



Cheshire East

TOGETHER for Children and Young People

North West ADCS
Leading Children's Services

Cheshire East Self-Assessment January 2022



Executive Director of Children's Services

Deborah Woodcock

Lead Member for Children's Services

Cllr Kathryn Flavell

Chief Executive

Lorraine O'Donnell

Contextual information: Key Personnel

Role	Name	Time in Post	Role	Name	Time in Post
Executive Director of Children's Services	Deborah Woodcock	2 months	Assistant Director Director of Children's Social Care	Kerry Birtles	1 year 4 months
Chief Executive	Lorraine O'Donnell	2 years	Assistant Director Director Prevention and Early Help	Ali Stathers-Tracey	3 years 11 months
Lead Member	Cllr Kathryn Flavell (Children and Families Committee Chair)	2 years 8 months	Assistant Director Director of Education 14-19 Skills	Jacky Forster	6 years 3 months
LSCP Chair/Scrutineer	The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership has a rolling chair arrangement – each year it is chaired by one of the statutory partners. From 2021-22 the Chair is Paula Wedd, Executive Director of Quality and Patient Experience Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group.	Rolling chair each year	Designated Clinical Officer	Penny Hughes	5 years 4 months
Virtual School Head	Laura Rogerson	3 years 8 months	Designated Medical Officer	Not applicable	Not applicable

About the local area and services for children

With an estimated population of 386,700, Cheshire East is the third biggest unitary council in the North West and the 17th largest in the country. **Approximately 40% of the population lives in rural areas** and the remainder in the two major towns of Crewe and Macclesfield and smaller towns of Wilmslow, Congleton, Sandbach, Poynton, Nantwich, Middlewich, Knutsford and Alsager. **We have approximately 104,700 children and young people aged 0-25 years old**; approximately 27% of the total population. Residents of Cheshire East are predominantly white (96.7%). The black and minority ethnic population (3.2%) is lower than in the North West (10%) and England (14%). A proportion of our residents (2%) are from European countries, with 3,868 of these being from Poland (1%). Cheshire East has a travelling community. 7.3% of Primary, 5.5% Secondary, and 5.1% Special School pupils' first language spoken at home was not English.

The borough is generally affluent and is a **desirable place** to live. It has **excellent schools, good employment options, transport networks and services**. As a result, there has been significant population growth, in particular, **families moving into the borough for schooling**. This has placed significant demand on our schools and other council services.

We want Cheshire East to be a great place to be for all our children and young people and for the vast majority this is the case. Most children in Cheshire East have a level of wellbeing that is equal and often higher than the national average. However, there are 18 small areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 20% nationally (an increase from 16 areas in 2010). These areas are in Crewe (13), Macclesfield (2), Wilmslow (1), Alsager (1), and Congleton (1).

We remain committed to progress our action plan to address the recommendations from the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in November 2019 and have worked hard to continue to develop our services. Our continued focus is on **achieving excellent outcomes for children and young people through establishing consistently good practice**. We have brought our fostering recruitment service in-house, launched our own **fostering campaign**, and developed our first **Mockingbird constellation** and well as leading on the coproduction of a **Neglect Strategy** with statutory and third sector agencies. **Ofsted's focused visit in November 2021 recognised the improvement in the overall quality of work with children who are in need of help or protection** and that senior leaders are embedding a **child-centred** culture. **Our SEND revisit** in May 2021 provided strong evidence of strategic improvement and the removal of the written statement of action. We have co-produced our new **SEND Strategy** to support the continuation of these improvements which has now been approved across all partnership groups. In the **joint inspection of the pan-Cheshire Youth Justice Service** that took place in July 2021, inspectors praised the work being carried out by the service, highlighting a clear ambition for children, sustained and effective partnerships, and sound operational delivery.

We have developed a **clear vision for children, young people, and care experienced adults** in Cheshire East, **Together for Children and Young People**. We want to ensure that across the council and the partnership, everyone is clear on our **shared ambition for children and young people**, and we work together to achieve the best outcomes.

We will do all we can to ensure that:

Children and young people we care for are happy and given every opportunity to achieve their full potential

Children and young people feel and are safe

Children and young people are happy and experience good mental health and wellbeing

Children and young people are healthy and make positive choices

Children and young people leave school with the best skills and qualifications they can achieve and the life skills they need to thrive into adulthood

Children, young people and young adults with additional needs have better chances in life.

Our services have worked relentlessly under challenging professional and personal circumstances to continue to put children and young people first. **We have kept children at the centre of our thinking**, maintaining contact with families, delivering services to children and their families through our **early years settings, schools, colleges and children's centres** and the **implementation of our new child health hubs**. We have continued to **progress plans and deliver outcomes for our children across all services; despite the adverse challenges we have faced**.

The pandemic has required that we continue to adapt to respond to the evolving situation and changes in legislation, guidance and restrictions. We are extremely proud of our response, which has ensured we have a joined-up partnership approach in **supporting families, safeguarding children and keeping children and young people in education**.

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What have we delivered?

- **The Children and Families budget for 2021/22 included net growth of £4.15m into Children's Social Care (CSC)**, home to school transport and SEND staffing. This builds on growth of £4m factored into 2020/21. Investment/growth into SEND to implement new models of working.
- Strong council support and **scrutiny of outcomes for children** through the Children and Families Committee and Corporate Parenting Committee (CPC).
- **Joined up partnership working** through the Early Help Board, Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP), 0-25 SEND Partnership, Children and Young People's Trust, and Partnership Chairs Board.
- **Proactive lead member as chair of CPC who strongly advocates for cared for children**, including attendance at 'My Voice' (our Children in Care Council).
- Robust **quarterly data analysis and weekly datasets** and trackers across the directorate.
- Chief Executive and Lead Member scrutiny through the Safeguarding Review meeting, which includes Children's Directors and Chair of the SCP Executive Board.
- Weekly SCP Covid partnership meetings introduced to **maintain safeguarding as a priority**.
- Continued to carry out rapid and learning reviews, ensuring practice changes.
- Leaders, officers, and members actively involved in review of local offer for care leavers.
- **Connected to our frontline** with monthly forums and practice and performance clinics and member frontline visits.
- Co-produced the **revised SEND Strategy** with strong support across all partners including elected members and parent /carers.

What have been our challenges?

- **Prioritising vulnerable children** during COVID restrictions, especially those not in education.
- **Sufficiency within in-house fostering** and our Bespoke children's homes, particularly the independent care market.
- Maintaining service delivery within existing budgets given the significant **increase in the demand for services**, in particular around children's social care and SEND.
- Quality assurance activity suggests that the pace of change in some areas of recording have not progressed at the pace anticipated as a result of the pandemic.

What difference have we made?

- Ofsted focused visit – recognised senior leaders are successfully embedding a child-centred culture and **overall improvement of practice**.
- SEND revisit found that **leaders had transformed the timeliness, process and quality of EHC plans**. Sufficient progress made against the Written Statement of Action (WSOA).
- Youth Justice Inspection awarded an '**Outstanding**' rating for leadership and good overall.
- Additional investment through the managed social work service has provided support to the frontline.
- Addressed issues quickly during COVID through the SCP operational meetings.
- Regular evaluation of the **quality of frontline practice** through quality assurance from senior managers to team managers inclusive of conversational audit with social workers.
- **Recruitment and retention** of frontline teams means that we have been resourced to be able to stay connected to children and young people and communities.

What do we still need to do?

- Develop and launch the new four year strategies for **Corporate Parenting and the Children and Young People's Plan**.
- To deliver excellent outcomes through our partnership arrangements that are underpinned by best practice during the pandemic and the partnership response.
- Audit the impact of the Rapid Review recommendations to ensure progress against practice standards and improvements.
- Visit from **Mark Riddell Ambassador for Care Leavers** offering further support to Cheshire East on our journey to excellence with our care experienced adults.
- Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) mobilisation.
- Improve impact measures and coproduction of plans and outcomes.
- Further embed SEN reforms across all settings as identified within revised SEND Strategy – rigorous monitoring of agreed milestones.

SUMMARY: Children's Social Care and Early Help

What have we delivered?

- **Successful 'step up step down' process means we have** safely reduced the number of children requiring Help and Protection through a Child in Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP) plan. 195 step downs recorded in 2019/20, increased to 293 in 2020/21, 50% increase.
- Launched the **Neglect Strategy and practice guidance** across the partnership.
- Led **weekly Covid partnership meetings** to maintain safeguarding as a priority.
- Designed and implemented **2 child health hubs**.
- **Strengthened leadership of court work, recognised by Ofsted during our focus visit.**
- **Enhanced our care leaver local offer** and recommissioned our **short breaks local offer**.
- **Strengthened** our identification and response to **Private Fostering arrangements**.
- Launched **'Together for Fostering'**, and implemented our **Mockingbird Family Model**.
- Implemented the **self-harm information sharing pathway** for under 16s.
- **Increased long term placement stability** with dedicated placement stability officer.
- **Recommissioned high quality supported accommodation provider.**
- **Stayed connected to our frontline** with monthly forums and member frontline visits.
- **Continued short breaks offer** for disabled children to prevent escalation of need.
- **Recruited and retained increased number of child-focused staff.**

What have been our challenges?

- Maintaining service delivery within existing budgets given a 20% additional **demand for Early Help services.**
- **Prioritising vulnerable children** during COVID, especially those not in education who may be at greater risk.
- **Court delays due to COVID** impacted on our ability to conclude Care Proceedings in a timely manner.
- **Children and adult mental health needs have increased** across the system requiring new investment in support.
- Despite increased in-house fostering and a reduced number of children who need residential care, **sufficiency challenges** mean we have facilitated care in unregistered settings.
- **Care leavers have been disproportionately affected by COVID.**
- Engagement in rapid development and **implementation of the voluntary rota of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) at pace.**

What difference have we made?

- Focussed visit recognised **improvements in the overall quality of our work.**
- **Distributed Over 60,000 vouchers** for families and over **1,200 children** in our **summer activities.**
- **Significantly improved the number of homeless 16/17 year olds appropriately accommodated** under S20 in suitable accommodation.
- **The percentage of children that concluded care proceedings with an order that secured them within their own family increased** from 46% in Q1 to 72% Q2 (20/21).
- Improved identification of neglect due to increased and appropriate use of **neglect screening tools and Graded Care Profiles** across the partnership.
- **Improved multi-agency safeguarding response** through prioritisation of those at **risk of exploitation** and changes presented by **organised crime.**
- **Alignment of CSC and SEND;** short break reviews held alongside EHCP annual reviews.
- **Good outcome from Youth Justice Inspection.**
- **Less children are coming into care** through our increased edge of care support and less living in residential care (**more living in CE foster care**).
- Improved care leaver outcomes - we are **in touch with all** except 2 who have opted out, **18 are at University, staying put arrangements increased from 13 to 25.**
- We have **doubled the number of adoptions** despite the pandemic.

What do we still need to do?

- **Restructure of the Early Help service,** embedding Family Hubs across localities.
- Reduce the number of referrals which go on to no further action through **the online form.**
- **Dedicated Mental Health Worker** in the front door to strengthen the timeliness of response.
- Increase the **use of Family Networking at an earlier stage.**
- Launch **the refreshed 'Plan' across all services** to support evidencing how we are working with families and building strength.
- **Improve social care input into EHCPs** through the DCSO role.
- Mobilise **children's home** in the borough to provide **care to our children with multiple needs.**
- Launch our new ambitious **Corporate Parenting Strategy.**
- Finalise **Pan-Cheshire All Age Exploitation Policy.**
- Introduce **systems to routinely monitor and collate our preventative work, both with 16 and 17 year olds and young adults who present as homeless.**
- Ensure that **at least 80% of all practice is good.**
- Continue to recruit new and experienced **foster carers from diverse backgrounds.**
- Further improve the **identification of contingency arrangements** in child-in-need plans.
- We have already improved the consistency and effectiveness of **management oversight and need to now improve the effectiveness for disabled children.**
- Make sure **audit recommendations are completed** to further improve experiences for children.

What have we delivered?

- **Blend of targeted 1:1 and group face to face sessions** in homes, buildings and outdoors during COVID, including detached work with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and outdoor education delivered sessions for cared for children.
- Rolled out **Covid Winter Grant Scheme, Covid Support Grant, and Holiday Activity Fund.**
- At the height of the pandemic, all new parents were posted a Babies Together leaflet to highlight all the services available to support them.
- Family Service Workers supported Children's Social Care contacting families with under 5s to support through play and routines and deliver home learning packs.
- **Journey First and Parents First support individuals/parents to secure employment.**
- Invested in Locality Support Officers to do quality and timely early intervention.
- Carried out virtual multi agency audits on early help cases to embed and share learning.
- Designed and rolled out service standards, case file checklist and performance data across Council Early help services to **ensure high quality and consistent delivery.**
- **Designed and implemented 2 Child Health Hubs.**
- Submitted **detailed bid to the Local Transformation Fund to implement Family Hubs** across Cheshire East (outcome expected March 2022).

What have been our challenges?

- Continuing to deliver a **robust and effective Preventative service** in the context of a challenging financial position with more complex, demanding cases.
- Maintaining quality and timely responses to our children and families whilst keeping frontline colleagues safe - we brought staff back into work safely to provide the essential service.
- **Impact of the closure of schools and early years settings made children less visible.** We ensured that an education place was available to all early help children and monitored attendance.
- **Impact of other service responses to the pandemic** e.g. not completing face to face direct work and in homes.
- Ongoing **system capability and tracking of all early help intervention** to establish good practice and gaps.
- **Impact on resource and budget for high numbers of SEND children.**

What difference have we made?

- Due to successful Supporting Families Payment by Results (PbR) claims on track, children are experiencing more stable environments for 6 months or more. 2021/22 PBR target is 332. As at Q2 we achieved 216 families achieving 2 or more criteria for 6+ months. We are on track to achieve the annual figure.
- **Children and young people receive the right service at the right time:** in Q2 there were 1105 children open to all early help services.
- Continued Children Centre registrations through COVID; in Q2 we had a further 953.
- **176 children and their families successfully moved into universal services in Q2.**
- Over 60,000 vouchers have benefited families. Over 1,200 free school meal (FSM) children at summer Holiday Activity Fund (HAF).
- 342 young people in Q2 were supported through **bespoke 121 sessions or groupwork** delivered by our Youth Support Service.

What do we still need to do?

- **Deliver a successful restructure of the service, embedding the principles of Family Hubs.**
- Review SEND resource and budget to ensure it matches demand.
- Review and redesign the **Quality Assessment (QA) framework** in line with Children's Social Care standards.
- **Work with the partnership** to baseline and develop early intervention practices and confidence to deliver quality and timely early intervention.
- Analyse and review the **impact of the online referral form** with regards to the delivery of Early Help Services.
- Ensure that Early Help features prominently within the revised Thresholds of Need document.
- Consider a new Early Help model within the Integrated Front Door to support the **right service at the right time for families.**
- Continue the rollout of the Household Support Fund.

What have we delivered?

- Continued to deliver **multi-agency Integrated Front Door (IFD) meetings to prevent risk of harm to children** who have been missing from home (MFH), children in care of other local authorities (CICOLA) and at risk of exploitation.
- Expanded the scope of the **multi-agency pregnancy liaison** response to include children up to aged 2 to support early identification of need, prioritising those who are care experienced.
- **Daily multi-agency scrutiny of Police Vulnerable Person’s Assessment (VPAs)** to jointly assess risk and determine the right support.
- **Tested thresholds** and quality of work at the Front Door through multi-agency audits.
- Relunched the multi-agency screening toolkit to support evidence based assessments.
- Improved multi-agency system access to support informed and **timely decision making**.
- Clear strategy in place to respond to the Domestic Abuse Bill.
- Dedicated social work link into Change Grow Live (CGL), Adult Services and Probation to further strengthen collaborative working.
- **We mapped every child not in school from early help across CSC and ensured that an education place was made available; attendance was monitored and supported.**

What have been our challenges?

- Regular review of data and quality revealed there were **changes in demand and need**, so we shared referral data weekly through the Covid-19 Cheshire East Safeguarding Children Partnership (CESCP) meeting. This identified **possible vulnerability due to reduced visibility** and we strengthened our response to under 2s and families where alcohol and substance misuse were present.
- **Maintaining quality and timely responses to our children and families** whilst keeping frontline colleagues safe was a challenge, but we brought staff back into work safely which enabled colleagues in the front door to work together effectively.
- **The closure of schools and early years settings made children less visible.**
- The introduction of our online referral form has been delayed due to the impact of the pandemic and system modification. We are now piloting the use of the form with our partners.
- From Q1 20-21 to Q1 21-22 **an increase in referrals to the Domestic Abuse (DA) hub** from 414 referrals to 614 (48%).

What difference have we made?

- **Children and young people receive the right service at the right time. Our re-referral rate is low** at 16% for 2021, compared to 20% in 2018-2019.
- We have sustained the level of partnership performance in leading early help assessments and plans, 20% at Q2, reflects the introduction of the online form in the front door which has seen more organisations working directly with children without needing to have cases allocated to them. This is a positive development as the work of the Locality Support Officers and the process to identify need via the online form has meant that children are not waiting to have their needs met.
- Edge of care exploitation support has prevented escalation, delivering services at early help
- Our Emergency Duty Team (EDT) ensures support for children out of hours.
- Safeguarding Children in Education Settings (SCiES) Team support the discussions with schools, ensuring actions are taken before consultation and provide support where there is disagreement around thresholds.
- **Increase in self referrals to the DA hub** from 43 in Q1 20-21 to 116 in Q1 21-22 (169%).
- Informed decisions through **increase in screening tools completed**. From Q1 20-21 to Q1 21-22 Neglect Tools have increased 13% to 53%. Substance Tools have increased 2% to 6%, DV Tools have increased 9% to 15%. CSE Tools have increased 33% to 56%.
- Appointed a dedicated Housing worker to strengthen multi-agency working.

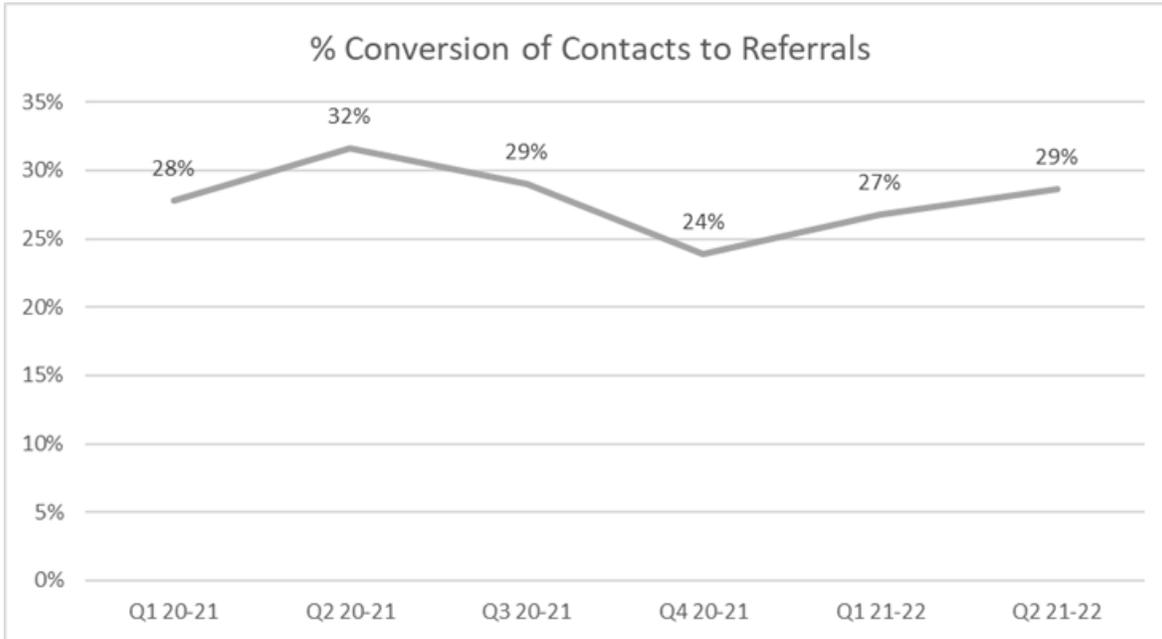
What do we still need to do?

- Reduce the number of referrals which go on to no further action through the introduction of the online form.
- **Continue to strengthen the multi-agency function of the Front Door** through inclusion of a dedicated mental health worker.
- **Increase early help support for children with mental health needs** and where there is potential for adoption breakdown.
- Increase awareness of all the resources available to support families through the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS).
- Further **improve our performance around repeat referrals**.
- Measure the impact of increased resources in the DA Hub.
- Further embed the ‘whole family’ approach to all impacted by domestic abuse.

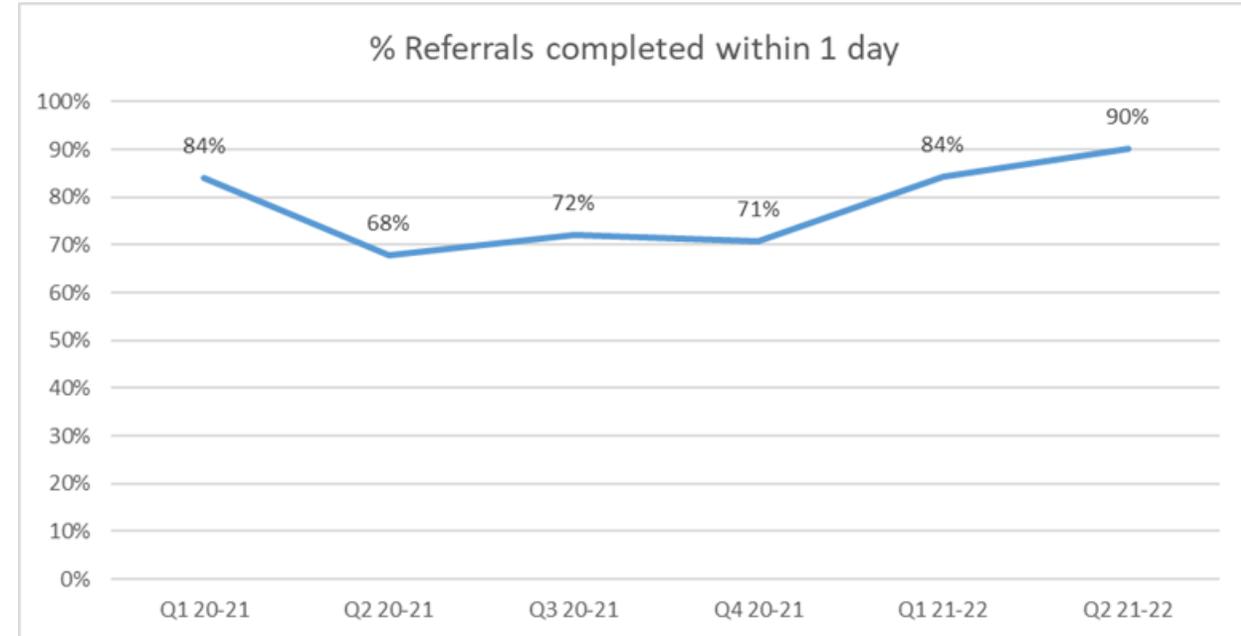
Front Door: Graph of Contact and Referral Data

	Q1 20-21	Q2 20-21	Q3 20-21	Q4 20-21	Q1 21-22	Q2 21-22
Contacts	1938	2133	2100	1952	2243	1583
Referral	539	674	610	467	601	454
% Conversion	28%	32%	29%	24%	27%	29%
Referrals in 1 day	453	457	439	330	507	409
% completed in 1 day	84%	68%	72%	71%	84%	90%

% Conversion of Contacts to Referrals



% Referrals completed within 1 day



What have we delivered?

- **Launched the Neglect Strategy and practice guidance across the partnership** - includes better flexibility for Family Service Workers to respond during evenings/weekends.
- **Safely reduced the number of children requiring Help and Protection** through a Child in Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP) plan in the last 12 months through an embedded 'step up step down' policy.
- Strengthened our identification and **response to Private Fostering arrangements**.
- Relaunched **joint Housing Protocol** alongside training and 'champions' in each service.
- Piloted a CIN/CP participation group in Macclesfield to **increase participation of our children**.
- Clear process developed when cases have been identified as needing initial child protection conferences (ICPC) to ensure timely response to risks identified. This has started to see an **increase in ICPCs being held in timescales**.
- Early drift in **pre-proceedings** is being addressed through the **introduction of a 4 week review**.

What have been our challenges?

- Court delays due to COVID and the impact on our ability to **conclude Care Proceedings in a timely manner**, including delay in external assessments.
- Changes in demand to our Crewe CIN/CP Service at a time when other services were seeing a reduction. The average caseload for CIN/CP is currently 19.
- Continuing to provide safe interventions and environments to have face to face contact with children and families during COVID, with less support from external agencies such as CGL and the National Probation Service.
- **School closures and the need to ensure that our vulnerable children and young people were not at increased risk**.
- Increase in the amount of Police Protection Orders (PPO) and **the speed at which a family has reached crisis**.

What difference have we made?

- **Assessments and plans are focused on improving outcomes for children**.
- Children are identified as a result of **effective assessments of risk and need** and have written **plans that are regularly reviewed and updated**.
- Team managers are effectively **quality assuring assessments and plans** (98% of children open to CIN/CP have a completed or ongoing assessment within the last year).
- **Children experiencing repeat CP planning has reduced**, in 20-21 (1st April – 31st Mar) 28% of new CP plans were repeat plans. In Q1&2, 2021-22 (1st April – 30th Sept) 11% of new CP plans were repeat plans
- The edge of care service, **@ct**, **has a positive impact for children who are at risk of needing to come into care**.
- Use of Neglect Screening Tools and Graded Care Profiles has increased across the partnership.
- Increase in the number of children appropriately managed within pre-proceedings.
- **16/17-year-olds who present as homeless receive a timely response** and are provided with the right information to inform their decisions.
- We have **significantly improved the number of homeless 16/17 year olds appropriately accommodated under S20 in suitable accommodation**.
- Q1 increase in the number of children have their permanence plan endorsed at the 2nd Review to 64%.
- **The percentage of children that concluded care proceedings with an Order that secured them within their own family increased** from 46% in Q1 to 72% Q2 (20/21).

What do we still need to do?

- Improve the **identification of contingency arrangements** in child in need plans.
- Ensure all **assessments fully consider children's identities** when reaching decisions.
- Embed the **Neglect Strategy across the partnership**, supporting early identification and intervention to have a direct impact on children experience neglect for a repeat or subsequent time.
- Continue to work hard to **keep children within their own communities**, increasing the use of Family Networking at an earlier stage and ensuring this is explored for longer term contingencies.
- Launch the refreshed 'Plan' across all services to support **evidencing how we are working with families and building strength**.
- Embed and raise awareness of the legislation for domestic abuse victims (DA Act).
- Audit the intervention for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

What have we delivered?

- **Continued to assess and deliver packages of support to 242** children and young people through the Children Act, Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act, Children and Families Act and our Short Break Local Offer. With agreement and monitoring at fortnightly Children with Disabilities Care Package Panel.
- We are delivering **Early Help Individual Payments** through our Short Breaks Local Offer to 404 families.
- We have **7** disabled children and young people subject to **Child Protection Plans** and **2** families within **PLO**.
- **Improved transition planning** – joint working with Adult Social Care and transition co-ordinator developing robust planning; evidenced by transition Adult Social Care workers attending care plan / CIN reviews.
- Developed social care training and support around Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- Recommissioned our Short Breaks Local Offer.
- Developed creative ways of working with our fostering service and **increased the number of short break foster carers**.
- Responded to the need to always have **advice and support at the end of the phone for families and professionals** through creation of a Short Breaks Team (SBT) duty system.
- Data from the **vulnerable children not in education weekly report** has been used to identify children and young people who may be in need of protection.

What have been our challenges?

- The loss of local network, clubs and groups, and identifying Personal Assistants (PAs) for disabled children due to the national lockdown.
- **The increasing impact of mental health for our children and their parent and carers.**
- Colleagues within the wider support network not undertaking home visits and a **reliance that social workers and the SBT** would undertake some of the network tasks, for example Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy.
- Aligning our service with SEND and schools during a period where schools were closed.
- Ensuring support through our Short Break Local Offer is Cheshire East wide.
- **The complex health needs of some of our children** have meant that we have not always been able to visit face to face during the lockdown. When this has been an issue we have used virtual methods to ensure that the needs of these children are met, or visits at a distance.
- **Social workers** have acted as the point of contact for all families during the pandemic due to the changing roles within the NHS. This has been both a strength for social workers and families alike, whilst being a challenge in relation to capacity and workload.

What difference have we made?

- **Families have valued the consistent point of contact during COVID** as the service has continued to complete visits face to face or virtually to meet family needs.
- We have **worked with partner agencies** to ensure that specialist services continued to be delivered throughout COVID.
- Majority of disabled children remain supported within their family homes and or in their local communities.
- The Increase in recruitment of **specialist short break foster carers** has enabled us to increase the number of disabled children accessing overnight short break support.
- We have **improved the transition to adulthood** for our young people.
- Parents only have to tell their story once as short break reviews are held alongside EHCP annual reviews.
- 67% assessments completed by CWD were within 45 days in Q1 2021-22 (year to date figure is 79 %).
- **100% cared for and CP cases in CWD are seen in timescales.**

What do we still need to do?

- Ensure the consistency and effectiveness of **management oversight for disabled children**.
- **Embed Pinewood (overnight short break) offer.** Although signed off, it is delayed due to staff recruitment which has impacted.
- Continue to develop our Liberty Protection Safeguards Strategy (LPS) and deliver training across the directorate.
- Complete tender exercise for our Care at Home Service.
- **Strengthen interface with partner agencies**, particularly around mental health, and autism.
- Develop the role of the Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO).
- Improve evidencing the specific outcomes of short break packages.
- Improve social care input into EHCPs through the DSCO role.
- **Build on families supporting each other.**
- Achieve increased numbers on the Children with Disabilities Database to **improve reach and communication.**

What have we delivered?

- **Increased the capacity of our Edge of Care and Exploitation Team @CT**, to enable us to support more children at an earlier stage.
- **Multi-agency Contextual Safeguarding Operational meetings** have operated throughout COVID to children across Early Help, CIN/CP and our cared for children and care leavers.
- Contributed to the development of an 18-25 Complex Safeguarding Model in Adults Services to support the transition of vulnerable CIN/CP child who turn 18 and are not cared for.
- Child Exploitation Tool Masterclass delivered by our @CT Service to increase awareness and quality of the tool.
- Monthly performance report developed for Contextual Safeguarding, including missing from home data.
- **Participated in two Pan-Cheshire Operation Paddington activities** at local service stations (February/August 2021) to identify trafficking of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).
- **Implemented the self-harm information sharing pathway for under 16s.**

What have been our challenges?

- At times COVID has limited the way in which we could deliver outreach and **continue to engage with our young people.**
- Responding to the challenges that the pandemic placed on organised crime.
- A small number of **children are serving custodial sentences** for serious violent offences.
- **Children and adult mental health needs have increased across the system.**
- Increased parental alcohol use; a seconded social worker was placed in the service to ensure that all contacts to the commissioned service were applying consistent thresholds.
- Responding to the changing landscape around **vulnerable children not in education**, this required a directorate response to track and act where necessary.

What difference have we made?

- **Initial feedback from our Youth Justice Inspection has been positive and indicates that our partnership working is contributing to keeping children safe.**
- Majority of children at risk of Contextual Safeguarding are managed under a CIN Plan; 67% of those with a CSE at risk flag were at CIN or early help as at 30/6/21.
- Schools and Early Help Services complete the highest number of Exploitation Tools to inform decision making.
- **We are safely supporting our increasing number of children at risk of exploitation (currently 104) to remain within their own families and communities.**
- Multi-agency mapping exercises have used local knowledge to proactively address children at risk of exploitation.
- High risk/complex children's needs met by bespoke packages of commissioned support.
- **Self-harm info sharing pathway** notifications increased from initial audit in March 2021.

What do we still need to do?

- **Deliver multi-agency training** on Contextual Safeguarding and Exploitation.
- Finalise Pan-Cheshire All Age Exploitation Policy.
- Further improve support to children in education to remain in mainstream provision.
- Work alongside our colleagues in the Police to identify anti-social behaviour (ASB) at an earlier stage to support Early Intervention.
- **Ensure support is available for parents at an earlier stage** to feel more confident in managing child exploitation.
- Finalise and embed a Contextual Safeguarding Conference Model.
- **Dedicated mental health worker** in the front door to strengthen the timeliness of response.
- Develop a toolkit with partners to support disruption – link with Serious and Organised Crime Strategy (Adult Services and Police).
- Complete appointment of an exploitation lead, as agreed Pan-Cheshire.

What have we delivered?

- **Transition of the realignment of permanence planning** through court work to the cared for children's team is underway.
- **Continued focus on permanency** through a weekly panel chaired by Heads of Service (HoS).
- Refreshed our Early permanency policy (Oct 2021).
- **Worked in partnership** with our regional adoption agency to achieve permanence for 26 children in 2021/22 (unprecedented since 2017, despite the impact of COVID).
- We have responded to our sufficiency challenges, like national trends, and remobilized additional residential provision and increased internal provision.
- **Increased long term placement stability** with dedicated support from a placement stability officer.
- Maintained connection with the Local Family Justice Board (LFJB) to work together to mitigate the impact of COVID and progress actions within the Public Law Working Group Publication (PLWGP). Lead on strategic work to implement the ambitions, S.20.

What have been our challenges?

- **Timeliness of children achieving permanence through adoption during the pandemic.**
- The suitability of placement providers who can offer stability to our most complex children and associated cost.
- The transition of court work from CIN/CP to cared for children has included delay due to transferring the skills set from one team to another.
- **The family justice system has been under pressure** during the pandemic resulting in the revocation of care orders and adoptions not being prioritised.
- **Engagement in repaid development and implementation of the voluntary rota of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) at pace.**

What difference have we made?

- As at 30/09/2021:
- **Increase in children living inside the borough:** 311 children are within Cheshire East and 208 are placed outside.
- 73% of cared for children are living within a 20 mile radius and 81% are living within an hour of their family home. **Many of those placed furthest are living within their family networks or have/are achieving permanency.**
- 48% of children living with Cheshire East Foster Carers and 41% of children living with Independent Foster Carers are long term matched.
- 54% of children aged over 12 are long term matched.
- 98% of children over age 4 contributed to their care plan review.
- In the 6 months to 30/09/21, 48% of children who have entered care have had their plans of permanence endorsed in their second review. We also have 66 children living with family and friends foster carers who are all considered to be in long term placements.
- **We have 78 children and young people living with their parents** under Orders or Section 38 (6).
- Children's journey to adoption is captured well in CPR documents.
- **Children can remain within their family through bespoke packages of support.**

What do we still need to do?

- **Further mobilise our 3rd and 4th children's home in the borough to provide care to our children with multiple needs.**
- Develop the adoption stability post to support cases where there is a **possibility of adoption breakdown.**
- Commission a framework of edge of care specialists to strengthen our edge of care offer.
- Focus on Foster to Adopt and concurrency.
- Simplify the decision making process for placement options.
- Develop an established Agency Decision Making (ADM) process of Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs).
- Embed permanence tracker.
- Following a refresh, launch the Early Permanency Strategy.
- Develop how we **celebrate permanence.**

What have we delivered?

- **Strengthened leadership of court work** following delays in care proceedings led to higher than regional average of care completion in 26 weeks/increase in discharge applications.
- **Additional resource into edge of care** has supported more children to remain in their family.
- Engaged with requests for support prior to the roll out of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS), supporting 4 young people prior to the launch in July.
- Targeted and creative approaches used to **prioritise educational outcomes of our children**, including a survey to children and young people about their experiences.
- Dedicated emotional wellbeing service, delivers support for young people and their carers.
- Recommissioned our 16+ supported accommodation offer in line with wishes of our children.
- **Evidentially strengthened our practice in relation to 16/17 year old homeless young people.**
- Audited children who live out of borough to ensure that they receive same level of service.

What have been our challenges?

- Despite increased in-house fostering and a reduced number of children who need residential care, **sufficiency challenges** mean we have facilitated care in unregistered settings.
- Regional competition in **commissioning suitable accommodation provision** for children and adolescents has resulted in reduced options.
- **Regional and local delays within proceedings at the start of COVID are continuing to impact; completion of care proceedings in 26 weeks remains an area of focus.**
- Performance in relation to achieving permanence at the second review has been impacted, however Q1 position has been strengthened, currently at 64%.
- Despite increasing placement stability in 2021-22, the 16/17 cohort has been a challenge.
- Accessing routine dental care for our children and young people has been impacted by the pandemic, currently 44% of our cared for children over the age of 1 have had a dental check in the last 12 months.
- **Maintaining timeliness in assessment work** impacted by the restrictions, isolation and positive Covid cases amongst our children and families.

What difference have we made?

- **Reduced our cared for population** from 537 Sept 20 – 519 in Sept 21, evidencing a whole system approach and shared vision.
- Less children living in residential care and more living in CE foster care, from 40 as at Sept 2020 down to 28 as at Sept 21.
- 98% cared for reviews took place in time for 6 months from 1st April – 30 Sept 21.
- Dedicated Family Time Coordinator has kept children connected to their families.
- **There has been double the amount of adoptions despite the pandemic.**
- 72% of cared for children in good/outstanding schools; 100% had a Personal Education Plan in place during COVID.
- 80% of cared for children have an up to date health assessment.
- 100% of young people have health passports by their 18th birthday.
- In Q1 of 2021 we have achieved 5 discharges of care (During 20-21 we achieved 7).
- ***'Being in care has been amazing. My social worker who I have been with has made sure I live with people I can trust. I feel like people are making good decisions about my future'*** [Feedback from young people survey]

What do we still need to do?

- Continue to **enable children to participate in a meaningful way** to build our services and use feedback from our most recent survey to inform practice.
- Recommission **additional in-house residential capacity** for our most vulnerable children.
- Further strengthen our response to early identification of placement instability.
- Strengthen our analysis of data to respond to changing need.
- Implement the recommendations of the PLWGP and safely use S.20 to prevent the instruction of the Court into family life.
- **Continue to increase the number of children who live within a family environment.**
- Utilise the New NHS England Dental referral pilot to ensure cared for children have access to timely dental health services.

What have we delivered?

- **Prioritised support for care leavers**, e.g. in the COVID Winter Grant scheme and guarantee of the payment continuation of £20p/w on ending of universal top up.
- Support to 400 young adults, 256 as care leavers and 143 under our 21+ offer after proactively reaching out and offering support.
- **Recommissioned high quality supported accommodation provider.**
- Reviewed and enhanced the [local offer](#).
- Run events such as not in education, employment or training (NEET) course which resulted in **re-engagement back into education, employment or training**. Also, events such as the chambers of commerce and Cheshire East small business forum.
- Successfully and proactively been involved in the NTS.
- Developed a music project with the Love Music Trust and a group of musicians from Manchester who were originally refugees themselves.
- **Progress we have made to homelessness amongst children and young people has been recognised, ultimately resulting in no further monitoring.**

What have been our challenges?

- **Care leavers are amongst those who have been disproportionately affected by COVID**; we have had to place 8 care leavers in emergency accommodation; one of whom remained in a hotel for longer than we would have wished.
- Those coming out of custody must present as homeless if they have nowhere to go; we have pre-arranged and funded placements to alleviate this.
- We have supported young people financially, so they do not get into debt whilst awaiting Universal Credit payments.
- **We have provided post 18 accommodation to care leavers** on multiple occasions to prevent homelessness, but do not always routinely record all our preventative work; addressing this is in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) action plan. The 9 cases show that repeat evictions, poor behaviour is the most common reason for young people having to access emergency accommodation.

What difference have we made?

- **We are in touch with all our care leavers apart from 2** who have requested that we do not provide them with a service; contact has remained high throughout the pandemic.
- **We have reduced our NEET figure** from around 50% to 47% and are continuing efforts to achieve and exceed our target of 30%. If we include re-engagement activity this further reduces to 35%.
- **Highest number of young people (18) at University**, including 6 new starters in Sep 21.
- Supported 7 young people into apprenticeships: 6 external and one within the council.
- Successful tenancy ready course (online during COVID) has an average of 2 young people per month completing to secure their B status.
- Around 30 young people are benefiting from support from our psychological wellbeing worker via the partnership with Pure Insights at any time: issues supported include mental health, substance misuse, self-harm, and the impact of trauma.
- **Increase in the number of staying put arrangements for care leavers from 13 to 25.**
- Ignition Panel continues to meet monthly to offer young people some choice and involvement in decision making around 16+ and supported accommodation.

What do we still need to do?

- **The workload in the team is growing** and caseloads are still higher than we would wish; we have agreement for additional staffing to alleviate this.
- Introducing systems to routinely monitor and collate our preventative work, both with 16 and 17 year olds and young adults who present as homeless.
- **Reinforce the use of our Emergency Accommodation Procedure.**
- Extend taster flat provision across the borough, particularly to Macclesfield, and the number of individual tenancies.
- **Widen the scope of our Supported Lodgings offer, particularly for young people who have experienced residential care, including developing 'staying close' arrangement.**
- Increase apprenticeship take up dramatically; we have a 12 month post starting on 1st November to support this. **We will continue to raise awareness of and create internal apprenticeship opportunities** across Cheshire East internal services.

What have we delivered?

- **Delivered Skills to Foster for all connected carers.** This is delivered separately to mainstream due to the other issues that connected carers have to deal with.
- **Launched 'Together for Fostering'**, our own recruitment and assessment team.
- New Fostering Development Board chaired by the Director of Children's Social Care.
- **Implemented our Mockingbird Family Model.**
- Improved communications and engagement with foster carers with regular newsletters, forums, attendance at gatherings and surveys.
- Provided SharePoint access for all carers and developed a foster carer portal to LiquidLogic.
- Appointed a fostering training officer, who is developing a new training programme.
- Completed a review of all Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) cases and implemented recommendations.
- Developed and implemented a new Private Fostering procedure and process.
- Foster carers are involved in service developments, and a member of the Virtual School Governing Body.
- **We have maintained pace and frequency of fostering panels.**

What have been our challenges?

- **We have had to work differently to support our carers** during COVID: the impact of restrictions, shielding, isolation and infection impacted on our ability to facilitate large training events and maintain consistent face to face contact.
- Supporting our carers to adapt to virtual training to make it meaningful.
- Establishing our new brand 'together for fostering' and targeting marketing in the majority online because of reduced footfall in the community.
- **In-house sufficiency because of the impact of COVID.**
- Increased need in having sufficiency for young people seeking asylum under the NTS.
- Introducing a new model for fostering (Mockingbird Family Model) during lockdown.
- **Delivering the fostering restructure.**
- Some delays in completion of new fostering assessment due to DBS and Health challenges.
- 3 permanent placements have disrupted over the last 12 months.

What difference have we made?

- As at Q2 of 21-22
- **135 or 42% of the 319 children in foster care are long term matched;** 17 children were long term matched with their foster carer over the last year.
 - 17 new carers were approved over the last 12 months, and a further one awaits ADM.
 - Currently 8 mainstream fostering assessments are underway, and about to start targeted recruitment for the step down scheme.
 - In the past year only 4 foster carer reviews were out of timescale out of a total of 98.
 - **The increase in foster carer contacts and referrals has created a net increase of placements** of between 17 and 25 (if siblings placed together).
 - All carers have a linked named FSW, as well as an SSW, and increased support risk assessments to keep children, young people, and carers safe.
 - **Impact of Mockingbird:** increased capacity of vacancies, 2 foster carers retained, improved ways of working with carers and increased support to the children.
 - Foster carers survey evidences that interface and engagement with foster carers has improved our relationships with them.
 - **Increased placements for UASC.**

What do we still need to do?

- Continue to **recruit new and experienced foster carers from diverse backgrounds.**
- Establish a specialist salaried fostering scheme.
- **Strengthen our evidence of the quality of frontline practice in the fostering service.**
- Continue to update all policies and procedures.
- **Reintroduce Foster Carer Forums** face to face when safe to do so.
- Continue to increase information sharing via SharePoint as a tool to maintain contact and strengthen relationships.
- Implement a mentoring system.
- **Further improve placement stability, identifying the early signs of disruption and offering support to stabilise.**
- Develop specialist foster carer scheme and continue to expand Mockingbird.
- Complete the foster service restructure.

What have we delivered?

- **Audits are completed regularly**, managers know what 'good' looks like. Audit findings are disseminated widely via training sessions, masterclasses or team meetings and include a conversation with the social worker.
- Thematic audits have taken place across the service and throughout CЕСCP.
- **We have undertaken two independent learning reviews.**
- Used weekly data, and shared across the partnership, to enable early identification and quick response to new and emerging needs.
- Two well attended training sessions were held remotely to early years providers to **strengthen the awareness of the role and remit of LADO.**
- The Safeguarding Partnership training programme has also continued, including the Managing Allegations Training.
- **There has been a 40% increase** in referrals for advocacy, and independent visitor referrals have almost doubled over the past three years.
- **Lead practitioners engage with staff** to provide feedback on quality of work through observation of practice, particularly ASYE, to support improvement in their knowledge and understanding when working with children and their families.

What have been our challenges?

- Audits have shown that changes to the allocated social worker for a child can be disruptive; **we remain focused on making our employment offer attractive and meaningful.**
- Supporting team managers to only approve **good quality assessments.**
- Some of the development work planned with faith and charitable groups in the locality has not taken place as planned. This will be refreshed later in the year.
- Some delays have occurred in finding evidence in Police investigations especially where sophisticated use of IT and social media is a feature. This is being experienced nationally.
- National delays in Criminal Courts - charges have been made and trials need to take place.

What difference have we made?

- **Connectedness across leaders and managers** is creating an environment of curiosity about practice through audit, dip sampling and wider quality assurance.
- The use of qualitative and quantitative quality assurance (QA) has **enabled frontline practitioners and leaders to understand demand, trend, and the increase in complex needs.** This has led to **changes in service delivery** i.e. a secondment to CGL.
- Our robust QA framework provides scrutiny of frontline practice, ensuring actions are identified and implemented for high risk cases.
- 96% of CP review conferences have taken place within statutory time frames for the 6 months to 30th September.
- We have increasing evidence of **confidence in our managers ability to know and recognise what good service delivery 'looks like'.**
- Findings from audits have influenced our priorities especially in our objective **to work together with children and their families.**
- Robust offer in place for Designated Officer; allegations concerning adults have been progressed in a timely way and **the safeguarding of children has been maintained.**
- **Increased evidence of child's voice.**
- We have a clearer understanding of where our strengths and weaknesses lie.
- **Children and young people have participated in their reviews**, 95% of children (over 4 years old) have expressed their views in CP reviews and 95% of the time participation is evidenced on CP plans.

What do we still need to do?

- Make sure **audit recommendations are completed** to further improve experiences for children.
- Re-introduce the children and their families feedback into the audit methodology to ensure they contribute to service improvements.
- Continue to consolidate the learning from audits in **identifying what good looks like and how we can promote this to all our worker's practice, and measure impact on specific areas.**
- Continue to **develop first line manager's confidence and recognition of 'good' service delivery** and their role in promoting and ensuring the work of their teams reflects this.
- Continue to influence the focus of training for frontline staff to further improve the quality of outcomes for children and young people
- **Ensure that at least 80% of all practice is good.**
- Review all those referrals that are live for more than 6 months in relation to above areas detailed in challenges.

What have we delivered?

- **A comprehensive training offer is well used and appreciated** by social workers, who can describe the direct positive impact their training has for the children they work with.
- Completion of Team Manager Leadership programme for all managers across CSC.
- **Back to Basics masterclass programme** offers practical “bitesize learning” to the frontline.
- Director led Frontline Practitioner Forums provide direct opportunity to listen and to hear staff’s views in relation to practice, challenges, obstacles to effective working etc.
- Using work based Step up to Social Work to grow our own.
- Additional capacity brought in to support the service from July – Oct 2021.
- Advanced Practitioner programme available.
- **Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme is run over 12 months to all newly qualified social workers within CSC.**
- Director led Practice and Performance Forums on a quarterly basis.
- **Established management structure** - all Service Managers are permanent, longstanding employees. Only 2 of 19 team manager posts are currently filled by agency.

What have been our challenges?

- **Impact of COVID on the delivery of face to face training, instead using virtual sessions.**
- Induction on newly appointed staff during COVID due to the lack of “in office” induction activity and feeling part of wider team.
- Supporting student placements and learning during the pandemic that prepare for face to face interaction and challenge with children and their families.
- **Higher cohort of ASYEs** than in previous years has created less experienced teams with newly qualified social workers that have completed final placements during a pandemic that affected face to face learning opportunities.
- The ASYE cohort have required more support and learning opportunity due to their student placement experiences during COVID, impacting on their opportunity to develop skills that would ordinarily have been developed in final placements.
- **Staff morale throughout the pandemic** due to the challenges of the role and personal circumstances.

What difference have we made?

- The workforce is stable so **children benefit from enduring relationships with their social workers.** Social workers feel supported and **enjoy working in Cheshire East.**
- **Improved practice confidence as described by staff attending progression panel.**
- High levels of support for student social workers and ASYE.
- We host 3 places on the Step up to Social Work programme, alongside “Growing our own” through a Social Work Degree Apprenticeship. 8 practitioners supported to date.
- **Better skilled staff** through external training on topics such as Trauma Informed Practice and Gang Awareness.
- Of the 202 FTE Social Work posts, 6.7% are agency workers. **We have successfully recruited 38 practitioners over the past year and vacancy rate is currently 5%.**
- Clear structure career progression routes are creating greater stability within the workforce as evidenced in only 16 practitioners leaving the authority within the year.
- **Results of the Social Worker Health Check Survey are positive,** Social workers scored highly in the areas ‘a strong and clear social work framework’ and ‘a desire to stay’.

What do we still need to do?

- **Continue to make access to training and professional development achievable for frontline colleagues evaluating the impact of this for children and families.**
- Strengthen and reinforce our Apprenticeship in Social Work offer to care leaver/ care experienced staff to encourage and support our next generation of social workers.
- **Relaunch recruitment strategy** to streamline recruitment process and provide a whole system approach to developing staff teams starting with “Best Start Ever” induction framework and approach.
- **Develop stronger sustainable relationships** in the North of our footprint with Higher Education Institutes to ensure a robust offer for student social workers in the catchment and create equality across all teams in terms of growth and development.

What have we delivered?

- **Strong LA response to the demands of COVID on schools** – influence and impact of the Education Recovery Group (ERG) has been widespread and highly valued by schools.
- Continuation of the strategic school improvement support to all schools regardless of status. A dedicated intervention programmes for curriculum recovery allows schools to identify areas of greatest need from a diverse range of offers.
- **Detailed local and regional alignment of school improvement (SI) partnerships** including Teaching Hubs, maths and English hubs and making best use of commissioned services.
- Early years – dedicated support for early adopters has proved invaluable and plans in place to now share this learning to all schools.
- **Strong support for safeguarding across all settings** with high levels of buyback from schools for dedicated safeguarding team.
- Positive outcomes achieved in terms of pupil place planning, high first preference allocations and extensive programme of capital investment into school infrastructure.
- Positive work to promote attendance and reduce the number of children missing education.
- Proactive work to intervene and meet with families where they are opting to electively home educate.

What have been our challenges?

- **Maintaining strategic school improvement** with school leaders during COVID where day to day operational needs significantly add pressures on leaders.
- Understanding the value and systematic inspections of schools via Ofsted during COVID.
- **Continuing to make the best use of a fragmented SI landscape** with the emergence of Teaching School Hubs and other related regional and national programmes.
- Management of LA staffing teams where limited resources have had to be deployed to meeting national initiatives – e.g. COVID, Afghanistan resettlement.
- **Changes to our local governance arrangements** with a move to a councillor led committee system for strategic decision making within the council.
- Increasing challenges of referrals for children missing education and the requests for elective home education.
- Managing the overall demands on school leaders to continue to respond to the COVID agenda – wellbeing of staff and leaders of continuing concern.
- Increasing complexities of children with mental health concerns which directly impacts of school attendance rates.

What difference have we made?

- Schools have provided outstanding levels of support to the work of the **dedicated COVID team** who provide coordinated responses to very challenging situations.
- Providing all schools with a diverse range of school improvement programmes which best coordinate the local, regional, and national providers and deliver sustainable improvements for school leaders.
- **Very high satisfaction from parents** in terms of being able to attend a local school of their choice.
- Voluntary 2021 primary data collection has allowed for ongoing performance analysis and support to schools – significantly above national response rate.
- Clear process in place for children reported to be missing from education leading to an increase in cases located and moved on within a 12-week period.
- **Strong support for the Afghanistan resettlement scheme** in securing places in schools for all families involved- recognised as best practice by Home Office.
- **Prevention of the permanent exclusion of children with EHCPs** and primary age children.
- Strong outcomes and support for our cared for children through the Virtual School.

What do we still need to do?

- Further support schools in **curriculum recovery** which increased focus on foundation subjects to develop greater subject knowledge and curriculum planning.
- Establish a **behaviour strategy** to address behaviour support within schools.
- Review the governance arrangement locally for school improvement to build on the **successful operation of the Education Recovery Group**.
- Repurpose early years support through better use of **national best practice**.

What have we delivered?

- **Between 20-25 Headteachers new to HT leadership role have been supported** /mentored, giving positive feedback on impact of this formal and informal support package.
- Primary data collection has allowed participating schools to be able to benchmark themselves against local and available national datasets and therefore be able to strengthen their areas of focus within own school development planning.
- **Real impact being seen on engagement** in sustainable maths leadership in supported schools, programmes now are focused upon longer term curriculum recovery.
- Progression as an LA to coordinating sector lead working for real local impact, structured programmes through English hub for early reading and phonics.
- Remote curriculum reviews completed in **targeted vulnerable schools**, (RI). Impact has been seen in those who then experienced Ofsted monitoring.
- Director of Education visits / remote meetings to new HTs have been well received.
- **Continued deployment of National Leaders of Education** (NLEs) and National Leaders of Governance (NLG) in targeted schools – replacement of ineffective leads has led to clear improvements in practice.

What have been our challenges?

- **Lack of clarity** of emerging **Teaching Hub** role and functions.
- Lack of flexibility in **national school to school support programme** – availability of system leaders and not supporting single Requires Improvement (RI) schools.
- Concerns over the intention of national school improvement packages of support which potentially directs schools towards academisation.
- Whilst successful in voluntary data collection, certain vulnerable schools have not contributed.
- Challenges of not being able to undertake in-school monitoring to see experience of learners directly.
- **Curriculum coverage**, ensuring schools have a focus on the breadth of learner experiences.
- Potential changes to national **school improvement grant funding** going forward and the requirement to de-delegate funding.

What difference have we made?

- **Primary data collection for 2021.** 70 schools (63% of our learners). Key headlines were:
- 13% drop in EY literacy compared to 2019. 10% drop in maths.
- 7% drop in writing at KS1 and 8ppt drop at end of KS2.
- Reading up 5% at end of KS2.
- Vulnerable groups: free school meal boys have seen largest impact on performance.
- **Dedicated packages of curriculum support** for all sectors utilising a range of national and local commissioned services. These include:
- Very strong Maths Hub interface with over 32 schools currently involved in **sustainable leadership development**.
- Strong engagement from schools for dedicated Education Endowment Foundation (EFF) led programme for better supporting disadvantaged learners – 20 schools participating.
- Detailed early years training support for new EY framework with early adopters.
- Comprehensive categorisation process of all schools.
- Introduction of traded services for school attendance on top of statutory requirements which is targeted at at risk schools in sharing best practice and expectations.
- Establishing whole school Mental Health Strategy with school leadership teams to support clear focus of support – all secondary schools engaged.

What do we still need to do?

- **Widen curriculum recovery** support to other subject leaders.
- Establish full interface with all sector lead stakeholders to ensure coherent offer to our schools.
- **Further embed subject leadership** in maths and English especially in terms of real impact on learner outcomes.
- Move to locality based monitoring of schools as part of categorisation process.
- Undertake formalised meetings with school leaders in high priority schools.
- Further strengthen our **partnership working** with our maintained sector of schools.

What have we delivered?

- Very strong support across all sectors for role, functions, and **impact of Education Recovery** group (ERG) which has managed the ongoing support to schools in the management of COVID.
- **Dedicated COVID team** of officer leads working in harmony with dedicated Public Health leads to shape local policies and practice. Dedicated COVID points of contact for all stakeholders.
- Role of this function has widened to include impact on wider programmes to avoid duplication – e.g. Winter Support Grant and Summer school / Holiday Activity Fund.
- Strong relationship with the Regional Schools Commissioners (RSC) leads and communication channels up into the system.
- **Strong and effective relationships with School Associations** through attendance and joint decision making at association meetings throughout the year.
- Strong partnership governance of key curriculum forums – Maths Hub, English Hub and Teaching Hub.
- Delivery of directors report to all schools with focus on school governors and meeting their training needs.
- Emergence of targeted work to develop increased **governance of key workstreams** – e.g. multi-academy trusts (MAT) relationships.

What have been our challenges?

- **Coordination and management of national COVID messages within a local context** – timeliness of national guidance.
- Whilst knowledge and delivery methods of maintained sector can be influenced, **challenges of having quality monitoring of academies remains a concern.**
- Ensuring feedback from school leaders and LA Officers around COVID is heard and impacts on future policy guidance.
- **Maintaining strategic school improvement themes** in the face of demanding COVID pressures on school leaders.
- Ability to quality assure face to face activities in schools to see and experience the learning journey of pupils.

What difference have we made?

- **Impact of ERG** has been extremely strong in shaping local COVID decision making and local interpretation of national advice. Strong compliance from schools to the regular COVID bulletins which includes local guidance.
- All education settings have massively appreciated consistent feedback and messages with an overwhelming appreciation of the **rapid response and advice to emerging COVID issues.**
- **Planned and co-delivered workstreams** via School Associations has seen consistent support for new Heads and stronger engagement of schools due to integrated sector working.
- MAT working – increasing openness and sharing of ‘moral purpose’ to best support sector working.
- New governing board for the Virtual School to increase accountability through multi-agency governance.

What do we still need to do?

- Continue to use the ERG meetings as an essential forum for management of COVID and associated workstreams.
- **Further develop the relationships** with multi-academy trusts (MATs) and establish MAT profiles of known skill sets and areas of expertise/ best practice.
- **Understand further** the role of teaching hubs and sector led improvement in order to best meet the needs of our schools.

What have we delivered?

- Since January 2021 to January 2022 there has been a total of **17,860 children and 23,643 adults accessing Early Start Services through a Children's Centre.**
- A universal and targeted offer of training is available for all providers, during Q2 the EY Service have delivered 18 training courses with a total of 246 delegates attending.
- Early Start service adapted their delivery to meet the needs of families during COVID by offering virtual sessions as well as new sessions in line with government guidance.
- **Comprehensive online universal training offer** that has included Communication and Language (C&L), SEND, Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), Safeguarding, EYFS Reforms, Ofsted.
- **Introduction of practitioner consultations** with specialist SLT/practitioners for Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and PSED in partnership with Cheshire Wirral Partnership.
- Communication Matters Programme of Support delivered by members of the Early Start team and Specialist Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT) to 19 settings in areas of high social deprivation; these include 11 maintained nurseries (MN).
- Worked with the EY SEND Specialist Support to produce a draft (SLCN) Pathway for 0-5s.
- Launched the consultation for the Cheshire East SLCN 0-5 Pathway.

What have been our challenges?

- Continuing to deliver a service through COVID given that many of the buildings and services were not able to operate effectively, however, the team overcame those by delivering in a different way.
- Moving to online training and support for EY settings; however, training has still been well attended and this will continue alongside face to face opportunities when they resume.
- Lack of face to face support for some EY settings due to COVID restrictions.
- **Implementing the new statutory EY Reforms across all sectors.**
- Responding to the increasing numbers of children who require additional support.
- Ensuring all EY providers in Cheshire East access the universal training offer to provide high quality early education and care.
- Implications of the new Ofsted Inspection Framework.

What difference have we made?

- **Over the last 2 years, 91% of Early Years providers have been judged good or better in their Ofsted Inspection.**
- The **take up of the 2, 3 and 4 year old offer remains consistently high.** 71% take up for 2 year old offer and 93% take up for 3 and 4 year old offer in Q2.
- Families were still able to receive an Early Start service during COVID.
- In EY, there is **evidence of improvement in all aspects of Communication & Language** (Listening & Attention (40%), Understanding (29%) and Speaking (37%) when comparing input from the Cheshire East Chatters team vs no input.
- In EY, there is evidence that supporting children's communication and language development also has an impact on improvement in all aspects of Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Making Relationships (15%) Self Confidence & Self Awareness (10%) and Managing Feelings and Behaviour (15%)) when comparing input from the Cheshire East Chatters team vs no input.

What do we still need to do?

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) – further develop the programme to support children with their emotional health and wellbeing.
- **Relaunch Cheshire East's universal Programme of Support for Two Year Olds** to include an emphasis on the Statutory Progress Check at Age 2.
- Work in partnership with health to further develop the Integrated Review at 2.
- **Launch the pilot** of Home Talk in Crewe with a view to rolling it out for families across Cheshire East from January 22.
- Working in partnership with the National Family Nurse Partnership team to develop a pilot programme to support transitions from FNP to early education.
- **Continue to work with the school improvement team** to develop the training and support for schools around the statutory assessment Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.
- Upskill the EY workforce in the area of Physical Development.

What have we delivered?

- A voluntary EY, KS1, and KS2 **data collection** was initiated by the LA with 70 schools taking part, covering 63% of pupils across CE packages of **leadership support in vulnerable schools** where there were leadership concerns/absence. Brokered support from experienced Executive HT or strong system leadership in order to provide stability and address key areas for improvement.
- **Strong curriculum support** for key core subjects and vulnerable groups brokered through maths hub and EEF system leads.
- Structure 'New to Headteacher' mentor programme for 15+ schools throughout the year with bespoke training and individual support/advice via experienced school leader.
- **LA led curriculum reviews** (remote learning) in vulnerable maintained schools with RI Ofsted judgement to monitored school systems.
- Learning bulletins to all schools which outline all local, regional, and national workstreams focused upon curriculum recovery.
- Strong and effective **liaison with Ofsted** in terms of briefings/training for schools.
- School categorisation for all primaries with databank of comments both positive and negative.
- Continued and extended roll out of targeted mental health and wellbeing programme co-funded with Health services.

What have been our challenges?

- **Lack of ability to influence certain national intervention programmes** such as academic mentor scheme and Tuition programme. Long waiting times and failure to secure tutors through identified agencies.
- Management of initiatives and ensuring the right programmes of support are targeted to the right schools resulting in an overload of information.
- Direct access into schools to undertake essential monitoring via face to face meetings and review of processes happening in classrooms.
- Ability to follow up on training and support packages due to pressure on school leaders to manage COVID compared to curriculum development.
- Absence of up to date data, whilst voluntary data collection was strong, not all schools participated, and some vulnerable schools did not partake.
- **Transition** from KS2 – 3 due to impact of COVID on ability of face to face transition events.
- Ensuring curriculum recovery happens in all subject areas and not just the core.
- **Managing Ofsted monitoring** as some schools have been overwhelmed with visits.

What difference have we made?

- **Primary dataset** – all participating schools have received a bespoke dataset of their results with comparisons against national, North West and local clusters in order to inform areas of achievement and areas for improvement.
- **Strong positive feedback and impact from new HT on mentor programme** and the ability to have sounding board to help shape decision making and accountability.
- Packages of leadership support have allowed critical schools to recover and regained local confidence in the school community.
- Clear **impact on LA Curriculum reviews** (Remote Learning) in schools who had subsequent Ofsted monitoring visits. Positive reporting shows benefit of these reviews.
- **Curriculum support packages** in Maths, English and disadvantaged have focused upon sustainable curriculum recovery and building confidence in middle leaders.
- Positive feedback that the Learning Bulletin has made schools leaders aware of critical intervention programmes and allowed easy access to essential data/programmes of support.

What do we still need to do?

- **Curriculum recovery** to extend the reach of programmes of support to include a wider coverage of subjects. Ofsted subject briefings are an example of the programme of support we are making available to schools.
- **Shape intervention packages** of support to meet the highest levels of need using available local datasets, e.g. impact of lower performance in writing across the primary phases.
- Continue to support new HT's and those in the early years of their leadership careers to feel well supported and have structured programmes of support.
- Respond to the demands of Ofsted and re-start of inspections.
- **Make continued improvements** in managing the fragmented S2S support programmes especially in terms of role of the teaching school.
- **Harnessing the relationships** between academy MATS and maintained sector. Positive steps being taken to establish meaningful systems for the benefit of pupils, not systems.

What have we delivered?

- **Support and coordination of summer schools** especially in terms of close liaison with HAF process to avoid duplication.
- **Sector led support** funded by the LA for new to Secondary Headship.
- Brokered support into schools where emerging leadership concerns.
- Positive liaison with MAT leads on best managing sector support and relationships between academies and maintained schools.
- Learning Bulletins to all schools which outline all local and regional workstreams.
- Significant work across schools to respond to growing demands for secondary school places, **linking school expansions and curriculum needs.**
- Strong curriculum support for key core subjects and vulnerable groups brokered through maths hub and EEF system leads with a strong update to programmes.
- **Transition support** to secondary schools – purchase of transition resources by LA.
- Strong and effective liaison with Ofsted in terms of briefings/training for schools.
- **School categorisation** for all secondary schools with bank of comments to show successes and alerts.
- Continued to fund coordinator for return to education; focus upon supporting mental health strategies- all secondary schools accessing.

What have been our challenges?

- **Lack of ability to influence certain national intervention programmes** such as academic mentor scheme and Tuition programme. Long waiting times and failure to secure tutors through identified agencies.
- Management of initiatives and ensuring the right programmes of support are targeted to the right schools, resulting in an overload of information.
- **Direct access into schools** to undertake essential monitoring via face to face meetings and review of processes happening in classrooms.
- Ability to follow up on training and support packages due to pressure on school leaders to manage COVID compared to curriculum development.
- Absence of up to date data, whilst result day conversations with leaders was positive, no details or analysis hampers bespoke packages of support and intervention.
- Ensuring curriculum recovery happens in all subject areas and not just the core.
- Some academy trusts becoming 'more distant'.

What difference have we made?

- **New HTs have given positive feedback** about the support available and the ability to have a sounding board to help shape decision making and accountability.
- Targeted support for vulnerable schools has seen **stronger engagement** from some hard to reach schools.
- Where face to face transition events could not take place, transition resources have allowed for work to continue in primary schools ahead of September move.
- **Categorisation process** has led to detailed discussions with some schools to address critical themes resulting in significant changes in approach and engagement.
- Positive feedback that the learning bulletin has made schools leaders aware of critical intervention programmes and allowed easy access to essential data/programmes of support.
- Increased engagement of secondary schools in maths hub work which is focused on sustainable leadership management of maths.

What do we still need to do?

- **Curriculum recovery** – extend the reach of programmes of support to include a wider coverage of subjects. Ofsted subject briefings are an example of the programme of support we are making available to schools.
- Shape intervention packages of support to meet the highest levels of need using available local datasets – e.g. impact of reading in Key Stage 3.
- Establishing more strategic secondary thinking through Secondary School Association.
- Respond to the demands of Ofsted and re-start of inspections.
- Make continued improvements in managing the **fragmented S2S support programmes** especially in terms of role of teaching school.
- **Harnessing the relationships** between academy MATs and maintained sector. Positive steps being taken to establish meaningful systems for the benefit of pupils.
- Continual support for new HTs.
- Increased focus later in the year on transition from Year 6 into Year 7.

What have we delivered?

- Engagement with colleges to develop local advice/guidance through the ERG.
- **Innovative practices to address challenges of COVID on vulnerable groups** including work based learning support for adults through Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) grants.
- **Increasing engagement through the Local Employment Partnership (LEP)** with emerging strategic themes.
- Stronger engagement with 'The Pledge' initiatives across the borough.
- Online forums for young people - included job search, self-confidence, interview preparation.
- **Launch of computers for kids scheme** with increasing engagement of employers.
- Dedicated English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support for Afghanistan resettlement scheme.
- Worked with colleges and post 16 providers to engage in virtual and face to face transition visits.
- **Journey First programme is supporting those over the age of 15 into EET** via ESF funding.
- Strong offer of support for Post 16 cared for /care leavers through dedicated virtual school dedicated team.

What have been our challenges?

- COVID impact on uptake of **commissioned adult learning courses**. Loss of face to face sessions has impacted on uptake for accredited and non-accredited courses.
- Ability to undertake **quality assurance visits** to gain first hand experiences from settings.
- Challenges of sourcing appropriate venues and re-establishing confidence of vulnerable adults to return to accredited and non-accredited courses.
- Abilities of adult groups to effectively use remote learning forums.

What difference have we made?

- **Journey First has over 200 starts on the programme** to date of participants looking for work and training, with early successes in voluntary work, employment, and college.
- **NEET young people remains low at 2.3%** with less than 180 out of a cohort of 7,000. Not known stands at 0.05% with 97.2% Year 12 in learning and 95.1% Year 13 in learning.
- 100% of September Guarantee recorded for 2021 - 99.5% are positive EET outcomes.
- **Significant increase in our Supported Internship offer**, with successful outcomes.
- Strong further education performance in 2021: Cheshire's largest further education college achieved a 100% across all 30 A Level subjects.
- ESFA Adult learning Outcomes remain strong: 105 courses, 1657 enrolments, retention 90%, pass rate 99%.
- The reach of the **Pledge programme has been successful with young people** accessing information employers via range of remote forums, as show in data below

Number of Viewers	15,361
Live Chat interactions on the night	4,230
On Demand Views within 12 hours of the event	19,407
Page visits (since page was launched)	31,507

What do we still need to do?

- Broaden the offer and work in the **Pledge and Journey First** to look at more 'first step' options into work, with employers offering job tasters, work experience etc.
- Further develop interface with further education sector leads to integrate strategic programmes and liaison with the LEP.
- **Allocate more NEET** (not in education, employment, and training) young people a Journey First Advisor.
- Strengthen **council opportunities** for care leavers and SEND pupils through **apprenticeships and supported internships**.

What have we delivered?

- High level of **parental preference met**, 98.4% of CE residents received an offer of a preference school for Reception and 97.9% for Year 7.
- Delivery of training sessions for schools on new Admissions Code.
- **Expansion of the Transport team** to include roles working directly with Social Care and SEND to support the transport needs of our most vulnerable children.
- School Organisation – currently overseeing a significant number of Basic Need schemes to provide 1050 new places across key planning areas. In addition to this we have produced a five year capital strategy to address the sufficiency of places across priority areas, this includes for the provision of new primary schools, **further expansion of secondary places and additional SEN provision.**
- £70 million has been invested into capital schemes to **increase capacity of school places across the borough**, since September 2019 we have delivered 345 additional primary places and 650 secondary places.
- The School Organisation Team also have delivered a wide range of schemes to the value of £6 million in improving the condition of our maintained school infrastructure.
- This capacity building extends to **include new SEN provisions** - a further £10.4m.

What have been our challenges?

- **Managing Admissions** round and Offer Day remotely.
- Pressure at peak times for applications.
- Introduction of **new Admissions Code** for September 2021 requiring already determined admissions arrangements to be varied.
- Delivering schemes with ever **increasing costs.**
- Keeping buildings operational and safe with limited funding to address condition issues.
- Correctly forecasting/ assessing need against ongoing new housing development.
- Ensuring that S106 requests for contributions are successful.
- Meeting parents expectations in timely delivery of projects.

What difference have we made?

- **Increased capacity in schools** in terms of providing additional places has resulted in the very high % figures in meeting parental preferences.
- Maintained schools have been able to benefit from COVID capital support to the value of £125K.
- Increased Special School capacity as well as new **SEN resource provisions** have been opened and are in the process of being constructed and opened as part of the SEN sufficiency work.
- The LA has initiated and funded a **new SEN provision** – referred to as Enhanced Mainstream to reduce the demand for EHCPs or change of placements.
- Education Directorate on track to deliver 250+ special school places – committed budgets of £12 million. This provides local provision to meet local levels of need.

What do we still need to do?

- Implementation and funding of **Carbon neutral strategy** within projects.
- Ongoing review of **SEN place requirements** and delivery of additional places within this sector.
- Consistency of placements decision making and access to training.
- Extension of SEN monitoring regime.

What have we delivered?

- **Maintained above national average attendance** over COVID-19 pandemic.
- Met regularly with social care colleagues to review attendance of vulnerable students.
- 3 vulnerable pupil leads to work in a locality model in line with SEND and wider locality teams.
- 6 education family support workers were recruited to provide **direct support to children and families** at home and in the school.
- Frontline workers have monthly case supervision to support robust RAG rated case management with vulnerable pupils locality leads.
- **Traded Service launched** in September 20 to offer attendance support and direct work to academy and maintained schools.
- Free termly (Primary) half termly attendance support and guidance offered to schools.
- Principles of attendance guidance issued to all schools prior to return in September 20, with key principles being schools need to ensure wellbeing support in place to support children returning to school after the pandemic.
- **Permanent exclusion prevention work** delivered by education access officer.
- Regular 6 weekly meetings with PRU to discuss preventative support around holistic needs.

What have been our challenges?

- We received 190 referrals for **children missing education** in September and October 20, in the same period last year we received 90. To support the increase in volume we have moved staff to support the area.
- Increase in requests for **part time timetables**. In September and October 46 new part time timetables were registered.
- We have had to make adaptations to deliver statutory work. Register Inspections were completed virtually with schools.

What difference have we made?

- **Significant support to schools** to manage additional pressures of COVID on attendance rates in schools such as coding clarification and training for maintaining level of DfE (Department for Education) returns.
- **Improved multi-agency working**. Attendance Team delivered sessions for SEND teams, SENCO's, Early Help managers and Front Door Team to establish relationships between the teams, resulting in improved working relationships and increased referrals.
- Additional **support for children** transitioning to school.
- Clear process in place for children reported to be missing from education leading to an increase in cases located and moved on within a 12-week period.
- Strong support for the **Afghanistan resettlement** scheme in securing places in schools for all families involved - recognised as best practice by Home Office.
- **Prevention of the permanent exclusion** of children with EHCPs and primary age children.

What do we still need to do?

- Embed **Education wellbeing recovery** to ensure children with long term absence are supported to transition back to school.
- To **increase buy back of traded service** from schools to offer direct work to children and families.
- Continue to support the **Afghanistan resettlement scheme**.
- **Roll out of Behaviour Strategy** to address the needs of vulnerable groups.

What have we delivered?

- 6 education FSWs recruited to ensure **strong transition support offered to the children** moving from elective home education (EHE) to school.
- EHE advisors work with social workers to **review education provided to EHE children on CP or CSE Plans**, offering support to make school applications if home education is not deemed appropriate as part of the plan.
- **Home visit offer triggered** to any EHE child that is open to CIN/CP, is MFH, or has an Accident and Emergency admission for self-harm.
- Risk assessed home visits to families to **review suitable education for EHE children**. From September 20, Cheshire East has asked the school to co-ordinate a multi-agency meeting with LA representation to ensure families are making an informed choice around de-registration to EHE.
- CE shares EHE good practice with other LAs at North West and Midlands Regional meetings.
- Ensured that children who are EHE have equal access to healthcare provision and vaccinations, we have a designated school nurse for EHE children.
- EHE advisors have been trained to complete the Annual Reviews on EHE children with EHCP plans and work with SEND Key workers to update plans at point of de-registration.
- **Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) children offered remote learning support** pilot project to prevent de-registration.

What have been our challenges?

- Adapting to virtual visits with families to have oversight of a suitable education.
- Schools being willing to take on new students during lockdown periods of COVID-19.
- **Some families are still reluctant to work directly with the LA**, and supplying evidence only around their child's education, the team therefore have no visibility of these children.
- **Increasing requests for EHE** post lockdown – minimised through robust intervention processes with families and schools.

What difference have we made?

- Pre de-registration meetings lead to **only 20% increase in de-registrations** for EHE compared to local authority neighbours who were significantly higher.
- From September to December we had over 200 enquiries of this nature which led to only 90 children actually de-registering, managing to prevent EHE for a significant number of children.
- **Successful sustained attendance** at school for children transitioning into school settings from prolonged periods of elective home education.
- **EHE advisors awarded bronze certificate by 'Education Otherwise'** for support to EHE community.

What do we still need to do?

- Develop more groups and **parent and young people forums** around EHE.
- **Engage the families** who are currently supplying evidence only to the team to increase visibility of these children.

What have we delivered?

- Provided education to **children missing education** due to a medical need through one to one tuition.
- Provided education and **support to children in receipt of an EHCP** to help their return to a school setting or a change in school placement.
- Taken a multi-disciplinary approach to supporting children in their education and return to school.
- **Embedded a bespoke PHSE programme** aimed at broadening children's awareness on a range of subject areas including mental health and keeping themselves safe.
- Provided academic evidence to support the attainment of Year 11 students.
- Adapted staff training for remote learning.

What have been our challenges?

- **Adapting to online teaching**, varying strategies to engage and support children with complex and varied needs.
- **Ensuring children are visible to professionals** and are safeguarded even whilst being supported remotely.
- **Quality assuring** educational provision during the pandemic and whilst remote teaching is in place.
- Provide support for children discharged from Tier 4 mental health provisions.
- Increased complexity of children with mental and emotional health issues.

What difference have we made?

- Provided education for **87 children with medical needs**.
- Provided education **for 65 children with EHCP's**.
- Supported 54 children to return to a school setting.
- **Enabled our year 11 students** to gain formal qualifications through a robust assessment and evidence process.
- Supported our Year 11 students to gain entry to **post 16 education** and worked with the Youth Support Service where needed.

What do we still need to do?

- Continue to explore new ways of service delivery to meet **increasing demand**.
- Review referral pathways and documents for both medical need and SEND tuition to ensure they are fit for purpose and enable **prioritisation of the most vulnerable students**. Consult and co-produce new documentation alongside Health (including CAMHS), SEND, Children's Social Care, schools, parents, and children.
- Develop systems for the identification and **support of children with poor mental health** but not open to CAMHS.

What have we delivered?

- Between 1st August 20 - 31st July 21 SCiES have delivered Safeguarding Basic Awareness Training to 1944 members of school staff in addition to a **wide ranging safeguarding training programme**.
- Termly designated safeguarding lead continuous professional development sessions.
- Monthly safeguarding scenarios have been written and circulated.
- Monthly "Spotlight on Safeguarding" newsletters/updates.
- **Represented schools at Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)** contextual safeguarding, step up/down as appropriate.
- Updated exemplar policies and cascaded to schools re: Recording and Reporting and Child Protection and Safeguarding.
- **Completed Safeguarding Policy in Practice Reviews in schools.**
- Supported the LADO process as appropriate.
- Supported the **development and implementation of a notification pathway** to ensure schools are made aware of incidents where a child attends hospital because of self-harm.

What have been our challenges?

- Demands on the team have grown e.g. an **increase in the number of calls** to the team and the numbers of schools requesting training- we have met these demands ensuring that every call has been returned and all schools have been able to access training.
- Some activities, which would have been face to face before COVID, could not take place during the pandemic which is why the team have addressed this to allow schools to access the training/parts of whole school reviews etc. virtually i.e. through Teams. There is now a blended approach; training and reviews can take place entirely remotely, fully face to face or a combination of the two.
- Supporting schools in understanding what is required of them when change occurs and there are numerous priorities e.g. **updates to Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE), Sexual Violence and Harassment documents**, CE's policy updates including the **Neglect Strategy** etc.

What difference have we made?

- Having the **information provided via SCiES in relation to self-harm** has meant that schools have been able to support those children and their families at a crucial time. It has given them key information to **act in the best interests of the child**.
- Schools have received up to date information on a monthly basis about local and national developments which has enabled them to take appropriate actions to meet key expectations from the Safeguarding Children Partnership, Ofsted and the DfE.
- We have provided schools with relevant tools and training; this has built their knowledge and confidence in managing challenging safeguarding situations.
- The emotional support we have provided through responses to school queries and supervision have helped senior managers in schools to manage the many things expected of them as one head said: **"I don't really know what we would do without you all."**

What do we still need to do?

- Deliver a **Sexual Violence and Harassment workshop for schools**, working with children to inform the approach and sharing effective practice between across phases of education.
- **Ensure that the child's voice is heard** through the Act Now Conference (event led by pupils for agencies).
- Ensure that all schools are aware of and make effective use of the **escalation procedure**.
- Support schools in understanding the online process for contacts with the **Integrated Front Door**.
- **Ensure the Neglect Strategy** is fully understood and adopted by all education settings.

What have we delivered?

- **Recent Ofsted SEND revisit** provides strong evidence of strategic improvement in all facets of meeting the need of SEND learners across the borough.
- Multi-agency SEND training programme for all staff involved in the production of EHC plans.
- A monthly scorecard and live SEND trackers **enable the service to manage performance.**
- Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) provides oversight of health advice.
- **Improved communication**, including leaflets for families, so that they are better informed about the assessment process and how long it may take.
- **'Non-negotiables'** for EHC Plans developed, along with more detailed quality standards.
- Robust review systems have been put in place at every stage up to the final written plan.
- Launched an **effective diagnostic pathway** for the youngest children as part of a single Cheshire Autism Integrated Service Specification.
- **Additional resources** have been put in place across in the SEND Service and Health to further increase SEND management and frontline capacity and embed the locality model.
- Improvements made to panel, including introduction of triage.
- Co-produced Quality Assurance Framework.
- There were around 63,000 page views of the [Local Offer](#) within 20/21.
- **Workforce Strategy developed for Educational Psychology (EP) service** and buy back specification developed to enhance early intervention.
- Co-produced the **revised SEND Strategy which has now been approved by all forums.**

What have been our challenges?

- Our SEND Inspection in March 2018 identified two areas of significant weakness:
 - The timeliness, process and quality of education, health, and care (EHC) plans.
 - The lack of an effective autism spectrum disorder (ASD) pathway and unreasonable waiting times.
- Many parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey as part of the SEND revisit have yet to be convinced that there has been lasting improvement.
- Changes in how professionals have had to work during the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted on parental perceptions.
- SEND needs assessments and significant financial pressure on High Needs dedicated schools grant (DSG).
- **Increasing demand for needs assessments and increased complexity of need.**

What difference have we made?

- Inspectors recognised the following difference that Cheshire East has made:
 - The timeliness, process, and quality **of EHC plans have been transformed**; significant increase in EHC Plans issued within 20 weeks, leading to **improved outcomes for children and young people** as support and provision are in place sooner. The quality and timeliness of annual reviews has improved.
 - Increase in local SEND Provisions – on track to deliver 250+ special school places.
 - **Co-production is at the heart of** every EHC needs assessment.
 - Inspectors heard from parents, children and young people and professionals about the **positive impact that plans have on children and young peoples lives.**
 - More children are starting nursery/school with their needs being understood and met.
 - **Families value the pre- and post-diagnosis support** and training offered as part of the pathway as it helps them better understand and support their children's needs.
 - Specialist ASD training for school staff, more children and young people are getting appropriate support day to day.
 - Outcomes for SEN learners have improved through quality and timeliness of SEN plans and better training and delivery of SEN staff in schools to improve quality of classroom practice.

What do we still need to do?

- Deliver the SEND Strategy priorities as follows:
 - **Improving communication** and coproduction with families.
 - Improving access to **provision and support.**
 - Improving timeliness and quality of **annual reviews** of education, health and care plans.
 - Further developing an **effective and supported workforce.**
 - Ensuring an effective **COVID-19 recovery response.**

What have we delivered?

- The **TOGETHER principles have been adopted** by other boards and organisations.
- Set agendas for 'Working Together' meetings have been established.
- There are **2 SEND Youth Forums** in Macclesfield and Crewe that meet twice a month.
- Young people with SEND attend Cheshire East Youth Council and the Children and Young People's Trust Board.
- 3 termly school events for SEND participation involve primary and secondary pupils.
- The SEND voice calendar sets out **participation activity** over the year.
- **Parent Carer Forum (PCF)** reps are on all workstream groups to **support to shape strategic developments.**
- **PCF have delivered training sessions** to services and access training sessions.
- The PCF is involved in recruitment and appointments of new staff.
- Coffee sessions for parent carers across each locality.
- Other examples of recent coproduction activity include CDC training/sessions, development of new SEND and preparing for adulthood (PFA) strategies, work on temporary changes to provision plans and new annual review documentation and resources.

What have been our challenges?

- At the SEND Inspection in 2018 Inspectors view was that there was **no shared understanding or definition across all partners of co- production.**
- There was varying quality of co-production happening. Inspectors saw examples of strong co-production but also saw other examples that demonstrated engagement and involvement rather than true co-production.
- **Reaching out to those SEND children and young people who are not engaging.**
- Ensuring that coproduction has continued during COVID by switching to remote.
- There can be a lag between the point that changes are introduced and the time where they are actually felt by children and young people and their families.

What difference have we made?

- **Parents and carers and young people are actively involved in shaping SEND services.**
- Young people have increased confidence through participation in key pieces of work and attendance at boards.
- **SEND young people's voices are listened to** in key strategic forums.
- Strategies and services are **child/parent focussed** as they are shaped by their lived experiences.
- There is **improved awareness** about the ways that an EHC needs assessment can be requested. This is demonstrated by the increase in the number of parental requests.
- Increase in the number of first and second Working Together meetings, from 19% as at Q1 20-21 to 71% as at Q1 21-22.

What do we still need to do?

- Develop a co-production charter **with families to support working TOGETHER** across the partnership.
- Simplify key communications into 'at a glance' one-page summaries.
- Develop a forward plan of joint training opportunities for parents and carers to up-skill together with support teams.

What have we delivered?

- **Significant data collection** from school on future needs assessment in order to be able to target support packages according to levels of need.
- Detailed training programme for SENCOs to **develop their abilities to impact on classroom practices.**
- Internal coordination of SEN training for new to post or to widen knowledge and understanding.
- Audited and tracked website compliance for settings.
- **Update of SEN Toolkit** with sensory section.
- Supported settings with the management and effective use of the Toolkit and paperwork to directly impact on classroom practice.
- Delivered Governors SEND training and New to Role SENCO Training.
- Dedicated SEND school reviews in vulnerable schools to promote best practice.
- **Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings** have been held for a number of settings causing concern.

What have been our challenges?

- Overall **capacity of the team** due to the loss of a secondary specialist within the year and challenges to get release of specialist staff from schools.
- Moving the priority in some schools from a **reactive model of assessments** to one of better management of SEND within the school.
- **Ensuring strong accountability** within settings – responsibility of SEND leads to initiate change.settings.
- Number of new SENCOs and capacity of the team to deliver the number of sessions required.
- Attendance numbers at some sessions due to impact of COVID/ other priorities.

What difference have we made?

- **Significant data set now available** on schools in terms of existing and predicted needs assessments – this is now being used to shape intervention programmes.
- Ofsted / DfE good practice website – inclusion of article on the **CE Toolkit for SEND.**
- Positive Feedback from SENCOs on the sessions delivered.
- % of new needs assessment referrals on the new paperwork is increased to move to a more consistent use of revised practices.
- Number of predicted new need assessment referrals has reduced from last year - this needs drilling down to ensure this is due to greater use of training and systems.
- **Improved communication** and delivery of support to settings due to the multi-disciplinary team approach.
- **Increased use of multi-agency reviews** to identify levels of support in most vulnerable schools.

What do we still need to do?

- Strengthen the quality of **graduated response paperwork** by some settings (especially secondary).
- Continue to add to the quality of resources within the SEND Toolkit.
- Consider greater levels of **support for SEND Support** rather than EHCP.
- Identify priority schools for support via the service which results in prolonged and sustained programmes of support.

What have we delivered?

- **Successful reinspection** in regard to the Written Statement of Action (WSOA), inspectors found that the LA have made sufficient level of progress.
- **The timeliness**, process, and quality of EHC plans have been transformed, inspectors reported that by early 2020, almost every needs assessment was completed within the 20-week deadline, compared to less than one in six in 2018.
- Increased staffing capacity across the SEND service, introducing a number of new roles to further support the improvement made in regard to timeliness and quality of EHC plans.
- **Robust tracking and monitoring tools** are in place.
- Consistent and improved completion rates of coproduction/working together meetings are taking place across all areas in regard to new needs assessments to **ensure children and young people and parent/carer voice throughout the needs assessment process.**
- Development of **annual review processes**, guidance, and resources in coproduction with all partners including PCF published on our local offer.

What have been our challenges?

- Continued **increase in number of needs assessment** requests – increase of 19%. Development of START tool and data analysis to help to review strategies for support.
- Continued increase in number of change of placement requests being submitted from schools and settings. This has seen an additional pressure on **sufficiency of places** within special schools and increased the workload of individual staff as often complex cases.
- Introduction of new staff, **supporting robust induction and training** to ensure that all staff are fully supported when new into role. There have been a significant number of number staff who have joined during the pandemic therefore extra challenges in regard to virtual induction and training have needed to be introduced into the service.
- Adapting to new ways of working in response to COVID to ensure that processes and timescales are still met. Co-production/ working together meetings still taking place within statutory timeframes, logistics of arranging virtual meetings to **ensure children and young people and parent/ carer voice are captured** throughout the process.
- Staff absences – particular issues with SEND staff in October and November has had real impact on assessment data.

What difference have we made?

- Improved **overall timeliness and quality** of new EHC plans.
- Improving existing EHC plans in line with quality of new plans.
- **Improved co-production** across the needs assessment process.
- Clear and robust systems in place to ensure we are able to track and monitor timeliness in line with statutory timescales ensuring effective management oversight at each stage of the process.
- Consistent process and documentation in place in regard to annual reviews.
- **Increased staffing and capacity** within the SEND team to match demand.
- Stable and secure workforce within the SEND team to ensure consistency.

What do we still need to do?

- Sustain and continue to strengthen the improvements made in regard to timeliness and quality of EHC plans.
- Implement clear action plans to improve the **quality and timeliness of annual reviews** in line with new needs assessments.
- Review support/ **training required in schools for children and young people on school support plans**, working across partners to develop strategies to increase level of support in schools and reduce the number of needs assessments over time.

What have we delivered?

- **Timely approach** responding to our statutory duties, these include EHC needs assessment advice requests, change of placements, tribunal cases.
- Consistent support to Virtual School and been responsive to the wide ranging needs and complexity of cases.
- Developed a **strategic plan for recruitment and retention** and have increased in numbers.
- Professional consultation at triage and panel.
- Involvement with critical incidents.
- Provided efficient **group consultation** to all settings.
- Utilised staff skills efficiently to develop a **wide range of traded offers**.
- Forged stronger links with a wider range of partners and stakeholders.

What have been our challenges?

- **There is a shortage of Educational Psychologists** to fulfil statutory, transformation and prevention and inclusion activities.
- **Surge in EHC needs assessment requests** requiring reliance on locum commissions.
- Need for continued CPD to reflect current practice/ evidence informed interventions.

What difference have we made?

- **Effective psychological contribution** to statutory reports including EHCs, tribunal cases, change of placements.
- **Timeliness** has been significantly improved.
- A universal, targeted, and individual traded package reflective of Cheshire East's key priorities.
- Traded courses have yielded positive feedback with impact becoming more evident.
- Revenue has been brought into the service.
- Virtual School has received consistent EP involvement to support complex cases.
- Clear system of change of placement requests.
- Cases coming through triage are being moderated, providing a **consistent and transparent approach**.
- We have a **recruitment drive that is sustainable over the next 5 years**.
- Made considerable savings by taking locum EPs outside of agency working.
- A healthy bank of locum EPs in order to backfill EP working in response to surge planning.

What do we still need to do?

- Continue with agreed **transformation workstreams** (wellbeing / cognition and learning / autism team / early years / post 16).
- **Continue to refine the EP structure** to ensure efficient deployment of skills to meet council priorities.
- **Continue to design** universal, targeted, and individual traded services.

What have we delivered?

- Regarding support for children and young people with autism, inspectors found that **more children are starting nursery and school with their needs understood and met**. Families have also been offered support and training, so they can better understand and **support their child**. In terms of waiting times:
 - In 2018 more than 200 children and young people were waiting more than 12 weeks for their first assessment, but by **March 2020, this had reduced to two weeks**.
 - There is a **pre and post ASD diagnostic offer** across CE.
 - The **Occupational Therapy (OT) sensory pilot has been evaluated** and there is now recurrent funding and jointly commissioned for 3 OT posts across CE. The offer will be based on the learning from the pilot due to evidence of improved outcomes for children, with an expanded offer.

What have been our challenges?

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of face to face consultations have been reduced.
- In order to comply with national guidance. Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) assessments used as part of the ASD diagnosis pathway are only validated if used in a face to face situation, without personal protective equipment. This has led to an **increase in waits for this service**. Available clinic space and the need to clean between clients has also led to an increase in waiting times for services.
- There is an **increase in referrals to services** – particularly to SaLT and to ASD/ attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) services.

What difference have we made?

- The 0-4 ASD East Cheshire Trust diagnostic pathway has ensured there is an **equitable offer across CE** and that needs are identified early. Therapy services have maintained both face to face and virtual appointments. This was decided **on clinical need and parental choice** which has ensured needs are being met effectively.
- Through the delivery of the SaLT programme in early years, there is **evidence of improvement in all aspects of Communication and Language** (Listening and Attention (40%), Understanding (29%) and Speaking (37%)) when comparing input from the Cheshire East Chatters team vs no input. WellComm screening data shows the impact of early identification and intervention from Autumn 20 to summer 21 – 16% fewer children at red (consider referral), 7% more children at amber (extra support and intervention needed) and 9% more children at green (no intervention required).

What do we still need to do?

- Reduce waits** for any service to meet the 18 week referral to treatment standard.
- Recruitment to the Sensory Occupational Therapist (OT)** posts has now been completed, and the full core Sensory OT service will become operational during November 2021.
- Waiting list initiative money has been secured **to drive down the waiting times for an ASD diagnosis** to bring the waits back to the March 2020 levels.
- Clear communication of referral pathways** and support available in easy read version and/ or by using social media.

What have we delivered?

- Developed detailed **guidance around EHCPs** and social care role and responsibilities.
- The Service Manager for Children with Disabilities delivered training on the guidance to early help and social care professionals across children's and adults' services.
- A **Dedicated Social Care Officer (DSCO)** role has been developed and recruitment is underway.
- CSC reps are active members on the SEND Partnership and workstreams, special schools educational recovery group, moderation meetings and tribunal weekly meetings.
- There has been **improved transition** planning across children's and adults social care.
- All short break reviews are now held alongside EHCP annual reviews.
- The Short Breaks Team duty system **ensures that there is always someone on the end of the phone to provide families and professionals with advice and support.**
- During COVID-19 changes have been made that allow the money to fund a wider range of provision to allow parents and carers to still be able to have a break.

What have been our challenges?

- Prior to the inspection, inspectors saw far too many examples of children who have significant health and/or social care needs yet their EHC plans state 'none identified'.
- The **increasing impact of mental health for our children and their parent carers.** This also impacts on young people having stability in school settings.
- There has been a **reliance on social care** to carry out some wider partnership tasks during COVID.
- Ensuring support through our **Short Break Local Offer** is Cheshire East wide.

What difference have we made?

- Involvement of social care managers and Practice Champions in the quality assurance of advice/ EHC Plans ensures a holistic approach.
- **Families have appreciated** the face to face support from social care during COVID.
- Through ongoing visits, social care have **championed the needs of SEND children and families,** e.g., the need for specialist equipment at home.
- The majority of children remain supported within their family homes and or in their local communities by social care.
- Through monthly matching meetings with the short break fostering service, **gaps for families waiting for short breaks have been addressed.**
- As the short break review is undertaken along with the EHCP review parents only have to tell their story once.
- Short break services are now included in children and young peoples EHC Plan ensuring that the full range of a **child or young person's needs and provision are evidenced.**
- Increased uptake of EHIPs since these are more **accessible to parents and carers online.**

What do we still need to do?

- **Recruit and induct** the new DCSO and embed better ways of working across the service.
- Increase attendance of social care at the programme of training around guidance for EHCP's for new starters.
- **Continue to improve** social care input into EHCPs through the DCSO role and training and support to social workers.
- **Improve communication** reach through increasing the number of children on the Children with Disabilities Database.

What have we delivered?

- **Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Strategy** written, consulted on, and published.
- Implementation groups to ensure the strategy is delivered have been agreed, terms of reference published, and attendance is excellent. Governance for this via SEND board.
- Data and tracking groups formed, in order to use Power BI to its best effect with LiquidLogic, to predict out of area placements and to ensure we **are tracking our young people who are outside of the area.**
- SEND ignition roll out. 5 schools in total, including special schools and resourced provisions, feedback has been excellent.
- **Supported internships have increased** this year 21-22 with increased numbers gaining employment, featuring on Granada reports for the success via the supported internship programme.
- Locality coffee mornings for PCF to support the discussion and development of PFA.
- **Best practice with the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi)** for virtual review in year 9.
- Audited 25 plans for PFA content with report written by NDTi.

What have been our challenges?

- The strategy was developed some time ago via a workshop, but due to changes in staffing the strategy took over a year to pull together which in turn **caused drift for the implementation plan and working groups.**
- Impact of COVID on supported internships. We did see **a decrease in numbers** for this, but we also saw a number of students able to take advantage of the extension programme.
- **Staffing changes and capacity**, which has hampered progress across all services.
- Competing priorities including the inspection, COVID, WSoA outcomes.

What difference have we made?

- **Supported internship cohorts are increasing:** 2018/19: 18 interns, 2019/20: 37 interns, 2020/21: 21 interns (COVID), 2021/22: 38 interns.
- 2020/21 cohort: 47% of interns across all CE SI provision into paid work, an additional 39% able to continue on the extension due to the impact of COVID. 59% conversion rate of interns into paid work across the 4 new SI providers (launched Sept 2019), 24% accessed the SI extension, 17% into meaningful volunteering opportunities.
- **Co-production with PCF** increased awareness of PFA and relationships.
- Resources supporting schools and providers available on website have received excellent feedback.
- **Increased awareness and appreciative enquiry** from Education Psychologists following training to look at writing PFA outcomes.
- Over 120 staff completed PFA eLearning - increased awareness on writing PFA outcomes.
- Increased awareness in resourced provision of year 9 virtual reviews.

What do we still need to do?

- Develop an easy read **PFA pathway** on the Livewell website.
- Provide the **updated transition booklet** electronically for this year.
- Ensure that PFA is part of the **QA process** and learn from the audits for PFA in EHC plans.
- **Continue to grow SI provision** as an exit pathway - out of education into employment for SEND young people in CE.

What have we delivered?

- Cheshire East is the lead authority establishing a new **North West SEND Purchasing System**.
- Following a successful Sensory Occupational Therapist (OT) local authority pilot a new jointly commissioned (LA / CCG) Sensory OT service has been established from September 2021 with three OTs **providing a tiered approach to support children with autism and their families**.
- The local authority is steadily introducing Paediatric Autism Communication Therapy (PACT) for a small number of children with autism who struggle to engage with the regular ways in which SaLT is delivered.
- **Opening of Axis Academy** as a new special school for social, emotional mental health (SEMH).
- In 2021 we have re-shaped and recommissioned our children with disability short break offer alongside parent / carers to **ensure good outcomes for children and accessible support** across the area.
- **3 All Age Strategies** (LD, Autism and Mental Health) and Partnership Boards established.
- Service monitoring of independent schools where places commissioned.

What have been our challenges?

- **Demand and capacity of SEND school places**, especially for the more complex children and young people.
- Regional Purchasing system difficult to navigate 23 authorities Service teams, Commissioners, Legal and Procurement.

What difference have we made?

- **NW SEND Purchasing System has improved** choice, relationships with provider market and better use of resources. All 23 North West authorities have signed up to use the system which puts structure, contract, quality assurance, value for money and **most importantly improved outcomes at the heart** of our use of the independent non maintained special schools / colleges. Phase 1, covering pre-16 placements, went live on 1 March 2021 and Phase 2 is planned to go live January 2022. Early feedback from authorities (including Cheshire East itself) is that improved choice and best use of resources is already evident.
- **Improved support to children with Autism.**
- The various key strategies ensure that our partnership work is **focused and effective** in ensuring continuous improvement for children with additional needs.
- Increase in commissioned provision.
- Challenge sessions with independent schools where concerns over quality of deliver including CQC reporting.

What do we still need to do?

- Redesign and re-commission our **Care at Home Purchasing System**. One of the redesign principles is to extend the scope of support for children with autism and those with mental health needs.
- Revisit the **mental health offer across the SEND partnership**.

What have we delivered?

- We became an **Autism Education Trust (AET) training hub** in January 2021 and had a successful roll out programme.
- Half termly group consultations offered to all Cheshire East Schools where more complex cases can be discussed (90% of schools regularly attending).
- **Carried out school visits to support** with environment, use of visual and structure, adapting curriculum etc.
- Peer awareness and Circle of Friends training.
- Drop ins/ coffee mornings at Space4Autism; Ruby's Fund; and Autism Inclusive; bookable appointments for parent/carers.
- **Training and support** provided for family support workers.
- Specialist sensory support delivered via a blended approach, including face to face visits, use of children's centres in place of home visits, Teams training etc.
- Improvements made to providing **specialist advice for needs assessments**.

What have been our challenges?

- Delivering consultation and training via Teams.
- Supporting autistic and sensory impaired children and young people and their parent/carers through COVID-19.
- **Delivering effective support** to all children and young people within restrictions of risk assessments.
- **Capacity to meet need with ongoing new referrals**.

What difference have we made?

- Delivered **AET training to over 600 delegates** across early years and schools; those trained report improved confidence in including children and young people with autism.
- 800 children and young people with autism or social communication difficulties have benefitted from strategies implemented by school following discussion at group consultation.
- **Parent/carers feel supported and understood**, evidenced by high number of compliments.
- Continued to take new referrals, **ensuring ongoing support for families**.

What do we still need to do?

- Extend **AET training to post-16 settings**.
- **Train lead practitioners** to support the embedding of AET autism standards across our early years, schools, and post-16 settings.
- **Establish Autism Schools Project** and evaluate impact.
- Establish a **system of providing costed specialist equipment** and support for yp with sensory needs in FE colleges.
- **Further develop processes** around Pupil Voice, SEMH and communication within the Sensory Inclusion Service delivery.

What have we delivered?

- **Created an enhanced tracking tool to inform training needs** (START) to best shape training in schools with greatest need.
- SEND Training Programme for CE staff (phase 1).
- SEND Training programme for CE SENCOs (phase 1 and 2).
- SEND Training programme for SEND Governors in schools.
- Enhanced Virtual SEND Clusters themed around needs.
- Enhanced clusters with a multi-disciplinary team approach.
- New to SENCO training for 25 new SENCOs.
- Created a Staff Induction Handbook for new staff.
- **Targeted interventions and liaison working** with Cheshire East Information Advice and Support (CEIAS) and parents.
- **Embedded a multi-disciplinary team approach** – working towards a better outcome for children and families.

What have been our challenges?

- **Capacity to deliver**, the programme takes a lot of time to create, and the team is small and part time.
- Staff being able to take time out of their busy workloads to attend the training.
- **Some staff turnover** has led to the programme having to be repeated.
- Capacity of the teams delivering the training to create and deliver the sessions.

What difference have we made?

- **16 sessions delivered to CE staff with over 300 CE staff attending.**
- 21 sessions made available to SENCOs.
- 78 SENCOs attended sessions.
- 3 sessions made available to Governors.
- 30 Governors attended.
- **Increase in positive feedback from all stakeholders.**
- Staff/ SENCOs have a clear understanding of the professional Teams, their roles and referral routes.
- Staff have a good understanding of the **Code of Practice and the parents' perspective**, providing a holistic view of childrens needs.
- SENCOs, especially new SENCOs have a clear understanding of the role, systems, and processes.
- New staff have a clear understanding of the processes within the SEND Team.
- Signposting to relevant teams is **clear and consistent**.

What do we still need to do?

- Plan and deliver **Phase 3 training programme** (for all staff – including Headteachers, Teaching Assistants and Teaching staff in schools).
- Extend the training plan to include parents/ carers **to enhance communication and working TOGETHER.**