

Children and Families Committee

Agenda

Date: Monday, 13th November, 2023
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To note any apologies for absence from Members.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 16)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 September 2023.

4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Council's Committee Procedure Rules and Appendix on Public Speaking, set out in the [Constitution](#), a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes each to speak, and the Chair will have discretion to vary this where they consider it appropriate.

Members of the public wishing to speak are required to provide notice of this at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

For requests for further information

Contact: Josie Lloyd

Tel: 01270 686466

E-Mail: josie.lloyd@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies

5. **Presentation from Cheshire East Youth Council**

To receive a presentation from Cheshire East Youth Council to mark Children's Rights Month.

6. **Kingsbourne Academy, Nantwich – 12-month delay for the opening of the new school** (Pages 17 - 24)

To receive an update regarding the delay to the opening of the new Kingsbourne Academy.

7. **Academisation of Millfields Primary School and Nursery, Marsh Lane, Nantwich** (Pages 25 - 90)

To consider the report on the academisation of Millfields Primary School, Nantwich.

8. **Cheshire East Place - Learning Disability and Mental Health Plans** (Pages 91 - 208)

To consider the report on the co-production of the Cheshire East Place - Mental Health Plan and Cheshire East Place - Learning Disabilities Plan.

9. **Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2024/25 - 2027/28** (Pages 209 - 222)

To receive a report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation for 2024/25 - 2027/28.

10. **Second Financial Review 2023/24** (Pages 223 - 264)

To receive the second financial review of 2023-24.

11. **Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report 2022/23** (Pages 265 - 344)

To receive the annual report of the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership for 2022-23.

12. **Children's Services Improvement Plan** (Pages 345 - 374)

To receive an update on preparation for inspection, the current improvement plan in response to previous inspection findings, and the findings from the self-evaluation.

13. **Mental Health Spotlight Review: Working together to protect, promote, prevent, empower and intervene early for all involved** (Pages 375 - 470)

To receive an update on progress against the Mental Health Spotlight Review.

14. **Unregulated and Unregistered Provision Protocol** (Pages 471 - 484)

To receive a report on the unregulated and unregistered provision protocol in Cheshire East.

15. **Work Programme** (Pages 485 - 490)

To consider the work programme and determine any required amendments.

Membership: Councillors L Anderson (Vice-Chair), R Bailey, M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, C Bulman (Chair), D Clark, E Gilman, G Hayes, R Kain, B Posnett, J Saunders, G Smith and L Smith

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Committee**
held on Monday, 18th September, 2023 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor C Bulman (Chair)
Councillor L Anderson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, G Hayes, R Kain, B Posnett,
J Saunders, G Smith, A Critchley, L Wardlaw, J Bird and J Place

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services
Claire Williamson, Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Integration
Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care
Janet Witkowski, Head of Legal Services
Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services & S151 Officer
Steve Reading, Principal Accountant
Josie Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer
Laura Rogerson, Head of Service - Inclusion
Gill Betton, Head of Service – Children's Developments and Partnerships
Richard Hibbert, Head of Strategic Transport and Parking
Brian Cotter, Education Consultant
Val Simons, Pupil Place Planning Officer
Simon Hodgkiss, Capital Development Officer
Shelley Brough, Director of Commissioning

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Rachel Bailey, Cllr Dawn Clark, Cllr Emma Gilman and Cllr Laura Smith. Cllr Liz Wardlaw, Cllr Anthony Critchley and Cllr John Place attended as substitutes, and Cllr John Bird arrived as a substitute after item 9.

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Bennett-Wake declared that she was a teaching assistant at a local school which was referenced in reports and had had dealings with Visyon, Just Drop In and Utopia in Macclesfield.

Cllr Place declared that he was a governor of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School and was a member of the Together Trust.

Cllr G Smith declared that he was a teacher at Malbank School.

Cllr Hayes declared that a school of which he was the Chair of the governing body was named in agenda item 14 (Children and Families Capital Programme) and that he had recently provided support to the governing body at St Gregory's Catholic Primary School.

Cllr Wardlaw declared in relation to item 17 (Commissioning Children and Young Peoples Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service) that she undertook occasional work as a visiting nurse.

23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

24 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

25 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 TO 2027/28

The committee considered the report which sought approval of the updated Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.

A number of concerns were raised during the debate which included:

- Concerns around the size of the deficit
- Whether it was appropriate for this committee to make the decision rather than Full Council as the financial impact would have a wider effect
- The need for more SEND provision in mainstream schools
- This was a national issue and there was a lack of an alternative

Members asked officers for assurance on their confidence that the plan would be effective and for the Section 151 Officer to provide assurance that it was a sound recommendation.

The Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Integration advised that officers were confident in the plans put before committee. The right staff were in place and were committed to being part of the Safety Valve programme and learning from others. Learning had been taken from the Delivering Better Value Programme.

The Section 151 Officer advised that the committee had responsibility for the oversight of budgets associated with Children and Families which included the Dedicated Schools Grant. The management plan included significant activity to mitigate the expenditure and the Safety Valve programme had been entered into by other local authorities before. The

Section 151 Officer was satisfied that this was compliant with the statutory duty and accounting rules put in place by central government and, while members' concerns and the importance of the topic were understood, it was considered appropriate for the committee to make the decision.

Paragraph 50 of the report referred to 17 local authorities in the North West which were holding combined deficit balances totalling £177m and it was queried whether Cheshire East held the highest deficit. Officers undertook to check this detail and confirm in a written response.

An amendment was moved and seconded which sought to remove recommendation 1 in the report and instead refer the decision to Full Council. A recorded vote was requested with the following results:

FOR

Councillors M Beanland, G Hayes, R Kain, B Posnett, J Saunders, L Wardlaw

AGAINST

Councillors L Anderson, S Bennett-Wake, C Bulman, A Critchley, G Smith, J Place

The Chair used a casting vote against and the amendment was declared lost.

The recommendations as set out in the report were proposed and seconded and a recorded vote was requested with the following results:

FOR

Councillors L Anderson, S Bennett-Wake, C Bulman, A Critchley, G Smith, J Place

AGAINST

Councillors M Beanland, G Hayes, R Kain, B Posnett, J Saunders, L Wardlaw

The Chair used a casting vote for and the recommendations were carried.

RESOLVED (by majority)

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Approve the current DSG Management Plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28, which forecasts a deficit reserve position of £536m unmitigated and £307m mitigated by the end of March 2028. There is a full breakdown of the forecast for income and expenditure in appendix 1 paragraph 22. This is a requirement of DfE.

2. Note the need to pursue additional capital funding and review the capital programme to identify additional projects which could be included in DSG management plan as determined by the SEN sufficiency statement.

The council has updated the SEN sufficiency statement for 2023/24 to 2025/26. This will set out the additional provision needed over the next three years to further mitigate the overspend and require significant capital investment to deliver).

3. To delegate to the Executive Director of Children's Services authority to undertake any consultations deemed necessary to facilitate implementation.
4. To note, the Chief Executive, Executive Director of Children's Services and the Section 151 Officer will continue to raise the financial issues with the DfE and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
5. To note, the acceptance of invitation to join the Safety Valve intervention programme.
6. To approve an onward journey for a revised version of the DSG management plan to include Safety Valve to be presented to Council on 11 December 2023.

26 **REFRESHED SEND STRATEGY 2021-2025**

The committee received the report which set out the details of the refreshed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) partnership strategy and priority areas for the next 12 months aligned to the outcomes of the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme.

A query was raised as to the current average waiting times for the ADHD service and it was agreed that this would be confirmed in a written response following the meeting.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Approve the refreshed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) strategy 2021-2025 attached at Appendix 1
2. Agree that the Children and Families Committee receive an annual report on the progress being made against the vision, values and actions contained in the SEND Strategy
3. Approve for a new strategy to be presented back to committee in September 2025

27 SEND SUFFICIENCY STATEMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN

The committee considered the report which provided an overview of the Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) sufficiency statement which had been updated to reflect the growing demand for specialist SEND provisions and identified the shortfalls across the borough.

It was suggested in regard to the identification of sites that the former Vernon Infant School in Poynton, which had been vacant for over a decade, be looked into.

Page 142 of the agenda referred to percentages of pupils placed outside of Cheshire East and it was queried what this equated to in numbers. This would be confirmed in a written response following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Review the information as presented within the updated SEND Sufficiency Statement 2023-2024.
2. Recognise the work already undertaken, and/or planned which has resulted in the increase of places within our maintained schools, resource provision, SEND units and special schools to support our children and young people with special educational needs.
3. Recognise the challenges ahead in addressing our reliance on placements within non-maintained special schools, independent special schools and specialist post 16 institutes.
4. Recognise the support that will be required from the wider council with regards to the identification of potential sites for the provision of new SEND schools and additional SEND places.

28 ALLOCATION OF ADDITIONAL HIGH NEEDS FUNDING AND ADDITIONAL EARLY YEARS FUNDING FOR 2023/24

The committee considered the report which provided an update on the two additional funding streams announced for 2023/24.

A query was raised regarding the table at paragraph 30 of the report which referred to the proposed £1.1m investment in SEN support services or offset against in year pressures. Clarity was sought as to where the £1.1m would be spent and why it would not be spent on frontline providers to enhance Cheshire East's competitive position in the market. Officers undertook to provide this detail in a written response following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

Unanimously:

That the Children and Families Committee

1. Approve 3.4% increase on both place and top up funding, representing the allocation £0.4m to Cheshire East maintained special schools, special academies and special free schools.
2. Approve 3.4% increase on both place and top up funding, representing the allocation £0.05m to Cheshire East alternative provision schools.
3. Approve 3.4% increase of top up funding, representing the allocation of £0.6m for those independent schools and non-maintained special schools that have requested a fee increase in line with contractual arrangements.

By majority:

That the Children and Families Committee

4. Approve the proposal to use the remainder of the additional funding to support SEN support and to offset against in year pressures.
5. Approve the allocation of the early years supplement using a flat rate for all providers subject to approval of the supplementary revenue estimate at council on 18 October 2023.

29 PUPIL PLACE PLANNING SUFFICIENCY REPORT (SCAP RETURN)

The committee received the report which provided detail on the outcome of the 2023 primary and secondary mainstream forecasts which was submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and would inform the amount of Basic Need grant awarded to the authority for the 2026/2027 academic year.

A written response was requested to detail how shortfalls are being mitigated in year for areas where expansion projects are underway but not yet completed.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Note that the SCAP return was completed and submitted prior to the deadline of 28 July.

The committee adjourned for a short break.

Cllr Bird arrived as a substitute during the break.

30 ANNUAL YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

The committee received the report which provided detail on the content of the 2023-24 Youth Justice Plan.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Be sighted on the Annual Plan of the Young Justice Service.
2. Note paragraph 17 of this report and the requirement for the report to be considered and adopted at full council.
3. Delegate authority to Executive Director of children's services to approve the report at the pan Cheshire youth justice board.

31 CARED FOR CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The committee received the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee Annual Report for 2022-23.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Endorse the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee Annual Report 2022-23 as set out at Appendix 1.

32 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCORECARD Q1

The committee received the report which provided an overview of performance against the core indicator set within the three directorate areas of Children's Services for quarter 1 of 2023-24.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

33 TRANSFORMATION OF TRAVEL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND REVIEW OF AVAILABLE WALKING ROUTES

The committee received the report which provided an overview of progress to date against the plans to transform travel support for children and young people and sought approval on the proposed redesignation of two routes to two schools making them 'available walking routes' from their current designation as 'unavailable walking routes'.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Scrutinise the progress to date in relation to the transformation of travel support for children and young people.
2. Approve the redesignation of the Willaston to Brine Leas Academy and Prestbury to Fallibroome Academy routes as 'Available Walking Routes'.
3. Approve the pupil eligibility changes that will be necessary as a result of the redesignation in line with the Councils 'Compulsory School Age Education Travel Policy' to remove school transport from 75 pupils, following a 12 week notice period.
4. Approve the review of other sites across the borough which are currently designated as 'unavailable walking routes' for any financially viable improvement schemes which could make those routes 'available walking routes' to be brought back to committee for future approval.
5. Approve the proposal to go out to consultation on the current school transport policies, including the review of charging for post-16, spare seats and the Poynton High School scheme and for the results of the consultation to be brought back to committee.

34 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES CAPITAL PROGRAMME – IMPLEMENTATION OF CAPITAL SCHEMES (INCLUDING NEW AND NAMED SCHEMES AND SCHOOL CONDITION PROGRAMME)

The committee considered the report which provided an update on the progress of the school capital programme for 2023/24.

A query was raised regarding paragraph 3 of the report, which referred to the allocation of uncommitted funds to projects for the purpose of supporting additional pupil places and SEN schemes, and whether there had been any analysis of what that amount might be. The Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Integration assured the committee that this was being closely monitored and further detail could be provided in a written response.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Agree the allocation of the Children and Families Capital funding as approved in the budget by full council on 22 February 2023 to the schools and projects as set out in Appendix 1.

2. Approve the new, named and amended schemes as detailed in Appendix 2.
3. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Childrens Services to determine the school sites and works to be instructed from the block funding allocations set out in Appendix 2 and take all steps to deliver those works.
4. Approve the school condition programme of schemes as detailed in Appendix 3.
5. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Childrens Services to determine the school sites and works to be instructed from the block funding allocations set out in Appendix 3 and take all steps to deliver those works.
6. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Childrens Services to approve uplifts to project costs of individual schemes approved in the Capital Programme to a maximum of 20% of the approved capital budget or £500,000 whichever is the lesser sum.
7. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Childrens Services to allocate uncommitted funds to enable the progression of feasibility studies, design development and project delivery, where projects will be for the purpose of supporting additional pupil places and SEN schemes.
8. Delegate to the Executive Director of Childrens Services the authority to approve Virements and where necessary enter into grant agreements with Academies and Diocesan bodies to facilitate the delivery of the projects identified in the Children and Families Capital Programme.
9. To note that the Executive Director of Children's Services will provide a six-monthly update to committee on the implementation of the Children and Families Capital Programme and the exercise of the delegations set out in this report.

35 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS INCLUSION FUND POLICY (SENIF)

The committee considered the report which sought approval to consult on revising the mechanism of support provided to enable children with special educational needs to access their early education entitlements.

It was noted that the recommendation in the report referred to a consultation start date of 18 September. As this was the date of the committee meeting and therefore the consultation would not commence on this date, it was suggested that the date be removed from the recommendations.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Approve the consultation on the policy set out in appendix 1 and to report back to Committee with the outcome from the consultation process for a final decision.

36 SCHOOL CAUSING CONCERN - ST GREGORY'S

Cllr Place left the room for the duration of this item, having declared an interest as a governor of the school.

The committee considered the report which sought approval to commence the formal statutory processes regarding the future of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School in Bollington.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Consider the evidence of information as presented within the report and appendices.
2. Approve the commencement of the structured process as outlined in the statutory guidance 'Opening, closing, and making changes to schools' regarding the future viability of St Gregory's Catholic primary school.
3. Consider the responses to the pre-publication consultation at a future committee and to formally consider the next steps as outlined in the statutory guidance.

37 COMMISSIONING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SERVICE

The committee received the report on the recommission of the Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service.

A query was raised regarding detail on impact and outcomes. The Director of Commissioning advised that the paper described the progression made against the objectives within the service specification and that further detail could be distributed following the meeting.

It was noted that the report would also be considered by the Adults and Health Committee on 25 September 2023.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Approve the recommission of the EHCYP programme with a focus on early help and prevention for children and young people, to ultimately reduce demand on statutory social care and mental health services.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Commissioning to award the contract(s).

38 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered the work programme.

It was noted that the November agenda was currently heavy but an additional meeting was scheduled for December and therefore officers would give consideration to any reports that could be deferred to the December meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

39 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The committee received the minutes of the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee meeting of 20 June 2023.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10:00 and concluded at 14:27

Councillor C Bulman (Chair)

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OPEN

BRIEFING REPORT

Children and Families Committee

13/11/2023

Kingsbourne Academy, Nantwich – 12-month delay for the opening of the new school

Report of: Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director Children's Services

Report Reference No: CF/37/23-24

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Children and Families Committee with an update on the delay to providing the new 1FE (210 places) primary free school, on the Kingsley Fields Development, Nantwich.

Executive Summary

- 2 The new Kingsbourne Academy, on the Kingsley Fields housing development, was due to open for its first class of 30 reception pupils in September 2024, but delays, including transferring the site to the council and increasing costs, have impacted on the building programme. It is anticipated that the construction will now begin in late Spring 2024, with the school opening in September 2025.
- 3 The design for the new school has been created and planning permission was granted on 28 June 2023. The programme to deliver the new school was based on a start on site of July 2023 in order to achieve completion in readiness for the September 2024 reception class intake.
- 4 The decision notice for the planning permission has not yet been issued as a result of a late consultee response from United Utilities which was received in August 2023. Additional information was

requested, and this has now been provided and sent back to United Utilities to review.

- 5 It has been established that a new substation is required to support the school. Due to the proximity of the nearest electricity sub-station being over 300m from the site entrance and the fact that it is operating at near capacity, it was advised that a new sub-station to serve the school would be required. It is anticipated that providing the new substation, an upgrade to the supply infrastructure in the locality and temporary power will cost approx. £443K.
- 6 These additional costs have had a significant impact on the overall budget. The approved budget in the Children and Families Capital Programme is £7.78m, the target cost figure including additional works for temporary power, sub-station and the overall cost increase as a result of the finalised design is £8.612m.
- 7 The transfer of the site into the council ownership cannot be completed until: -
 - the outstanding legal issues have been resolved,
 - the decision notice is issued and
 - the impact of these issues can be calculated and incorporated into the budget and if required, a further report is taken to Children and Families Committee to request the approval of an increase to the budget.
- 8 It is anticipated that we will commence with the build in Spring 2024 to enable the new school to open in readiness for the September 2025 intake.
- 9 The Local Authority as the Strategic Commissioner for school places has a statutory duty (under section 14 of the Education Act 1996) to ensure that there are sufficient school places to meet the demands of its residents in the area.
- 10 Data analysis was undertaken to determine the current provision of places in the local schools and to assess the impact on future provision of school places given that the new school was now very unlikely to be completed for September 2024. The data analysis has confirmed a small surplus in the Nantwich Town, Nantwich North and Nantwich South planning areas will enable the placement of Reception children who were due to start at the new school in September 2024.

- 11 From the local GP data, we have available, there are potentially 21 pupils in the development that will be of reception class age for September 2024. Of these 21, 5 children have already been included in the Acton Primary forecasts for Sept 2024. There are also forecast to be 17 vacancies for reception places in the Nantwich Primaries. There are also 2 of the local primaries with planned admission numbers (PAN) of 28, if agreed locally, and are needed, these 2 schools could admit over PAN to 30 and this would provide another additional 4 reception places.
- 12 We are working closely with the appointed sponsor of the new school, North West Academies Trust, who are also the trust for Acton, Calveley and potentially Millfields (subject to the approval of the academy order), and they will assist where possible to ensure pupils are placed.
- 13 Local ward members were invited to attend a briefing session on 11 September 2023 where an overview of the issues was provided by the School Organisation Team.
- 14 Information has been published on the council website informing parents and residents of the delay.
- 15 For the 2024 admissions round the new school has not been included as a parental preference option.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the 12 – month delay for the opening new school Kingsbourne Academy, Nantwich.

Background

- 16 As a result of the housing development at Kingsley Fields, Nantwich it was identified the need for additional places would be provided by the establishment of a new 1 Form of Entry (FE) Primary School (with the option for a 30-place nursery), opening in September 2024. Originally the school was to open with 30 place reception class only, this will then build over 7 years to fill the school.
- 17 A report was taken to Children and Families Committee on 10 January 2022 seeking approval to progress with the free school presumption process to open a new primary school in Kingsley Fields, Nantwich. A copy of this report and previous committee

paper from 12 July 2021 can be assessed in the background papers link.

- 18 The Kingsley Fields development Nantwich is a strategic site within the Cheshire East Council Local Plan for 1,100 new dwellings, although the actual number of planned dwellings is currently only 999. The site also included provision of a new primary school.
- 19 The development is expected to have a significant impact on education provision in the local area. The Section 106 agreement for the development secured the provision of a new primary school, which included the land and a contribution from the developers for the partial build costs.
- 20 Kingsley Fields, Nantwich, planning reference 13/2471N, has an agreed Section 106 contribution of £2.27m towards the build costs of the new primary school. There are three developers, David Wilson Homes, Taylor Wimpey and Redrow collaboratively developing the site. The school site is located on the Redrow land.
- 21 As part of our strategic vision and statutory duty a need for a new primary school has been identified to serve the Nantwich Town planning area. This aligns with our overarching intent that where large housing developments are progressed, families can, wherever possible, attend a local school in the heart of a community which promotes the ability to attend a school within a safe walking distance.
- 22 The proposal includes a 14-place resourced provision for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) children. The specialism is Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). There has also been consideration made if a nursery provision needs to be built in the future.
- 23 Following the committee's approval to proceed with the free school presumption process, transfer of the land into council ownership and design development work was commissioned through the Estates Property Projects Team for feasibility and survey work on the proposed site. Site investigations have been undertaken and all due diligence completed in preparation for the land to transfer into Cheshire East ownership. The design for the new school has been created and planning permission granted on 28 June 2023. The programme to deliver the new school was based on a start on site of July 2023. Planning application reference 23/0376N and gives further details of the approved design.

Briefing Information

- 24 This report is not seeking a decision but is to provide an update on the scheme and notify Children and Families Committee of the delay to the opening of the new primary school in Nantwich that scheme of one year due programme delays, rising costs and the legal challenge to the developers regarding the requirement for the provision of a serviced site.

Implications

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 25 The Council has a fiduciary duty to the residents of Cheshire East to spend its funds in an appropriate manner, therefore before the Council takes the ownership of the land it is necessary for any outstanding issues to be resolved, a decision to delay the project appears to be a reasonable option to take.
- 26 The Council has a statutory duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that there are sufficient school places in its area.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 27 This uplift for the Kingsley Field Scheme at £7.780m was included in the MTFs and was approved by Council in February 2023.
- 28 The revised target cost figure including additional works for temporary power, sub-station and the overall cost increase as a result of the finalised design is currently £8.612m.
- 29 The approved £7.78m figure is fully funded. Additional funding requirements could be met from unallocated Basic Need Grant, but this would be subject to further approval once the issues regarding the site have been resolved. This would also mean the unallocated Basic Need Grant if transferred to this project would not be available to fund other projects if they required further funding or a new higher priority project that required funding may not be able to go ahead.
- 30 Given the current financial climate the Council is facing by delaying the project, may give the Council time to re-evaluate the scope of the project and see if costs can be reduced further.

Policy

- 31 Local authorities are under a duty to ensure sufficiency of school places in their area (section 14 of the Education Act 1996) and over the last 5 years, the percentage of parents receiving one of their three preferences has remained very strong and above the national average Cheshire East have been above national average for 4 of

the last 5 years, in 2022 National Average was 98.4% and Cheshire East was 98.34%.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 32 Equality Impact Assessments are completed informally and formally to determine the varying needs of learners and their families to be able to access schools. Such factors are built into all stages of the progression of a scheme.
- 33 The Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is available on the website.

Human Resources

- 34 There are no human resources implications for Cheshire east Council.

Risk Management

- 35 If additional places beyond the forecast figures are required for Cheshire East children who are resident in the Nantwich area are unable to secure places at their local school and may be required to travel over 2 miles to alternative Cheshire East schools requiring transport assistance.
- 36 Inflation – Whilst it is recognised that the overall inflation rate has been certain material costs due to global supply issues and increased manufacturing costs are still showing significant increase and these will impact on the overall costs.
- 37 Force Majeure – The global Covid pandemic has identified that there can be some risks that on impact cannot be mitigated against and will inevitably cause some delay, disruption, and any additional costs.
- 38 Further delays to the scheme beyond those proposed could have an impact on place planning in the area and additional short-term options including temporary accommodation would need to be considered.
- 39 There is a risk management plan is in place and this will continue to be monitored as part of the Project Management of this scheme.

Rural Communities

- 40 There are no direct implications for rural communities although providing sufficient places in rural schools will ensure that pupils can stay in their local community.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 41 Providing sufficient school places for all children and young people resident in our area is a statutory duty.

Public Health

- 42 *There are no direct implications for public health, however providing sufficient places in their local community could improve the child's social and emotional wellbeing.*
- 43 *By providing local school places the distances which some children may have to travel to attend school should be reduced thus reduce congestion on the roads and therefore reduce emissions improving the air quality and making a better environment to live in.*

Climate Change

- 44 Providing additional school places will enable Cheshire East children the ability to secure at place at their local school thus reducing the need to travel outside of the area which will reduce energy consumption.
- 45 Cheshire East Council are very aware of their environmental education and stewardship role and are very interested in promoting sustainability in general.
- 46 Cheshire East Council is committed to being carbon neutral by 2025 and our capital build schemes are required to align with this expectation.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Claire Williamson Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Integration and SEND Claire.williamson@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	n/a

<p>Background Papers:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. School Capital Organisation - 1. Kingsley Fields New School Proposal.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk)<li>2. Microsoft Word - Committee paper - Kingsley Field Update following Consultation CLT version (cheshireeast.gov.uk)<li>3. Covering report.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk)
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OPEN

Children and Families Committee

13 November 2023

**Academisation of Millfields Primary
School and Nursery, Marsh Lane,
Nantwich**

**Report of: Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's
Services**

Report Reference No: CF/39/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: Nantwich South and Stapely

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report sets out the arrangements in place to support the intended academy conversion of Millfields Primary School and Nursery to become part of the North West Academies Trust Limited. The report provides the necessary assurances to enable the Committee to consider their support for the conversion.
- 2 The report is connected to the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 priorities:
 - (a) an open and enabling organisation ensuring that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making.
 - (b) a council which empowers and cares about people by supporting all children to have the best start in life and ensuring all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve to their full potential.

Executive Summary

- 3 The Children and Families Committee on 12 July 2021, approved a process by which a school would convert from a local maintained school to an academy (see Appendix 1). The Committee delegated authority

to certain officers to enable delegated decisions to be taken by them subject to a number of exemptions.

- 4 The proposed conversion does not fall into any of the exemptions approved by Committee. However, Committee approval is sought for the academisation of the school as it is a significant decision in terms of the effects of the decision on communities living or working in an area comprising one ward or electoral divisions.
- 5 The academisation of a school removes it from the control of the local authority and transfers it a charitable trust. The staff and assets of the school are all transferred to the charity with the school building and land being leased to them by the Council on a 125-year lease, with the charitable trust receiving funding direct from the Government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Childrens and Families committee is recommended to:

1. Authorise the Executive Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer to take all steps necessary to agree and execute the Commercial Transfer Agreement (Appendix 2) to the North West Academies Trust Limited relating to the transfer of all staff under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006, and assets.
2. Authorise the Executive Director of Place and Chief Finance Officer to take the steps necessary to agree the required transactions in relation to land, facilities or shared use agreements as are necessary in order to facilitate the conversion, including (but not limited to) the grant and completion of a lease (see Appendix 3) to the North West Academies Trust Limited for 125 years substantially in the form of the model lease produced by DfE at a peppercorn rent. The school site is identifiable as shown on the accompanying redline lease plan (see Appendix 4).

Background

- 6 The introduction of the Academies Act in 2010 enabled schools to apply to the Secretary of State to convert to an Academy. The effect of becoming an Academy is to remove the school from the control of the local authority and enables them to become a publicly funded independent state school which is directly funded by the Department of Education. Academies are run by academy trusts which are charitable companies limited by guarantee.

- 7 Millfields Primary School and Nursery is a Community school. A community school is maintained by the Council and the Council are the owners of the land, building, equipment and the ultimate employer of the school staff. The school applied to the Department for Education to become an academy, the DFE granted an Academy Order on 30 June 2023 (see Appendix 5) for the school to convert to an Academy on 1 January 2024.
- 8 Millfields Primary School and Nursey is in Nantwich, Cheshire. There are currently 205 pupils in the single form entry school. The current secondary feeders are Malbank School and Sixth Form College and Brine Leas School, which are not part of the North West Academies Trust Limited.
- 9 North West Academies Trust Limited, The Coach House, Union Street, Chester, CH1 1QP, was established on 20 January 2014. It currently has ten academies, one Secondary Cheshire West and Chester, two Primary Cheshire East, six Primary Cheshire West and Chester and one Primary, Shropshire. The Trustees are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Trust and are accountable for the performance of the schools and ensuring financial probity. They also link the NWAT Central Governing Body with the Schools' Governing Bodies. The Trust want all schools to maintain their autonomy through their own governance and leadership, with each school supported by the central team.
- 10 The two Cheshire East Primary Schools converted to the Trust in September 2021, so the council have supported previous conversions. The Trust Chief Executive Officer (CEO) attends regular meetings with the CEC Education Team, sharing working practices with other Trust Senior Leaders.
- 11 The CEO works alongside the Trust School Development Partner to collaborate with Headteachers through the many challenges of running a successful school. The Trust has specialist teams in Finance, Facilities Management, People Management, Safeguarding and Marketing and work closely with Browne Jacobson Solicitors to ensure the Trust policies and procedures are the best they can be.
- 12 As the land and assets used by the school are currently owned by the Council, it will therefore be necessary for the Council to negotiate and enter into a 125-year lease. The lease will enable the Academy to use the land and assets in accordance with the lease. The granting of the 125-year lease will be of the school site and will be a peppercorn rent to the Academy, with the Academy Trust taking the responsibility of maintaining the assets. The freehold interest will remain with the Council.

- 13 A commercial transfer Agreement is required to transfer the responsibility of all the administration, including employment of personnel and pension obligations, maintenance of the school and insurance to the Academy Trust.
- 14 Non-teaching staff at schools fall within the Local Government Pension scheme (“LGPS”). As the employer, the academy would be responsible for meeting the employers pension contributions. Academies are obliged to offer LGPS membership to all staff and staff transferring would simply continue their scheme membership. The Council remain the pension authority under the LGPS.
- 15 The Council will remain the co-ordination body for admissions for the Academy which means that parents/carers only need to complete one application form. The academy will be responsible for applying its own allocation criteria to the list of applications supplied by the Council. The Academy will be responsible for the setting up of an independent admission appeals panel on conversion to hear appeals, however, whilst the Academy is establishing its own independent panel the Council may continue to hear any outstanding appeals.

Consultation and Engagement

- 16 Appropriate consultation and engagement has taken place as required to support the conversion. Specific Human Resources engagement is set out in sections 39, 40 and 41 below.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 17 In April 2021, the Education Secretary set out the government’s vision of “a world-class school-led system where every school is part of a family of schools in a strong multi-academy trust (MAT).”
- 18 Key reasons schools consider conversions to MATs are to increase collaboration, to benefit from better strategic planning and direction; to provide more opportunities to staff for professional development; to gain access to better centrally provided services; to benefit from cost savings and efficiencies; to benefit from strengthened governance and leadership. Source: [Schools’ views on the perceived benefits and obstacles to joining a multi-academy trust \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97122/schools_views_on_the_perceived_benefits_and_obstacles_to_joining_a_multi-academy_trust.pdf)
- 19 Millfields Primary School and Nursery is one of 53 primary school provisions in Cheshire East which has not already converted to an Academy. There are currently 71 primary academies.
- 20 The school and Governing Board began to consider options for academisation in May 2022.

- 21 The DfE granted an academy order in June 2023; therefore the Council is under a statutory duty to facilitate the academisation of the school and is expected to work constructively so that the conversion takes place within a specified time period.

Other Options Considered

- 22 The Council's consent is not required for the School to convert to a Academy. The Council consent is required for the commercial and land transaction. The land and commercial transactions follow standard documentation which the Council and school can vary to achieve the best outcome dependant on the individual circumstance of each school. This may include historic land issues and sporting facilities as way of example.
- 23 An Academy Proprietor is entitled to expect the lease of all the premises and facilities which the school uses and are matters for negotiation and if agreement cannot be reached then the Council should make application to the Office of the School's Adjudicator on or before the conversion date seeking resolution of the dispute.
- 24 The Secretary of State retains a default power where there is an inability to reach agreement and negotiate the lease arrangements and a Commercial Transfer Agreement.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 25 Under section 6 subsection (2) of the Academies Act 2010, the Council as the local authority must cease to maintain the school on the conversion date, being 1 January 2024, the date on which the school is expected to open as an Academy.
- 26 In order to facilitate this, approval is required to enter into two legal agreements, being a lease and a commercial transfer agreement. Under the provisions of the Academy Order and of the Academies Act, the Council is required to negotiate and enter into a 125-year lease. If the Council fails to negotiate terms of the lease, the SoS has power to make a property transfer scheme and impose terms on the Council. The Council will finalise the terms of lease before the transfer. The Council is required to formalise the transfer of the maintenance responsibility of the Schools to the Academy Trust by way of the commercial transfer agreement.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 27 The conversion to Academy status has a number of financial implications for the Council. However, the authority must cease to maintain the school on the appropriate date.
- 28 The transfer of staff who are members of the LGPS as described above creates an obligation on the school to meet an appropriate proportion of the pension fund scheme deficit; agreement was made by the Council's Corporate Committee on an appropriate basis for determining the relevant resource and this has been advised to the schools and their identified sponsors.
- 29 The Academy will be responsible for all outgoings related to the land to include public liability and premises insurances or participation in the DfE Risk Protection Arrangement, and repairs / maintenance. The Council will retain a landlord role, but the leases will contain provisions for recovering costs for approvals required under the terms of the leases e.g. for alterations.
- 30 The CTA can also provide for certain liabilities to fall on the Council, e.g. certain staff termination costs where a reorganisation is necessary to balance the budget and action has not been previously taken by the school. The extent of such liabilities would need to be identified in the CTA. The CTA includes standardised text that confirms the Council remains liable for any pre conversion costs and the academy is responsible for post conversion costs. It must be noted that any cash balance or local bank account balance remains the property of the Council (excluding any local school funds).
- 31 The creation of an Academy means that resources are paid to the school directly by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) once the local Authority ceases to maintain the school. There is a consequent reduction in an Authority's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), based broadly on replication of the Authority's funding formula for schools.
- 32 The Local Authority has made it clear that it expects the School and the Governing Body or the Interim Executive Board to discharge their financial responsibilities in respect of public money appropriately. The school is predicted to have a surplus on conversion.
- 33 The Local Authority requires that any surplus at the point of closure will be treated in accordance with the provisions of the Academies Act 2010 and the guidance on Academy surplus and deficits issued by the Department for Education. The Finance Service will complete a "final balance" calculation to ensure all costs and funding are correctly

allocated. This can be complex and it must be agreed with the school within three months of conversion.

Policy

- 34 The implementation of academy conversion is undertaken in accordance with national legislation as per the various Education Acts as referred to earlier in this report.
- 35 The governing body of an academy will be the admitting authority. This means they have the power to set and apply their admission criteria. They must adhere to the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code and follow the provisions set out in the local authority's scheme of co-ordination.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 36 The Academies Conversion programme is a Central Government Policy. The school will become their own admissions authority but will continue to work with the local authority to ensure they are code compliant. Strong relationships will remain with the school and Headteacher on a wide variety of educational themes post conversion.
- 37 The SoS has confirmed that the School will convert to Academy status on 1 January 2024. The Council will urge the new Academy, as a public body, to be mindful of its Public Sector Equality Duty in particular in relation to its admissions policy and recruitment and management of staff.
- 38 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) should be undertaken by the relevant governing body/interim executive board of the school prior to conversion for the School to adequately discharge their equality duty. The Local Authority will work with and remind the schools governing body/interim executive board of its duty to ensure this is undertaken to address the impact prior to conversion.

Human Resources

- 39 The Council employees in respect of the School will transfer from the Council to the Academy under TUPE regulations. The school uses the dedicated Local Authority HR service for Schools who will advise on human resource implications with the Council keeping a watching brief to ensure all statutory requirements are met and often responds where Union concerns are raised.
- 40 In addition, members of staff at the school that are currently employed by the Council are to transfer under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 to the Trust under a Commercial Transfer Agreement (CTA).

- 41 The statutory TUPE consultation has been completed, being managed and co-ordinated by the HR Team. A formal TUPE consultation meeting with the unions took place on 12 July 2023 and minutes of this meeting have been circulated.

Risk Management

- 42 The management of risk to the Council arising from the conversion of the school to an academy is governed by the structured legislative process which is followed; this ensures due diligence is undertaken at all stages and that the Council complies with its statutory responsibilities and the conversion process is completed effectively and efficiently.
- 43 The Council is required to take all reasonable steps to facilitate the conversion, as described in the body of the report, and then “Cease to Maintain” the school; by co-operating with the conversion process, negotiating and entering into the lease agreements, the need for the Secretary of State to enforce a transfer scheme under the Academies Act 2010 is mitigated.
- 44 All parties are kept regularly informed of progress to ensure any concerns are picked up and resolved at the earliest opportunity to keep the conversation on track.

Rural Communities

- 45 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 46 There are no direct implications for children and young people.

Public Health

- 47 There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

- 48 There are no direct implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	<p>Joe Carter</p> <p>Education Project Manager</p> <p>Joe.carter@cheshireeast.gov.uk</p>
Appendices:	<p>Appendix 1: Previously agreed Committee approval on Academy Conversions</p> <p>Appendix 2: Draft Commercial Transfer Agreement</p> <p>Appendix 3: Draft Lease</p> <p>Appendix 4: Millfields Lease plan</p> <p>Appendix 5: Academy Order for Millfields Primary School and Nursery School</p>
Background Papers:	<p>Convert to an academy: documents for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>

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Appendix 1: Previously agreed Committee approval on Academy Conversions

At the [Children and Families Committee meeting on 12 July 2021](#), approval was given to put in place a process by which academy conversions would be undertaken by Cheshire East Borough Council (the council). A decision was taken to enable certain conversions to be progressed via Officer Decision Record subject to exemptions. Key to these were the arrangements relating to the land transfer, the commercial transfer agreement and the financial position of the school as the point of transfer.

It was resolved that the committee:

- 2.1 Delegates to the Executive Director of Children's Services in consultation with Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer authority to take all steps necessary to agree and execute the commercial transfer agreement, novation of third-party contracts, Shared Use Agreements/Facilities Access Agreements, staffing and information transfer.
- 2.2 Delegates to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer to take all steps necessary to agree and execute any transactions in relation to land, facilities or shared use agreements.
- 2.3 Notes that the Chief Finance Officer has authority to take all steps necessary to agree, transfer and adjust relevant budgets and allocate balances in accordance with Department for Education Guidance
- 2.4 Notes that no delegation may be exercised to execute any agreement as per recommendations 2.1 ,2.2 or 2.3 of the report where:
 - a) the school has a deficit of £100k or there is any significant impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy
 - b) there are substantive third party land interests
 - c) any public funds are to be reclaimed under section (land contributions)
 - d) any current or proposed legal claim has been identified
 - e) where an indemnity is sought against Cheshire East Council on any matter.

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Department
for Education

DRAFT Commercial Transfer Agreement

**Legal agreement between a Local
Authority, predecessor school
governing body and academy trust**

November 2013

15 November 2013

UNCLASSIFIED

DATED _____ 2023

(1) CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL

(2) THE GOVERNING BODY OF MILLFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

(3) NORTH WEST ACADEMIES TRUST LIMITED

TRANSFER AGREEMENT

Re: MILLFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

THIS AGREEMENT is made

2023

BETWEEN:

- (1) **CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH** of Wesfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 1HZ (the "**Council**");
- (2) **THE GOVERNING BODY OF MILLFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY** of MARSH LANE, NANTWICH, CHESHIRE, CW5 5HP (the "**Governing Body**");
- (3) **NORTH WEST ACADEMIES TRUST LIMITED** a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 08852553) whose registered office is at The Coach House, Union Street, Chester, CH1 1QP (the "**Company**").

WHEREAS

- (A) The School will close and the Company will, from the Transfer Date, operate the Academy on the same site as the School.
- (B) The freehold of the site of the School is owned by the Council and on the Transfer Date the Council will grant a lease to the Company of the site currently occupied by the School.

1 DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

1.1 In this Agreement the following words shall have the following meanings:-

- "Academy"** means the academy to be run by the Company on the site of the School under the proposed name Millfield Primary Academy;
- "Assets"** means all property, undertaking, rights and assets, whether tangible or intangible, of whatever nature used or held by the Council and/or the Governing Body (as the case may be) for the purposes of the School including those listed in 0, but excluding the Excluded Assets;
- "Contractor"** means a contractor providing services to the Company to whom the contract of employment of any Transferring Employee is transferred pursuant to the Regulations on or after the Transfer Date;
- "Contracts"** means the contracts entered into by the Council and/or the Governing Body (as the case may be) for the purpose of operating the School in the ordinary course of business which are still in force at the Transfer Date, including those contracts listed in Schedule 1 (true and accurate copies of which have been disclosed to the Company prior to the Transfer Date);
- "Data Protection Legislation"** means (i) the UK GDPR, the LED and any applicable national implementing Laws as amended from time to time; (ii) the Data Protection Act 2018 to the extent that it relates to processing of personal data and privacy; (iii) all applicable Law about the processing of personal data and privacy;
- "Directive"** means the Safeguarding of Employees Directive (2001/23/EC) (as amended, re-enacted or extended from time to time)

“Eligible Employees”	means the Transferring Employees who are active members of or eligible to join either the LGPS or the TPS immediately before the Transfer Date;
"Employee Liability Information"	means the information which a transferor is obliged to notify to a transferee pursuant to Regulation 11(2) of the Regulations
“Employee Schedule”	means a list of all School Employees as at the date that the list is provided to the Company;
"Encumbrance"	means any mortgage, charge, pledge, lien, equity, option, restriction, right of refusal, right of pre-emption, third party right or interest, any other encumbrance or security interest of any kind, and any other type of preferential arrangement (including title transfer and retention arrangements) having a similar effect;
“Excluded Assets”	means the assets described in Schedule 3 which are excluded from the transfer effected by this Agreement;
“Final Employee Schedule”	means a list of all School Employees as at the Transfer Date;
"Funding Agreement"	means a funding agreement to be entered into between the Secretary of State for Education and the Company with regard to funding arrangements for the Academy;
“Loss”	means all costs, claims, liabilities and expenses (including reasonable legal expenses);
“the LGPS”	means a Local Government Pension Scheme established pursuant to regulations made by the Secretary of State in exercise of powers under Sections 7 and 12 of the Superannuation Act 1972 as from time to time amended;
“the Personnel Files”	means in respect of the Transferring Employees copies of all personnel files or records relating to their employment at the School and any previous period of continuous employment with the Council and/or the Governing Body, including without limitation a copy of any contractual documentation, any documentation relating to job description, pay information, training records, information relating to sickness absence, a copy of any disciplinary warnings and a copy of any grievances;
“the Pupil Records”	means the following records and information in respect of the pupils at the School who will or who are likely to become pupils at the Academy: All pupil records currently held by the school;
“the Regulations”	means The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (as amended or re-enacted from time to time);
“the School”	means Millfield Primary School and Nursery;

“School Employees”	means any employees of the Council or of the Governing Body or of any other persons who are assigned to the School or to services provided in connection with the School;
“Staffing Information”	means, in respect of the School Employees, the information listed in Schedule 1;
“the TPS”	means the Teachers’ Pension Scheme established pursuant to regulations made by the Secretary of State in exercise of powers under sections 9 and 12 of and Schedule 3 to the Superannuation Act 1972 as from time to time amended;
“Transfer Date”	means the date specified in the Funding Agreement on which the Academy will open;
“Transferring Employees”	means any School Employees whose employment transfers to the Company or to a Contractor on the Transfer Date pursuant to the Regulations and who are listed in the Employee Schedule;

- 1.2 In this Agreement (except where the context otherwise requires):
 - 1.2.1 use of the singular includes the plural (and *vice versa*) and use of any gender includes the other genders;
 - 1.2.2 a reference to a party is to a party to this Agreement and shall include that party's personal representatives, successors or permitted assignees;
 - 1.2.3 a reference to persons includes natural persons, firms, partnerships, bodies corporate and corporations, and associations, organisations, governments, states, foundations, trusts and other unincorporated bodies (in each case whether or not having separate legal personality and irrespective of their jurisdiction of origin, incorporation or residence); and
 - 1.2.4 a reference to a Clause or Schedule is to the relevant clause of or schedule to this Agreement; a reference to a sub-clause or paragraph is to the relevant sub-clause or paragraph of the Clause or Schedule in which it appears.
- 1.3 The Schedules form an integral part of this Agreement and have effect as if set out in full in the body of this Agreement. A reference to this Agreement includes the Schedules.
- 1.4 In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the Clauses and the Schedules of this Agreement, the Clauses shall prevail.
- 1.5 General words are not to be given a restrictive meaning because they are followed by particular examples, and any words introduced by the terms "including", "include", "in particular" or any similar expression will be construed as illustrative and the words following any of those terms will not limit the sense of the words preceding those terms.
- 1.6 Any reference to a statute, statutory provision or statutory instrument includes a reference to that statute, statutory provision or statutory instrument together with all rules and regulations made under it as from time to time amended, consolidated or re-enacted.

2. **CONDITION PRECEDENT**

- 2.1 This Agreement is conditional on the Funding Agreement being signed by the Company and the Secretary of State. If the Funding Agreement is not so signed by the date which is six months after the date of this Agreement (the “Deadline”), this Agreement will cease to have effect on the day after the Deadline.

3. OPERATION OF THE REGULATIONS

The Parties intend and acknowledge that the closing of the School and the opening of the Academy shall constitute a transfer to which the Directive and the Regulations apply and agree that as a consequence that the contracts of employment made between the current employer and the Transferring Employees (save insofar as such contracts relate to benefits for old age, invalidity or survivors under any occupational pension scheme) shall have effect from and after the Transfer Date as if originally made between the Company or (as the case may be) a Contractor and the Transferring Employees.

4. PROVISION OF STAFFING INFORMATION AND WARRANTIES

4.1 Without prejudice to its obligation pursuant to the Regulations to provide the Employee Liability Information, the Council shall on or before 30th November 2023 to the extent lawfully permitted provide the Company with the Employee Schedule and Staffing Information.

4.2 The Council shall notify the Company of any material change to the Employee Schedule and the Staffing Information as soon as is reasonably practicable and shall upon request by the Company meet the Company to discuss the information disclosed.

4.3 The Council the Council also warrants:

4.3.1 that the information in the Employee Schedule and the Staffing Information shall be complete and accurate and kept up-to-date;

4.3.2 that neither it (nor any other employer of a School Employee) is in material breach of the contract of employment of any of the School Employees nor is any School Employee in material breach of his contract of employment;

4.3.3 that none of the School Employees have given or received notice of termination of employment nor are any of the School Employees the subject of any material disciplinary action nor is any School Employee engaged in any grievance procedure; and

4.3.4 that neither it (nor any other employer of a School Employee) is engaged in relation to any School Employee in any dispute, claim or legal proceedings, arising under contract or common law or arising out of or relating to any statute including the provisions of the Regulations and any claim or allegation of unlawful discrimination;

4.3.5 that all School Employees who carry out teaching are eligible to do so in accordance with the Education (Specified Work and Registration) (England) Regulations 2003; and

4.3.6 that by the Transfer Date all Transferring Employees will have been checked against List 99 and checked through the Criminal Records Bureau and all other checks required by law.

4.4 The Council undertakes to the Company, and the Council undertakes in respect of any School Employees employed by the Council, that during the period from the date of this Agreement up to and including the Transfer Date:

4.4.1 the Council shall enable and assist the Company and such other persons as the Company may determine to communicate with and meet the School Employees and their trade union or other employee representatives;

4.4.2 the Council shall not, and shall procure that any other employer of the School Employees shall not, without the prior written consent of the Company:

- (a) amend or vary (or purport or promise to amend or vary) the terms and conditions of employment or engagement (including, for the avoidance of doubt, pay and job description) of any School Employees (other than where such amendment or variation has previously been agreed between the Council and the School Employees in the normal course of business, and where any such amendment or variation is not in any way related to the transfer to the Company);
- (b) terminate or give notice to terminate the employment or engagement of any School Employees (other than in circumstances in which the termination is for reasons of misconduct or lack of capability);
- (c) employ or assign any person to the School who would or might as a consequence of such employment or assignment become a Transferring Employee;

and the Council shall indemnify the Company from and against all Losses incurred by the Company in connection with or as a result of a breach of their obligations under this clause.

5. APPORTIONMENTS

- 5.1 The Council shall be responsible for all emoluments and outgoings in respect of the School Employees (including all wages, bonuses, commission, premiums, subscriptions, PAYE and national insurance contributions and pension contributions) which are attributable in whole or in part to the period up to and including the Transfer Date and will indemnify the Company (both for itself and any Contractor) against all Losses incurred by the Company or any Contractor in respect of the same.
- 5.2 The Company shall be responsible for all emoluments and outgoings in respect of the Transferring Employees (including all wages, bonuses, commission, premiums, subscriptions, PAYE and national insurance contributions and pension contributions) which are attributable in whole or in part to the period after the Transfer Date and will indemnify the Governing Body against Losses in respect of the same.

6. INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Company shall comply (and shall procure that any Contractor complies) with its obligations under Regulation 13 of the Regulations during the period prior to the Transfer Date.
- 6.2 The Council shall comply with its obligations under Regulations 13 and 14 of the Regulations during the period prior to the Transfer Date, save where the Governing Body or, in respect of any School Employee employed by the Council, the Council is unable to do so as a result of the failure of the Company and/or any Contractor to comply with their duties under Regulation 13 of the Regulations.

7. INDEMNITIES

- 7.1 The Council shall indemnify the Company (either for itself or for or on behalf of any other person to whom the Transferring Employee or any liability relating to them has transferred or is alleged to have transferred) against all Losses incurred by the Company in connection with or as a result of:
 - 7.1.1 any claim or demand by any School Employee or former School Employee (whether in contract, tort, under statute, pursuant to European law or otherwise) including any claim for unfair dismissal, wrongful dismissal, a redundancy payment, breach of contract, unlawful deduction from wages, discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation,

religion or religious belief, personal injury, a protective award or a claim or demand of any other nature, in each case arising directly or indirectly from any act, fault or omission of the employer in respect of any School Employee or former School Employee, or any claim relating to the period on and before the Transfer Date (and for the avoidance of doubt, this indemnity shall apply in respect of all Losses incurred by the beneficiary of this indemnity in respect of the period after the Transfer Date where the claim (such as, without limitation, a claim for equal pay) arises out of circumstances which arose on or before the Transfer Date);

- 7.1.2 any failure by the Council or any other employer of the School Employees to comply with its obligations under Regulations 13 and 14 of the Regulations, or any award of compensation under Regulation 15 of the Regulations, save where such failure arises from the failure of the Company or any Contractor to comply with its duties under Regulation 13 of the Regulations;
 - 7.1.3 any claim (including any individual employee entitlement under or consequent on such a claim) by any trade union or other body or person representing the School Employees (or other employees of the Council or Governing Body) arising from or connected with any failure by the Council or the Governing Body or any other employer of the School Employees to comply with any legal obligation to such trade union, body or person; and/or
 - 7.1.4 any claim by any person (other than a Transferring Employee) in respect of which the Company or any Contractor incurs or is alleged to incur responsibility or liability as a result of the operation of the Regulations.
- 7.2 If in connection with the closing of the School and the opening of the Academy it is found or alleged that the employment of any person other than the Transferring Employees has transferred to the Company or a Contractor pursuant to the Directive or the Regulations:
- 7.2.1 the Company (or, where applicable, the Contractor) may by 4pm on the fifteenth (15th) working day following but excluding the day upon which it becomes aware of that allegation or finding, dismiss the employee with immediate effect; and
 - 7.2.2 the Council shall indemnify and keep indemnified the Company (both for itself and any Contractor) against all Losses which the Company (or, where applicable, the Contractor) may suffer or incur in respect of that dismissal and the employment of that person up to the date of the dismissal and any other claim brought by or on behalf of that person.
- 7.3 The Company shall (in respect of Transferring Employees employed by the Company), and shall use reasonable endeavours to procure that any Contractor shall (in respect of Transferring Employees employed by the Contractor), indemnify the Governing Body or, in respect of any School Employee employed by the Council, the Council against all Losses incurred by that party in connection with or as a result of:
- 7.3.1 any claim or demand by any Transferring Employee (whether in contract, tort, under statute, pursuant to European law or otherwise) including any claim for unfair dismissal, wrongful dismissal, a redundancy payment, breach of contract, unlawful deduction from wages, discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or religious belief, a protective award or a claim or demand of any other nature, in each case arising directly or indirectly from any act, fault or omission of the Company or the Contractor, as the case may be, in respect of any Transferring Employee on or after the Transfer Date;

- 7.3.2 any failure by the Company or the Contractor, as the case may be, to comply with its obligations under Regulation 13 of the Regulations; and/or
- 7.3.3 any claim or demand by any School Employee arising out of any change or proposed change in the terms and conditions of employment or working conditions of that person on or after their transfer to the Company or the Contractor, as the case may be, on the Transfer Date, where that School Employee would have been a Transferring Employee but for their resignation or decision to treat their employment as terminated under Regulation 4(9) of the Regulations on or before the Transfer Date as a result of any such changes.

8. **PENSIONS**

- 8.1 The parties acknowledge that the Academy is a “scheme employer” for the purposes of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008 (“the LGPS Regulations” which expression shall include any regulations amending or replacing the regulations from time to time) and that the LGPS Regulations shall apply to the Company (as the person carrying on the business of the Academy).
- 8.2 The parties acknowledge that the Academy is an “employer” for the purposes of the Teachers’ Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 SI 1997/3001 (“the TPS Regulations” which expression shall include any regulations amending or replacing the regulations from time to time) and that the TPS Regulations shall apply to the Company (as the person carrying on the business of the Academy).
- 8.3 The Company acknowledges that the Eligible Employees shall be, or as the case may be, remain eligible for membership of the LGPS or the TPS (as the case may be) while employed at the Academy following the Transfer Date subject to the terms of the LGPS Regulations and the TPS Regulations.
- 8.4 The Company shall be responsible for any LGPS deficit relating to the Eligible Employees’ membership of the LGPS referable to service up to and including the Transfer Date.
- 8.5 The Company shall be responsible for all employer contributions payable to the LGPS and the TPS in respect of the Eligible Employees and any other sum due to the LGPS and the TPS in respect of the Eligible Employees.
- 8.6 The Company shall:
 - 8.6.1 maintain such documents and information as will be reasonably required to manage the pension aspects of any onward transfer of any of the Eligible Employees;
 - 8.6.2 promptly provide to the Council such documents and information which the Council may reasonably request in advance of any onward transfer of any person engaged or employed by the Company; and
 - 8.6.3 fully co-operate with the reasonable requests of the Council relating to any administrative tasks necessary to deal with the pension aspects of any onward transfer of any person engaged or employed by the Company.

9. **THE ASSETS AND THE CONTRACTS**

- 9.1 On the Transfer Date the Council and/or the Governing Body (as applicable) will transfer (or to the extent that it is not the owner thereof shall procure the transfer of) the legal and beneficial interest in the Assets, free of charge and free from any Encumbrance, to the Company, save for any Encumbrance which has been fully and accurately disclosed to the Company prior to the Transfer Date.

- 9.2 The Council and/or Governing Body (as applicable) undertakes with effect from the Transfer Date to assign to the Company or to procure the assignment to the Company all the Contracts which are capable of assignment without the consent of other parties to those contracts.
- 9.3 If any of the Contracts cannot be transferred to the Company except by an assignment made with the consent of another party or by an agreement of novation:
- 9.3.1 this Agreement shall not constitute an assignment or an attempted assignment of the Contract if the assignment or attempted assignment would constitute a breach of the Contract;
- 9.3.2 after the Transfer Date the parties shall use their respective reasonable endeavours to obtain the consent of the other party to the assignment, or to procure the novation, of the Contract; and
- 9.3.3 until the consent or novation is obtained:
- (a) the Council or the Governing Body (as the case may be) shall hold the same on trust for the Company and shall (at its cost) do all such acts and things as the Company may reasonably require to enable due performance of the Contract and to provide for the Company the benefits of the Contract (including enforcement of any right of the Council or the Governing Body (as the case may be) against the other party to the Contract arising out of its termination by the other party or otherwise);
- (b) the Company shall (if sub-contracting is permissible and lawful under the Contract in question), as the Council's or Governing Body's (as appropriate) sub-contractor, perform all the obligations of the Council (or Governing Body) under such Contract and where sub-contracting is not permissible, the Company shall perform such obligations as agent for the Council or Governing Body (as appropriate); and
- (c) unless and until any such Contract is assigned or novated, the Council or Governing Body (as appropriate) shall (so far as it lawfully may) at the Company's cost give all such assistance as the Company may reasonably require to enable the Company to enforce its rights under such Contract, including, providing access to all relevant books, documents and other information in relation to such Contract as the Company may reasonably require from time to time.
- 9.4 Pending the Transfer Date, possession of the Assets shall be retained by the Council and/or the Governing Body (as the case may be).
- 9.5 All receipts relating to the Assets and the Contracts and all Losses and outgoings incurred or payable in relation to the Assets and the Contracts up to the Transfer Date ("**Historic Liabilities**") shall belong to, and be paid and discharged by, the Council or, as the case may be, the Governing Body and the Council undertakes to indemnify and keep the Company and the Governing Body indemnified against any Historic Liabilities.
- 9.6 All receipts relating to the Assets and the Contracts and all Losses and outgoings incurred or payable as from and including the Transfer Date ("**Future Liabilities**") shall belong to and be paid and discharged by the Company and the Company undertakes to indemnify and keep the Council and the Governing Body indemnified against any Future Liabilities.
- 9.7 The Company agrees that, following the Transfer Date, it shall provide the Council with sufficient information, as reasonably requested by the Council, to enable the Council to

accurately determine and discharge any Historic Liabilities (including, without limitation, any payments relating to the School's accounts). In the event that the Council makes an underpayment or overpayment in relation to any Historic Liabilities (including, without limitation, any payments relating to the School's accounts), the Council and the Company agree to repay any such sums to the other (as appropriate). In the event that the Council has made no payment in relation to any Historic Liabilities but has received payment from the Secretary of State in respect of these, and this amount is an underpayment or an overpayment, the Council and the Company agree to repay any such sums to the other (as appropriate).

9.8 The Council and the Governing Body shall on or before the Transfer Date deliver to the Company the Personnel Files and the Pupil Records, to the extent that they are permitted to do so by Data Protection Legislation (and both the Council and the Governing Body shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure that they are permitted by Data Protection Legislation to deliver such information to the Company).

9.9 The Company undertakes not to use the Personnel Files or the Pupil Records for any purposes unconnected with the operation and management of the Academy, the purposes for which such information was originally collected or any other lawful purposes.

10. CONDUCT OF CLAIMS

10.1 In respect of the indemnities given in this Agreement:

10.1.1 The indemnified party shall give written notice to the indemnifying party as soon as is practicable of the details of any claim or proceedings brought or threatened against it by a third party in respect of which a claim will or may be made under the relevant indemnity;

10.1.2 The indemnifying party shall at its own expense have the exclusive right to defend, conduct and/or settle all claims and proceedings which may be brought by a third party to the extent that such claims or proceedings may be covered by the relevant indemnity provided that where there is an impact on the indemnified party, the indemnifying party shall consult with the indemnified party and shall at all times keep the indemnified party informed of all material matters; and

10.1.3 The indemnified party shall, at the indemnifying party's expense, provide all reasonable assistance and documentation required by the indemnifying party in connection with, and act as or be joined as a defendant in, any claim or proceedings brought by a third party. The indemnifying party shall reimburse the indemnified party for all reasonable costs and expenses (including legal costs and disbursements) incurred in providing such cooperation and/or arising as a result of the indemnifying party's failure to defend, conduct and/or settle such claims and proceedings.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

Each party undertakes to the others that it will keep the contents of this Agreement confidential as between the parties and the Department for Education (or its successors) except to the extent that disclosure is required by law.

12. THIRD PARTIES

No person who is not a party to this Agreement is intended to reserve a benefit under, or be entitled to enforce, this Agreement pursuant to the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 (the "Act") save that any Contractor may enjoy the benefit and enforce the terms of this Agreement in accordance with the Act. Notwithstanding this, neither the Council nor the Governing Body nor the Company require the consent of any

Contractor to rescind or vary this Agreement at any time, even if that variation or rescission affects the benefits conferred on such Contractor.

13. **FORCE MAJEURE**

Neither party will be liable to the other for any delay or non-performance of its obligations under this Agreement arising from any cause or causes beyond its reasonable control.

14. **GENERAL**

14.1 No forbearance or delay by either party in enforcing its rights will prejudice or restrict the rights of that party, and no waiver of any such rights or of any breach of any contractual terms will be deemed to be a waiver of any other right or of any later breach.

14.2 No variation of this Agreement will be valid unless recorded in writing and signed by or on behalf of each of the parties to this Agreement.

14.3 If any provision of this Agreement (or part of any provision) is found by any court or other authority of competent jurisdiction or illegal, the other provisions will remain unaffected and in force.

14.4 Nothing in this Agreement will be construed as constituting or evidencing any partnership, contract of employment or joint venture of any kind between either of the parties or as authorising either party to act as agent for the other. Neither party will have authority to make representations for, act in the name or on behalf of or otherwise to bind the other party in any way.

14.5 Neither party will make any announcement relating to this Agreement or its subject matter without the prior written approval of the other party (such approval not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed).

14.6 Each party will, at the request of the other party and its own cost, do (or procure others to do) everything necessary to give the other party the full benefit of this Agreement.

14.7 Any notice required to be given under this Agreement shall be in writing and shall be delivered personally, or sent by pre-paid first class or recorded delivery or by commercial courier, to each party required to receive the notice at the addresses specified by the relevant party by written notice to the other (and if no such address is specified), the address set out at the front of this Agreement.

14.8 Any notice shall be deemed to have been duly received:

14.8.1 if delivered personally, when left at the address and for the contract referred to in this Clause; or

14.8.2 if sent by pre-paid first class post or recorded delivery, at 9.00 a.m. on the second business day after posting; or

14.8.3 if delivered by commercial courier, on the date and at the time that the courier's delivery receipt is signed.

14.9 A notice required to be given under this Agreement shall not be validly given if sent by email.

14.10 This Agreement may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which will be an original and all of which will together constitute a single agreement.

14.11 Each party shall bear its own costs and expenses (including legal fees) in relation to the preparation and execution of this Agreement.

14.12 This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement and understanding between the parties in respect of the matters dealt with in and supersedes any previous agreement between the parties.

14.13 Each of the parties acknowledge and agrees that in entering into this Agreement it does not rely on, and will have no remedy in respect of, any statement, representation, warranty or understanding (whether negligently or innocently made) of any person (whether party to this Agreement or not) other than as expressly set out in this Agreement.

15. GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION

15.1 This Agreement will be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the law of England and Wales.

15.2 Each party irrevocably submits to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales over any claim or matter arising under or in connection with this Agreement.

SIGNED by _____)
Duly authorised on behalf of the)
COUNCIL

SIGNED by _____)
Duly authorised on behalf of the)
GOVERNING BODY

SIGNED by _____)
Duly authorised on behalf of
COMPANY

SCHEDULE 1

STAFFING INFORMATION

1. **Individual terms and conditions**
- 1.1 Copies of all current employment contracts, and all other terms and conditions of employment.
- 1.2 A schedule comprising in respect of each employee, the following particulars:-
 - (a) full name;
 - (b) post;
 - (c) whether the employment is full or part time;
 - (d) sex;
 - (e) date of birth;
 - (f) date of commencement of service;
 - (g) notice period;
 - (h) normal retirement age;
 - (i) remuneration;
 - (j) pension;
 - (k) in respect of teachers:
 - (i) scale point or leadership group spine point;
 - (ii) assimilation point for the head teacher;
 - (iii) whether the employee is a post-threshold teacher;
 - (iv) whether the employee is a good honours graduate;
 - (v) management, recruitment, retention and/or any other allowances payable;
 - (vi) any applicable assimilation safeguarding,

and all other benefits whether contractual or otherwise.
- 1.3 Details of any recent changes of terms and conditions in relation to any employee.
- 1.4 Copies of any employee handbooks, rules and other policies, procedures, arrangements or agreements in relation to:-
 - (a) redundancy procedures and payments;
 - (b) redeployment procedures;
 - (c) sickness absence and sick pay entitlements;
 - (d) equal opportunities;

(e) disciplinary matters;

(f) maternity rights;

and details of whether or not each of the above are discretionary or contractual.

1.5 Copies of any job descriptions.

1.6 Details of any practices or customs which although not written down form part of employees' terms and conditions of employment.

2. **Collective bargaining**

2.1 Details of the names of all trade union and other employee representatives, with the name of the trade union, the position held and how long the position was held.

2.2 Details of any trade union recognised by the Council / Governing Body, giving the date and details of the recognition agreement (and a copy if available), with brief details of current and historic labour relations and any pending negotiations.

2.3 Details of any other agreement, whether school, local or national, with any trade union or other body of employee representatives (and copies if available) including any informal recognition and procedure arrangements and other arrangements honoured by "custom and practice".

2.4 Details of which, if any, of the terms of any collective agreement form part of individuals' terms and conditions of employment.

3. **Disputes**

3.1 Details of any dispute with any employee whether brought under the Council / Governing Body's disciplinary or grievance procedure or otherwise and any matters which might give rise to such.

3.2 Details of any litigation threatened or pending against the Council / Governing Body, including any court, employment tribunal or arbitration claims or any matters which might give rise to such.

3.3 Details of any enquiry, correspondence or contact between the Council / Governing Body and the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Health and Safety Inspector and the Inland Revenue concerning employees.

3.4 Details of any court judgment or current employment tribunal award in respect of any employee dispute.

3.5 Details, and, if available, copies, of any warnings given to employees under the Council / Governing Body's disciplinary or capability procedures.

4. **Dismissals**

4.1 Details of all dismissals/resignations within the last 12 months including reasons for the dismissal/resignation.

4.2 Details of all employees recruited within the last 12 months.

5. **Working Time Regulations 1998**

5.1 Copies of any individual, collective and workforce agreements entered into pursuant to the Working Time Regulations.

6. **Health and Safety**

6.1 Details of any health and safety committees/representatives.

6.2 Details of any health and safety complaints or recommendations or claims within the last 5 years.

7. **Trainees/Consultants**

7.1 Details of all individuals in the undertaking working on training, work experience or similar schemes.

7.2 Details of all consultancy agreements or self-employed personnel who are or may actually be employees.

8. **Absent employees**

8.1 Details of all employees who have notified the Council / Governing Body that they are pregnant or who are currently absent on maternity leave.

8.2 Details of all employees on long term sick leave together with confirmation of the nature of their illness and the duration and dates of their absence(s) due to that condition.

9. **Job Evaluation Scheme**

9.1 A copy of any job evaluation scheme.

10. **Contractor Employees**

10.1 Details of any individuals employed by contractors working in the school.

11. **Pension**

11.1 A list of all pension schemes (both occupational and personal) applicable to the employees.

11.2 Details of any current or pending applications for early retirement.

SCHEDULE 2
THE CONTRACTS

PLEASE SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENT ATTACHED

SCHEDULE 3

THE ASSETS

1. All equipment, furniture, fixtures and fittings on the site of the School ("**the loose plant and equipment**"), subject to all contractual obligations in respect of any part of the loose plant and equipment which is the subject of any leasing, hire or hire purchase agreements listed in Schedule 2 except, for the avoidance of doubt, the Excluded Assets.
2. All rights to use the name of the School and all logos and domain names used exclusively by the School. All copyrights, database rights and other intellectual property rights owned by the Council or Governing Body (as appropriate) and used exclusively by the School.
3. All rights of the Council or Governing Body (as appropriate) in respect of computer software used by the School whether granted by licence or otherwise.
4. Any balance remaining from the School's budget following completion of due accounting procedures.

SCHEDULE 4
THE EXCLUDED ASSETS

The following assets are excluded from this transfer:

1. The freehold titles to the site of the School.
2. Cash in hand or at bank.
3. The benefit of any grants made to the School in respect of periods before the Transfer Date.

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Dated _____ **2023**

(1) **CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- and -

(2) **NORTH WEST ACADEMIES TRUST LIMITED**

LEASE

Property:	Millfields Primary & Nursery School Marsh Lane, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 5HP
Term:	125 years

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LAND REGISTRY REQUIRED WORDING FOR PRESCRIBED CLAUSES LEASE¹

LR1. Date of lease: 2023

LR2. Title number(s): **LR2.1 Landlord's title number(s):**
CH519596

LR2.2 Other title number(s):
None

LR3. Parties to this lease:

Landlord: CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL
of

Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach,
Cheshire CW11 1HZ

Tenant: NORTHWEST ACADEMIES TRUST LIMITED
of

The Coach House, Union Street, Chester,
CH11QP

(Company Registration Number: 08852553)

LR4. Property: Please see the definition of "Property" in clause 1.1
(referred to in the remainder of this lease as the "Property")

LR5. Prescribed statements etc: The Statement contained in Clause 10 of this Lease

[LR5.1]

[LR5.2]

LR6. Term for which the Property is leased: The term is as follows: 125 years from and including 2023

(referred to in the remainder of this lease as the "Term")

(i) ¹ The provisions that follow designated with LR reference numbers are clauses prescribed by the Land Registry, which must be inserted at the beginning of the lease. These cannot be amended/deleted, save in relation to site specific information which will be inserted at the time of negotiation of the lease. Where terms and expressions are not relevant to the body of the lease the word "None" will be inserted in the space underneath.

- LR7. Premium:² None
- LR8. Prohibitions or restrictions on disposing of this lease: This lease contains a provision that prohibits or restricts dispositions.
- LR9. Rights of acquisition etc:
- LR9.1 Tenant's contractual rights to renew this lease, to acquire the reversion or another lease of the Property, or to acquire an interest in other land: None
- LR9.2 Tenant's covenant to (or offer to) surrender this lease: None
- LR9.3 Landlord's contractual rights to acquire this lease: None
- LR10. Restrictive covenants given in this lease by the Landlord in respect of land other than the Property: None
- LR11. Easements:
- LR11.1 None
- LR11.2 Easements granted or reserved by this lease over the Property for the benefit of other property
The rights set out in Schedule 2 to this Lease
- LR12. Estate rentcharge burdening the Property: None

(ii) ² This will not apply

LR13. Application for standard form of restriction:

The Parties to this lease apply to enter the following standard form of restriction against the title of the Property

No disposition of the registered estate by the proprietor of the registered estate or by the proprietor of any registered charge, not being a charge registered before the entry of this restriction, is to be registered without a written consent signed by the Secretary of State for Education of Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street London SW1P 3BT

LR14. Declaration of trust where there is more than one person comprising the Tenant:

Not applicable

DRAFT

THIS LEASE is made the day of2023

BETWEEN:

- (1) **CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL** of Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 1HZ ("the **Landlord**")
- (2) **NORTHWEST ACADEMIES TRUST LIMITED** (Company No 08852553) whose registered office is at The Coach House, Union Street, Chester, Cheshire CH1 1QP ("the **Tenant**")

NOW IT IS HEREBY AGREED as follows: -

PART A: PRELIMINARY

1. Definitions and Interpretation

1.1 In this Lease unless the context otherwise requires the following words and expressions shall have the following meanings:

- "**Amenities**" drainage water gas electricity telephone and any other services or amenities of like nature;
- "**Conduits**" gutters gullies pipes sewers drains watercourses channels ducts flues wires aerials cables mains cisterns tanks and all other conducting media together with all meters and other apparatus used in connection with them;
- "**End Date**" the date that falls 90 working days after the Funding Termination Date;
- "**Environment Acts**" the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Environment Act 1995, the Water Resources Act 1991, the Water Industry Act 1991, the Environment Act 2021 and any other Law or Laws of a similar nature in force at any time during the Term;
- "**Fixtures and Fittings**" **and** all fixtures and fittings in or upon the Property to include plant and machinery lifts boilers central heating air conditioning lighting plumbing sanitary and sprinkler systems hardware and cabling of computer systems and any other apparatus from time to time in or upon the Property;
- "**Funding Agreement**" (a) an agreement pursuant to Section 1 of the Academies Act 2010 made between (1) the Secretary of State for Education and (2) Northwest Academies Trust Limited; and

- (b) any replacement or renewal of such agreement between the same parties and in substantially the same form; and
- (c) any replacement agreement made between the Tenant and the Secretary of State for Education (or the successor government body which assumes his functions for funding educational organisations of the Tenant's kind) and which provides funding for the Tenant in relation to the operation of educational services at the Property;

"Funding Termination Date"

the date that falls 30 working days after the termination of the Funding Agreement;

"Insured/Covered Risks"

fire, lightning, explosion, earthquake, storm, tempest, flood, subsidence, landslip, heave, impact, terrorism, bursting or overflowing of water tanks and pipes, damage by aircraft and other aerial devices or articles dropped therefrom, riot and civil commotion, labour disturbance and malicious damage and such other risks as the Tenant insures against from time to time or are covered by the Risk Protection Arrangement of which the Tenant is a member, Subject in all cases to any exclusions or limitations as may from time to time be imposed by the insurers or underwriters or by the terms of the Risk Protection Arrangement, provided that if in respect of any period of time the Tenant is unable to effect insurance against any one or more of such risks upon terms or at a premium which the Tenant considers reasonable or if the risks are not covered by the Risk Protection Arrangement of which the Tenant is a member then during such period such risk or risks are deemed to be excluded from the definition of "Insured/Covered Risks";

"Interest"

interest at the rate of 4 per cent per annum above Barclays Bank plc Base Rate for the time being in force (both before and after any judgment) such interest to be compounded with rests on the usual quarter days or if such Base Rate ceases to be published then at the rate of 1 per cent per annum above the rate at which the Landlord could reasonably borrow from time to time;

"Landlord's Property"

Land and buildings including the Property registered at the Land Registry under Title Number CH519596 comprised in the documents set out at Schedule 3;

"Law"

any statute or any order instrument or regulation made under it or any notice or order issued by a government department the legislative making institutions of the European Union minister or local public regulatory or other authority;

"Lease"	this Lease as varied from time to time together with any other deed document or agreement at any time during the Term amending supplemental or collateral to it;
"Outgoings"	all present and future rates taxes duties charges assessments impositions and outgoings whatsoever (whether parliamentary local or of any other description including capital or non-recurring and including any novel expenses);
"Plan"	the plan ³ annexed to this Lease;
"Planning Acts"	the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990 the Planning (Consequential Provisions) Act 1990 the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and any other Law or Laws of a similar nature in force at any time during the Term;
"Premises Acts"	the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 the Factories Act 1961 the Offices Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963 the Fire Precautions Act 1971 the Defective Premises Act 1972 the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 the Occupiers' Liability Act 1984 and any other Law or Laws regulating the safety of premises and those occupying or visiting the same in force at any time during the Term;
"President"	the President of the Institution of Chartered Surveyors;
"Property"	the property described in Schedule 1;
"Reinstatement Value"	the full cost of reinstating the Property including:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) temporarily making the Property safe and protecting any adjoining structures;(b) debris removal demolition and site clearance;(c) obtaining planning and any other requisite consents or approvals;(d) complying with the requirements of any Law;(e) architects' surveyors' and other fees incurred by the Tenant in relation to the reinstatement;(f) all construction costs;(g) any VAT chargeable on any of the reinstatement costs (save where the Tenant is able to recover such VAT as an input in relation to supplies made by the Tenant);

(iii)

³ Project specific amendment will be required to refer to numbered plan or plans

“Relevant Secretary of State” such secretary of state or Minister of the Crown as may be nominated by the Secretary of State for Education to take an assignment of this Lease;

"Rent" a peppercorn;

“Risk Protection Arrangement Arrangements to cover certain risks as operated by the Department for Education.

"Secretary of State for Education" the Secretary of State for Education or such other Minister of the Crown who is a successor to such person and who is party to the Funding Agreement with the Tenant at the relevant time;

"Term" 125 years from and including the Term Commencement Date;

"Term Commencement Date" 2023

"Termination Date" the date of expiration or sooner determination of the Term;

“the 1954 Act” the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954;

“the 1995 Act” the Landlord and Tenant (Covenants) Act 1995;

"VAT" Value Added Tax or any equivalent tax which may at any time during the Term be imposed in substitution for it or in addition to it and all references to rents or other sums payable by the Tenant are exclusive of VAT.

1.2 In interpreting this Lease:-

1.2.1 references to Clauses pages and Schedules are to Clauses and pages of and Schedules to this Lease unless stated otherwise;

1.2.2 the expression "Landlord" includes the person for the time being entitled to the immediate possession of the Property on the expiry of the Term;

1.2.3 the expression "Tenant" includes the person in whom for the time being the Tenant's interest under this Lease is vested;

- 1.2.4 where reference is made to a statute this includes all prior and subsequent enactments amendments and modifications relating to that statute and any subordinate legislation made under such statute;
- 1.2.5 references to a "person" include any individual firm unincorporated association or body corporate and words importing the singular number include the plural number and vice versa and words importing one gender include all genders;
- 1.2.6 if the Tenant is or are at any time more than one person any reference to the Tenant is deemed to refer to each such person and any obligation on the part of the Tenant takes effect as a joint and several obligation;
- 1.2.7 any covenant by the Tenant not to carry out any action is to be construed as if it is (where appropriate) additionally a covenant by the Tenant not to permit or suffer such action to be done;
- 1.2.8 the words "include" and "including" are to be construed without limitation and in construing this Lease the ejusdem generis principle does not apply and general words are not to be given a restrictive meaning because they are followed by particular examples intended to be embraced by the general words;
- 1.2.9 a reference to an act or omission of the Tenant includes an act or omission of any undertenant and any other person deriving title under the Tenant and includes an act or omission of their respective employees and visitors and anyone at the Landlord's Property with the express or implied authority of any one or more of them;
- 1.2.10 a reference to the Property includes any part of it except where the word is used in Clause 3.12;
- 1.2.11 a reference to the end of the Term or to the Termination Date is to the end of the Term however it terminates;
- 1.2.12 a consent of the Landlord shall be valid if it is either:
- (a) given in writing and signed by a person duly authorised on behalf of the Landlord; or
 - (b) (if required by the Landlord after any request for consent from the Tenant but prior to consent being given) it is by deed; and
- if a consent is not by deed it will not affect the Landlord's ability to require that any other consent should be by deed;
- 1.2.13 any notice given to the Landlord shall not be valid unless it is in writing;
- 1.2.14 the Landlord is entitled to withhold its consent where it requires the corresponding consent of any mortgagee or superior landlord of the Property until it obtains that consent (and the Landlord shall use all reasonable endeavours to obtain such

consent and shall ensure that any charges or superior leases created after the date of this Lease shall contain obligations on the mortgagee or superior landlord not unreasonably to withhold or delay consent in circumstances where the Landlord's consent cannot be unreasonably withheld or delayed under this Lease);

- 1.2.15 a right of the Landlord or anyone else to have access to or entry upon the Property extends to any superior landlord and any mortgagee of the Landlord's Property and to anyone authorised by the Landlord or any superior landlord or mortgagee and includes a right of entry with workmen equipment and materials;
- 1.2.16 pursuant to the Perpetuities and Accumulations Act 1964 the perpetuity period applicable to this Lease is eighty (80) years from the Term Commencement Date and whenever a future interest is granted it shall vest within that period and if it does not it will be void for remoteness;
- 1.2.17 the table of contents and headings to Clauses paragraphs and Schedules do not affect the construction of this Lease;
- 1.2.18 a right granted by the Landlord is granted in common with all other persons entitled to it and/or authorised by the Landlord to exercise it;
- 1.2.19 a right excepted or reserved to the Landlord is also reserved to any other person entitled to it and/or authorised by the Landlord;
- 1.2.20 where the Landlord is entitled to enter the Property on giving notice it is also entitled to enter without notice in emergency and may break and enter if it considers it necessary;
- 1.2.21 nothing entitles the Tenant to enforce any obligation given by anyone to the Landlord;
- 1.2.22 any person undertaking any obligation under or by virtue of this Lease which is a 'landlord covenant' for the purposes of the 1995 Act does so only in respect of the period of time during which the immediate reversion to this Lease is vested in such person and not further or otherwise;
- 1.2.23 any works (whether of repair decoration alteration or otherwise) that the Tenant is permitted or obliged to carry out in accordance with this Lease shall be carried out in accordance with good modern practice;
- 1.2.24 a provision of this Lease which is void or unenforceable shall be severed from all other provisions of this Lease and the remaining provisions shall continue to have effect;
- 1.2.25 if a provision of this Lease extends beyond the limitations set by any Law or rule of law but if it were not so extended would remain unaffected by the Law or rule of law the provision is deemed to be varied so as not to extend beyond the limitations;
- 1.2.26 if any matter is referred to arbitration pursuant to this Lease:

- (a) it is to be conducted in accordance with the Arbitration Act 1996; and
- (b) the arbitrator has no power:
 - (i) to order rectification setting aside or cancellation of this Lease;
 - (ii) to direct that the recoverable costs of the arbitration or any parts of the arbitral proceedings will be limited to a specific amount;
 - (iii) where there are provisions in this Lease for the payment of interest at a specified rate to award interest whether in addition to or in substitution for such interest provisions;

1.2.27 if any matter in this Lease is to be determined by an arbitrator:

- (a) he is to be appointed by agreement between the Landlord and the Tenant or at the request and option of either of them is to be nominated by the President;
- (b) if he dies delays or declines to act the President may on the application of either the Landlord or the Tenant discharge him and appoint another to act in his place in the same capacity; and
- (c) if either the Landlord or the Tenant pays his fees and expenses it may recover the proportion (if any) the other party was obliged to pay from that other party as a debt recoverable on demand;

1.2.28 wherever and to the extent that any provision of this Lease would or might contravene the provisions of section 25 of the 1995 Act then:-

- (a) such provision is to take effect only in so far as it may do so without contravening section 25 of the 1995 Act (and where such provision extends beyond the limits permitted by section 25 of the 1995 Act that provision is to be varied so as not to extend beyond those limits); and
- (b) where such provision is incapable of having any effect without contravening section 25 of the 1995 Act this Lease is to be construed and interpreted as if such provision were deleted; and
- (c) the legality validity and enforceability of any of the remaining provisions of this Lease is not in any way to be affected or impaired as a result.

2. Demise Rents and Other Payments

2.1 The Landlord demises the Property to the Tenant for the Term (subject to the provisions for earlier termination contained in this Lease) the

Tenant paying therefor by way of rent throughout the Term without any deduction counterclaim or set off (whether legal or equitable) of any nature whatsoever:-

2.1.1 the Rent (if demanded);

2.1.2 all other sums (including VAT) due under this Lease from the Tenant to the Landlord.

2.2 The Property is demised:-⁴

2.2.1 excepting and reserving to the Landlord and all others now entitled (or who may become entitled) and all others authorised by them (to include any adjoining or neighbouring owners or occupiers) as specified in Schedule 2; and

2.2.2 subject to and with the benefit of the matters contained or referred to in the documents listed in Schedule 3

3. Tenant's Covenant

The Tenant covenants with the Landlord as follows:-

3.1 Rent and Payments

To pay the Rent and all other sums reserved as rent by this Lease at the times and in the manner at and in which they are reserved in this Lease.

3.2 Outgoings

3.2.1 Promptly to pay the Outgoings which are now or may during the Term be payable in respect of the Property or its owner or occupier except any payment occasioned by any disposition of or dealing with the ownership of any estate or interest expectant in reversion on the Term

3.2.2 To pay for all Amenities exclusively used by or available to the Property (including all standing charges);

3.2.3 To observe and perform all present and future regulations and requirements of the authorities or companies supplying or providing the Amenities.

3.3 Repair and Upkeep

3.3.1 At all times during the Term to keep the Property (including for the avoidance of doubt all buildings structures landscaping and other erections) clean and tidy and make good:-

(a) any damage it causes to the Property and/or

(b) any deterioration to the condition of the Property that may arise from the Term Commencement date provided

(iv) ⁴ Rights and reservations will only apply if the Landlord retains land or owns adjoining land over which rights are required.

that the Tenant shall not be in breach of this covenant if and for so long as disrepair arises due to damage caused to the Property by any of the Insured/Covered Risks and the Tenant is diligently pursuing its insurance claim or its claim under the Risk Protection Arrangement and reinstating such damage;

3.3.2 To notify the Landlord in writing immediately if any structural damage occurs to the Property.

3.4 Access of Landlord and Notice to Repair

To permit the Landlord and all persons authorised by the Landlord (with or without equipment) upon reasonable prior notice to the Tenant (but at any time without notice in case of emergency) to enter the Property as follows:-

3.4.1 in the final 3 years of the Term in order to take inventories of any Fixtures and Fittings to be yielded up at the end of the Term;

3.4.2 at reasonable intervals during the Term in order to view and examine the state of repair and condition of the Property and to give to the Tenant or the Tenant's agent or leave on the Property notice in writing to the Tenant of all breaches of any of the tenant covenants in this Lease relating to the condition or repair of the Property ("Repair Notice") and the Tenant covenants (subject to having obtained any necessary consents to any required works, which the Tenant shall use all reasonable endeavours to obtain as soon as possible) to repair and make good the Property according to such notice and the covenants in that behalf contained in this Lease within the following time periods:-

(a) where (b) and (c) below do not apply or where the state of repair is causing a breach of health and safety or other legislation or is causing structural damage ("Safety Breach"), the works shall be commenced within the period of 56 days after the service of the Repair Notice and shall be completed diligently thereafter;

(b) where there is no Safety Breach, if the Tenant does not immediately have the funds to carry out such works but could complete the works within a reasonable period without requiring further funding under the Funding Agreement it shall demonstrate this to the Landlord by providing to the Landlord within 56 days of the service of the Repair Notice:

(i) a statement of the maintenance budget for the Property (included within the funding already received under the Funding Agreement) and the sums expended that financial year to date on the repair and maintenance of the Property ("Funding Statement"); and

- (ii) a programme of works setting out a reasonable time period for the works to be carried out taking into account the nature of the disrepair and the funds available;

and the works shall be commenced and carried out within the periods set out in the programme of works referred to at (ii) above;

- (c) where there is no Safety Breach and where the Tenant cannot demonstrate that it can carry out the works within a reasonable time under (b) above but requires to make an application ("Funding Application") to the Secretary of State for funding under the Funding Agreement in order to carry out such works, the relevant section of works shall be commenced as soon as reasonably practicable after the Secretary of State grants permission under the programme of works agreed pursuant to the Funding Application ("Works Programme");

and if the Tenant fails satisfactorily to comply with such notice in accordance with (a) (b) or (c) above the Landlord and all persons authorised by the Landlord are entitled at any time without notice (but without prejudice to the right of re-entry contained in this Lease) to enter the Property with all necessary equipment to repair and make good the Property in accordance with the covenants and provisions contained in this Lease and the expense of such repairs together with all reasonable legal and surveyors' fees properly incurred in connection with this sub-clause must be repaid by the Tenant to the Landlord upon demand and on a full indemnity basis as a contractual debt;

- 3.4.3 where the Tenant has served notice on the Landlord pursuant to Clause 3.3.3 of the occurrence of structural damage to the Property then to permit the Landlord to enter onto the Property to view and examine the state of repair and condition of the Property;
- 3.4.4 at any time during the Term to view the Property in connection with any dealing or proposed dealing (by way of sale mortgage or otherwise) with the Landlord's reversionary interest in the Property;
- 3.4.5 (in circumstances only where the Landlord may have a liability under Law or under this Lease) to carry out such tests inspections and surveys as the Landlord reasonably requires;
- 3.4.6 at any time during the Term to fix and retain without interference upon any suitable part or parts of the Property one or more notice boards for reletting (but in the case of reletting only within six months before the Termination Date) or selling at any time the Landlord's reversionary interest in the Property;
- 3.4.7 at any time during the Term to exercise any rights reserved by this Lease and to comply with any obligations of the Landlord (whether arising under this Lease or otherwise);

- 3.4.8 at reasonable intervals during the Term in order to determine whether the Tenant has complied with all its obligations in this Lease (save that, for the avoidance of doubt, the Landlord shall not be entitled to inspect the financial records of the Tenant);

Provided that any exercise of the above rights by the Landlord does not constitute an action for forfeiture by the Landlord or evidence an intention to accept or effect the surrender of the Term and provided further that the exercise of the above rights by the Landlord shall not be in such a manner as materially to restrict or interrupt the operation of the school on the Property by the Tenant, shall cause as little damage as reasonably practicable and shall (save in relation to emergency access) be in accordance with the reasonable requirements of the Tenant in relation to the security of the Property and the health and safety of the students and others at the Property, and the Landlord shall make good any damage caused to the Property as soon as reasonably practicable.

3.5 Alterations and Additions

- 3.5.1 Not to commit any act of waste;
- 3.5.2 Not to erect any buildings or other structures on the Property nor make any structural or external alterations additions or variations to any structures for the time being on the Property without the Landlord's prior written consent (such consent not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed) save that the Landlord can only refuse such consent if:-
- (a) such erection alteration addition or variation will adversely affect the Landlord's statutory obligations as a landlord or as a local authority; and/or
 - (b) such erection alteration addition or variation will have an adverse effect on the structural integrity of any structures on the Property or any part or parts of any structures on the Property; and/or
 - (c) such erection alteration addition or variation will adversely affect the value of the Landlord's reversionary interest in the Property;⁵
- 3.5.3 As part of the application to the Landlord for its consent pursuant to Clause 3.5.2 the Tenant shall:-
- (a) submit to the Landlord adequate plans and specifications describing the proposed erection alteration addition or variation and shall consult with the Landlord on the proposed erection alteration addition or variation and shall take into account any representations that the Landlord may reasonably make in relation to the matters referred to at Clause 3.5.2 (a) (b) and (c);

(v) ⁵ If alterations are to be funded by the Tenant out of its own monies, rather than under the Funding Agreement, thought will need to be given in the licence for alterations as to how clause 5.1.3 (ownership of insurance proceeds on non-reinstatement) may need to be amended.

- (b) make any necessary variations or alterations to the plans and specifications in accordance with the reasonable representations of the Landlord pursuant to sub-clause (a) above;
 - (c) covenant with the Landlord as to the execution and (if it is agreed between the parties before the works are carried out that they will be reinstated at the determination of the Term) the reinstatement of any of the works as the Landlord may reasonably require;
 - 3.5.4 In relation to any works permitted pursuant to Clauses 3.5.2 and 3.5.3 above to carry out all such works only in accordance with such plans and specifications as have been provided to and approved by the Landlord in writing or as have been subsequently varied in accordance with any representations of the Landlord;
 - 3.5.5 After commencing any works of erection alteration addition or variation as permitted pursuant to Clauses 3.5.2 and 3.5.3 above to complete such works as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event no later than by the end of the Term;
 - 3.5.6 To carry out any works permitted by this Lease in a good and workmanlike manner as soon as reasonably practicable with good quality materials strictly in accordance with all relevant British Standards including codes of practice and the requirements and regulations of all utility companies affected by such works and so that any easements rights privileges or liberties which third parties enjoy in over or under the Property are not interfered with and that no nuisance is caused to the Landlord
 - 3.5.7 Not to carry out any erection alteration addition or variation which hinders access to a Conduit.
- 3.6 Signs and Advertisements
- 3.6.1 To notify the Landlord of the affixing or display on the boundaries of the Property or on the outside of the buildings on the Property of any sign (which expression includes any signboard advertisement hoarding fascia poster placard bill notice or other notification) other than signs which:
 - (a) are required by law to be affixed or displayed; or
 - (b) do not require planning permission; or
 - (c) are necessary or usual for the authorised use of the Property;
 - 3.6.2 To display and maintain upon the Property notices required in relation to the Premises Acts and the Environment Acts.

3.7 Statutory Obligations

- 3.7.1 To comply with all Laws (including the Premises Acts) affecting the Property the physical condition or the user of them or the use of any Fixtures and Fittings in them;
- 3.7.2 As soon as reasonably practicable to give written notice to the Landlord of anything arising or being in the Property which may endanger or adversely affect health or safety and which might give rise to a duty of care imposed by common law or statute on the Landlord in favour of the Tenant or any other person;
- 3.7.3 The Tenant shall comply with its obligations, requirements and duties under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 ("CDM Regulations") in relation to any works carried out at the Property, including all requirements in relation to the provision and maintenance of a health and safety file for the Property, which the Tenant shall maintain and shall give to the Landlord on the Termination Date;
- 3.7.4 The Tenant shall elect to be treated as the only client as defined under the CDM Regulations in respect of any works carried out at the Property pursuant to Regulation 8 of the CDM Regulations;
- 3.7.5 The Tenant shall supply all information to the Landlord that the Landlord reasonably requires from time to time to comply with the Landlord's obligations under the CDM Regulations.

3.8 Yield Up

On the Termination Date quietly to yield up the Property to the Landlord with vacant possession (subject only to any lease granted to a statutory undertaker) in accordance with the proper performance of the Tenant's covenants contained in this Lease and with all refuse and (unless the Landlord notifies the Tenant to the contrary prior to the Termination Date) all Tenant's fixtures and fittings lettering and signs put up by the Tenant duly removed.

3.9 Use

- 3.9.1 Not to carry on upon the Property any noisy noxious offensive or dangerous trade or occupation provided that the proper use of the Property for the purposes permitted by clause 3.9.3 shall not be a breach of this Clause;
- 3.9.2 Not to use the Property for any illegal or immoral purpose;
- 3.9.3 Without prejudice to the preceding covenants in this Clause not to use the Property otherwise than:
 - (a) for the purposes of the provision of educational services by the Tenant (as set out in accordance with the memorandum and articles of association of the Northwest Academies Trust Limited from time to time); and

- (b) for community, fundraising and recreational purposes which are ancillary to the use permitted under Clause 3.9.3 (a).⁶

3.10 Planning and Environmental Matters

- 3.10.1 To provide to the Landlord copies of any plans specifications applications consents and permissions relating to applications under the Planning Acts and to deal with any queries that the Landlord acting reasonably may raise;
- 3.10.2 So often as occasion requires to obtain all consents and permissions required to authorise the use from time to time of the Property and the carrying out of any development (within the meaning of the Planning Acts) on the Property;
- 3.10.3 To pay and satisfy any charges that may hereafter be imposed under the Planning Acts in respect of the carrying out or maintenance of any such development;
- 3.10.4 To give written notice to the Landlord of the granting or refusal of any planning permission within twenty days after its receipt by the Tenant;
- 3.10.5 If the Tenant receives any compensation because of any restriction placed upon the use of the Property under or by virtue of the Planning Acts then if this Lease is determined by surrender or re-entry immediately to make such provision as is just and equitable for the Landlord to receive due benefit from such compensation.

3.11 Notices

As soon as reasonably practicable following receipt to provide to the Landlord a copy of any communication or notice which may give rise to a liability on the part of the Landlord or which may adversely affect the value or nature of the Landlord's interest in the Property.

3.12 Dealings

- 3.12.1 Not to part with or share the possession or occupation of the whole or any part or parts of the Property Provided that the Tenant may share occupation of part of the Property with a body or individual providing services or facilities which are ancillary to and within the uses referred to in clause Without prejudice to the preceding covenants in this Clause not to use the Property otherwise than:
 - 3.12.2 (a) for the purposes of the provision of educational services by the Tenant (as set out in accordance with the memorandum and articles of association of the Northwest Academies Trust

(vi) ⁶ It is likely that the items in (b) would be within the charitable objects referred to in (a). However, this additional wording has been inserted as an optional clause for discussion between the parties on a case by case basis.

Limited from time to time) where no relationship of landlord and tenant arises as a result of such occupation;

3.12.3 Not to hold the Property or any part or parts of the Property or this Lease on trust for another;

3.12.4 Subject to sub-clause 3.12.4 not to assign or transfer any part or parts or the whole of the Property;

3.12.5 The Tenant is permitted to assign or transfer the whole of the Property to the relevant Secretary of State a proprietor or proposed proprietor of an Academy or to a successor charitable or public body without the consent of the Landlord where the Secretary of State has given approval in writing to such an assignment or transfer;

3.12.6 In any case where assignment or transfer is permitted under clause 3.12.4 the Tenant will notify the Landlord within one month of such assignment or transfer and provide a certified copy of the relevant assignment or transfer to the Landlord

3.12.7 Not to underlet any part or parts or the whole of the Property

3.12.8 Not to charge the whole or any part or parts of the Property

3.13 Rights of Light and Encroachments

Not to obstruct any windows or lights belonging to the Property nor to permit any encroachment upon the Property which might be or become a detriment to the Landlord and in case any encroachment is made or attempted to be made to give immediate notice of it to the Landlord.

3.14 Indemnity

3.14.1 To keep the Landlord indemnified against all actions proceedings costs claims demands and expenses in respect of any liability or alleged liability in respect of any injury to or the death of any person (however the same may be caused) damage to any property moveable or immovable Laws (including the Premises Acts the Planning Acts and the Environment Acts) the infringement disturbance or destruction of any right easement or privilege and every other liability arising directly or indirectly out of any defect in or the condition or use of the Property or anything done or omitted to be done on them or any breach of the Tenant's obligations in this Lease;

3.15 To notify the Landlord in writing immediately upon any of the events or matters referred to in sub-clause

3.15.1 To keep the Landlord indemnified against all actions proceedings costs claims demands and expenses in respect of any liability or alleged liability in respect of any injury to or the death of any person (however the same may be caused) damage to any property moveable or immovable Laws (including the Premises Acts the Planning Acts and the Environment Acts) the infringement disturbance or destruction of any right easement or privilege and every other liability arising

directly or indirectly out of any defect in or the condition or use of the Property or anything done or omitted to be done on them or any breach of the Tenant's obligations in this Lease;.1 occurring or arising.

3.16 Costs

To pay to the Landlord on demand all reasonable and proper costs charges and expenses (including legal costs and surveyors' fees and other professional fees and any charges and/or commission payable to a bailiff) losses and liabilities which may be incurred by the Landlord:-

3.16.1 in connection with the preparation and service of any notice (including any schedule of dilapidations) served under this Lease relating to the repair or condition of the Property whether during the Term or within two months after the Termination Date;

3.16.2 in connection with any application by the Tenant for any licence approval permission or consent required under the terms of this Lease whether or not the application is withdrawn or the licence approval permission or consent is refused (save where refused unreasonably contrary to the terms of this Lease) or is granted (save where granted subject to conditions declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be unreasonable);

3.16.3 in or in contemplation of claiming or recovering any arrears of Rent or rents or in connection with or arising out of any breach by the Tenant of any of the Tenant's obligations hereunder whether or not the Landlord proves such matters by proceedings in any Court.

3.17 VAT

3.17.1 To pay VAT upon the Rent and upon any other sums payable by the Tenant under this Lease and in relation to any other supply of goods or services (within the meaning of section 5 and schedule 4 of the Value Added Tax Act 1994) made by the Landlord to the Tenant under this Lease so far as such tax is from time to time properly chargeable upon the same and in relation to taxable supplies made by the Landlord to the Tenant the Landlord must deliver to the Tenant a VAT invoice addressed to the Tenant;

3.17.2 Where the Tenant has agreed to reimburse or indemnify the Landlord in respect of any payment made by the Landlord under the terms of or in connection with this Lease also to reimburse any VAT paid by the Landlord on such payment unless the VAT is actually recovered by the Landlord as an input in relation to supplies to the Landlord.

3.18 Interest on Arrears

If any sums from time to time payable by the Tenant to the Landlord under this Lease are not paid to the Landlord within 21 days of the date when such sums became due (whether demanded or not) or are tendered to the Landlord but the Landlord reasonably refuses to accept

them so as to preserve any rights the Landlord has to pay to the Landlord (without prejudice to any other right remedy or power available to the Landlord) interest on such sums (both before and after any judgement) from the date when such sums first became due until the date of actual payment inclusive of both dates at the Interest Rate.

3.19 Landlord's Property

To observe and perform the matters contained or referred to in the documents listed in Schedule 4 relating to the Landlord's Property so far as they are still subsisting and capable of taking effect and relate to the Property and to keep the Landlord indemnified against all actions proceedings costs claims demands and expenses relating to them.

4. Landlord's Covenants

The Landlord covenants with the Tenant:-

4.1 Quiet Enjoyment

That the Tenant may peaceably and quietly hold and enjoy the Property during the Term without any interruption or disturbance by the Landlord or any person rightfully claiming through or under the Landlord.

5. Insurance and Risk Protection Arrangement

5.1 The Tenant covenants with the Landlord:-

5.1.1 to keep the Property insured with a reputable insurance office against loss or damage by the Insured Risks in the sum the Tenant is advised represents the Reinstatement Value of the Property from time to time, or to be a member of the Risk Protection Arrangement;

5.1.2 if not a member of the Risk Protection Arrangement to pay the premiums for insurance promptly as they become due and maintain in force the policies of insurance on the Property;

5.1.3 following the incidence of damage to or destruction of the Property and subject to receipt of all necessary consents licences permissions and the like to apply the proceeds of the policy of the insurance or payment under the Risk Protection Arrangement received for those purposes in rebuilding and reinstating the Property (provided that this covenant should be satisfied if the Tenant provides premises not necessarily identical to the Property as the same existing prior to such damage or destruction occurring) as soon as may be reasonably practicable provided that in case it shall be impossible or impracticable to reinstate the Property in accordance with the provisions of this Clause Insurance within 3 years of the date of damage or destruction occurring either party may serve written notice on the other to terminate this Lease and upon service of such notice this Lease shall immediately cease and determine but without prejudice to the rights of either party against the other in respect of any prior breach of any obligation contained in this Lease and any monies received under the said policy of

insurance or under the Risk Protection Arrangement whether before or after the termination of this Lease shall be paid by the Tenant on receipt to the Landlord and shall as between the Landlord and the Tenant belong to the Landlord absolutely;⁷

5.1.4 if not a member of the Risk Protection Arrangement to produce to the Landlord a copy of the insurance policy whenever reasonably requested and the receipt for the last or other evidence of renewal and up to date details of the amount of cover (but no more often than once in any period of 12 months in both cases);

5.1.5 not to knowingly do anything whereby any policy of insurance relating to the Property may become void or voidable.

5.2 The Tenant further covenants with the Landlord to insure against liability in respect of property owners' and third party risks if not a member of the Risk Protection Arrangement.

6. Provisos

6.1 Re-Entry

6.1.1 Where there occurs a breach by the Tenant of Clause 3.9 and/or following the incidence of damage to or destruction of the Property and subject to receipt of all necessary consents licences permissions and the like to apply the proceeds of the policy of the insurance or payment under the Risk Protection Arrangement received for those purposes in rebuilding and reinstating the Property (provided that this covenant should be satisfied if the Tenant provides premises not necessarily identical to the Property as the same existing prior to such damage or destruction occurring) as soon as may be reasonably practicable provided that in case it shall be impossible or impracticable to reinstate the Property in accordance with the provisions of this Clause Insurance within 3 years of the date of damage or destruction occurring either party may serve written notice on the other to terminate this Lease and upon service of such notice this Lease shall immediately cease and determine but without prejudice to the rights of either party against the other in respect of any prior breach of any obligation contained in this Lease and any monies received under the said policy of insurance or under the Risk Protection Arrangement whether before or after the termination of this Lease shall be paid by the Tenant on receipt to the Landlord and shall as between the Landlord and the Tenant belong to the Landlord absolutely; of this Lease and the Landlord has served written notice specifying such breach and the remedial action required by the Tenant and if within a reasonable period (taking account of the breach complained of) the Tenant has not taken steps to remedy such breach or the Tenant is dissolved or struck off or removed from the Register of Companies or otherwise ceases to exist then it is lawful for the Landlord or any person authorised by the Landlord at any time afterwards to re-enter upon the Property or any part of it in the name of

(vii) ⁷ Note that insurance monies belong to the Landlord. If the Academy Trust is paying for any buildings, or does so in the future, the parties should agree equitable provisions for a split of the insurance proceeds in the event of non-reinstatement.

the whole and thereupon the Term absolutely determines without prejudice to any right of action of the Landlord in respect of any breach of the Tenant's obligations contained in this Lease.

6.2 Landlord's Rights on Forfeiture

The Landlord's right to forfeit this Lease is not affected by any acceptance of or demand for rent or any action which would affirm this Lease by the Landlord with knowledge of a breach of any of the Tenant's covenants contained in this Lease and the Tenant is not in any proceedings for forfeiture or otherwise entitled to rely upon any such acceptance demand or affirmation as aforesaid as a defence provided that this provision only applies to any acceptance of or demand for rent or affirmation of this Lease made during such period as may in all the circumstances be reasonable for enabling the Landlord to conduct negotiations with the Tenant for remedying the breach.

6.3 Service of Notices

Section 196 of the Law of Property Act 1925 as amended by the Recorded Delivery Service Act 1962 applies to all notices which may require to be served under the terms of this Lease except that section 196 is deemed to be amended as follows:-

- 6.3.1 the final words of section 196(4) "and that service be delivered" are deleted and there is substituted "and that service is deemed to have been made on the third working day after the registered letter has been posted" and "working day" means any day from Monday to Friday (inclusive) other than Christmas Day Good Friday and any statutory or bank holiday;
- 6.3.2 any notice or document is also sufficiently served if sent by telephonic facsimile transmission to the party to be served and that service is deemed to be made on the day of transmission if transmitted before 4.00 pm on a working day but otherwise on the next following working day;
- 6.3.3 if the party to whom any notice to be served consists of more than one person the service of notice upon one of such persons constitutes service upon all of them;
- 6.3.4 any notice to be given by a party may be given by that party's solicitor or agent and when addressed to a party is not rendered invalid by reason of that party having died become insolvent or changed name whether or not the party serving notice is aware of the fact.

6.4 Governance

- 6.4.1 This Lease is governed by English law.
- 6.4.2 The parties submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the High Court of Justice in England.

6.5 Agreement to Exclude Sections 24 to 28 of the 1954 Act

6.5.1 The Landlord and the Tenant agree pursuant to section 38A(1) of the 1954 Act that the provisions of sections 24 to 28 (inclusive) of the 1954 Act are excluded in relation to the tenancy created by this Lease.

6.5.2 The Tenant confirms that:

- (a) the Landlord served on the Tenant a notice (the "Notice") applicable to the tenancy created by this Lease on _____ 2023 in accordance with section 38A(3)(a) of the 1954 Act; and
- (b) the Tenant or a person duly authorised by the Tenant made a declaration or a statutory declaration in relation to the Notice on _____ 2023 in accordance with the requirements of section 38A(3)(b) of the 1954 Act;

before the Tenant entered into this Lease or (if earlier) became contractually bound to do so.

6.6 Termination

6.6.1 This Lease shall automatically determine on the Funding Termination Date in circumstances where there is no other Funding Agreement in existence unless either:

- (a) the Landlord has received prior notice in writing from the Secretary of State for Education of an intention for this Lease to be assigned in accordance with the terms of this Lease; or
- (b) this Lease has been assigned in accordance with the terms of this Lease.

6.7.2 This Lease shall automatically determine on the End Date if by that date this Lease has not been assigned in accordance with the terms of this Lease.

6.7.3 The Tenant shall give written notice to the Landlord as soon as possible after becoming aware that the Funding Agreement may be liable to termination, including where a notice terminating the Funding Agreement is served on the Tenant, and the notice served on the Landlord shall specify the date (or likely date) of termination of the Funding Agreement.

6.7.4 The Tenant shall give written notice to the Landlord at the same time as the Tenant serves any notice terminating the Funding Agreement and such notice shall specify the date (or likely date) of termination of the Funding Agreement.

6.7.5 On the termination of this Lease under Clause 6.7.1 or 6.7.2 everything contained in the Lease ceases and determines but without prejudice to any claim by either party against the other

in respect of any antecedent breach of any obligation contained in the Lease.

7. Landlord's Powers

7.1 The Landlord enters into this Lease pursuant to its powers under sections 111 120 122 and 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Education Act 1996 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 and all other powers so enabling and warrants that it has full power to enter into this Lease and to perform all obligations on its part herein contained.

7.2 Nothing in this Lease shall fetter the Landlord in the proper performance of its statutory functions.

8. New Tenancy

This Lease is a new tenancy for the purposes of the 1995 Act.

9. Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act

A person who is not a party to this Lease has no right under the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 to enforce any term of this Lease but this does not affect any right or remedy of a third party which exists or is available apart from that Act.

10. Charity

The property will as a result of this Lease be held by North West Academies Trust Limited an exempt charity.

EXECUTED AS A DEED by the parties on the date which first appears in this Lease.

SIGNATURE PAGE

EXECUTED (but not delivered until the date hereof) AS A DEED by affixing the Common Seal of **CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL** in the presence of:-

.....
Authorised Signature)
.....
(Date)

DRAFT

EXECUTED (but not delivered until the date hereof) AS A DEED by **STEPHEN EDWARD DOCKING**, a director, for and on behalf of **NORTH WEST ACADEMIES TRUST LIMITED** in the presence of:-

.....
Director
.....
(Date)

.....
.....
.....

SCHEDULE 1

Part 1 – The Property

ALL THAT land and buildings known as Millfields Primary and Nursery School, Marsh Lane, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 5HP registered under Title No CH519596 shown edged red on the Plan and include the following so far as the same may exist at any time during the Term:-

- (a) all Conduits exclusively serving such premises; and
- (b) all Fixtures and Fittings (save for those that belong to the Tenant).
- (c) all hedges fences and other structures abutting the highway

but does not include any interest in the highways known as Marsh Lane or Salt Meadows.

DRAFT

SCHEDULE 2

Rights Excepted and Reserved

1. Access to Property

The right upon giving reasonable prior notice to the Tenant (except in case of emergency) to enter upon the Property for the purposes of the exercise of the rights powers privileges and permissions conferred or granted under the covenants and provisions of this Lease the person exercising such right causing as little damage disturbance or inconvenience as reasonably possible to the operation of the school on the Property and making good as soon as reasonably practicable to the Tenant's reasonable satisfaction any damage to the Property caused by the exercise of this right.

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SCHEDULE 3

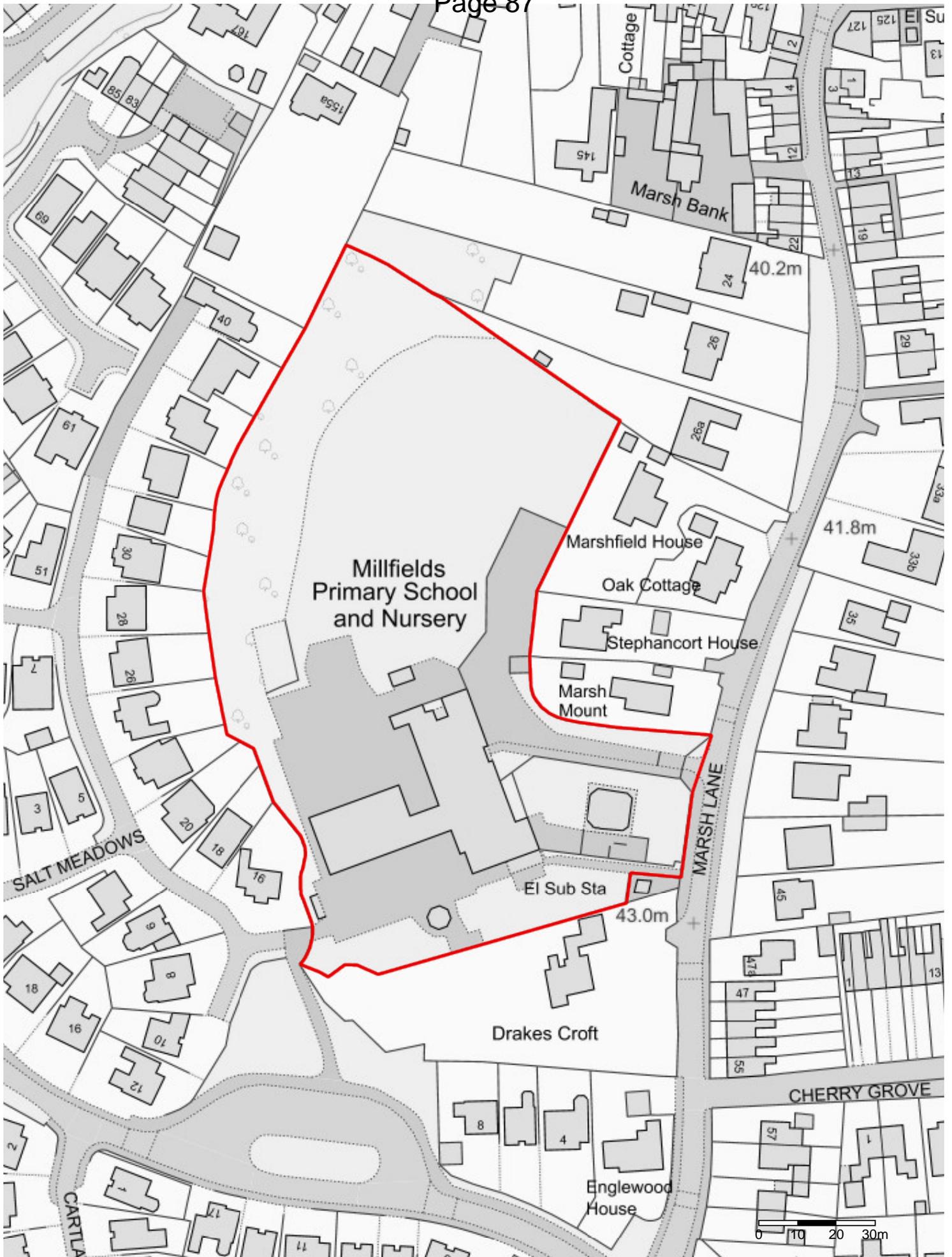
Landlord's Property

Details of title of Landlord's Property.⁸

All the land and building known as Millfields Primary and Nursery School, Marsh Lane, Nantwich registered under Title No CH 519596. The entirety of the Landlord's Property at this location and is subject to the entries on the title register, in particular the right of entry to the Property created by a conveyance of 28 September 1964 between (1) The County Council for the administrative County of the County Palatine of Chester and (2) Agnes Mary Young.

DRAFT

⁸



17/8/2023



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The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State for Education

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/contactus/df

To: The Chair of Governors of Millfields Primary School and Nursery

Cheshire East Council

ACADEMY ORDER

1. This is an Academy Order made further to section 4 of the Academies Act 2010.
2. I hereby order that on the conversion date Millfields Primary School and Nursery shall be converted into an Academy.
3. The conversion date shall be the date that the school opens as an Academy further to and as provided for in Academy arrangements made further to section 1 of the Academies Act 2010.
4. On the conversion date Cheshire East Council shall cease to maintain Millfields Primary School and Nursery.
5. The independent school standards (as defined in section 157(2) of the Education Act 2002) are to be treated as met in relation to the Academy on the conversion date.

Signed on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education by:

Signed:

Date: 30th June 2023

**Vicky Beer CBE,
Regional Director**

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OPEN

Children and Families Committee**13 November 2023****Cheshire East Place Plans for Learning
Disabilities and Mental Health****Report of: Helen Charlesworth-May, Executive Director Adults,
Health and Integration****Report Reference No: CF/41/22-23****Ward(s) Affected: All Wards****Purpose of Report**

- 1 This report seeks approval the Cheshire East Place Plans for Learning Disabilities and Mental Health.
- 2 Both plans support the delivery of the following priorities outlined in the Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-2025.
 - Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents.
 - Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient.
 - Reduce health inequalities across the borough.
 - Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs.
 - Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential.
 - Reduce the reliance on long term care by improving services closer to home and providing more extra care facilities, including dementia service.

Executive Summary

- 3 The development of the new All Age Placed Based Plans will be built around greater integrated partnership working at place level between the two lead organisations, Cheshire East Council and the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board and our partners.
- 4 Both plans promote a whole system approach, building on existing work and momentum to further the transformative change needed to tackle challenges we face across to provide services for the future needs of people with a variety of different levels of support needs.
- 5 Both plans seek to improve the lives and outcomes of people with learning disabilities and mental health support needs, by focusing on the importance of strong partnership working across health and local authorities. When organisations and teams work together, and when people and families receive support in a joined-up way, we know that people experience better outcomes.
- 6 This report provides details of the approach used for consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. It has ensured that both plans have been fully co-produced.
- 7 The development of the Plans is not an end. Together with the implementation plans, the respective plans will be continuously reviewed and monitored annually by the Cheshire East Learning Disabilities Partnership Board and the Mental Health Partnership Board, to ensure that the plans are delivering on the key priorities and outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Approve the Cheshire East Place Learning Disabilities Plan**
- 2. Approve the Cheshire East Place Mental Health Plan**

Background

- 8 All Age Strategies in Cheshire East have been in place for Learning Disabilities and Mental Health since 2018 and are now coming to the end of their strategic timeframes.
- 9 In their place we are seeking to develop new All Age Placed Based Plans. This will build on previous partnership working in Cheshire East and develop plans built around greater integrated partnership working at place level between the two lead organisations, Cheshire East Council and the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board.

- 10 It will also shape the way we work with our providers, voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) organisations and residents to support people with learning disabilities and mental health support needs.
- 11 The plans promote transformative change which is needed to tackle challenges such as reducing disparities in health and social care; improving quality and performance; preventing mental and physical ill health; maximising independence and preventing care needs, by promoting control, choice and flexibility in how people receive care and support.
- 12 Both Plans have a co-produced vision and several key strategic priorities.
- 13 To enable us to successfully deliver these priorities several high-level outcomes have been identified. These have been captured in the implementation plans will be delivered and monitored by a range of organisations as part of a partnership approach to ensuring the successful delivery of the plans.
- 14 Monitoring will be undertaken and reviewed through the Learning Disability Partnership Board and the Mental Health Partnership Board, with key updates and escalations highlighted up to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Consultation and Engagement

- 15 The development of both Plans is underpinned by 'Together in Cheshire East', a coproduction guide which details how residents and commissioners work together as equal partners toward common goals.
- 16 In the development of both plans we have (where possible) conducted joint engagement and coproduction with other commissioning workstreams, to reduce workload, pool system resources and the need for people to tell their story twice. For example, joint engagement was undertaken with the development of the Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service to capture the voice of children.
- 17 Engagement with a wide range of stakeholders has been undertaken as part of the development of both plans and there has also been consultation on the draft plans.
- 18 Easy Read versions have been developed with people who have lived experience of mental health and self-advocates with learning disabilities.

Cheshire East Place Learning Disability Plan Engagement

- 19 Engagement on the Learning Disability Plan started at the Learning Disability Conference back on 20 June 2022 which was attended by over 200 people, including children and adults with learning disabilities, health

and social care professionals, providers and community groups. Several key priorities were agreed and highlighted as important by self-advocates and parent carers as the three action to focus on:

Action 1 – Make things better for people who want to stay up late.

Action 2 – Give people more chance to have their say on services and what they want to do.

Action 3 – Provide better access to information for people with learning disabilities and carers.

20 To support this, a project group was set up to drive change and improvements around these key priorities, in which progress is governed through the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

21 Further engagement has been undertaken to support the coproduction of the refreshed Cheshire East Learning Disability Plan, which has been developed over the past 18 months in consultation with people with learning disabilities (adults and children), families, carers and staff delivering services. The Plan builds on the progress made in delivering the current 'My Life, My Choice' Learning Disability Strategy.

22 Working together, we developed both informal and formal platforms for consultation both face to face meetings and an online survey. While responses were low compared to the numbers who attended the Learning Disabilities Conference, overall, the aims and objectives were supported and felt the plan reflected effective change.

23 Further engagement has been undertaken with self-advocates, parent carers and residents with lived experience in terms of how the plan will be delivered. An Action Plan is being developed and shaped by this engagement, which will detail how the Plan's priorities will be tracked delivered.

24 The plan has also been shared and agreed by the Cheshire East Learning Disabilities Partnership Board.

Cheshire East Place Mental Health Plan Engagement

25 In Autumn 2022, we conducted pre-consultation engagement. The feedback from this engagement was then incorporated into the draft plan to be consulted on. This engagement consisted of a survey and a series of face-to-face meetings conducted with a wide range of key stakeholders.

26 The survey was made available as both a full and an easy read version and received 452 responses in total, with a total of 57 people attending one of the face-to-face meetings.

- 27 Feedback has been received from a wide range of organisations including Voluntary Community and Faith Sector Groups, Education settings, Mental Health Forums, Carers and people with lived experience.
- 28 Prior to the plan being finalised, we also give people the opportunity to provide further comments and feedback on the draft plan. 40 responses were received in total.
- 29 80% of survey respondents agreed the draft mental health plan should be adopted by partners across Cheshire East, 11% disagreed. 65% of survey respondents agreed the delivery actions will help deliver the priorities of the draft mental health plan, 18% disagreed.
- 30 Final engagement has been held with members of the Cheshire East Mental Health Partnership Board to formally sign the draft plan off.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 31 The development of both plans has been overseen by the Cheshire East Mental Health Partnership Board and Cheshire East Learning Disabilities Partnership Board. Membership of both boards includes representatives from Cheshire East Council, Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, self-advocates with lived experience and carers, Healthwatch, Cheshire Police and organisations from the Voluntary Community Faith Sector.
- 32 Both partnership boards also report directly into the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board and these plans are fully aligned with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 33 The Cheshire East Place Mental Health Plan and Learning Disabilities Plans will both play an important role in ensuring that the council meets its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014.
- 34 The plans also align with several other strategies and plans at both a local, sub regional and national level. This will ensure that we reduce duplication and ensure that strategic priorities are aligned and in turn ensuring that people using services are able to access better joined up support in a timely and effective manner.

Other Options Considered

35 **Do nothing**

The other option would be to not have any Cheshire East Place Plans for Learning Disabilities and Mental Health. This would not been aligned to the Health and Social Care Act (2022) which supports the need to

develop strategies that support more integrated approaches to delivering health and care.

Implications and Comments

Legal

- 36 Statutory guidance on the preparation of integrated care strategies was published on 29 July 2022. Integrated strategies are viewed as an opportunity to work with a wide range of people, communities, and organisations to develop evidence-based system-wide priorities that will improve the public's health and wellbeing and reduce disparities.
- 37 Under the Health and Care Act 2022, the integrated care partnership must give a copy of the integrated care strategy to each responsible local authority and the integrated care board and must publish the integrated care strategy.
- 38 Within the Care Act (2014) the partnership principle states that organisations should work with other local communities. Local people and authorities also have a part to play in preventing and supporting people.

Finance

- 39 Cheshire East Council has a total spend on commissioned services of £41.5m for (738) adults with learning disabilities and £10.7m for (487) adults with mental health support needs. There are also 259 individuals with autism (this includes people with learning disabilities and mental health support needs), with an annual spend of £17.4m.
- 40 Cheshire East Council Childrens Services data shows that there is an annual spend of £3.9m on services that support children with disabilities (we are unable to break this down to the primary support need of learning disabilities and mental health).
- 41 At the time of developing this report financial data on learning disabilities and mental health services is unavailable from the Integrated Care Board.
- 42 If both plans are adopted, and changes are proposed to local authority and NHS services in the future, then decision papers with the relevant financial information will be written and subject to governance and approval processes as usual.

Policy

- 43 The Cheshire East Place Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Plans firmly align with the Cheshire East Council's Corporate Plan 2021-2025, as identified in paragraph 2 of this report.
- 44 The Cheshire East Mental Health Plan also aligns with NHS Five Year Forward View. This sets out a vision of how NHS services need to change to meet the needs of the population. It argued that the NHS should place far greater emphasis on prevention, integration of services, and putting patients and communities in control of their health, which floating support provision seeks to achieve.
- 45 Both plans also align with vision and aspirations of the The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the population of Cheshire East 2023-2028 which are to:
- Reduce inequalities, narrowing the gap between those who are enjoying good health and wellbeing and those who are not
 - Improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of all of our residents
 - Help people to have a good quality of life, to be healthy and happy

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 46 Equality Impact Assessments have been completed for both plans; these has been included as an appendix to the report. (Appendix 5 and Appendix 6).
- 47 Each of the EIA's highlights the key protected characteristics around age and disabilities and potential barriers that prevent people from accessing and engaging with mental health and learning disability services. The plans seek to ensure that services and providers seek to identify solutions to improve through areas such as the use of technology, virtual support, making reasonable adjustments and provision of information on services in accessible formats.
- 48 Easy Read versions of the Plans which have been co-produced by people with learning disabilities and with mental health support needs.

Human Resources

- 49 There are no direct human resources implications because of the development of both plans.

Risk Management

- 50 Development of place-based plans and their implementation present challenges and risks, See below identified risks with mitigation.

Risk	Mitigation
<p>Poor response and engagement from key stakeholders towards the development of the plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive market development, engagement and coproduction have been key to the development of the plans, building on existing work undertaken (LD Conference). ▪ Both plans have been produced in collaborations with the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board and Mental Health Partnership Board which contains a wide range of stakeholders. ▪ Both plans will also be endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board
<p>Implementation actions are unrealistic, and there is a lack of stakeholder engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Detailed implementation plans within each plan identifying key outcomes, deliverables and implementation actions have been developed as part of those plans. ▪ Plans have had input and buy in from key stakeholders through the development of project group. ▪ Many of the key deliverable are already in place or are covered in different strategies and plans which demonstrates wider alignment and buy in across the system
<p>Lack of accountability to the delivery of the plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plans will be monitored by existing learning disabilities and mental health partnership boards with identified leads for each priority. ▪ Monitoring of the plans will take place on an annual basis and any issues will be escalated to the Health and Wellbeing Board

Rural Communities

- 51 There are no direct implications for rural communities. However, services identified in both plans will work to target people in need of support in rural areas and will develop strategies and methods of working to combat isolation and issues around accessibility.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 52 Both plans are all age in their scope. There is strong alignment between the plans and the Cheshire East Children and Young Peoples Plan, Cheshire East Preparing for Adulthood Strategy.
- 53 Both plans advocate a move towards move to a more personalised offer will create a wider range of enabled services which will be more attractive to young people preparing for adulthood than at present, to ensure a seamless journey for these individuals.

Public Health

- 54 There has been significant input from the Public Health Team in the development of both plans.
- 55 Through continued joint working and funding with the Public Health Team, the future service provision for people, and improved person-centred approaches can reduce the inequalities that arise from a standardised approach. Thorough consultation and intelligence on inequalities, opportunities can be robustly evaluated to ensure that they do not risk widening inequalities.

Climate Change

- 56 Both plans support the need to reduce the impact of climate change by adopting innovative approaches for future service delivery by reducing the need for travel to access support (where applicable).
- 57 The plans also support ways in which providers can deliver environmental sustainability as part of the social value criteria.

Access to Information	
Contact Officers:	<p>Keith Evans, Head of Service, Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Keith.Evans@cheshireeast.gov.uk</p> <p>Mark Hughes, Programme Lead, Complex Needs mark.hughes@cheshireeast.gov.uk</p> <p>Gerard Buckley, Project Manager, Complex Needs gerard.buckley@cheshireeast.gov.uk</p>
Appendices:	<p>Appendix 1 – CE Mental Health Plan</p> <p>Appendix 2 – CE Mental Health Plan – Easy Read</p> <p>Appendix 3 - CE Learning Disabilities Plan</p> <p>Appendix 4 - CE Learning Disabilities Plan - Easy Read</p> <p>Appendix 5 - Equality Impact Assessment All Age Mental Health Plan</p> <p>Appendix 6 - Equality Impact Assessment Cheshire East Learning Disability Plan</p>
Background Papers:	<p>Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021-2025</p> <p>Guidance on the preparation of integrated care strategies – Published 29 July 2022</p>



Cheshire East Place Mental Health Plan 2024-2029 Draft

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Our Vision and Aims
3. National and Local Strategies
4. Key facts and figures
5. Developing the plan
6. Priority Areas
7. How will we achieve this – Key Delivery Actions

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OFFICIAL

1. Introduction

The Cheshire East Place Mental Plan 2024-2029 covers how we plan to strengthen our efforts to help people in Cheshire East stay healthy and thrive, whilst addressing the fact that we need to do more to support people with mental health problems, including those that live with severe and enduring mental illness.

We all have a part to play in Cheshire East being a mentally healthy place to live, a compassionate place where our default is to listen to others, where everyone feels able to talk freely about their feelings and emotions and where families are supported to ensure good mental health now and for future generations.

The Cheshire East Place Mental Health Plan promotes and enables culture, ethos and practice that strengthens relational approaches and inclusion, and recognises the importance of psychological safety.

This means we can flourish across our diverse communities, enjoy the things that help us feel good and get access to high quality support and compassionate services when we need them.

Mental health is shaped by the wide-ranging characteristics (including inequalities) of the social, economic, and physical environments in which people live. It is acknowledged for example, that people on low incomes have higher rates of mental health conditions, particularly severe and enduring problems, than those in higher income groups. This has been further impacted by recent events including the coronavirus pandemic and more recently the cost of living crisis. These issues have contributed to widening health inequalities, which in turn impact on peoples overall mental health and wellbeing.

Mental health and wellbeing are something that affects us all and only by coming together to address the wider factors that affect mental health, by improving services and focusing on promotion and prevention, will Cheshire East achieve its ambition to be a trauma informed and mental health aware community

Strong local partnerships have already worked closely together to develop this plan as it is recognised that working collaboratively with other interested parties helps to develop a more robust and effective document. Partners have also contributed to develop an associated implementation plan. Implementation will enable us to improve the outcomes of the local population.

The approach brings together public, private and third sector organisations determined to make change happen and build a fairer, healthier Cheshire East.

The development of this plan has been overseen by the Cheshire East Mental Health Partnership Board, whose members represent Cheshire East Council, Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, the main mental health service provider in Cheshire East) mental health service users with lived experience and carers, Healthwatch, Cheshire Police and organisations from the Voluntary Sector Mental Health Alliance. The Mental Health Partnership Board also reports directly into the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board and this plan is fully aligned with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

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This plan proposes a whole system approach to improve the mental health and wellbeing of individuals and their families, supported by integrated health and social care services, resilient and trauma informed communities, inclusive employers and services that maximise independence and choice

The plan also aligns with several other strategies and plans at both a local, sub regional and national level. This will ensure that we reduce duplication of work and to ensure that strategic priorities are aligned and in turn ensuring that people using services are able to access better joined up support in a timely and effective manner.

The development of the Cheshire East Place Mental Health Plan is not an end. Together with the implementation plan, the plan will be continuously reviewed regularly by the Cheshire East Mental Health Partnership Board, to ensure that it always reflects both national demands and local need.

2. Our Vision and Aims

Vision

Cheshire East partners and people living within the borough have developed a co-produced vision to support the delivery of the key priority actions within the plan.

“We will seek to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all ages in Cheshire East, from children through to older adults, working in partnership with people with lived experience, families, communities, and the voluntary and faith sector.

Working together we will strive to meet the needs of the person, through integrated models of support that focus on people’s strengths, recovery, self-care and encourage independence – reducing the need for hospital care.

There will be a clear focus on the prevention of ill health, early intervention, health promotion and the development of strong communities that can support people with mental health needs.”

Aims

The Cheshire East Place Mental Health Plan will aim to

- Drive forward the vision and show how we can all play a part in achieving this, and how we will know when we’ve achieved it
- Set out the implementation plan – based on six key priorities that will help achieve the vision

Over the course of this mental health plan’s development, several principles and themes have emerged. These themes are reflected by everyone involved in developing this plan agreeing to:

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- Ensure that service re-design and future service developments are produced in conjunction with people with 'lived experience'. This way of working sees service users and service providers working together to reach an agreed outcome(s).
- Recognise the impact of trauma and adversity on peoples' mental health.
- Focus on the wider social determinants of mental health and illness. These are a broad range of social, economic and environmental factors which impact on people's health and include things such as education, housing and employment status.
- Ensure parity of esteem - that is, to value mental health equally to physical health.
- Challenge stigma and prejudice.
- Ensure actions and service developments / design are evidence-based and co-produced.
- Adopt a recovery focus where possible - in terms of mental wellbeing a recovery focus means gaining and retaining hope, understanding of one's abilities and disabilities, engagement in an active life, personal autonomy, social identity, meaning and purpose in life, and a positive sense of self.
- Address issues of inclusion and diversity - inclusion is about giving equal access and opportunities and getting rid of discrimination and intolerance. Diversity is about respecting and appreciating what makes people different.
- Adopt a focus on promotion, prevention and early intervention with education being the key focus.

Key Priorities

The six key priorities that have been developed to deliver the vision are outlined below.



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3. National Plans and Strategies

A new national Long-Term Plan for mental health is currently being developed and will build on the expansion and transformation of mental health services already underway through the NHS Long Term Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24¹. The plan recognises that its principles must be implemented in partnership with local systems, non-government organisations and other sectors in order to succeed.

The Health and Care Act (2022)² has seen the establishment of Integrated Care Systems, which bring together health, local government, and patients to improve services in every part of the country. The Integrated Care System that Cheshire East Place is part of are required to set out local plans for the next 5 years, and mental health must be a central part of those plans.

The **National Strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021-2026**⁷ identifies six broad aims to ensure people are diagnosed and receive the right support as early as possible, and across their lifetime. Seven out of ten autistic people have a mental health condition such as anxiety, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). We aim to ensure that our mental health services are autism friendly.

The **Best Start in Life: A Vision for the first 1,001 Days**⁸ through pregnancy to the age of two is also a key document to reference as it emphasises the importance of early years, parent-infant relationships and perinatal mental health. Maternal mental health difficulties are common and without the right support they can have serious consequences for women and their families and lasting effects on the health and wellbeing of babies.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on people experiencing health inequalities, and many people in Cheshire East have felt the effect of poorer mental health, financial worries, and food and employment insecurity for the first time. **Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review**³ highlights the impact of anticipated increases in poverty for children, young people and adults of working age, food insecurity, poorer mental health in children and young people, the unequal impact of the pandemic on ethnic minority 'groups' and people from ethnic minority 'backgrounds, rising unemployment and low wages leading to worse health and wider inequalities.

The **National Partnership Agreement: Right Care, Right Person**⁹ involves the police working with partner agencies to identify the most appropriate agency to give vulnerable people the care and support they need. While some mental health incidents do require police attendance, there are a significant number that involve no safety risk or crime. The new approach will mean police can focus on attending health incidents where there's a significant safety risk or crime being committed and refer others to the appropriate partner agency. Cheshire and Merseyside have been identified as an early adopter for this scheme and at the time this Plan commences, work is underway to understand the implications across health and social care.

Sport **England's Uniting the Movement** is a 10-year vision that seeks to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. Sport and physical activity has a big role to play in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society for all.

Core20PLUS5 is a national approach to the reduction of health inequalities. The approach targets improvements in health outcomes for key conditions within the most deprived local areas and for other inclusion health groups.

Core20PLUS5⁴ refers to improving outcomes for the most deprived 20% of England's population.

Whilst health and wellbeing outcomes in Cheshire East are often better than the England average, these overall figures mask significant inequalities within our Borough. Those in our most deprived areas not only live shorter lives but spend more years in poor health. Many people in more deprived areas will be in poor health before they reach retirement age.

This is also seen in Cheshire East where the inequality in life expectancy at birth is 9.5 years and 7.2 years for males and females respectively (2018-20) but the inequality in healthy life expectancy at birth is wider at 13.5 years and 12.6 years for males and females respectively (2009-13)¹.

That residents in deprived areas experience more years in poor health is unfair and unpleasant for the individuals but it also increases demands on our health and care services and reduces the local workforce. Reducing the gap is a key step in creating sustainable services and a vibrant economy.

Local Plans and Strategy Alignment

This plan is all age: it covers how we plan to improve mental health from conception through to end of life. It also makes clear the contribution that other policy areas, such as housing or community safety, make towards people having good mental health.

Cheshire East has published its Health and Wellbeing Strategy and mental health is one of the four priority strategic outcomes within the strategy. The Mental Health Plan will sit below the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and this will ensure that there is alignment between the documents.

Mental health and reducing health inequalities is a key priority in the Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan (2021-2025)⁵. The plan seeks to work to improve the mental health of all people working and living in Cheshire East.

There are also other strategies and plans in Cheshire East that address the mental health of children and young people (Cheshire East Children and Young Peoples Plan, Cheshire East Preparing for Adulthood Strategy) and the mental health of older people (Cheshire East Place Dementia Plan, Cheshire East Live Well for Longer Plan) and carers (Cheshire East All Age Carers Strategy). There are also sub regional plans for improving community mental health services (Community Mental Health

Transformation Programme) and for and the Cheshire East Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Action Plan).

All Together Active¹ is a system-wide strategy for Physical Activity, commissioned by the Integrated Care System Population Health Board, developed by MSP and Active Cheshire in conjunction with place based and regional partners. Whilst not a panacea for health inequality, physical activity has been identified as a key tool in health improvement.

The All Together Active strategy sets out how we plan to capitalise on this opportunity by working with partners across the subregion to build physical activity into both health and social care and the wider settings people move through. All Together Active is aimed at strategic and place-based partners across Cheshire and Merseyside in a position to influence changes in physical activity at scale.

The Cheshire East Place Mental Health Plan does not seek to replace these existing plans and strategies and work programmes, but it does provide a unified vision for mental health in the borough. This means that activity across children and adult services, across both prevention and treatment, and in community settings and hospitals, can be better aligned and therefore have the greatest impact on people's lives.

4. Key Facts and Figures

Prevalence of mental health conditions in Cheshire East residents is very variable, and there is some indication that higher rates are linked to the more deprived areas of Macclesfield and Crewe.

The overall rate of prevalence calculated as a rate per 1,000 resident population is highest in Macclesfield with a rate of 175.3/1,000). Crewe is the second highest with a rate of 163.9/1,000. The locality with the lowest prevalence rate is in Middlewood (Bollington, Disley & Poynton) at 128.8/1,000.

Significant variation also occurs within the individual age groups, e.g., Macclesfield has the highest rate for residents aged 0-19 at 58.2 per 1,000 population compared to CHAW (35.2/1,000).

Macclesfield also has the highest rate for residents aged 20-64y (222.9/1,000) when compared to the lowest, Middlewood (164.9/1,000). For residents aged +65y, Crewe is the highest (155.9/1,000) with Nantwich & Rural the lowest (113.0/1,000).

Table. 1i shows the rates for the Care Community footprint areas across Cheshire East for each of the age groups; note that prevalence is for mild to moderate mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety as well a serious mental illness (SMI).

Table. 1i

Prevalence of Mental Health Condition				
Cheshire East	Rate / 1,000 Population			
Locality	0-19y	20-64y	+65y	All Ages
MACCLESFIELD	58.22	222.96	153.82	175.29
CREWE	41.93	211.74	155.86	163.92
SMASH	43.07	215.00	133.76	160.66
KNUTSFORD	40.23	211.94	145.91	158.40
CHESHIRE EAST:	44.09	200.29	135.43	153.28
CHOC	44.17	201.63	128.54	150.98
NANTWICH & RURAL	40.04	172.66	113.04	131.56
CHAW	35.15	165.52	128.80	129.68
MIDDLEWOOD	46.13	164.89	116.00	128.76

Data Source: CIPHA (NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICS) - January 2023

Table 1ii illustrates the highest mental health prevalence rates at ward level for residents of all ages. Of the 15 wards with the highest prevalence, Macclesfield has 5 in this group and Crewe has 4. Most of the areas reflect higher levels of socio-economic deprivation. However, it should also be noted that some of the areas highlighted below do have some of the highest levels of life expectancy in the borough and rate better across physical health.

Table. 1ii

CIPHA @ August 2023			
Cheshire East	Rate/1,000 total popn (All residents)	Life Expectancy	
		Males	Females
Ward (highest 15)			
Macclesfield Hurdsfield	253.63	78.4	82.5
Macclesfield West & Ivy	223.65	79.6	84.8
Macclesfield South	220.35	75.6	81.2
Sandbach Heath & East	210.65	75.4	86.3
Crewe North	210.65	77.3	82.5
Macclesfield East	208.52	79.1	84.7
Handforth	203.62	80.5	85.8
Wilmslow Lacey Green	203.07	77.8	80.5
Macclesfield Central	202.72	79.0	83.9
Crewe St Barnabas	202.49	75.4	80.0
Congleton West	200.49	78.4	83.1
Sandbach Ettiley Heath & Wheelock	198.30	81.7	87.2
Crewe East	196.96	77.4	81.6
Shavington	196.89	81.0	86.3
Sandbach Elworth	192.64	78.8	83.8

Data Source: CIPHA [Tartan Rug \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](http://Tartan Rug (cheshireeast.gov.uk))
(NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICS) - August 2023 2013-2017

Table. 1iii summarises A&E attendances for mental health-related issues (including self-harm) for the period April 2021 to December 2022). This activity is by residents registered at any GP Practice in Cheshire East. There is a monthly average of 232 attendances, across all ages, for this period.

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Table. 1iii

A&E Attendances: Apr21 - Dec22	
Psychosocial/Behavioural Change	
Environmental	
Key Presentations:	
Depressive/Anxiety Disorder	
Psychosis/Other Serious Mental Illness	
Wounding from Self Harm	
Overdose: Paracetamol/Antidepressants/Opiates	
Alcohol: Intoxication/Dependency	
Average Monthly Attendances:	
All Ages:	232
0-19y	62
20-64y	149
+65y	22

Source: ECDS - NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICS QlikSense

Wider Determinants of Mental Health

Our mental health and many common mental disorders are shaped by the social, economic, and physical environments in which we live, at different stages of life. Throughout the current coronavirus pandemic, these issues have contributed to widening health inequalities.

Our aspiration is to reduce mental health inequalities associated with wider factors including:

- **Employment/income** (good quality employment linked to education & skills; supportive workplaces; impact of worklessness, income maximisation and better budgeting)
- **Housing** (quality/type of housing; housing conditions, energy efficiency and supporting communities)
- **Transport** (connectivity; access to public transport and active travel)
- **Justice** – Many children, young people and adults in or at risk of being in temporary detention, custody or secure and detained settings experience a disproportionately higher levels of poor mental health.

Quantitative data analysis can confirm this, by demonstrating that high numbers of young people engaged with Youth Justice Service had poor mental health, SEND requirements, and were using drugs and alcohol. 17.7% of young people accessing the service in Cheshire had a formally diagnosed mental health condition. Overall, 47.9% of young people were accessing mental health services.⁶

- **Access to green space & physical activity** (accessible routes; using indoor/outdoor opportunities for physical activity) - recognizing the impact that seeing nature and wildlife has in promoting people's wellbeing, and how sharing green space is a simple and effective way to support people's mental wellbeing, achieved by simply

drawing on one of the assets that Cheshire East has an abundance of. Currently, far too few people in Cheshire and Merseyside meet the NHS physical activity guidelines. Half a million adults in the subregion are inactive, (Sport England Active Lives (2022)) with many facing barriers to physical activity because of issues around gender, race, disability, poverty, sexuality, religion and parental status.

- In **rural areas** we also need to ensure that our mental health services work closely with the Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy Services. Farming as an occupation has one of the highest rates of suicide due to occupational pressures and this can contribute to serious levels of depression and self-harm.
- For **schools and colleges** to become trauma informed and mentally healthy places for all there is an overarching set of principles and body of evidence that informs the kind of response and support that can reduce the impact of traumatic events. There is also recognition that the experiences of each child must be thought of in the light of their lived experience.

5. Developing the Plan

A comprehensive engagement process was undertaken by the Cheshire East Mental Health Partnership Board between August and October 2022.

This draft plan and the priorities have been written through co-production with providers, people currently accessing services, experts by experience and carers.. This co-production was undertaken through several focus groups (face to face/virtual), attending local forums and meetings, the distribution of a survey and an online consultation. Through this engagement a picture of what good mental health care looks like has been built.

“Early help for children and young people is vital in helping them to avoid much worse problems as they get older. Early help also allows the family to feel like they have been heard and responded to in their concerns for their child/young person, and are taken seriously.”

Online Survey

The survey was made available as a full version and an easy read version and received 452 responses in total,

Key themes from the engagement and pre consultation have been summarised below.

Mental Health Support

Of all survey respondents:

- 29% had used mental health support services with Cheshire East
- 57% knew where to get help with their mental health, 43% did not

- 31% felt they had received the mental health support they needed in the past, 40% felt they had not

Respondents listed up to 3 things about mental health services they would want to change/improve.

The areas that were flagged up the most were as follows

Changes to mental health services

Improve service access/increase capacity

People have told us would like to see:

- Access to mental health services become easier and faster
- More funding and resource for mental health services is needed
- Long term access to mental health services, and a responsive service
- More support provided in local areas, and outside of clinical settings
- Access to support should in person, or at home
- Increased service provision through GPs

How we treat mental health:

People have told us they would like to see:

- Improved mental health support in the community
- Better mental health support for parents
- Enhanced mental health support for employers
- Improved wellbeing to improve mental health, don't rely on medication
- Encouragement of healthier lifestyles to improve mental health
- Mental Health Services that are able to listen better to what people require
- More children and young people's mental health services (CYPMHS)
- Have more interaction between mental health services and Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations.
- Expand access to "Improving Access to Psychological Therapies" (IAPT),
- Have more access to skills based Dialectal Behavioural Therapy particularly for those experiencing Personality Disorders
- More group sessions
- Encouragement of self-responsibility, resilience and strength

Mental health services and processes

People have told us they would like to see:

- Better links between health services, ensure they are more joined-up
- Service users only having to tell their story once
- Better trained staff across all teams
- Enhanced carer/family support
- Improved communication with families in the system so they know what to expect and when

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- Better GP support

Promotion of mental health services

People have told us they would like to see:

- Improved awareness of services among different professionals and teams
- Better communications and promotion of mental health services

Reduced stigma around mental health

People have told us they would like to see

- Reduced stigma towards mental health conditions
- Greater awareness around mental health

“In the event of an emergency with physical health, there are clear routes to obtain help. How might this be mirrored for mental health? It’s an important question, for certain, but not without some huge challenges.”

Face-to-face and virtual engagement was conducted during September and October 2022 with the below organisations, forums and services. During the face-to-face meetings the pre-consultation survey was promoted as the main way to give feedback:

During the meetings people were asked to provide feedback on the draft priorities, how services can intervene earlier when people need support with their mental health, and what were the gaps in current provision, as well as the barriers to accessing services

- Vesta (Support for Polish Communities)
- Voluntary Sector Mental Health Alliance
- Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum
- Cheshire East Mental Health Partnership Board
- The Weston Centre Day Service
- Weston Hub Crisis Cafe
- Cheshire East Youth Council
- Open Mind Forum
- East Cheshire Mental Health Forum
- Cheshire East Youth Council

“Focus on prevention rather than cure, mental health should just be a part of life/wellbeing and-talked about in schools and communities. You shouldn't have to have a mental health 'problem' to benefit from services, but they should be easy to access should you need the extra support.”

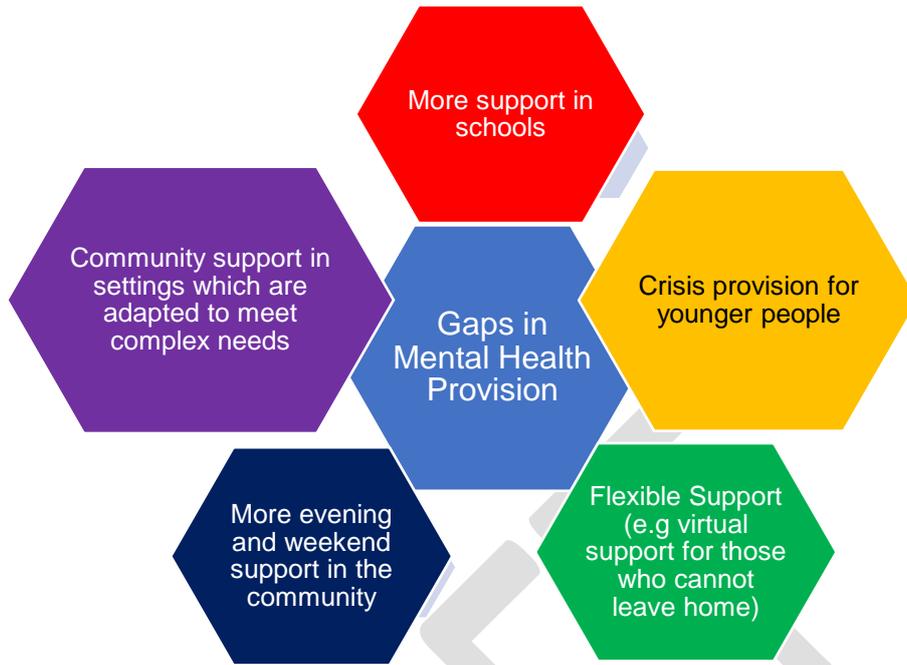
What people have told us?
Early Intervention and Prevention

The following areas were flagged up as key to improving early intervention and prevention and ensuring services work effectively.



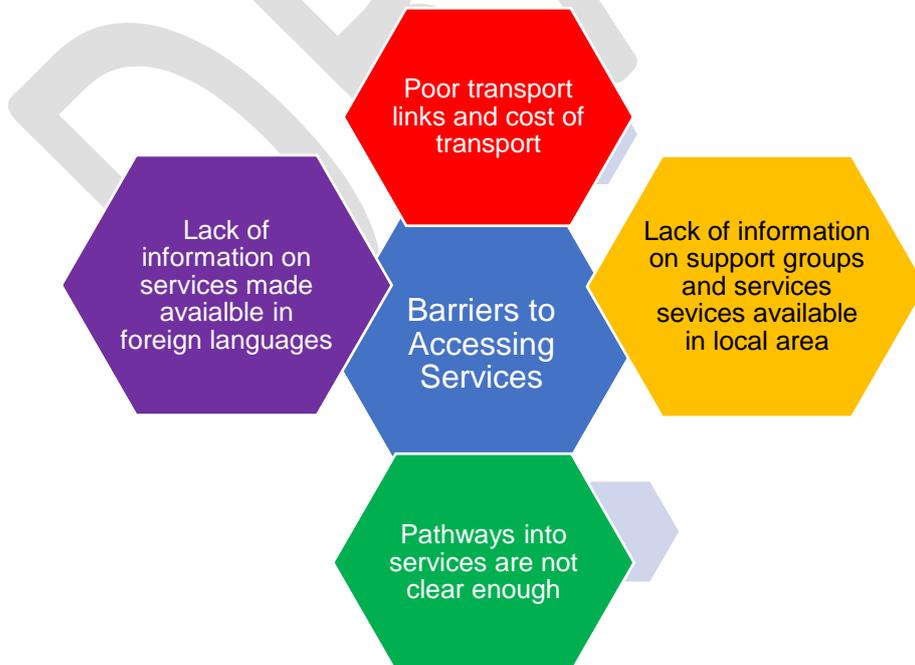
Gaps in Provision

Feedback on current gaps in provision around mental health services were as follows:



Barriers to accessing services

In terms of barriers to accessing services the following were noted as key areas that need to be addressed in the borough.



Community Mental Health Transformation Engagement

Engagement was carried out during the summer of 2022 as part of the Community Mental Health Transformation project.

The purpose of this engagement was to

- Building on previous engagement – responding to the views and feedback that people provided to develop the model for community mental health in Cheshire and Wirral
- Talk about and seek views on the new emerging plans to improve community mental health care in Cheshire and Wirral

5 online and face to face community engagement events held in July and August 2022, which were attended by 182 people.

Further opportunities to improve mental to improve community mental health were highlighted through the engagement process and were categorised below.



"I think the lack of community care and the lack of mental health training for carers has a negative impact on so many people. I think we need to look at how we can recruit more care staff in the community and how to train them to support individuals with mental health illnesses."

7. Priority Areas

Priority 1 – Children and Young Peoples Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Why is this a priority?

Children and young people (CYP) have indicated that support with their mental health needs would be enhanced by providing support at a much earlier stage, when and where they need it.

Healthy social and emotional development during the first 1001 days lays the foundations for lifelong mental and physical health. Being proactive and intervening at the earliest opportunity is essential.

By promoting initiatives that support mental wellness, emotional wellbeing, and resilience of the whole CYP population (for CYP who do not need individualised support) and support CYP who would benefit from targeted support by enabling access to personalised support when and where they need it.'

What have people told us?

- We need to intervene at a much earlier stage to help build children's resilience and prevent escalations in mental ill health that are often impacted because of long waiting lists
- There needs to be a more a joined-up approach in terms of mental health support for schools, and for parents and carers with healthcare providers to establish a comprehensive support network that supports the wider system.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted heavily on children and young people's mental health
- More mental health support needs to be made available to meet the needs of children and young people who have additional needs such as autism and ADHD and for those with historic or current self-harm. Some services will often see such cases as above threshold of need. Thresholds need to be better understood where children and young people have self-harmed.
- Whole school/systems should promote emotionally healthy environments, making every effort to prevent the risk of psychological harm or escalated needs.

What will we do to deliver this priority?

- Undertake a joint strategic needs assessment to help us better understand the emotional and mental wellbeing needs of children and young people and ways we can support and work with families to improve emotional and mental wellbeing. This will include areas such as the impact of social media and bullying.
- Deliver a more enhanced Early Intervention Children and Young People Mental Health Service to bring together colleagues from early years, education, health and the voluntary sector to support children, families and professionals

- Deliver Multi-agency Institute of Health Visiting (IHV) Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Training via Champions to promote understanding of the concepts of perinatal and infant mental health, the impact it can have for the developing baby, infant, parents, wider family and society and what we can do to support good family mental health and wellbeing from the Antenatal period.
- Development of Family Hubs - with a focus on improving maternal mental health in pregnancy and during parenthood and children and young people's mental health
- Roll out a range of evidenced based programmes including the My Happy Minds Programme in Cheshire East to support all Local Authority primary schools and academies to deliver an effective curriculum that teaches children and young people the skills to thrive and the skills to bounce back when challenge hits.
- Develop the connectivity between community mental health services and early help provision to reduce the number of children who need additional support and care in hospital
- Give Children, young people, their parents, and carers more opportunities to have their say and ensure they become fully embedded in the development of mental health services at place and across the Integrated Care System

Lead Partners

- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System
- VCFS Sector

Priority 2 – Education, Employment and Training

Why is this a priority?

We will look to enhance mental health support within education settings and workplaces and support people into education and employment opportunities. We will also seek to support the mental health sector workforce to recruit and retain staff across all levels of service provision.

What have people told us?

- Staff working across mental health services should be made to feel more valued and in turn this would lead to increased staff retention and continuity of care
- Leadership in school and college settings need to understand how a programme of 'supervision' can benefit staff and pupil wellbeing as part of a whole school approach. Those facilitating supervision / reflective space must have adequate training and understanding of the function of supervision and receive appropriate professional supervision themselves

with qualified and experienced supervisors, in order to nurture their ability to be emotionally available adults.

- There needs to be more support provided to improve employment opportunities for people with mental health support needs including care leavers

What will we do to deliver this priority?

- Development a multi-disciplinary Mental Health workforce across health and educational settings
- Improve school access to evidence informed information, advice, training, resources and services and support school leadership to match services to their own set of unique needs.
- Provide specialist support to people with mental health support needs to help them into employment, including more integrated working with employers through the work of the Welfare to Work Partnership.
- Place more employment support in NHS Talking Therapies services we can ensure that more people with common mental health conditions are getting the integrated support they need to improve their mental health and remain in, return to or find work. The Provision provides skills-based interventions, information and practical support to help people receiving NHS Talking Therapies services to remain in; return to; and find work. This Initiative also complements the NHS England programme to increase the provision of NHS Talking Therapies to ensure that 1.9m per year have a first session of treatment by March 2024 as stated in the NHS Long Term Plan.
- Where possible seek to embed the recommendations from Transformation Partners in health and care to find ways in which physical activity can be better utilised within NHS talking therapy services to help improve the mental health outcomes of service users. This includes developing a joint plan to better promote best practice and emerging work in the area with credible partners in physical activity such as the Active Partnership Active Cheshire and mental health services providers.

Lead Partners

- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System

Priority 3 – Early Intervention and Prevention

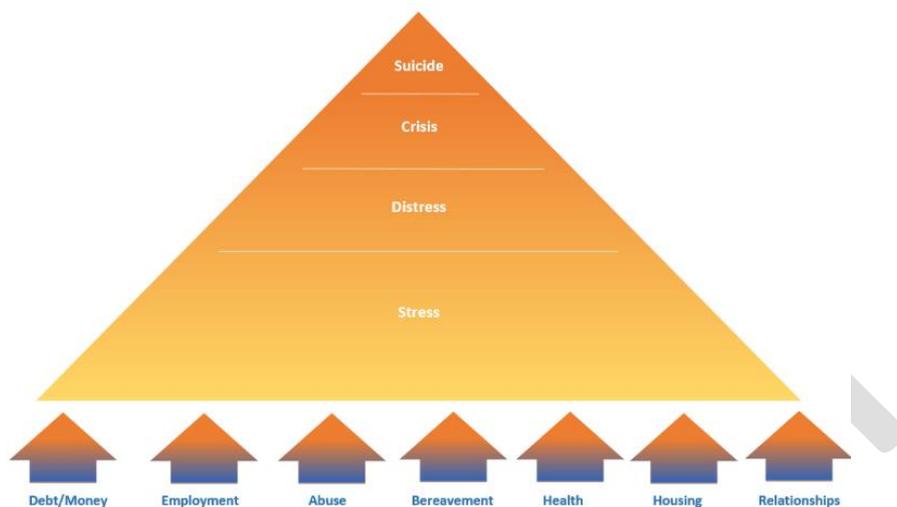
Why is this a priority?

There will be a focus on building on early intervention and prevention support. This will include a greater focus tackling the wider determinants of mental health (including loneliness, social isolation, cost of living crisis, drug and alcohol addiction) with a focus on areas such as self-harm, anxiety and suicide prevention.

Early intervention means identifying and providing effective early support to people who are at risk of poor mental health outcomes. Effective early intervention works to prevent problems occurring, or to tackle them head-on when they do before problems get worse.

Mental health prevention is defined as intervening to minimize mental health problems by addressing determinants of mental health problems before a specific mental health problem has been identified in the individual, group, or population of focus with the goal of reducing the number of future mental health interventions.

Many of the social detriments of poor mental health have their foundation in everyday life issues such as problem debts, poor physical health, relationship breakdown, abuse and loss.



The focus on early intervention and prevention is also supported through the Cheshire East Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Action plan. This is a multi-agency live document that includes key priorities aligned with the national and regional strategy. Priorities in our local plan include: *'tailor approaches to improve mental health in specific groups'*.

Some examples are:

1. Mens mental health
 2. Children and young people emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- People with reduced inequalities and/or overlapping social risk factors

What have people told us?

- We need to shift the focus of services to focus on early intervention to provide better long-term outcomes and reduce the number of people in crisis
- There needs to be more emphasis on wider determinants of mental health and a greater focus on links to improving diet, and exercise.
- Key to improving early intervention services is enhanced partnership working, better signposting to services, improved links into local group/community settings and leisure support
- More support is required for people with depression and preventing self harm and suicide

What will we do to deliver this priority?

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- Support our residents to become more physically active by implementing the All Together Active Strategy and Everybody Healthy Programme
- Develop a more joined up approach between specialist domestic abuse services and mental health services
- Provide improved Peer Support Networks and support provided across local areas
- To support a system wide suicide prevention strategy, and the recently developed local suicide place action plan
- Encourage and enable joined up and effective support to VCFS services that address the social determinants of poor mental health
- Family Hubs will aim to bring the council, health and community services together so that families can access the right support at the right time. They will build on our current children's centre and early help offer to provide high quality, joined up, whole-family help services.
- Support the wider community to be mental health aware by offering the Tier 1 intervention training MECC for Mental Health and MECC for physical activity training at a minimum.

Lead Partners

- Cheshire East Council Public Health Team
- Active Cheshire
- Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Priority 4 – Building Sustainable Communities

Why is this a priority?

We will seek to ensure the communities within which we live support good mental health. This will be achieved by shaping and developing places, connecting communities; planning sustainable places to live which are free from crime. We will also encourage access to green spaces; promoting public health and working to tackle stigma and discrimination within communities.

What have people told us?

- There needs to be a greater focus on enhancing access to green spaces to support and maintain health and wellbeing, especially through the development of new housing developments
- They would like to see reduced stigma within communities associated with poor mental health
- More support and awareness raising within communities on mental health generally for the public and carers

What will we do to deliver this priority?

- More focus on reducing mental health inequalities across communities in Cheshire East, including improved mental health support for carers and people from under-represented groups, including those from different ethnic backgrounds and address cultural and language barriers
- Work with commissioned care and housing providers to deliver an improved and diverse housing offer in Cheshire East to support those with

mental health support needs or need environmental adaptations due to neurodiversity

- A project by the Mental Health Partnership Board to reduce stigma, normalise human distress and psychological difficulties and consider the needs of those providing unpaid care for someone with mental illness.
- Implement a collaborative approach between specialist domestic abuse services and mental health services to support individuals and families experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence to have improved mental health outcomes.
- Encourage local providers of housing to better engage with challenges their residents experience and the role they can play in impacting those challenges

Lead Partners

- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System
- Cheshire East Carers Hub
- Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Partnership

Priority 5 – Transformation of Mental Health Services

Why is this a priority?

We will work in a more joined up way to support people with their mental health and wellbeing needs in the community. Improving community services will mean people will be less likely to need help in hospitals and make sure people can move between the services they need easily. We will utilise the highest level of skill as early in the care pathway as possible as this will ensure a very robust and holistic assessment of needs and will prevent unnecessary, low relevance interventions or placement on unsuitable waiting lists.

What have people told us?

- It is important that mental health services in the community work collaboratively to ensure early access to support as part of recovery and building resilience
- Services need to be easy to access with clear pathways of support to reduce pressure on hospitals and also more easily accessible in local communities, together with more emphasis on the use of technology to reduce the need to travel (which will reduce the impact on climate change)
- More person-centred services are required offering bespoke (1-1) services, supporting long term planning and greater accessibility at different times of the day. This is particularly important for people who are autistic.

What will we do to deliver this priority?

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- Develop the market through joint working between health and social care commissioners with providers in the borough, to establish services that meet a range of mental health support needs in the community.
- Development of a lower level mental health pathway to support those discharged from hospital back into the community.
- Implementation of the Community Mental Health Transformation Programme to improve support around social prescribing, improve accessibility to services through initiatives such as digital technology and reduce waiting times,
- Greater partnership working with the Voluntary Community Faith Sector (VCFS) Mental Health Alliance to develop community mental health services which will meet need, demand, and address gaps in services.

Lead Partners

- Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System
- VCFS Mental Health Alliance

Priority 6 – Crisis Support

Why is this a priority?

We will look to build on current crisis support by making it easier to access services and ensure that appropriate support is available at all times of day and night. We will also seek to address the current gaps around crisis provision for children and young people through the development of more urgent and emergency care provision.

Mental health crisis support is vital to support to someone experiencing extreme distress. This may lead to self-harm or suicidality – inclusive to planning and further risk. Someone may experience a crisis for a range of reasons, such as a big life change, or because an existing mental health condition is getting worse. All crises will be different in their cause, presentation, and progression.

It must be recognised that there have been significant developments in terms of enhancing crisis support within Cheshire East in recent years, with the introduction of an All-Age Mental Health Crisis Line and the establishment of community crisis beds and crisis cafes (in Macclesfield and Crewe). This plan aims to encourage greater integrated partnership working to build on existing available crisis support and ensure that this is further enhanced to meet the needs of our population.

What have people told us?

- Crisis support is vital, and support needs to be available at all times of the day
- There needs to be improved urgent and emergency care provision. available for children and young people within the community
- For non- mental health professionals who work with children and young people at risk: timely access to guidance is required to enable effective

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risk management and support plans that scope both home and school environment

- Support needs to be complimented with better links into other services to prevent people slipping back into crisis situations
- There needs to be clearer routes into accessing crisis support
- People require better information of what crisis support is available in the community to stop people going to hospital

What will we do to deliver this priority?

- We will seek to improve our Children and Young People Crisis Care Service Provision, including the development of an intensive home treatment team
- We will support the priorities set in the Cheshire East Place Suicide Prevention Action Plan.
- We will seek to ensure that our crisis services are more accessible with clear pathways to support and better linkages between services across health, social care and the wider community including the Third Sector.
- There will be wider promotion of the crisis offer available to both adults and children with more accessible information in a variety of formats and languages made available.
- We will work with system partners to understand the implications of Right Care, Right Person and to develop and implement plans for partner agencies to be able to respond where, historically, police services have provided support.

Lead Partners

- Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Cheshire East Council,
- Cheshire Police
- Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System,
- Voluntary, Community, Faith Sector Providers

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7 How Will We Deliver Our Priorities and High-Level Outcomes?

To enable us to successfully deliver our priorities in Cheshire East, **several high-level outcomes** have been identified. These key delivery actions in the implementation plan (below) will be delivered and monitored by a range of organisations as part of a partnership approach to ensuring the successful delivery of the plan.

Regular monitoring on the plan will be undertaken through the Cheshire East Mental Health Partnership Board and updates will be made available on the Cheshire East Council Website.

Cheshire East Place Mental Health Plan - Implementation Plan

Priority 1- Children and Young Peoples Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing					
High Level Outcomes	Wider Strategic Links	Cheshire East Place Implementation Actions	Lead Organisation (s)	Other Partners	Timescales for Completion
Children and Young People benefit from individualised support and have timely and appropriate access to Mental Health, Emotional Health and Wellbeing Services	Cheshire & Merseyside CYP Mental Health Logic Model 2022-2024, Beyond CYP Transformation Programme	Recommissioning of the co- produced Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service	Cheshire East Council	Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System, Participation Team, Children and Young Peoples Groups	2024
Measured by: CYP M1: Low wait times to access Children and Young People’s MH services (CWP to provide data) CYP M2: Low MH inpatient admissions for Children and		Develop the connectivity between community mental health services and early help provision to reduce the number of children who need additional support and care in hospital	Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Cheshire East Council	Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System	Ongoing 2023-2028

<p>Young People (CWP to provide data)</p> <p>CYP M3: Periodic feedback from Children and Young People and families about service access and provision</p>		<p>Strengthen the Early Help Board and workstreams to improve outcomes for children through an improved early help offer</p> <p>Implementation of the Beyond Programme Emotional Health and Wellbeing Workstream</p> <p>Rollout of the Best Start in Life policy to support early years and recommendations through the Family Hubs operational delivery in communities.</p>	<p>Cheshire East Council</p> <p>Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System</p> <p>Family Hubs</p>	<p>Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership, Children and Young Peoples Groups</p> <p>Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Children and Young Peoples Groups</p> <p>Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System , VCFS</p>	<p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p>
<p>Children and Young People who do not need individualised support have access to initiatives that support their mental wellness,</p>	<p>Cheshire East Children and Young Peoples Plan 2022-2026</p>	<p>Development of Family Hubs - with a focus on Improving maternal mental health in pregnancy and during parenthood and children and young people's mental health</p>	<p>Cheshire East Council</p>	<p>ICB, Participation Team, Childrens Trust Board</p>	<p>2023/24</p>

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<p>emotional wellbeing, and resilience.</p> <p>Measured by: CYP M3: Feedback from Children and Young People and families about service access and provision</p> <p>CYP M4: Published Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Emotional Mental Well-being</p> <p>CYP M5: Evaluation about impact of My Happy Mind Software using feedback from schools</p> <p>CYP M6: reduction of persistent absenteeism in primary and secondary schools (Fingertips Public Health data)</p>		<p>Recommissioning of Care Leavers Mentoring Service</p> <p>Development of Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Emotional Mental Wellbeing – This will help to better understand the emotional and mental wellbeing needs of children and young people and their parents,</p> <p>Further implementation and roll out of ‘My Happy Mind Software’ - to teach school children about the workings of the brain and improving wellbeing, this has been rolled out across all Primary Schools</p> <p>Development of guidance to improve school attendance. ‘Working together to improve attendance’ through home centred approaches</p>	<p>Cheshire East Council</p> <p>Cheshire East Council – Public Health Team</p> <p>Cheshire East Council</p> <p>Cheshire East Council</p>	<p>Independent Sector Providers</p> <p>ICB, VCFS, Education</p> <p>Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System</p>	<p>2023/24</p> <p>2023/24</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p>
<p>Children, young people, their parents, and carers are fully embedded in the development of services at place and across the Integrated Care System</p> <p>Measured by:</p>	<p>Cheshire & Merseyside CYP Mental Health Logic Model 2022-2024</p>	<p>Increasing the involvement of young people on the Cheshire East Mental Health Partnership Board</p>	<p>Cheshire East Council</p> <p>Cheshire East Council and Cheshire and</p>	<p>Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System, Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum, Cheshire East Youth Groups, Cheshire and Wirral</p>	<p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p>

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<p>CYP M7: Number of CYP nominated representatives and their attendance record at CE MHPB or representation from members of co-production workstream</p> <p>CYP M8: Outputs from CYP Co-production workstream (to be agreed with children and young people)</p> <p>CYP M9: Feedback from Parent Carer Forum and Youth Groups on their inclusion and involvement in planning of future service developments, together with assurance from services around co-production activity</p> <p>CYP M10: Bi-annual review of co-production activity within Mental Health Support Teams</p>		<p>Further development of Children and Young People Co-Production Workstream Team</p> <p>Engagement and Co production to capture voice via Parent Carer Forum and Youth Groups on future service development</p> <p>Mental Health Support Teams using evidence-based co-production methods to ensure that their services and projects balance the expressed needs of CYP alongside the evidence base and service capacity.</p>	<p>Merseyside Integrated Care System</p> <p>Mental Health Support Teams (Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust)</p>	<p>Partnership NHS Foundation Trust</p>	<p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p>
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Priority 2 - Education, Employment and Training					
High Level Outcomes	Wider Strategic Links	Cheshire East Place Implementation Actions	Lead Organisation (s)	Other Partners	Timescales for Completion
Develop a Mental Health workforce that is multi-	Cheshire & Merseyside CYP	Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL)-is a new role and the DfE have committed	CEC - Education Team	Cheshire and Merseyside	

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		<p>self-harm and suicide prevention training.</p> <p>To enable CEC to monitor uptake the training and information will continue be shared via the CEC Wellbeing for Education Chess Hub page.</p>			
<p>Improve mental health support across education settings across Cheshire East</p> <p>Measured by: <u>Overall:</u> CYP M2 : low MH inpatient admissions for Children and Young People (CWP data) NB It is possible that there would be an initial rise in referrals for community mental health support as schools become more aware of mental health issues</p> <p><u>Additional proxy measure</u> EET M2: further development and usage statistics for iThrive Mental Health Service Directory</p>	<p>Children and Young Peoples Trust Board, Integrated Care Board Strategy, Children and Young Peoples Plan</p>	<p>Ongoing development of the Wellbeing for Education webpage and Training Directory for schools on mental health, self-harm and suicide prevention training that is available locally and nationally on the Cheshire East Council Website.</p>	CEC - Education Team	<p>Integrated Care System, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust</p>	Ongoing 2023-2028
		<p>Schools to implement the Suicide Prevention Guidance for Cheshire East Schools document</p>	CEC - Education Team		Ongoing 2023-2028
		<p>Continue to roll out the Cheshire East iThrive Mental Health Service Directory which has been developed by CEC and ICB, so that school and college settings can use this to sign post CYP who would benefit from advice and support to the right services at the right time.</p> <p>Develop pathways to support school to-integrate ithrive language throughout policy, procedure and everyday communications.</p>	Cheshire East Council, Integrated Care System		Ongoing 2023-2028

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<p>Improved employment opportunities for people with mental health support needs, with employment being one of the most important determinants of physical and mental health</p> <p>Measured by: <u>Overall:</u> EET M3: increased % of people in work during lifetime of plan (Fingertips Public Health data)</p> <p><u>Additional proxy measure</u> EET M4: Supported Employment Strategy in place</p>	<p>Shared Prosperity Fund 2024/25, Cheshire and Warrington Workforce Recovery Group and Welfare To Work Partnership Board</p>	<p>NHS Individual Placement and Support Service - supporting people with MH support needs</p> <p>Shared Prosperity Fund 2024/25 - People and Skills workstream, will be using evidence-based practice to support people with Mental Health needs into work through specialist support.</p> <p>Welfare to Work Partnership - established and will be looking at a range of people with support needs including mental health with a focus on employer Engagement to look at working with employers.</p> <p>Development of Supported Employment Strategy</p>	<p>Integrated Care System</p> <p>Cheshire East Council Supported Employment Team</p> <p>Cheshire East Council Supported Employment Team</p> <p>Cheshire East Council – Supported Employment Team</p>	<p>Standguide</p>	<p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p> <p>2024/25</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p>
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Priority 3 - Early Intervention and Prevention					
High Level Outcomes	Wider Strategic Links	Cheshire East Place Implementation Actions	Lead Organisation (s)	Other Partners	Timescales for Completion
<p>Enhanced suicide prevention support by increasing awareness of risks, training and improving the support offer</p> <p>Measured by: <u>Overall:</u> EIP M1: stabilisation or reduction in % suicide rate for CE during lifetime of Plan (Fingertips Public Health data) Target – The ambition is for a zero target across Cheshire and Merseyside</p> <p><u>Additional proxy measures</u> EIP M2: JSNA developed EIP M3: Local Suicide Action Plan developed</p>	Cheshire and Merseyside Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022-2027	Development of Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to identify local picture	Cheshire East Council Public Health Team	Integrated Care System, Mental Health VCFS Alliance	2023/2024
		Development of Local Suicide Action Plan, aligned with the Cheshire and Merseyside Suicide Prevention Strategy	Cheshire East Council Public Health Team	Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Board, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	2022-2025
		Delivery of CHAMPs Suicide Prevention Training to frontline staff in education, health, social care and voluntary community settings.	Cheshire East Council Health Improvement Team		Ongoing 2023-2028

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<p>EIP M4: delivery of CHAMPs Suicide Prevention training widely across system</p>					
<p>Cheshire East residents to become more physically active to support and manage their mental health</p> <p>Measured by: <u>Overall:</u> EIP M5: increase in % of physically active adults during lifetime of the plan (Fingertips Public Health data)</p> <p><u>Additional proxy measure</u> EIP M6: evaluation of the Green Spaces for Well-being project</p>	<p>C&M All Together Active, Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-2025, Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Strategy</p>	<p>Implement the All Together Active Strategy to reduce health inequalities resulting from physical inactivity by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting CE Place to further develop opportunities to use physical activity as a way of improving population health. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Encouraging and supporting inactive people to move more o Removing barriers to participation in physical activity o Increasing opportunities to be physically active o Increasing opportunities to get involved in sport - Embedding movement, physical activity and sport within the Cheshire (and Merseyside) health and social care system. <p>Delivery of the <u>Green Spaces for Wellbeing Project</u>- a nature-based activities designed around the Five</p>	<p>Active Cheshire</p> <p>ANSA</p>	<p>Integrated Care System, Care Communities (Social Prescribing) Physical activity providers Cheshire East Council, Public Health Team</p> <p>Cheshire East Social Action Partnership,</p>	<p>2022-2026</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p>

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		Ways to Wellbeing to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing (launched in Crewe in November 2022; Macclesfield in January 2023)		CCICP, Care Communities	
		Implementation of Everybody Healthy Programme	Everybody Health and Leisure	One You – Cheshire East	Ongoing 2023-2028
Improved Peer Support Networks and support provided across the local area Measured by: EIP M7: increase in paid peer support workforce (CWP and CEC Data)	Community Mental Health Transformation	Implement a paid Peer Support workforce Establishment of a framework to support the Peer Support Network in Cheshire East Ongoing consultation, and co-production with Peer Support Groups	Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust CEC - Communities Team Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Cheshire East Council	Mental Health VCFS Alliance, Recovery College Mental Health VCFS Alliance Mental Health VCFS Alliance	Ongoing 2023-2028 2025 Ongoing 2023-2028

Priority 4 - Building Sustainable Communities					
High Level Outcomes	Wider Strategic Links	Cheshire East Place Implementation Actions	Lead Organisation (s)	Other Partners	Timescales for Completion
<p>Reduce mental health inequalities across communities in Cheshire East</p> <p>Measured by: EIP M8: increase in the % of adult carers who report as much social contact as they would like (Fingertips Public Health data)</p> <p>EIP M9: uptake of Oliver McGowan training across Place</p>	<p>CE Carers Strategy, Cheshire East Council Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2021-25</p>	<p>Increase mental health support for carers</p> <p>Development of the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>implement the Oliver McGowan training on Learning Disability and Autism for mental health staff working across health and social care</p>	<p>Cheshire East Council</p> <p>Integrated Care System</p> <p>Integrated Care System</p>	<p>Cheshire East Carers Hub</p>	<p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p>
<p>Stigma and discrimination associated with mental health is reduced</p> <p>EIP M11 – Reduction in levels of hate crime in Cheshire East (Cheshire Police)</p> <p><u>Proxy Measure:</u> EIP: M10: increase in % people aged 16+ who</p>		<p>Project to tackle stigma and discrimination in Cheshire East</p>	<p>Cheshire East Mental Health Partnership Board</p>	<p>Cheshire Police, Mental Health Alliance</p>	<p>2023-2025</p>

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<p>agree with the statement I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood (Fingertips Public Health data)</p>					
<p>An improved and diverse housing offer in Cheshire East to support those with mental health support needs</p> <p>Measured by: EIP M11: increase in number of adults in contact with secondary mental health services who live in stable and appropriate accommodation (Fingertips Public Health data)</p>	<p>Vulnerable and Older Persons Housing Strategy, Cheshire East Market Position Statement, Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document</p>	<p>Collaboration with providers, developers and the Local Planning Authority to improve housing stock across the borough.</p> <p>Ensure housing/planning policy is implemented to facilitate the delivery of safe and suitable housing in sustainable locations, with appropriate green space and active routes to improve physical and mental health.</p> <p>Development of renewed Vulnerable and Older Persons' Housing Strategy to understand need for accommodation.</p> <p>Increased collaboration between Health and Housing Link Workers and NHS Teams</p>	<p>Cheshire East Council – Commissioning Team & Strategic Housing Team Planning</p> <p>Cheshire East Council – Members, Planning & Strategic Housing Team</p> <p>Cheshire East Council - Strategic Housing Team</p> <p>Cheshire East Housing Options Team</p>	<p>Registered Housing Providers, Developers, Care Providers</p> <p>As above</p> <p>CEC departments and external partners including developers and care providers</p> <p>Integrated Care System</p>	<p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p>

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<p>Individuals and families experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence have improved mental health outcomes through a more joined up approach between specialist domestic abuse services and mental health services (and other services)</p> <p>Measured by: EIP M12: periodic evaluation of service outcomes, commencing 2025</p>	<p>Cheshire East Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Strategy 2021 - 2023</p>	<p>Whole Housing Approach - Specialist Domestic Abuse/MH Worker located in My CWA,</p>	<p>Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Partnership</p>	<p>CWP, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Services (IDVA, RASASC and My CWA), Cheshire Police, Community Asset Providers</p>	2023/24
		<p>Multi-Disciplinary Team including Domestic Abuse Worker within Custody Suites around Domestic Abuse with links to Mental Health Services</p>			2023/24
		<p>Implementation of Health Pathfinder, to improve pathways into domestic abuse services from health,</p> <p>Refresh of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Strategy</p>			2023/24

Priority 5 - Transformation of Mental Health Services					
High Level Outcomes	Wider Strategic Links	Cheshire East Place Implementation Actions	Lead Organisation (s)	Other Partners	Timescales for Completion
<p>Earlier and easier access to support as part of recovery and building resilience</p> <p>Measured by: TMHS M1: reduction in referrals to adult secondary</p>	<p>Community Mental Health Transformation, CE Market Position Statement</p>	<p>Recommission of Mental Health Floating Support Service</p> <p>Development of a lower level mental health pathway to support people discharged from hospital back into the community</p>	<p>Cheshire East Council</p> <p>Cheshire East Council, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership</p>	<p>Integrated Care System</p>	<p>2023/24</p> <p>2023/24</p>

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<p>mental health services (Fingertips Public Health data)</p> <p>TMHS M2: waiting times for adult community mental health services are within 4 week wait (CWP data)</p>		<p>ARRS Workers working across Primary Care to triage individuals and link with social prescribing,</p> <p>Implement a 4 week waiting time standard by Q1 2023/24 for community mental health services</p> <p>Support community asset organisations to ensure greater links with community mental health teams</p>	<p>Community Mental Health Transformation Programme</p> <p>Community Mental Health Transformation Programme</p> <p>Community Mental Health Transformation Programme</p>	<p>Mental Health Alliance</p>	<p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p> <p>2023/24</p>
<p>Improved access to services which are joined up with clear pathways of support</p> <p>TMHS M2: waiting times for adult community mental health services are within 4 week wait (CWP data)</p>	<p>Community Mental Health Transformation</p>	<p>Community Mental Health Transformation Programme, including workstreams around - Community Assets, SMI, Neurodiversity, Eating Disorders, Complex Needs (Personality Disorder), Early Intervention Psychosis</p>	<p>Community Mental Health Transformation Programme</p>	<p>ICB, Primary Care Networks, VS Mental Health Alliance, CEC, ICS, Care Communities</p>	<p>March 2024, ongoing</p>
<p>Enhanced commissioned services that are more person centred, deliver positive outcomes and value for money</p> <p><u>Proxy measure:</u> TMHS M3: increase in % of adult social care users who have as much social care</p>	<p>Community Mental Health Transformation</p>	<p>Development of a shared marketplace for Complex Needs (including those with Mental Health Support needs)</p> <p>VCFS Mental Health Alliance to develop community mental health services which will meet need, demand and address gaps in services</p>	<p>Cheshire East Council, Integrated Care System</p> <p>Mental Health Alliances (Rethink)</p>	<p>Lived Experience Advisors, Care Communities</p>	<p>2023/24</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p>

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contact as they would like (Fingertips Public Health data)				
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Priority 6 - Crisis Support					
High Level Outcomes	Wider Strategic Links	Cheshire East Place Implementation Actions	Lead Organisation (s)	Other Partners	Timescales for Completion
Improve the crisis support offer for children and young people Measured by: CS M1: reduction in hospital admissions as a result of self-harm 10-24 years (Fingertips Public Health data)	NHS Long Term Plan	Development of Child and Young People Crisis Care Service Provision including an intensive home treatment team	Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	Integrated Care System, Cheshire East Council	2023/24
		Development of Crisis Resolution Service, to ensure children who attend A+E up to age of 16 will receive an assessment and follow up, crisis resolution support for two weeks or intensive home treatment for up to 8 weeks	Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	Integrated Care System, Cheshire East Council	2023/24
		Ancora Care – development of service to support children at home.	Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	Cheshire East Council	2023/24
		Scoping exercise on the development of alternative places of safety for children and young people	Cheshire and Wirral Partnership, Integrated Care System	Cheshire East Council, VCFS Sector	2023/24

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<p>Improve timely access and clear pathways across existing mental health crisis support services</p> <p>Measured by: <u>Overall:</u> EIP M1: stabilisation or reduction in % suicide rate for CE during lifetime of Plan (Fingertips Public Health data)</p> <p>CS M2: reduction in emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm (Fingertips Public Health data)</p> <p>Additional proxy measure: CS 3: Periodic evaluation of impact of Crisis Café provision</p>	<p>NHS Long Term Plan</p>	<p>Review of Community Crisis Beds across Cheshire East to ensure improved accessibility, utilisation and onward journey</p> <p>Recommissioning of Crisis Cafes in Macclesfield and Crewe</p>	<p>Integrated Care System</p> <p>Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust</p>	<p>Independent Care Providers</p> <p>Cheshire East Council, Independent Care Providers</p>	<p>2023/24</p> <p>2024/2025</p>
<p>Information about crisis services is easy to find, clearly written and include how to gain access to them</p> <p>Measured by: <u>Overall:</u> EIP M1: stabilisation or reduction in % suicide rate for CE during lifetime of Plan (Fingertips Public Health data)</p>	<p>NHS Long Term Plan</p>	<p>Promotion of the All Age Crisis Telephone line with targeted approach focusing on schools</p> <p>Services that support people in crisis produce information in a variety of formats (including easy read and other languages)</p>	<p>Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p>Integrated Care System</p>	<p>Cheshire East Council</p> <p>Independent Care Providers</p>	<p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p> <p>Ongoing 2023-2028</p>

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CS M2: reduction in emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm across CE during lifetime of Plan (Fingertips Public Health data)					
<u>Additional proxy measure:</u> Co-produced review of availability and accessibility of crisis information					

Appendices

1 Mental Health and Wellbeing Discussion Plan, Updated January 202

[Mental health and wellbeing plan: discussion paper - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

2 The Health and Care Act 2022

[Health and Care Act 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

3 Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review

[Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review - The Health Foundation](http://www.healthfoundation.org.uk)

4 Core20Plus5

[CORE20PLUS5 Landscape \(england.nhs.uk\)](http://www.england.nhs.uk)

[Reducing-healthcare-inequalities-Core20PLUS-infographic.pdf \(england.nhs.uk\)](http://www.england.nhs.uk)

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5 Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-2025

[Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021-2025](#)

6 Cheshire Youth Justice Services Health Needs Assessment – Executive Summary Report – Liverpool John Moores University

7 National Strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021-2026

[The national strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

8 The Best Start in Life – A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days

[The best start for life a vision for the 1 001 critical days.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

9 National Partnership Agreement: Right Care, Right Person

[National Partnership Agreement: Right Care, Right Person \(RCRP\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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#BecauseWeCare
Cheshire East Partnership

Cheshire East Place Mental Health Plan 2024-2029

Easy Read Version
Draft V2



Introduction



Mental health is about our minds. It is about how we think and feel.



Mental ill health is when our minds are not well.
A person may think or behave differently to how they normally would.



We want people in Cheshire East to have good mental health.



Mental health can be affected by things like

- Home
- Work
- Family
- Friends

	<p>Mental health affects everybody.</p>
	<p>We want to make our services better.</p>
	<p>We want to help people sooner.</p>
	<p>We want to prevent mental ill-health.</p>

	<p>We want to promote good health.</p>
<p>What did we do?</p>	
	<p>During 2022 we talked to lots of people face to face and online.</p>
	<p>We did a survey and had lots of replies.</p>
	<p>People want to have better access to services and local support.</p>

	<p>They want different options and not just medication.</p>
	<p>They want their family to be involved.</p>
	<p>They want services to talk to each other.</p>
	<p>They want to know who can help and when.</p>
 <p>Training Room</p>	<p>They want better information, so people are not afraid of mental health.</p>



They want training for carers about mental ill health and how to help.

How we will make changes



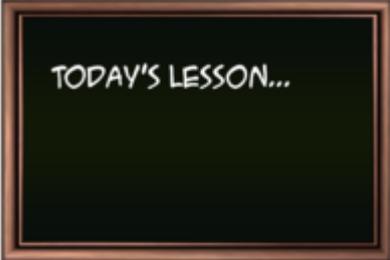
How we will make changes for children and young people



- We will keep services to a high standard.



- We will help services to talk to each other.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will offer better help and sooner.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will help Family Hubs to be better at supporting mental health
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will listen to the needs of children, young people and parents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will use special software to teach children about wellbeing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will help children to get to their school.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will make decisions with young people and their parents or carers.
	<p>How we will make changes in learning and work</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will create a network for staff to share ideas, skills and training.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will improve online learning and mental health information in schools.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will help schools to give information and training to keep children safe.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will use services to help people to get a job
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will help employers to understand mental health
	<p>How we will make changes to stop suicide</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suicide is when a person dies by their own actions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We want to stop suicide by training teachers and teaching assistants.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will write a local action plan to stop suicide
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will write a local action plan to help people to be more active
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will have local activity programmes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will help people to support each other
	<p>How we will make changes and make communities better</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will improve mental health support for carers.
 <p>Training Room</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will help more staff to have good quality training
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will help people to understand that mental ill health does not make you a bad person
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will improve the housing in our communities and have more green space
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will help health and housing groups to talk to each other.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will have a big team of people to help services to talk to each other.
	<p>How we will make change by changing mental health services:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will help people who move from hospital to the community.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will help people to improve their communities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will have quicker access to services with shorter waiting time.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have a mental health plan to help make changes to improve mental health
	<p>How we will make changes to emergency support</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will create safe places for children and young people and support them at home.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will look at the number of crisis care beds and what they are used for.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will make sure that children get the right care when they leave hospital.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will provide crisis cafes in Macclesfield and Crewe.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will tell people about the All-Age Crisis telephone line.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will tell people about crisis support so it is available to everyone



#BecauseWeCare
Cheshire East Partnership

Cheshire East Place

All Age Learning Disability Plan 2024-2029



Cheshire and Merseyside



Our plan sets out our vision and aims for people of any age with learning disability in Cheshire East for the period 2023 to 2028.

We are proud to present this Cheshire East All-age learning disability plan as it has been co-produced with, and based on the views of, people with learning disability and their parents and carers. This has been possible through engagement to understand what is important to them. We are incredibly grateful for the support of all those people who have taken the time to contribute their views either in person or through written feedback.

In developing our plan, we have listened to residents with a learning disability, their parents and families, professionals and those who provide support to identify six priorities to focus on for the next five years. Our plan is a framework to support children, young people and adults with a learning disability and their families and carers in Cheshire East. Everyone is unique and services are personalised to meet need.

The next five years

While the plan details what our aims are for the next five years, this strategy builds on progress so far and seeks to maintain the very positive service developments achieved to date, delivering better health and wellbeing outcomes for people with learning disability and parents and carers.

The refreshing of the previous document maintains a further improved approach taken when it was first published in 2018, engaging closely with people and families and those who support them.

Cheshire East Learning Disability Partnership Board have the responsibility of ensuring successful delivery of the plan. To ensure this is done, the Plan is supported by a Delivery, which has been developed from our consultation, outlining how the plan is developed into clear foundations of change.

Who are we?

The Cheshire East Partnership is a group of partners working together to improve the health and wellbeing of the residents of the Cheshire East local authority areas. The partnership includes:

- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire and Merseyside NHS
- Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- East Cheshire NHS Trust
- Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- South Cheshire and Vale Royal GP Alliance
- Vernova Healthcare CIC
- Healthwatch Cheshire

They have produced a plan to explain how partners will work together to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities. [The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the population of Cheshire East 2023-2028](#) sets out what we want to do, why we want to do

it and the difference we believe we can make to the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents.

What is Cheshire East Place

Cheshire East Place is an area that covers the Cheshire East Local Authority area and sits within the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership, which is one of nine Places all based upon the local authority areas of Cheshire and Merseyside.

It is a platform for leadership, planning and delivery of health and local authority care services. Taking a place-based approach requires working effectively with other local authority services, other public sector organisations and with the many voluntary, community, faith and not-for profit organisations.

Our vision

To make life better for Cheshire East residents with a learning disability and their carers

Whilst our vision remains our focus for the next five years, our new plan builds on progress so far and seeks to maintain the very positive service developments achieved to date, delivering better health and wellbeing outcomes for people with learning disability and parents and carers.



Our vision is based on identifying the life outcomes that are important to people with learning disabilities and ensuring that all our commissioning activity is focused on meeting those outcomes. By identifying activities and outputs that enable people with learning disabilities to achieve the outcomes framed by their aspirations

We also contribute to a whole range of wider outcomes that benefit the whole population of Cheshire East. This has been achieved through having conversations with people with lived experience, family carers, health & social care professionals and organisations represented on the [Cheshire East Learning Disability Partnership Board](#). Our conversations now form the building foundation for this plan, through the priorities that people have told us are important.

What we want to achieve

We want people in Cheshire East to enjoy independence, and to be in control, working with people to be as independent as possible rather than someone doing things for them. Our vision for people with a learning disability to make life better is based upon ensuring people can make informed choices and how they are able to live their lives like anyone else.

People with a learning disability will be involved in the design and delivery of services that meet their needs, now and in the future. The contents of our plan shapes how we will work over coming years to ensure our vision and aims are met for the benefit of our residents.

Our priorities

We want children, young people, and adults with a learning disability in Cheshire East to be safe and be part of community, learning and achieving potential, being supported into paid and unpaid work. To achieve this, our plan is built upon key priorities and aims:



The priorities have been co-produced within this plan, seeking to raise the profile of children and young people and adults with a Learning Disability to continue our work to increase community awareness and inclusion and reduce inequalities that people experience. Further, the priorities have been informed by direct feedback from people with lived experience, and act as a foundation to ensure further improved support for children and young and people and adults with a Learning Disability to live healthy, safe, and fulfilling lives.

The plan has a five-year lifespan and will be subject to progress reports through the Delivery Plan to the Learning Disability Partnership Board, ultimately reporting to the wider Cheshire Place Health and Wellbeing Board.

More information about our priorities

Becoming an adult	We want you to....
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ have the right support and choices at the existing stage of life for people with a learning disability turning 18 years of age ▪ have an enjoyable experience of transferring to adult social care ▪ feel happy that your parents and carers have the right information about making choices together with you
What we will do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure integration of social workers through CYP and ASC ▪ Continue to improve pathways for young people approaching adulthood based on our Plan for Adulthood ▪ Continue working of the aligning multi-agency systems in both children's and adults' services
How will we measure progress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An increase in satisfaction rates for Adult Social Care among people with learning disability aged 18 to 25 year-olds ▪ Reduction in the number of young people aged 18 to 25-year-olds who live in residential care home ▪ Increase in the number of young people aged 18 to 25-year-olds with a learning disability in paid, unpaid employment or in training ▪ Information and/or training is available on life impacting health transitions
Right care and support	We want you to....
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ have access to current information provided in different ways so that it is accessible to all ▪ have a greater say and share information about good practice from self- advocacy organisations locally and nationally ▪ have access to a broad range of activities and learning opportunities, universal opportunities being open to everyone

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ have a care and support plan about my life and my future care not just about money and how I pay for care
What we will do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure an integration of health and social care commissioners develop services that maintain a culture of valuing people ▪ Process of assessment and care and support plans are clear and transparent and include future life planning ▪ Co-produce care and support plans with the individual ▪ Develop services that are person-centred and focused on the individual
How will we measure progress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An excellent quality of life ▪ Care and support that is person centred, including advance care planning ▪ People are supported who are eligible to have a Personal Health Budget, Direct Payments and Individual Service Fund (ISF) ▪ You, your family, and carers will have the right information at the right time
Choice and control	We want you to....
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ have equal access to various kinds of services that meet your need ▪ have a say about choices made for you ▪ have a say about how services are designed and delivered ▪ be able to go out more and enjoy a social life
What we will do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure you have a person-centred plan and have control of it ▪ Have choice of how you pay for services, through direct payments, personal budgets, and personal health budgets and ISF ▪ Ensure you are listened to and valued in making choices for your life and end of life ▪ Maintain you are supported with your friendships and relationships
How will we measure progress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You are supported to make decisions about every aspect of your life including end of life ▪ There is an increase in the number of people who report they had a say in the way their care or support is being provided

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Measure occasions when people are supported to go out when they want ▪ Promote the increased use of assistive technology to support people to be independent
My home	We want you to....
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ feel safe and have a choice of accommodation ▪ receive valuable information and advice on your housing options ▪ have choice and control about who you live with ▪ be close to family and friends ▪ have access to good transport ▪ have good accommodation that is of good quality and flexible for your needs
What we will do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Detailed plans to develop more accommodation options ▪ Make sure people are given clear information and have choice about where to live, and who to live with ▪ Make sure there is enough local support for people who come back to Cheshire East ▪ Develop plans to support people to live in their local community as independently as possible ▪ Review and promote Shared Lives
How will we measure progress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased offers for suitable accommodation ▪ Housing that enables inclusion and supports choice and control, and quality of life ▪ Develop homes for life ▪ Information and advice on housing and support is consistent, available, clear, and accessible
My community	We want you to....
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ feel supported to be part of where you live ▪ live your life to the full ▪ have the opportunity to gain experience and develop ▪ be able to contribute to the community in which you live
What we will do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work towards you feeling part of your community and directly involved in the area you live ▪ Ensure we are understanding and acting on what a person wants and needs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop existing community assets and resources to enable residents with Learning Disabilities to have the opportunity to access them ▪ Co-design and implement a Relationships Policy and guidance including training programme for residents with Learning Disabilities
How will we measure progress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information and support to access activities in the community ▪ Providing information about different types of activities - universal and specialist, to understand how inclusion is progressing for you ▪ An increased awareness of the needs of adults with learning disabilities within the community and the promotion of inclusion ▪ Improved opportunities to access the community ▪ Feeling happy about where you live
Good health	We want you to....
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ feel well and be healthy ▪ have good mental health ▪ have annual health checks ▪ good access to services is available at the right time and it is easy to find support
What we will do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making sure more people have a health check each year for people aged 14 years and above ▪ Ensure we work together so more people have Health Action Plans ▪ Look at why people remain in long stay hospitals ▪ Review health impacts of loneliness and isolation ▪ Assess instances of individuals at risk of admission to hospital to take action to prevent admission
How will we measure progress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An increase in the number of young people and adults with a health passport and fast track ID when they go into hospital ▪ Young people and adults with long term conditions and their families and carers are supported to manage their health ▪ Awareness of sexual health for young people and adults with a learning disability

Developing our plan

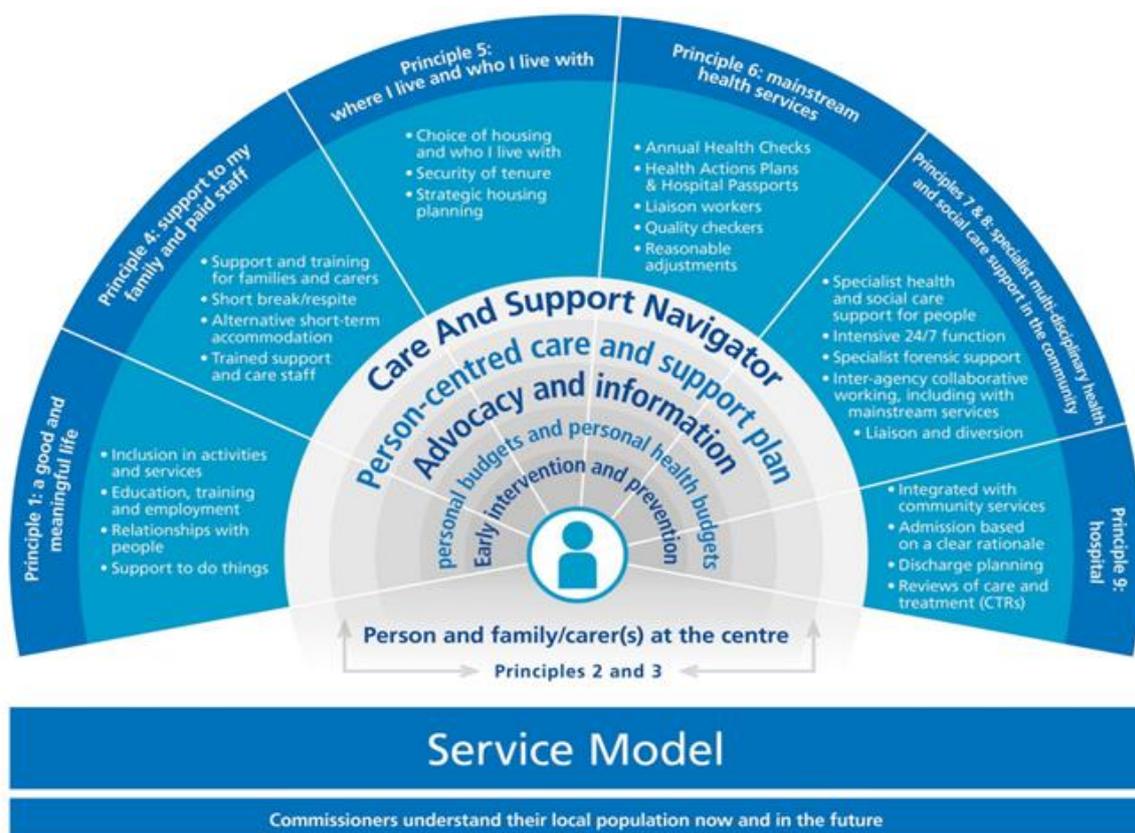
Lots of people have been working to produce this plan. The co-production of the plan was developed with the Cheshire East Learning Disability Partnership Board (LDPB) and included input from many people;

- Self-advocates of young people and adults with a learning disability
- Parents and carers
- Schools
- Health practitioners
- Service commissioners and social workers
- Providers of services

The vision of our five-year plan is to improve the health and wellbeing of local communities, enabling people to live longer and healthier lives. We will do this by creating and delivering safe, integrated, and sustainable services that meet people's needs by the best use of all the assets and resources we have available to us. The plan is an update of our previous strategy for Cheshire East, taking many actions and tasks further forward. The plan supports Cheshire East Councils' [Corporate Plan 2021-2025](#) and particularly our priorities;

An open and enabling organisation	A council which empowers and cares about people	A thriving and sustainable place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation ▪ Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce health inequalities across the borough • Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A great place for people to live, work and visit • Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods

While the NHS has experienced changes within this field with integrated care systems replacing clinical commissioning groups, the nine principles within the National Service Model¹ remain as important as outlined in the Service Model.



Also, the plan further supports the **NHS The Learning Disability Mortality Review (LeDeR)²** and subsequent change to new name for the LeDeR programme will be Learning from Life and Death Reviews³ This is a programme commissioned to improve the standard and quality of care for people with a learning disability and will help people with a learning disability enjoy a range of life opportunities without constraint on their choices.

Combining an integrated approach is further supported through the **Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028⁴**, in which it outlines their high-level vision and aspirations to:

<p>Reduce inequalities, narrowing the gap between those who are enjoying good health and wellbeing and those who are not</p>	<p>Improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of all of our residents</p>	<p>Help people to have a good quality of life, to be healthy and happy.</p>
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¹ [Transforming Care: service model specification January 2017](#)

² [NHS Learning Disability Mortality Review \(LeDeR\) Programme: Action from Learning](#). May 2019

³ [NHS Learning from Life and Death Reviews](#)

⁴ [Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028 The Cheshire East Partnership Five Year Plan](#)

How we developed our plan

Engagement and consultation

A review of the previous All Age Learning Disability Strategy was undertaken to assess its success which was presented to the Cheshire East Learning Disability Partnership Board, and a project group was developed. The learning from the review was that the new strategy should be called a Plan, which needs to have a clear and SMART objective (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely), workstreams to take forward actions and that there is clear accountability in which to monitor progress.

We undertook two online consultations during the past two years in the lead up to developing our plan, gaining feedback from people with lived experience and partners in seeking to shape our refreshed plan.

What people told us

Even through our most challenging time during the Covid 19 lockdown we undertook online engagement events, including surveys and online meetings, which has now shaped and informed the contents of this new plan.

To acknowledge coming out of lockdown, and to get everyone together again the Cheshire East Learning Disability Partnership Board hosted a face-to-face conference in June 2022, celebrating with over 200 self-advocates, parent carers, professionals and people with lived experience what we have achieved in recent years, and the issues that are important to people now. This has now not only influenced this plan, but also based on what people had told us, three key actions were formulated into an Acton Plan, see below.



Some of what people told us		Key actions to make improvements
	<p>'We would like to go out more'</p> <p>'We get to access the community and meet new people'</p> <p>'More social and evening activities to let people stay up late'</p> <p>'Better transition working'</p>	<p>Make things better for people who want to stay up late</p>
	<p>'Staff, personal assistants, and carers don't get enough praise'</p> <p>'More events and chances for people to have their say on services'</p> <p>'I have difficulty in getting to events as no transport'</p> <p>'Make work in care more attractive'</p>	<p>Give people more chance to have their say on services and what they want to do</p>
	<p>'Better access to information'</p> <p>'Services that meet the needs of people and what they want to do'</p> <p>'More choice of services for people with learning disabilities'</p>	<p>Provide better access to information for people with learning disabilities and carers</p>

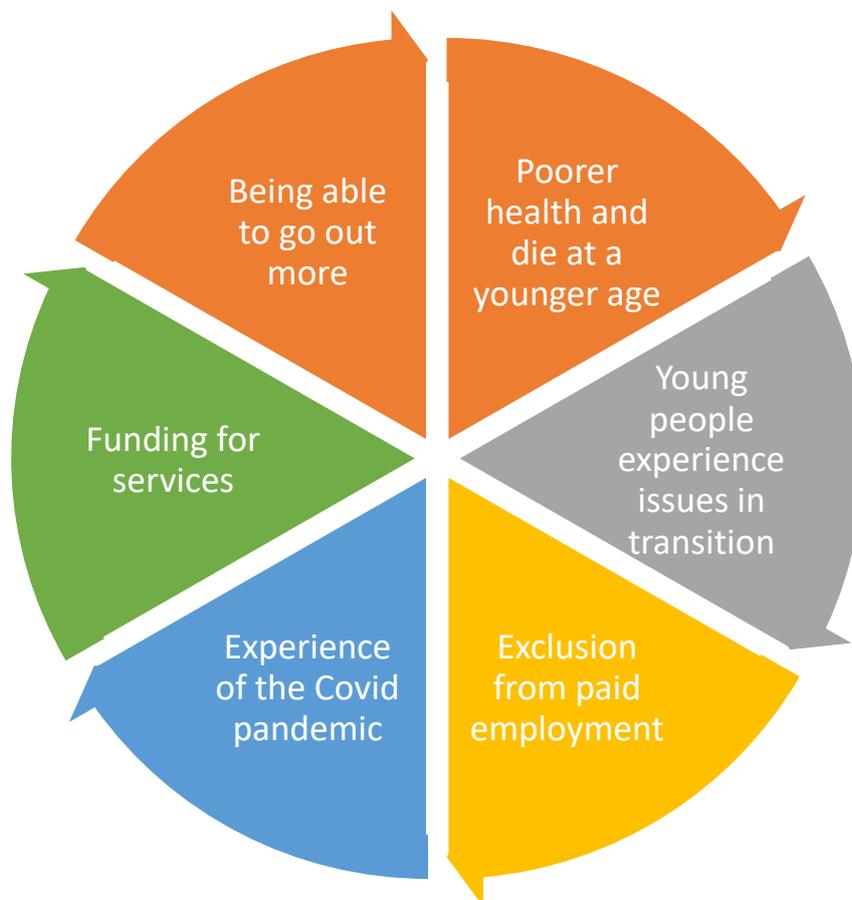
Listening and working together to reflect the voices of many, requires a balance between what people want and need and the challenges faced in the current environment. Our shared experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic have highlighted again that it is often the most vulnerable in society who are likely to suffer most from these kinds of significant impact events, dealing with feelings of isolation and lack of control.

However, the pandemic has brought forward opportunities within communities themselves for new ways of working, the use of new and emerging technology and heightened the awareness of the good that communities can do for each other. Our plan will set out how we will look to continue this shift and make the most of the benefits of engaged and supportive communities.

Our challenges

We have achieved a lot since our first coproduced strategy and worked to improve the lives of people with a learning disability.

Guidance has been provided to support health, social care, and other public services to further support people with a learning disability to have more independency and control of their lives and the service they receive. However, we still have work to do and there are still challenges that we face for people with a learning disability, including:



More information about our challenges

<p>Being able to go out more</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and teenagers take part in fewer leisure activities • Our experience of lockdown made people feel isolated • People tell us they want to go out more in the evenings and weekends 	<p>Poorer health and die at a younger age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People still experience health inequalities • Experience poor mental and physical health • Ensuring effective services are in place so fewer people die early 	<p>Young people experience issues in transition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring care there are good pathways established • Making sure young people and their families get the right information • Ensuring teams are in place to support young people 14-25 with SEND
<p>Exclusion from paid employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences in education affect ability to access employment • Feel out of place, different, forgotten, worthless and isolated • Need the support and help of carers, family, friends and people they know and trust 	<p>Experience of the Covid pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationally there was an increased risk of illness and death during the COVID-19 pandemic • Linking health inequalities and experiences of Covid to support improvements 	<p>Cost of living</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rising costs of living is having an immediate effect on people with a learning disability • We are seeing an increase in demand for services and a reduction in budget • Ensuring that support needs match the individual's care and support plan for personal budget

Meeting these challenges are reflected within this plan, explored in seeking to meet successful outcomes. It would need to be acknowledged that there will be less money available than in the past. We need to be spending money more targeted for better outcomes for the individual ensuring a better and measurable outcome.

Our local need⁵



Our numbers

In Cheshire East 5,253 adults and 2,647 children are estimated to have a learning disability.

The number of adults with a learning disability is projected to stay around the same at 5,244 by 2030.



Population growth in Cheshire East

Numbers of people will change as our population grows and people generally live longer.

By 2040 Cheshire East is expected an increase of 0.33% of people, from 390,980 to 415,756



Housing offer....

There are many people seeking accommodation and support to live independently. Just under 80% of current supported living provision for LD is within shared housing when people tell us they prefer their own front door.



Access to training and employment

In 2018/19 12% of the 940 working age adults with learning disabilities known to services in Cheshire East were in paid employment

Of these, 69 were male and 44 were female



Not everyone in Cheshire East needs support....

In Cheshire East, 1,050 children have a SEN related with a learning disability and 1,567 adults were registered with a GP and accessing support

In 2017 there were 10,029 people with learning disabilities, this includes 7382 adults (15+) and 2647 children and young people (0-14 years)

⁵ Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2020; Cheshire East Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2019; Cheshire East Population Statistics ONS 2023; Cheshire and Merseyside Transforming Care Partnership Assessment of future accommodation with support needs October 2022

How will we monitor this plan

Together, we will develop a comprehensive delivery plan which will set out in more detail the tasks that need to be undertaken to deliver the plan, and this will be updated at least annually.

Regular review and monitoring of this plan will also ensure that any future stakeholder feedback can be considered, and changes made to this plan and delivery plan where appropriate.

The delivery plan will be overseen through relevant Council and partnership governance, and have overall responsibility to the Cheshire East Place Health and Wellbeing Board ;



Next steps

We have undertaken a lot of engagement and consultation in order to develop this plan to ensure we have included what is important to the people of Cheshire East. The consultation period confirmed support for the broad priorities in the strategy, and some changes and additions to the plan will be made because of the consultation received during this period.

However, this is not the end of the conversation; once the strategy is adopted, it will be kept under regular review to ensure that we continue to put the needs of our residents and service users at the forefront of our plans.

Words and terms used in this plan, and what they mean

ASC	Adult Social Care
CEPCF	Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum is a group of parents and carers of disabled children and young people. Our aim is to make sure the services in Cheshire East meet the needs of disabled children / young people and their families.
CYP	Children and young people
CQC	Care Quality Commission the independent regulator of health and social care in England
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan is a legal document which describes a child or young person's aged up to 25 special educational needs, the support they need, and the outcomes they would like to achieve.
ICB	Integrated Care Board is an NHS organisation which is responsible for developing a plan for meeting the health needs of the population, managing the NHS budget, and arranging for the provision of health services in a geographical area.
ICS	Integrated Commissioning System are partnerships of organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined up health and care services, and to improve the lives of people who live and work in their area.
LA	Local Authority
LDPB	The Cheshire East Learning Disability Partnership Board is a partnership of agency, for example the Council, NHS, community groups, and self-advocates and parent carers with a role is to represent everyone in Cheshire East who has a learning disability and to be your voice.
LeDeR	Learning Disabilities Mortality Review - Established in 2017, founded by NHS England and NHS Improvement, LeDeR is a service improvement programme that improve care, reduce care inequalities, and prevent people with a learning disability and autistic people from early deaths
NHSE	National Health Service England
Personal outcomes	Describes what a person wants to achieve. These are goals that the person receiving care and support, and their care worker or carer work towards
Priorities	The priorities within this plan are the things everyone feels is important and want to work together to achieve
SEND	Special Education Need and Disabilities
SMART	SMART objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, and timebound. They help to organise, track, and accomplish long and short-term goals in an effective way, for example in our Delivery Plan
Social prescribing	Social prescribing refers to when health professionals refer patients to non-clinical support services in the local community to help their health and wellbeing where appropriate
Vision	The vision set out the ambition for the future

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#BecauseWeCare
Cheshire East Partnership

Cheshire East Place

All Age Learning Disability Plan 2024-2029

Easy Read Version



Cheshire and Merseyside





This plan is about you, your family, and carers.

It provides information about what we all want to achieve in improving services for Cheshire East residents of all ages with a learning disability.



The council, the NHS, other agencies, and people with a learning disability have produced a plan for people in Cheshire East of all ages with a learning disability and their family and carers.

The plan is a refresh of the current one and seeks to improve services and help people make choices.



The plan explains how we will work together make support and service better for people with a learning disability.

This easy read is a short version of the main plan. Some words are in bold, is this just to show you how we explain things in more detail.



We asked lots of people what we needed in our plan

They told us the most important things were:

- Becoming an adult
- Right care and support
- Choice and control
- My home
- My community
- Good health



The plan now focuses on the 6 important things, which are called priorities.



Becoming an adult

Some of the main things we will work on:

- Ensure social workers in Children and Young People Services and Adults work close together for you
- Improve things for young people approaching adulthood based on our [Plan for Adulthood](#)
- Continue working to help different agencies who work with you

	<p>How will we know things get better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We will ask you how you feel things are▪ Work to reduce the number of young people in residential care homes▪ Work to increase the number of young people in training or employment▪ Information is available to support you through changes as you become an adult
	<p>Right care and support</p> <p>Some of the main things we will work on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Services you receive are made to value you▪ Your care and support plans are clear to understand and written with you▪ Services have you at the very centre of things <p>How will we know things get better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ You feel safe and happy▪ Services are person-centred▪ People are supported to access Personal Health Budget▪ You, your family, and carers will have the right information at the right time



Choice and control

Some of the main things we will work on:

- Ensure you have Choice control over things that are important to you
- You have choice about how services are paid
- You are listened to and valued in making choices for your life

How will we know things get better?

- We ask you if you can make decisions for yourself
- More people say they have a say in the way their care and support is being provided
- You tell us that you have been able to go out to events in the evening and weekends when you want
- There is an increase in the use of assistive technology to support people to be independent



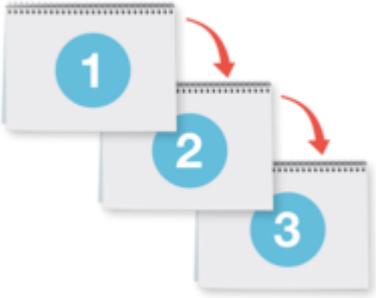
My home

Some of the main things we will work on:

- We will provide a plan for people accommodation options
- Make sure you have a good and clear information

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Make sure things are better for people who want to come back to Cheshire East▪ Ensure people feel happy in the community they live▪ Increase the use of Shared Lives <p>How will we know things get better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ There are more choices of accommodation▪ You have a home that enables you to be included, have choice and a good life▪ A home for life▪ Good and clear information about housing for you
 <p>The logo for 'Community Life' is a purple oval containing a 3D illustration of a community scene. On the left, a person is seated in a wheelchair. In the center, a woman in a blue top and patterned skirt stands. On the right, a man in a suit stands. The background shows a residential house and a church with a steeple, all set against a green tree.</p>	<p>My community</p> <p>Some of the main things we will work on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ensure you feel included where you live▪ Understanding and acting on what you want and need▪ Ensure our community buildings and other assets are available and easy to access▪ Work together to develop a Relationship Policy

	<p>How will we know things get better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ There is good information for you about where you live▪ We promote and work together to increase awareness of people needs▪ Improve access to you community▪ You feel happy about where you live
	<p>Good health</p> <p>Some of the main things we will work on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Making sure more people have a health check each year▪ Work together so more people have Health Action Plans▪ Look at how loneliness and isolation effects your health▪ Look at when people with a learning disability may be at risk of going into a hospital and work to prevent this <p>How will we know things get better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ More people health passport and fast track ID when they go into hospital▪ Everyone is supported to manage their health▪ Improved awareness of sexual health for people with Learning Disability

	<p>What will happen next?</p> <p>After a period of consultation, we will work together to put these plans into action.</p> <p>We will keep people involved in these plans to make sure they work well.</p>
	<p>If you would like more information about this plan, and may getting more involved, please contact:</p> <p>Gerard Buckley Cheshire East Council 07790 565154 gerard.buckley@cheshireeast.gov.uk</p>

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TITLE: All Age Mental Health Plan

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version	Author	Description of Changes
18 August 2022	1	Mark Hughes	
19 April 2023	2	Mark Hughes	Updated following pre consultation

CESHIRE EAST COUNCIL –EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1 Description: Fact finding (about your policy / service /

Department	Commissioning Team	Lead officer responsible for assessment	Mark Hughes
Service	People Services	Other members of team undertaking assessment	Keith Evans

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Date	19 April 2023		Version 4			
Type of document (mark as appropriate)	Plan	Plan	Function	Policy	Procedure	Service
		x				
Is this a new/ existing/ revision of an existing document (please mark as appropriate)	New		Existing		Revision	
	X				X	
Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation) Please attach a copy of the Plan/ plan/ function/ policy/ procedure/ service	<p>Partners in Cheshire East focusing on mental health, are working to develop a Mental Health Plan. Our plan will set out the vision and priorities for mental health in the coming years. We want these key parts of the Plan to be meaningful for people across Cheshire East.</p> <p>The Plan will guide the work that health and the local authority and our partners will do to improve mental health and wellbeing in Cheshire East This will include an overall shared vision, a set of key priorities, and how we will achieve these to improve people's mental health and wellbeing. It will also describe how we will measure the difference we're making.</p> <p>We want the Plan to focus on every part of what mental health and wellbeing means. This covers a range of areas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing the underlying reasons behind poor mental health; • helping to create the conditions for people to thrive; • challenging the stigma around mental health, and; • providing specialist help and support for mental illness. <p>We also want the Plan to guide how we provide support to everyone who has a role in improving and supporting people's mental health and wellbeing.</p>					

	<p>This ranges from those working in all health and social care settings, in our communities, schools, and prisons. We also recognise the invaluable support of volunteers and unpaid carers.</p> <p>The development of the All Age Mental Health Plan will align to the following priorities within the Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021-2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment to protect the most vulnerable people in our communities • Promote and develop the services of the council through regular communication and engagement with all residents • Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient • Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs • Support all children to have the best start in life <p>The development of the Cheshire East All Age Mental Health Plan will be firmly aligned to the NHS Long Term Plan. It promotes a whole system approach to improve the mental health and wellbeing of individuals and their families, supported by integrated health and social care services, resilient communities, inclusive employers and services that maximise independence and choice.</p>
<p>Who are the main stakeholders, and have they been engaged with? (e.g. general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences, residents)</p>	<p>Key Stakeholders</p> <p>As part of this process, we will undertake extensive engagement with children, young people and adults who use mental health services and those who may do so in the future.</p> <p>We will also engage with carers, services across the local authority, NHS and commissioned providers, voluntary and community groups and local forums to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the Plan development.</p>

	In terms of protected equality groups there will be engagement which will ensure we reach older people, BAME groups and people with a long-standing illness or disability, and young people.	
Consultation/ involvement carried out		A pre consultation has been carried out from August to October 2022 and also a follow up on the draft Plan shall be carried out in May-June 2023.
What consultation method(s) did you use?	<p>In terms of the consultation methods this has included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surveys (including Easy Read) - Consultation Meetings (Virtual and Face to Face) - Meetings with existing Forums and User Groups - We will also use existing partnership boards to keep people informed of the process and allow wider engagement from carers and service users. 	

Stage 2 Initial Screening

Who is affected and what evidence have you considered to arrive at this analysis? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)	<p>The development of a new Mental Health Plan may have an impact on existing mental health service providers, and service users and carers as they propose a change from the existing service models.</p> <p>There could also be a significant impact on staff from mental health services as well in terms of the location where services are delivered, level of support provided, and tasks related to the delivery of services.</p>
Who is intended to benefit and how	<p>The proposed impact of the Mental Health Plan will ensure that services are designed around an individual rather than vice versa. By ensuring that this provision adopts a more personalised and flexible approach and lead to improved outcomes for individuals who access support. It is hoped that this will also lead to a more joined up approach between mental health service and also stronger links into other forms of community provision including that which is provided by the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector.</p>

	<p>The Plan will ensure that people with protected characteristics and vulnerable groups, experience equitable access and services are more responsive to the needs of a diverse population.</p> <p>A key priority within the Plan will look at the best approach to tackling stigma and discrimination which will be a theme which runs through the document.</p>
<p>Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?</p>	<p>There could be impacts for some people who currently access mental health services in terms of the provision that they access changing which will be dependent on the review of their needs and outcomes. The buildings that services are currently delivered from could change as part of any service development and review. This could have impacts on both individuals and carers.</p>
<p>Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?</p>	<p>Yes there could potentially be decisions made on what type of services are provided for people with more complex needs to ensure that the services they receive deliver the support required.</p>
<p>Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (eg will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)</p>	<p>Mental health problems have very high rates of prevalence; they are often of long duration, and have adverse effects on many areas of people’s lives, including educational performance, employment, income, personal relationships, and social participation. These problems are very often compounded by the stigma and discrimination and exclusion which is experienced by many people with mental health problems.</p> <p>As part of Plan, we will ensure that we promote the development of support which can meet a variety of individuals with different care needs and that people receive services that meet their needs and outcomes. We also want to ensure equity in terms of locations in the borough where services are located so that people in different locations have local services and opportunities to access.</p>
<p>Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?</p>	<p>We have held engagement and consultation events to ensure that the voice of all stakeholders is heard and that we enable us to ensure that we take on board any considerations around equality.</p>
<p>Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please tick)</p>	

Age	Y		Marriage & civil partnership		N	Religion & belief		N
Disability	Y		Pregnancy & maternity		N	Sex		N
Gender reassignment		N	Race		N	Sexual orientation		N
Carers		N	Socio Economic		N			

Stage 3 Evidence

What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts		Level of Risk (High, Medium or Low)
Age	Some older people may not have the opportunity to engage in this process due to transport and accessibility issues. There may also be issues with accessing virtual appointments/services that require technology. We have used MS Teams to ensure that people who have been unable to attend face to face meetings can be involved.	Low
Marriage & civil partnership	There is no evidence to suggest an impact on this protected characteristic. There will be the opportunity to feedback any impacts relating to this during the consultation process.	N/A
Religion	There is no evidence to suggest an impact on this protected characteristic. There will be the opportunity to feedback any impacts relating to this during the consultation process.	N/A
Disability	Living with a disability may increase the chances of experiencing poor mental health and social isolation.	Low

	To ensure that people with learning disabilities can access the consultation and we have issued an easy read survey document as part of the consultation.	
Pregnancy & maternity	There is no evidence to suggest an impact on this protected characteristic. There will be the opportunity to feedback any impacts relating to this during the consultation process.	N/A
Sex	There is no evidence to suggest an impact on this protected characteristic. There will be the opportunity to feedback any impacts relating to this during the consultation process.	N/A
Gender Reassignment	No recording of gender reassignment takes place on the Council's social care record system as such data on this will be unavailable. However, there is no known element in these proposals which is likely to lead to discrimination of the basis of this protected characteristic	N/A
Race	There is no evidence to suggest an impact on this protected characteristic. There will be the opportunity to feedback any impacts relating to this during the consultation process.	N/A
Sexual Orientation	There is no evidence to suggest an impact on this protected characteristic. There will be the opportunity to feedback any impacts relating to this during the consultation process.	N/A
Carers	There is no evidence to suggest an impact on this protected characteristic. There will be the opportunity to feedback any impacts relating to this during the consultation process.	N/A
Socio Economic	There is no evidence to suggest an impact on this protected characteristic. There will be the opportunity to feedback any impacts relating to this during the consultation process.	N/A

Stage 4 Mitigation

Protected characteristics	Mitigating action <i>Once you have assessed the impact of a policy/service, it is important to identify options and alternatives to reduce or eliminate any negative impact. Options considered could be adapting the policy or service, changing the way in which it is implemented or introducing balancing measures to reduce any negative impact. When considering each option you should think about how it will reduce any negative impact, how it might impact on other groups and how it might impact on relationships between groups and overall issues</i>	How will this be monitored?	Officer responsible	Target date

	<i>around community cohesion. You should clearly demonstrate how you have considered various options and the impact of these. You must have a detailed rationale behind decisions and a justification for those alternatives that have not been accepted.</i>			
Age	Identify solutions to engage this group of people, working with other community groups and organisations that have the expertise and understanding regarding the needs of those over 65. We held meetings online to ensure that those who may struggle to attend face to face meetings were able to participate.	This will be undertaken throughout consultation and engagement process	Mark Hughes	August-October 2022
Marriage & civil partnership				
Religion				
Disability	Engage partner organisations that have the knowledge, relationships and expertise associated with a range of disabilities. Engage those with disabilities in the consultation process through virtual sessions and surveys.	This will be captured through the consultation and engagement process	Mark Hughes	August-October 2022
Pregnancy & maternity				
Sex				
Gender Reassignment				
Race				
Sexual Orientation				

Carers				
Socio Economic				

5. Review and Conclusion

Summary: provide a brief overview including impact, changes, improvement, any gaps in evidence and additional data that is needed

The Mental Health Plan seeks to enhance the support provided to individuals with mental health support needs of all ages. We seek to ensure through more integrated partnership working that we can enhance pathways and offer more support across communities in Cheshire East. There should be no change in service to provision to most people who use mental health services, but there does need to be a robust transition plan in place for those people who either want to change the services they access or those who are coming through transition from childrens services who may wish to access a wider range of options. Operational teams will be heavily involved in reviewing these people and we will also ensure that there will be no gap in service to any people affected.

Specific actions to be taken to reduce, justify or remove any adverse impacts	How will this be monitored?	Officer responsible	Target date
Identification of possible people who use services who may be affected to be completed as a priority prior to consultation and Plan being implemented	Contracts Team / Operational Staff/ consultation, customer questionnaire, drop in sessions, face to face meetings/virtual meetings.	Senior Commissioning Manager Operational Heads of Service	May 2023
Please provide details and link to full action plan for actions			

When will this assessment be reviewed?	April 2024		
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?	No		
Lead officer sign off	Mark Hughes	Date 19.04.23	<i>M Hughes</i>
Head of service sign off	Keith Evans	Date 20.4.23	K Evans

Please return to EDI Officer for publication once signed

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TITLE: All Age Learning Disability Plan 2024-2029

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version	Author	Description of Changes
June 2023	V1_draft	Gerard Buckley	Initial
July 2023	V2	Gerard Buckley	Consultation

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL –EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1 Description: Fact finding (about your policy / service /

Department	Integrated Commissioning Team		Lead officer responsible for assessment		Gerard Buckley	
Service	People Services		Other members of team undertaking assessment		TBC	
Date	07 October 2022		Version 1			
Type of document (mark as appropriate)	Strategy X	Plan	Function	Policy	Procedure	Service X
Is this a new/ existing/ revision of an existing document (please mark as appropriate)	New		Existing		Revision X	
Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation) Please attach a copy of the strategy/ plan/ function/ policy/ procedure/ service	<p>Learning Disability Strategy Cheshire East Council are Health partners are developing a five-year (2023-2028) Learning Disability Strategy, which is a refresh of our current strategy: Cheshire East Learning Disability Strategy 2019-2022 and will be developed as an All Age Placed Based Strategy. A refreshed strategy pulls together the existing aims and objectives, which set out how people with learning disabilities and their families can be supported to improve their quality of life and have better outcomes. This joint strategy will be developed by the local authority and health partners to ensure that self-advocates, parent carers and partners can support and enable the growing population of people with learning disabilities to achieve their aspirations, whilst also managing within the financial resources available.</p> <p>People with learning disability should not be defined solely by their learning disability. People with learning disability have the right to live full and equal lives, with access to the same opportunities as other members of our communities. Despite this, we know that people with learning disability often experience many disadvantages compared to the rest of the population</p>					

	<p>The learning disabilities improvements contained within this plan are informed by this national policy and direction. The plan illustrates the current and future challenges that the service is facing to meet the growing pressures on a sustainable basis from limited resources and identifies actions to achieve the best outcomes for people within these resources. It identifies what is working well and what needs to improve. The plan intends to implement a service-wide approach to current and future priorities for the learning disability service in order to address some of the demographic challenges for the future and resulting capacity demands and deliver sustainable services within available resources.</p> <p>The strategy aims to bring about systemic change to how learners can access and progress through learning to reach their goals. Intended impacts and outcomes are that the strategy are informed by the refreshed strategy's priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community inclusion ▪ Early help ▪ Education and employment ▪ Housing ▪ Assistive Technology ▪ Mortality, Health and Transforming Care 		
<p>Who are the main stakeholders, and have they been engaged with? (e.g. general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences, residents)</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents/Carers ▪ Service users ▪ Councillors ▪ Independent Sector Providers </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commissioners ▪ Operational Staff ▪ Health colleagues </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents/Carers ▪ Service users ▪ Councillors ▪ Independent Sector Providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commissioners ▪ Operational Staff ▪ Health colleagues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents/Carers ▪ Service users ▪ Councillors ▪ Independent Sector Providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commissioners ▪ Operational Staff ▪ Health colleagues 		
<p>Consultation/ involvement carried out</p>	<p>We have been working extensively to develop a refreshed Learning Disability Strategy steered through the setting up of a project group of social care, education, and health professionals; community groups; self-advocates, and parent carers. A formal public consultation will be conducted during November 2022. The contents of the consultation will be informed and shaped by our project group which will enable individuals and groups of people who experience autism to guide the questions.</p> <p>Once a draft refreshed Strategy have been developed, we will seek to go out for public consultation on a second occasion in January 2023.</p>		

What consultation method(s) did you use?	<p>The consultation methods will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public consultation, which will include easy read versions ▪ Engagement with operational teams, community groups, forums and with people with life experiences of learning disability
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Stage 2 Initial Screening

<p>Who is affected and what evidence have you considered to arrive at this analysis? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)</p>	<p>A learning disability is a lifelong condition that can significantly affect the lives of people living with it, and it is part of the daily life of around 600,000 people in the UK. In Cheshire East, there are an estimated 378,800 people living in Cheshire East, with approximately 75,800 children under the age of 18 and 303,000 adults.</p> <p>Currently there are 931 adults with a learning disability [see Table 1] who access services within Cheshire East. However, it is likely that there are many more adults with learning disabilities living in the wider community who do not receive support from the council and are therefore not included in these numbers.</p> <p>Table 1: GP Cluster data - Cheshire East residents with learning disabilities</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Area</th> <th>Learning Disability</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Alderley Edge, Chelford, Handforth, Wilmslow</td> <td>65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bollington, Disley, Poynton</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Congleton, Holmes Chapel</td> <td>80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Crewe</td> <td>181</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Knutsford</td> <td>57</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Macclesfield</td> <td>242</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nantwich and Rural</td> <td>74</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sandbach, Middlewich, Alsager, Scholar Green and Haslington</td> <td>106</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unknown</td> <td>99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grand Total</td> <td>931</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Area	Learning Disability	Alderley Edge, Chelford, Handforth, Wilmslow	65	Bollington, Disley, Poynton	27	Congleton, Holmes Chapel	80	Crewe	181	Knutsford	57	Macclesfield	242	Nantwich and Rural	74	Sandbach, Middlewich, Alsager, Scholar Green and Haslington	106	Unknown	99	Grand Total	931
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<p>Who is intended to benefit and how</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cheshire East residents with a learning disability ▪ Parents, families & carers with life experiences supporting people with learning disabilities ▪ Cheshire East Social Work Teams in the implementation of support ▪ Wider partners and providers including voluntary and community sector 																						

Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?	There could be impacts for some people who currently access services in terms of the provision that they access changing which will be dependent on how things change following the implementation of the strategy. This may include the properties or buildings that services are currently delivered from could change as part of the review. This could have impacts on both individuals and carers.							
Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?	Yes, there could potentially be decisions made on what type of services are provided for people to ensure that the services they receive deliver the support required to meet their care and support needs.							
Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (eg will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)	No – the provision detailed within the strategy and subsequent actions seeks to support all members of the learning disability community.							
Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?	We will be holding engagement and consultation events to ensure that the voice of all stakeholders are heard and that we enable us to ensure that we take on board any considerations around equality.							
Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please tick)								
Age	Y		Marriage & civil partnership		N	Religion & belief	Y	
Disability	Y		Pregnancy & maternity		N	Sex		N
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<p>Data information indicates Cheshire East residents with life experiences of learning disabilities will grow across all age groups between now and 2035 (See Table 2). This relates to all age groups, but in particular the older age group (age 65+) is likely to increase as people are living longer. The refreshed strategy will consider the needs of people with learning disabilities of different ages and also seeks to ‘futureproof’ support as set out in more detail in the strategy and covering report.</p>																																																																																					
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Marriage & civil partnership	Engagement on the strategy considers the family, relationships, and support needs of people with learning disabilities and this will be explored in more detail through the development of the strategy delivery plan.	Low
Religion	There is no evidence to suggest an impact on this protected characteristic. There will be the opportunity to feedback any impacts relating to this during the consultation process.	N/A
Disability	<p>This refreshed strategy seeks to address the core for the experiences of disability for people with learning disabilities, and the inequalities in access to health and wellbeing</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Overall, the proportion of people with learning disabilities who die from cancer in the UK is lower than among the general population (12-18%, compared with 26%), although they have proportionally higher rates of gastrointestinal cancer (48-59% vs 25% of cancer deaths). People with learning disabilities with cancer are less likely to be informed of their diagnosis and prognosis, to be given pain relief, to be involved in decisions about their care and they are less likely to receive palliative care.</p> <p>Coronary heart disease is a leading cause of death amongst people with learning disabilities (14-20%). Respiratory disease is possibly the leading cause of death for people with learning disabilities (46-52%) with rates much higher than for the general population. Adults with learning disabilities are 2.6 times more likely to die from asthma than those who do not have learning disabilities.</p> <p>The prevalence of epilepsy in the British population is between 0.5% and 1% among those with moderate learning disability this prevalence rises to 15%. Among those with severe and profound disability the rate raises further to 30%, with seizures commonly being multiple and resistant to drug treatment.</p> <p>Moreover, people with learning disability are 10 times more likely to have a serious sight problem than other people. 6 in 10 people with learning disabilities need glasses and often need support to get used to them. People living independently or with family are significantly less likely to have had a recent eye examination than people living with paid support staff.</p>	Medium

	<p>The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities states that around 40% of adults with a learning disability experience moderate to severe hearing loss in many cases the hearing loss may be linked the effects of an individual's learning disability, because it may sometimes go unrecognised or undiagnosed, with the behaviours associated with hearing loss being instead considered part of the learning disability.</p> <p>People who have a disability are twice as likely than people without a disability to have no access to a car (Office for Disability Issues 2009). Disabled people are also less confident in using public transport because of physical access issues but also because of staff attitudes (Framework for Action on Independent Living 2012).</p>	
Pregnancy & maternity	There is no evidence to suggest an impact on this protected characteristic. There will be the opportunity to feedback any impacts relating to this during the consultation process.	N/A
Sex	There is no evidence to suggest an impact on this protected characteristic. There will be the opportunity to feedback any impacts relating to this during the consultation process.	N/A
Gender Reassignment	No recording of gender reassignment takes place on the Council's social care record system as such data on this will be unavailable. However, there is no known element in these proposals which is likely to lead to discrimination of the basis of this protected characteristic	N/A
Race	There is no evidence to suggest an impact on this protected characteristic. There will be the opportunity to feedback any impacts relating to this during the consultation process.	N/A
Sexual Orientation	There is no evidence to suggest an impact on this protected characteristic. There will be the opportunity to feedback any impacts relating to this during the consultation process.	N/A

Stage 4 Mitigation

Protected characteristics	Mitigating action <i>Once you have assessed the impact of a policy/service, it is important to identify options and alternatives to reduce or eliminate any negative impact. Options considered could be adapting the policy or service, changing the way in which it is implemented or introducing balancing measures to reduce</i>	How will this be monitored?	Officer responsible	Target date

	<i>any negative impact. When considering each option you should think about how it will reduce any negative impact, how it might impact on other groups and how it might impact on relationships between groups and overall issues around community cohesion. You should clearly demonstrate how you have considered various options and the impact of these. You must have a detailed rationale behind decisions and a justification for those alternatives that have not been accepted.</i>			
Age	Physical access, Transport access, Explore flexible transport being added to service specifications to mitigate.	This will be captured through the consultation and engagement process	Gerard Buckley	April 2023
Marriage & civil partnership				
Religion	The rationale for change is that customers will have a greater choice about how services are provided, with more flexibility. It is possible that this more individually tailored approach could be more beneficial to people with protected characteristics. For instance people with religious beliefs that require a quiet area for prayer at specific times of the day – this could be designed into individually tailored package	This will be captured through the continued consultation and engagement process	Gerard Buckley	April 2023
Disability	The rationale for change is that customers will have a greater choice about how services will be provided, with more flexibility. It is possible that this more individually tailored approach could be more beneficial to people with protected characteristics.	This will be captured through the consultation and engagement process	Gerard Buckley	April 2023
Pregnancy & maternity				

Sex				
Gender Reassignment				
Race	During the consultation we will establish if there are any individuals who require support with accessible information if English is not their first language. This could involve linking in with established support groups/forums.	This will be captured through the consultation and engagement process	Gerard Buckley	April 2023
Sexual Orientation				

5. Review and Conclusion

Summary: provide a brief overview including impact, changes, improvement, any gaps in evidence and additional data that is needed

It is not envisaged that the EIA pre-consultation process would not identify indirect or direct discrimination through the policy intentions of the All Age Learning Disability Strategy. It has shown that despite limited evidence for some protected characteristics, evidence for the wider context in which provision operates shows that the impact of the Strategy will be positive across all many protected characteristics, in particular age, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, and race. For religion and belief, we have particularly limited data. We have found no evidence of negative consequences at this time, however, in line with best practice we will keep this under review as part of the monitoring of this EIA. Specific policy interventions for actions within the Strategy are yet to be developed. As these policies develop they will require their own EIA to ensure that the specific barriers for each protected characteristic are fully considered. Once these policies are implemented, we will gain a better understanding of the difference each policy will make in reducing discrimination and enhancing opportunity.

Specific actions to be taken to reduce, justify or remove any adverse impacts	How will this be monitored?	Officer responsible	Target date
Identification of possible people who use services who may be affected to be completed as a priority prior to strategy being implemented	Contracts Team / Operational Staff/ consultation, customer questionnaire, drop in sessions, face to face meetings/virtual meetings.	Senior Commissioning Manager Operational Heads of Service	April 2023
Enough time must be planned in to the transition plan to ensure effective transfer of those who may be impacted by any service changes and review of people can take place – thus ensuring no gap in service provision for those affected	Commissioning / Contracts Team / Operational Teams/ transition and mobilisation plan.	Operational Heads of Service Senior Commissioning Manager	April 2023
Please provide details and link to full action plan for actions			
When will this assessment be reviewed?	Jan 2023		
Are there any additional assessments that need to be	No		

undertaken in relation to this assessment?			
Lead officer sign off	Gerard Buckley	Date: 07 Oct 2022	
Head of service sign off	Mark Hughes	Date 07 Oct 2022	M Hughes

Please return to EDI Officer for publication once signed

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Children and Families Committee

Monday, 13 November 2023

Medium-Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2024/25 - 2027/28 (Children and Families Committee)

**Report of: Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer
Services (s151 Officer)**

Report Reference No: CF/09/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards;

Purpose of Report

- 1 The Children and Families Committee is being asked to approve the indicative financial envelope for this committee to support consultation on the development of the Cheshire East Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28.
- 2 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out how the Council will resource the achievement of the Corporate Plan and is subject to consultation and approval on an annual basis. The Finance Sub-committee approved the financial assumptions for the future MTFS at their meeting in June 2023, and this report goes further in recognising the need for financial targets that enable further development of the MTFS.
- 3 Developing the MTFS requires a wide range of stakeholder engagement. Members are key stakeholders in their capacity as community leaders, but also in their capacity as decision makers in setting the Council's budget. During this financial planning cycle there has been a series of all Member events to look at the current and future financial position. The Finance-Sub Committee formed a working group to scrutinise the financial assumptions underpinning the current MTFS.

- 4 Individual Committees are being asked to review the in-year budget positions and consider how this performance, and achieving the MTFS financial envelopes, will impact on services they are responsible for.
- 5 Public engagement will follow when financial proposals have been identified that could balance the Council's budget. The January cycle of Committee meetings will be the forum to scrutinise the draft balanced proposals put forward, alongside other feedback from consultees. All feedback will be collated and provided as evidence to the Corporate Policy Committee on 8 February 2024.
- 6 Final approval of the 2024/25 budget will take place at full Council on 27 February 2024 following recommendation from the Corporate Policy Committee.

Executive Summary

- 7 Financial strategies underpin how Cheshire East Council will allocate resources, achieve the Corporate Plan and provide in the region of 500 local services every day. The strategies must be affordable, based on robust estimates and balanced against adequate reserves.
- 8 In February 2021 the Council approved the Corporate Plan 2021-2025 which articulates the vision of how these services will make Cheshire East an Open, Fair and Green borough:
- 9 Open - We will provide strong community leadership and work transparently with our residents, businesses and partners to deliver our ambition in Cheshire East.
- 10 Fair - We aim to reduce inequalities, promote fairness and opportunity for all and support our most vulnerable residents.
- 11 Green - We will lead our communities to protect and enhance our environment, tackle the climate emergency and drive sustainable development.
- 12 A new Corporate Plan, referred to now as the Council Plan, is being developed to meet new criteria. These are identified as being: challenging but achievable; reflecting manifesto commitments to ensure that they are delivered to the electorate; to be co-created by a diverse range of stakeholders including Members, officers, residents, and partners; to be recognisable as uniquely Cheshire East, and; to have an outcomes framework that will allow measurement of results and review of success. The plan is expected to be approved alongside the budget in February 2024.

- 13 Committees are responsible for overseeing the achievement of the Council's priorities. Resources, including Revenue, Capital and Reserves were allocated by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2023, following the budget Council. All resources are allocated to a specific Service Committee or the Finance Sub-Committee. This report sets out an early indication of the allocation of resources to support financial planning for the MTFS.
- 14 Each Committee is issued a separate report on the current forecast in-year financial position. As set out in the Second Financial Review report, at this point the forecast adverse variance of £18.7m represents a combination of the several issues:
- (i) National economic pressures facing all councils (such as pay inflation and interest rates).
 - (ii) Growing local demand for services which represents a permanent pressure, also being experienced locally in other councils.
 - (iii) Revised forecasts related to budget changes agreed through the MTFS process in 2022/23. This is a mix of additional growth pressures, or savings taking longer to achieve than originally envisaged.
- 15 The Second Financial Review forecasts are shown in the table below:

2023/24	Revised Budget (NET) £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance FR2 £m	Forecast Variance FR1 £m	Movement from FR1 to FR2 £m
Service Committee					
Adults and Health	136.5	141.2	4.7	0.3	4.4
Children and Families	80.3	91.0	10.8	7.0	3.8
Corporate Policy	41.2	40.7	(0.5)	0.9	(1.4)
Economy and Growth	24.8	22.9	(1.9)	(1.8)	(0.1)
Environment and Communities	48.7	52.3	3.5	4.2	(0.7)
Highways and Transport	11.2	12.4	1.2	1.2	(0.0)
Sub-Committee					
Finance Sub	(342.7)	(341.8)	0.9	1.1	(0.2)
TOTAL	-	18.7	18.7	12.8	5.9

- 16 Analysis of the in-year forecasts and reflecting on the outturn performance against the 2022/23 budget indicates that the most significant prevailing financial pressure is within Services that are the responsibility of the Children and Families Committee. This position is in line with top-tier Local Authorities across England where similar issues are being experienced.

- 17 The Second Financial Review also highlights the potential for very low levels of reserves being retained by the Council at year-end, with a potential £18.7m reduction being forecast. Any positive variations to the financial assumptions reviewed by the Committee should therefore be allocated to recover reserves in the first instance.
- 18 The adverse impacts in the financial review therefore need to be addressed through a re-allocation of resources from within the assumed budget for 2024/25 onwards. The immediate short-term risk to the Council's financial resilience must lead to a focus on budget setting for the 2024/25 budget only. Subsequent years of the medium term will present indicative values, with significant further work required to ensure a sustainable position can be achieved in the medium term. This is a position being widely experienced by councils across the country.
- 19 The initial reallocation of resources responds to pressure in the Children and Families committee, increasing the revenue budget for the committee by £7m compared to the MTFS presented to Council in February 2023. This transfer of resources results in a savings requirement in other Committee budgets to maintain the balanced budget requirement.
- 20 The Financial Reviews presented to Members raise awareness of the current financial position. The reports highlight that the Council has set up a series of Cheshire East Budget Emergency Response Team (CEBERT) workstreams to focus on various elements of spending and pricing controls. The work of CEBERT is focused on both the in-year position and the development of the 2024/25 budget.
- 21 This report sets out the indicative budget envelopes for all Committee budgets for 2024/25 and recommends that officers work with Members to develop further proposals to enable budgets to be set within each envelope for 2024/25.
- 22 The budget envelopes for 2024/25 for all Committees have been set as follows:

	2023/24 Original Approved budget £m	2024/25 Policy proposals* (as included in MTFS Feb 23) £m	2023/24 Pay inflation shortfall £m	2024/25 Target growth / savings £m	2024/25 Revised budget envelope £m
Adults and Health	136.3	+6.1	+0.8	-5.5	137.7
Children and Families	79.1	+2.9	+0.6	+6.4	89.0
Corporate	41.0	+1.0	+0.4	-1.2	41.2

Policy					
Economy and Growth	25.0	+2.4	+0.2	-0.7	27.0
Environment and Communities	48.3	-0.3	+0.7	-1.6	47.2
Highways and Transport	11.0	+1.5	+0.1	-0.4	12.3
Finance Sub (Central)	12.4	+6.1	-	-	18.4
TOTAL	353.1	+19.6	+2.8	-2.8	372.7

*full list of existing budget proposals for 2024/25 is included at Appendix A

Note – there may be roundings present in the table due to the presentation to one decimal place

- 23 It is proposed that a more detailed report of service budgets is shared with Members, to support their further engagement and understanding of service-level expenditure and income, over the coming weeks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

- (a) Note the indicative budget envelope for this committee, as approved at the Finance Sub-Committee on 2 November, as a way of setting financial targets in support of achieving a balanced budget for 2024/25.
- (b) Note that officers will develop further proposals in consultation with Members to enable wider stakeholder consultation prior to approval by Council.
- (c) Note that Committees will be presented with the opportunity to further review financial proposals, designed to achieve a balanced budget, as part of their January cycle of meetings prior to recommendations being made to Council for approval.

Background

- 24 The Council's financial resources are provided from a combination of local taxes, government grants, investment returns on assets and other direct contributions from individuals or organisations. Financial plans are based on estimated spending and income over the next four years and the report of the Chief Finance Officer brings Members' attention to the processes and risks associated with developing these estimates.
- 25 The Council aims to achieve value for money based on Economy (how much we pay for things), Efficiency (how well we use things) and Effectiveness (how we use things to achieve outcomes). Public feedback and internal and external scrutiny create the necessary framework to hold the Council to account for achieving these aims.
- 26 All councils are legally required to set a balanced budget each year and the immediate focus will be on balancing the 2024/25 financial year rather than on the whole medium term as has been the case previously. This reflects the extremely challenging circumstances all councils are facing currently.
- 27 Finance Sub-Committee received a report on 7 June setting out the MTFS 2024-28 planned timetable and budget assumptions underpinning the current MTFS. A working group from that Sub-Committee then met on 6 September to discuss these assumptions and their suitability for the medium term. Feedback from this session was then provided verbally to the Sub-Committee on 7 September.
- 28 The Budget Setting Process 2024-2028 has so far identified additional pressure on budgets across all committee areas, especially within the Children and Families area as reported in the First and Second Financial Reviews. We are not anticipating additional funding to be announced as part of the Provisional Local Government Finance settlement due to be announced, at the earliest, in December 2023.
- 29 Should any benefits emerge from the Local Government Settlement the Council should look to recover reserves that are likely to be depleted based on the current year forecasts. Service budgets must be therefore balance within the current funding envelope as reported in the MTFS in February 2023.
- 30 In response to local financial pressure, identified in the financial reviews, and reflected in a national trend, the Children and Families committee will be allocated an additional £7m compared to the current MTFS to support a response to demand in this area. Allocations have also been made across all committees to address the shortfall in the

pay inflation budgeted for 2023/24. It must be noted that the final pay offer has not been agreed yet for “Green Book” employees, but the calculation is based on the announced offer of an additional £1,925, or 3.88% (whichever is the greater) per employee.

- 31 To accommodate the changes related to the Children and Families Committee budget the remaining service committees have been reduced pro rata based on net spending to rebalance the Council’s budget.
- 32 This has resulted in revised budget envelopes for 2024/25 for each service committee when compared to the published MTFS in February 2023. The revised budget envelope for the Children and Families Committee is included in the table above and at Appendix A – 2024/25 Budget Proposals as per MTFS February 2023, plus revised budget envelope.

Consultation and Engagement

- 33 This report forms part of the consultation process for Members on the budget setting for 2024/25. Each committee will receive a similar report covering their own area of responsibilities.
- 34 Once a set of draft budget change proposals have been agreed upon there will be further opportunity during the January cycle of Committee meetings to give formal feedback from each Committee to the Corporate Policy Committee which will then lead on to the full Council meeting in February 2024.
- 35 There are plans for a series of engagement events with wider stakeholders to gather opinion and collate ideas on the final budget for 2024/25.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 36 In accordance with the Constitution, Committees play an important role in planning, monitoring and reporting on the Council’s finances. Each Committee has specific financial responsibilities.
- 37 The Council’s annual budget must be balanced. The proposals within it must be robust and the strategy should be supported by adequate reserves. The assessment of these criteria is supported by each Committee having the opportunity to help develop the financial proposals before they are approved by Full Council.

Other Options Considered

- 38 The Council has a legal duty to set a balanced annual budget taking regard of the report from the Chief Finance Officer. As such options

cannot be considered that would breach this duty. Any feedback from the Committee must still recognise the requirement for Council to fulfil this duty.

- 39 There is no option to “do nothing”. The Council has statutory obligations to provide certain services, which would be unaffordable if the Council failed to levy an appropriate Council Tax.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 40 The Council should have robust processes so that it can meet statutory requirements and fulfil its fiduciary duty.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 41 The Council’s financial resources are agreed by Council on an annual basis and aligned to the achievement of stated outcomes for local residents and communities. Monitoring and managing performance helps to ensure that resources are used effectively, and that business planning and financial decision making are made in the right context.
- 42 Reserve levels are agreed, by Council, in February each year and are based on a risk assessment that considers the financial challenges facing the Council. If spending associated with in-year delivery of services is not contained within original forecasts for such activity it may be necessary to vire funds from reserves.
- 43 The unplanned use of financial reserves could require the Council to deliver a greater level of future savings to replenish reserve balances and/ or revise the level of risks associated with the development of the Reserves Strategy in future.
- 44 The risk associated with the scale of the current financial challenges both in year and in the setting of the 2024/25 budget is that the Council could act illegally, triggering the requirement for a s.114 report from the Chief Financial Officer. Illegal behaviour in this context could materialise from two distinct sources:
- (a) Spending decisions could be made that exceed the available resources of the Council. This would unbalance the budget, which is unlawful.
 - (b) Spending decisions to restrict or hide pressures could be made that avoid an immediate deficit, but in fact are based on unlawful activity.

- 45 The consequences of the Council undermining a budget with illegal activity, or planned illegal activity, is the requirement to issue a s.114 report. Under these circumstances statutory services will continue and existing contracts and commitments must be honoured. But any spending that is not essential or which can be postponed must not take place.
- 46 Further consequences would be highly likely and could include the appointment of Commissioners from the DLUHC, and potential restrictions on the decision-making powers of local leaders.

Policy

- 47 The existing Corporate Plan and the new Council Plan due to be approved in February 2024 will drive and inform Council policy and priorities for service delivery. The priorities and actions may have direct policy implications and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 48 Under the Equality Act 2010, decision makers must show “due regard” to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and
 - (c) Foster good relations between those groups.
- 49 The protected characteristics are age, disability, sex, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership.
- 50 Having “due regard” is a legal term which requires the Council to consider what is proportionate and relevant in terms of the decisions they take.
- 51 The Council needs to ensure that in taking decisions on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Budget that the impacts on those with protected characteristics are considered. The Council undertakes equality impact assessments where necessary and continues to do so as proposals and projects develop across the lifetime of the Corporate Plan. The process assists us to consider what actions could mitigate any adverse impacts identified. Completed equality impact assessments form part of any detailed Business Cases.

- 52 The proposals within the MTFS include positive and negative impacts. A separate Equality Impact Assessment for the budget as a whole is routinely included in the full MTFS report each year.
- 53 The Corporate Plan's vision reinforces the Council's commitment to meeting its equalities duties, promoting fairness and working openly for everyone. Cheshire East is a diverse place and we want to make sure that people are able to live, work and enjoy Cheshire East regardless of their background, needs or characteristics.

Human Resources

- 54 Consultation on the budget change proposals will include staff. Any changes involving staff will be managed in consultation with staff and Trade Unions.

Risk Management

- 55 Cheshire East recognises that in pursuit of its objectives and outcomes it may choose to accept an increased degree of risk. Where the Council chooses to accept an increased level of risk it will do so, subject always to ensuring that the potential benefits and threats are fully understood before developments are authorised, that it has sufficient risk capacity and that sensible measures to mitigate risk are established.
- 56 The Council also establishes a level of reserves that are adequate to protect the Council against financial risks, such as emergencies, which are not specifically budgeted for in individual years.
- 57 The Council will continue to be flexible about investing revenue funding in maintaining sustainable services and reflecting changes to the risks facing the Council. The full Budget Report will include a revised Reserves Strategy for 2024/25 to provide further detail on estimated balances and the application of reserves in the medium term.

Rural Communities

- 58 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 59 Budget change proposals and further mitigations that need to be identified which will affect the Children's area of the budget have been set out in the report to the Children and Families Committee.

Public Health

- 60 There are no direct implications for Public Health due to the nature of this budget being ringfenced.

Climate Change

- 61 The current Corporate Plan has a very strong environmental thread throughout with a specific aim for the Council to be 'Greener'.
- 62 Budget change proposals which will support the Council's commitment of being carbon neutral by 2025 will be included in the relevant Committee report to which they relate.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Alex Thompson, Paul Goodwin, Honor Field alex.thompson@cheshireeast.gov.uk, paul.goodwin@cheshireeast.gov.uk, honor.field@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A –2024/25 proposals as per MTFS February 2023, plus revised budget envelope (separate Appendix A per Committee area)
Background Papers:	Outturn Report 2022/23 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-27 First Financial Review 2023/24 Second Financial Review 2023/24

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Appendix A – 2024/25 budget proposals as per MTFS February 2023, plus revised budget envelope

Children and Families Committee Budget Change Proposal	Existing Revised New	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
School Transport Pressures	Existing MTFS 24		+0.600	+0.800	
Growth in Children's Social Care	Existing MTFS 26	+1.800	+1.700	+1.600	
Pension Costs Adjustment	Existing MTFS 33	-0.465	-0.487		
Use of Children & Families Transformation Reserve - estimated balance	Existing MTFS 34	+1.065			
Integrated Children's Service Strategy	Existing MTFS 35	-0.500	-0.200	-0.200	
Review of commissioned services across the Children and Families Directorate	Existing MTFS 38	-0.100			
Deliver the Family Hub model	Existing MTFS 41	-0.100			
Reduce Legacy Pension commitments	Existing MTFS 43	-0.050	-0.050		
Revenue costs for the Crewe Youth Zone (as above) aligned to Supporting Families Funding	Existing MTFS 44		+0.400		
Early Help budget to support funding towards the Crewe Youth Zone	Existing MTFS 45		-0.400		
Pay inflation	Existing MTFS 4,25,46,65,81,82,102	+1.230	+1.056	+1.082	
TOTAL CHANGE PROPOSALS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE AS PER MTFS FEB 2023		+2.880	+2.619	+3.282	

SUMMARY					
2023/24 Approved Budget		79.1			
Proposals for 2024/25 @ Feb 2023	As above	+2.9			
Additional pay inflation required for 23-24 shortfall	Revised MTFS 4,25,46,65,81,82,102	+0.6			
Growth in demand		+6.4			
2024/25 Revised Budget Envelope		89.0			

2023/24 FORECAST POSITION					
Adverse variance as per FR2		10.8			

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Children and Families Committee

Monday, 13 November 2023

Second Financial Review 2023/24

Report of: Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services (s151 Officer)

Report Reference No: CF/13/23-24

Ward(s) Affected:

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report provides Members with the second review of the Cheshire East Council forecast outturn for the financial year 2023/24. Members are being asked to consider the serious financial challenges being experienced by the Council (and other councils) and to recognise the important activities aimed at minimising the impact on services.
- 2 Members of the Committee are being asked to consider the financial performance of the Services relevant to their terms of reference.

Executive Summary

- 3 The Council operates a financial cycle of planning, monitoring and reporting. This review is part of the monitoring cycle and provides a forecast outturn position for the 2023/24 financial year. The information in this report also supports planning for next year's budget. This report supports the Council priority of being an open and enabling organisation, ensuring that there is transparency in all aspects of Council decision making.
- 4 The full report was received by Finance Sub Committee on 2 November 2023. Service Committees will receive the sections relevant to their committee (see Appendices).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee:

1. Consider the report of the Finance Sub Committee: [Finance Sub-Committee, 2nd November, 2023](#)
2. Consider the factors leading to a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial pressure of £10.8m against a revised budget of £80.3m (13.4%).
3. Consider the forecast and further mitigations needing to be identified, aimed at bringing spending back in line with budget.
4. Consider the in-year forecast Capital Spending of £36.5m against an approved MTFS budget of £53.8m, due to slippage that has been re-profiled into future years.
5. Scrutinise the contents of Annex 1 and Appendix 2 and note that any financial mitigation decisions requiring approval will be made in line with relevant delegations.

Background

- 5 Committees are responsible for discharging the Council's functions within the Budget and Policy Framework provided by Council. The Budget will be aligned with Committee and Head of Service responsibilities as far as possible.
- 6 Budget holders are expected to manage within the budgets provided by full Council. Committee and Sub-Committees are responsible for monitoring financial control and making decisions as required by these rules.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services (s151 Officer) alex.thompson@cheshireeast.gov.uk Paul Goodwin, Head of Finance & Deputy Chief Finance Officer paul.goodwin@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	1 Second Financial Review 2023/24 2 Annex 1 – Second Financial Review 2023/24
Background Papers	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-27 First Financial Review 2023/24 Second Financial Review 2023/24

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Finance Sub Committee

2 November 2023

Second Financial Review 2023/24

Report of: Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services

Report Reference No: [To be provided by Democratic Services]

Ward(s) Affected: Not applicable

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report provides Members with the second review of the Cheshire East Council forecast outturn for the financial year 2023/24. Members are being asked to consider the serious financial challenges being experienced by the Council (and other councils) and to recognise the important activities aimed at minimising the impact on services.
- 2 The report highlights the ongoing negative impact of high inflation, rising interest rates and increasing demand for services since the Council set its budget in February 2023. Annex 1 of the report highlights in detail what the Council is forecasting to achieve as part of the 2023/24 budget. Tables include updates to items identified in the MTFS plus further items identified in-year.
- 3 Reporting the financial forecast outturn supports the Council's vision to be an open Council as set out in the Corporate Plan 2021 to 2025. In particular, the priorities for an open and enabling organisation, ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of Council decision making.
- 4 The report also requests Member approval for amendments to the Council's budget in line with authorisation levels within the Constitution.

Executive Summary

- 5 The Council operates a financial cycle of planning, monitoring and reporting. This review is part of the monitoring cycle and provides a forecast outturn position for the 2023/24 financial year. The information

in this report also supports planning for next year's budget. This report supports the Council priority of being an open and enabling organisation, ensuring that there is transparency in all aspects of Council decision making.

- 6 The Council set its 2023/24 annual budget in February 2023. The budget was balanced, as required by statute, and included important assumptions about spending in the year. The budget is part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023 to 2027.
- 7 The MTFS for 2023/24 included £70m of service growth and £42m of service savings. The equivalent figures for 2022/23 were £21m of growth and £7m of savings. This highlights the challenge of delivering the 2023/24 budget even before the impact of increased demand, prevailing high inflation and rising interest rates.
- 8 The first financial review of 2023/24, reported to Corporate Policy Committee in October 2023, reported a pressure of £12.8m, reduced from £26.6m through potential mitigations. The report highlighted further activities that would be instigated to address current spending forecasts and income levels.
- 9 Prices, and demand, for services to support children and adults that require Council services continue to rise, reflecting complexity of care needs and market conditions.
- 10 Despite further savings of £4.3m being identified the overall spending forecasts have increased. The second financial review of 2023/24 is forecasting a pressure of £18.7m by 31 March 2024, an increase of £5.9m compared to first financial review.
- 11 The financial pressures being experienced by Cheshire East Council are not unique. Headlines published about local government finance including the BBC highlight that:
 - (a) councils will be £5.2bn short by April 2026 (after making £2.5bn of planned reductions),
 - (b) the average council facing a £33m deficit,
 - (c) £1.1bn of reserves will be required to balance in 2023/24.
- 12 Local authorities that have committed, or are likely to commit to, financial activities beyond their legal means must issue a s.114 notice. This has already happened for various reasons at eight local authorities to date (Birmingham, Northamptonshire, Nottingham, Northumberland, Croydon, Woking, Thurrock, and Slough). The pressures quoted in these councils are between £35m and £1.5bn.

- 13 Please see Financial Implications section for risks and consequences relating to a s.114 notice.
- 14 Press articles continue to report that more councils are concerned about further s.114 notices being issued. A search of such reports identifies Coventry, Derby, Havering, Medway, Leeds, Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington, Middlesbrough, Kirklees, Hastings, Kent, Stoke, Somerset, Guildford, Southampton as well as Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, as all being linked to financial stress and potential s.114 notices. The pressures quoted in these councils range from £8.5m to £47m. This list has got longer since the First Financial Review and continues to grow.
- 15 Local authorities, including Cheshire East Council, therefore continue to liaise with Government departments over the severity of so many emerging financial issues. The Council achieves this liaison either directly or through professional or political networks. The focus of this lobbying for Cheshire East Council is on the following important local issues:
- (a) **High needs / special educational needs deficit.** The Council reported a cumulative deficit of £47m from 2022/23, which is set to rise to £85.8m by March 2024 and to £243.5m by 2027. The cost of maintaining this deficit in interest payments is forecast to exceed £3m in 2023/24. The Council is also funding transport costs of over £1m in excess of the 2023/24 budget to manage demand. The Council has now begun conversations on entry to the DfE's Safety Valve Scheme.
 - (b) **Capital Funding and HS2.** Major infrastructure schemes are at risk due to construction costs inflation of 15% to 20%. Associated Government grants have not been revised to keep pace and do not reflect up to date costs forecasts. The Council is therefore having to manage all additional costs. The announcement of the cancellation of phase 2 of the HS2 project referred to escalating costs, and this also impacts on the Council's finances. Letters have been sent to Government ministers and officials to highlight the £11.2m spent by the Council on this project. The Government is looking at this issue as well as developing wider plans to provide additional funding for infrastructure projects in the North of England following the announcements about HS2.
 - (c) **Children's Services.** Although Government has previously provided additional funding for Adult Social Care, the costs of Children's Services are not being addressed. New burdens funding is not being provided, nor are capital grants that could potentially create new

provision of services reducing the reliance on private sector placements.

- (d) **Local Government Settlement.** Longer term settlements that address business rate retention, rurality and growth in demand are essential to providing longer term stability. Late and short-term settlements do not support the development of sustainable financial strategies.
- 16 The First Financial Review highlighted local mitigations that would be implemented to reduce expenditure. In October 2023, the Cheshire East Budget Response Team (CEBERT) was set up to lead on coordinating this work across the organisation. Weekly meetings are chaired by the Chief Executive with updates relating to the workstreams identified in the review.
- 17 The workstreams include:
- (a) Establishment Management: a full review of the Council's establishment is near completion. Recruitment controls have reduced the number of vacancies approved for recruitment from an average of over 20 per week to around 3 per week, with approved posts relating to essential safeguarding posts. All agency placements are also under review.
 - (b) Spending Control Panel: all Procurement Engagements are subject to additional review. Procurement has been rejected, with several others on hold requiring enhanced information as to the essential nature of the spending.
 - (c) Pricing Strategies: in many cases the cost of providing charged-for services has increased. This workstream is looking at price increases that may be required to reduce subsidising services that are unaffordable via local taxation.
 - (d) Capital Spending: a further £2.1m of transformation activity previously funded from revenue budgets is now being legitimately funded from Capital Receipts. Re-profiling Capital Expenditure has already reduced interest payments by £0.6m.
- 18 The impact of this work, as well as focused activity on services within each committee is reflected in Annex 1. Now that CEBERT has been established the Chief Executive will develop opportunities for frequent Member updates on progress. The results of further mitigations will also be factored into the third financial review.
- 19 The MTFs highlights that the Council has relatively low levels of reserves as annual funding is required to manage ongoing service demand. This means financial pressure requires changes to ongoing spending and income rather than relying on management via reserves.

Notwithstanding this issue all reserves held for specific purposes are under review through CEBERT.

20 **Annex 1: Second Financial Review 2023/24**

21 **Financial Stability:** Provides information on the overall financial stability and resilience of the Council. It demonstrates how spending in 2023/24 is being funded, including the positions on overall service budgets, centrally held budgets, council tax and business rates. Further details are contained in the appendices.

22 **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 Adults and Health Committee.

Appendix 2 Children and Families Committee.

Appendix 3 Corporate Policy Committee.

Appendix 4 Economy and Growth Committee.

Appendix 5 Environment and Communities Committee.

Appendix 6 Highways and Transport Committee.

Appendix 7 Finance Sub-Committee.

Appendix 7a Update to the Treasury Management Strategy.

Appendix 7b Update to the Investment Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Finance Sub Committee:

1. Consider the factors leading to a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial pressure of £18.7m against a revised budget of £353.1m (5.3%).
2. Consider the forecast and further mitigations needing to be identified, aimed at bringing spending back in line with budget.
3. Consider the in-year forecast Capital Spending of £181.4m against an approved MTFS budget of £214.7m, due to slippage that has been re-profiled into future years.
4. Scrutinise the contents of Annex 1 and each of the appendices and note that any financial mitigation decisions requiring approval will be made in line with relevant delegations.

5. Approve capital virements up to and including £5,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules as detailed in **Appendix 7 Finance Sub-Committee, Section 5 Capital Strategy, Table 5.**
6. Note that Council will be asked to:
7. Approve fully funded supplementary revenue estimates over £1,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules as detailed in **Appendix 1 Adults and Health Committee, Section 3 Corporate Grants Register, Table 2** and **Appendix 4 Economy and Growth Committee, Section 3 Corporate Grants Register, Table 2.**

Background

- 23 Managing performance is essential to the achievement of outcomes. This is especially important in evidencing the achievement of value for money across an organisation the size of Cheshire East Council. The Council is the third largest local authority in the Northwest of England, responsible for approximately 500 services, supporting over 398,000 local people. Gross annual spending is over £750m, with a revised net revenue budget for 2023/24 of £353.1m.
- 24 The management structure of the Council is organised into four directorates: Adults, Health and Integration; Children's Services; Place; and Corporate Services. The Council's reporting structure provides forecasts of a potential year-end outturn within each directorate during the year, as well as highlighting activity carried out in support of each outcome contained within the Corporate Plan.
- 25 The political structure of the Council is organised into six committees, with a single sub-committee, all with financial responsibilities acutely aligned to the management structure. Performance against the 2023/24 Budget within each Committee, and the sub-committee, is outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Revenue Outturn Forecast split by the Six Service Committees and the Finance Sub-Committee

2023/24	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance FR2	Forecast Variance FR1	Movement from FR1 to FR2
	(NET)				
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Service Committee					
Adults and Health	136.5	141.2	4.7	0.3	4.4
Children and Families	80.3	91.0	10.8	7.0	3.8
Corporate Policy	41.2	40.7	(0.5)	0.9	(1.4)
Economy and Growth	24.8	22.9	(1.9)	(1.8)	(0.1)
Environment and Communities	48.7	52.3	3.5	4.2	(0.7)
Highways and Transport	11.2	12.4	1.2	1.2	(0.0)
Sub-Committee					
Finance Sub	(342.7)	(341.8)	0.9	1.1	(0.2)
TOTAL	-	18.7	18.7	12.8	5.9

National Key issues causing the pressures

- 26 The national economic position of the UK has seen prevailing high inflation. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecast that inflation should reduce to 2.9% by quarter 4 of 2023. However, quarter 2 inflation was still at 7.7%, which is higher than the OBR forecast of 6.9% at this stage in the year. The Council is affected by inflation in wages (for Council staff and staff of contracted services), utilities and fuel. But the Council cannot inflate in-year income from Council Tax, Business Rates or Government Grants. The forecast impact of additional pay inflation above the estimates in February is £2.8m.
- 27 The national economic position of the UK is seeing increasing interest rates. In January 2023, when the current MTFs was drafted, interest rates were at 3.5%. Current interest rates are 5.25%. The Council has loans of £242m, mainly acquired to support important Highway and Regeneration schemes, and is therefore exposed to financial pressure from increasing borrowing costs. The Council is receiving more money from investments, but this does not offer adequate compensation. Interest rates are forecast to reduce once inflation is controlled which means a shift to long-term borrowing at this point is not a favourable option.
- 28 Demand for public services, particularly those that are required to support the health and wellbeing of local residents, has increased since the pandemic. Temporary grants associated with the pandemic have ended though. The Council is experiencing demand for care for more

individuals, which is driving up costs, as well as experiencing more complex demand that requires more hours of support in each case.

Consultation and Engagement

- 29 As part of the budget setting process the Pre-Budget Consultation provided an opportunity for interested parties to review and comment on the Council's Budget proposals. The budget proposals described in the consultation document were Council-wide proposals and that consultation was invited on the broad budget proposals. Where the implications of individual proposals were much wider for individuals affected by each proposal, further full and proper consultation was undertaken with people who would potentially be affected by individual budget proposals.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 30 The overall process for managing the Council's resources focuses on value for money, good governance and stewardship. The approach to these responsibilities is captured in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 31 The budget and policy framework sets out rules for managing the Council's financial affairs and contains the financial limits that apply in various parts of the Constitution. As part of sound financial management and to comply with the Constitution any changes to the budgets agreed by Council in the MTFS require approval in line with the financial limits within the Finance Procedure Rules.
- 32 This report provides strong links between the Council's statutory reporting requirements and the in-year monitoring processes for financial and non-financial management of resources.
- 33 In approving the Cheshire East Council Medium-Term Financial Strategy Members of the Council had regard to the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves as reported by the s.151 Officer. The s.151 Officer's report highlighted the importance of each element of the MTFS and the requirement to achieve all the proposals within it. The recommendations of this report highlight the need for ongoing activity to manage the financial pressure being experienced by the Council.

Other Options Considered

- 34 None. This report is important to ensure Members of the Committee are sighted on the financial pressure the Council is facing and the activity to date to try and mitigate this issue. Activity is required to ensure the Council balances its expenditure and income without serious impact on essential Council services.

- 35 Do nothing. Impact – Members are not updated on the financial position of the Council. Risks – Not abiding by the Constitution to provide regular reports.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 36 The legal implications surrounding the process of setting the 2023 to 2027 Medium-Term Financial Strategy were dealt with in the reports relating to that process. The purpose of this paper is to provide a progress report for 2023/24. Implications arising from individual proposals regarding service growth and savings have and will continue to be the subject of ongoing advice and support.
- 37 Implications arising directly from this report relating to the internal processes of approving supplementary estimates and virements referred to are governed by the Constitution and in particular the Finance Procedure Rules.
- 38 In relation the proposed review to ensure that all available resources are directed towards the delivery of statutory functions, savings and efficiency plans, it should be noted that local authorities are creatures of statute. They are created by statute and are regulated through the legislative regime and whilst they have in more recent times been given a general power of competence, this must operate within that regime. Within the statutory framework there are specific obligations placed upon a local authority to support communities. These duties encompass general and specific duties and there is often significant local discretion in respect of how those services or duties are discharged. These will need to be assessed and advised on as each circumstance is considered.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 39 The Council's financial resources are agreed by Council and aligned to the achievement of stated outcomes for local residents and communities. Monitoring and managing performance helps to ensure that resources are used effectively, and that business planning and financial decision making are made in the right context.
- 40 Reserve levels are agreed, by Council, in February each year and are based on a risk assessment that considers the financial challenges facing the Council. If spending associated with in-year delivery of services is not contained within original forecasts for such activity it may be necessary to vire funds from reserves.

- 41 The unplanned use of financial reserves could require the Council to deliver a greater level of future savings to replenish reserve balances and/ or revise the level of risks associated with the development of the Reserves Strategy in future.
- 42 As part of the process to produce this report, senior officers review expenditure and income across all services to support the development of mitigation plans that will return the outturn to a balanced position at year-end.
- 43 Forecasts contained within this review provide important information in the process of developing the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Analysis of variances during the year will identify whether such performance is likely to continue, and this enables more robust estimates to be established.
- 44 The risk associated with the scale of these challenges is that the Council could act illegally, triggering the requirement for a s.114 report from the Chief Financial Officer. Illegal behaviour in this context could materialise from two distinct sources:
- i) Spending decisions could be made that exceed the available resources of the Council. This would unbalance the budget, which is unlawful.
 - ii) Spending decisions to restrict or hide pressures could be made that avoid an immediate deficit, but in fact are based on unlawful activity.
- 45 The consequences of the Council undermining a budget with illegal activity, or planned illegal activity, is the requirement to issue a s.114 report. Under these circumstances statutory services will continue and existing contracts and commitments must be honoured. But any spending that is not essential or which can be postponed must not take place.
- 46 Further consequences would be highly likely and could include the appointment of Commissioners from the DLUHC, and potential restrictions on the decision-making powers of local leaders.

Policy

- 47 This report is a backward look at Council activities and predicts the year-end position. It supports the Corporate Plan aim Open and priority to be an open and enabling organisation.
- 48 The forecast outturn position, ongoing considerations for future years, and the impact on general reserves will be fed into the assumptions underpinning the 2024 to 2028 Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

- 49 The approval of supplementary estimates and virements are governed by the Finance Procedure Rules section of the Constitution.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 50 Any equality implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Human Resources

- 51 This report is a backward look at Council activities at outturn and states the year end position. Any HR implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Risk Management

- 52 Financial risks are assessed and reported on a regular basis, and remedial action taken if required. Risks associated with the achievement of the 2022/23 budget and the level of general reserves were factored into the 2023/24 financial scenario, budget, and reserves strategy.

Rural Communities

- 53 The report provides details of service provision across the borough.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 54 The report provides details of service provision across the borough and notes the pressure on Children in Care.

Public Health

- 55 This report is a backward look at Council activities at the first review and provides the forecast year end position. Any public health implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Climate Change

- 56 There are no direct implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	<p>Alex Thompson</p> <p>Director of Finance and Customer Services (Section 151 Officer)</p> <p>alex.thompson@cheshireeast.gov.uk</p> <p>01270 685876</p>
Appendices:	<p>Annex 1 including:</p> <p>Section 1 provides information on the overall financial stability and resilience of the Council. Further details are contained in the appendices.</p> <p>Appendix 1 Adults and Health Committee.</p> <p>Appendix 2 Children and Families Committee.</p> <p>Appendix 3 Corporate Policy Committee.</p> <p>Appendix 4 Economy and Growth Committee.</p> <p>Appendix 5 Environment and Communities Committee.</p> <p>Appendix 6 Highways and Transport Committee.</p> <p>Appendix 7 Finance Sub-Committee.</p> <p>Appendix 7a Update to the Treasury Management Strategy.</p> <p>Appendix 7b Update to the Investment Strategy.</p>
Background Papers:	<p>The following are links to key background documents:</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2027</p>



Second Financial Review 2023/24

November 2023

This report receives scrutiny and approval from Members of Cheshire East Council. As a public report, the Council welcomes feedback to the information contained here.

Anyone wanting to comment is invited to contact the Council at:

RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Introduction

Cheshire East Council is the third largest Council in the Northwest of England, supporting over 398,000 local people with annual spending of over £750m.

Local government is going through a period of financial challenges, with a combination of the impact of increasing demand for services and rising costs due to inflation and interest rates. There is also increasing uncertainty associated with income from business rates and government grants.

Demand for Council services is increasing, with more individuals and families needing support and services than ever before. This reflects an increase in population but also reflects changes in demographics and the national cost of living increases. This demand is resulting in a forecast outturn of £18.7m against a net revenue budget of £353.1m. The most significant impact is within the rising costs of Children's Social Care. Further activity is required to identify other mitigating measures.

When the 2023/24 budget was set, in February 2023, it was highlighted that the use of reserves was not sustainable in the medium term. Net spending therefore needs to be contained within the estimates of expenditure that form the budget. The forecasts at first review highlight pressures due to demand, inflation, interest rates and pay negotiations. These will almost certainly affect the medium term finances of the Council. This situation must be addressed now and as part of the MTFS process for 2024 to 2028.

To support openness and transparency, and provide evidence of strong governance, the report has a main section, to provide background and context, and then nine supporting appendices with detailed information about allocation and management of public money during 2023/24.

The **Financial Stability** section provides information on the overall financial stability and resilience of the Council. It demonstrates how spending in 2023/24 is being funded, including the positions on overall service budgets, centrally held budgets, Council Tax and Business Rates. Further details are contained in the appendices.

- **Appendix 1** Adults and Health Committee.
- **Appendix 2** Children and Families Committee.
- **Appendix 3** Corporate Policy Committee.
- **Appendix 4** Economy and Growth Committee.
- **Appendix 5** Environment and Communities Committee.
- **Appendix 6** Highways and Transport Committee.
- **Appendix 7** Finance Sub-Committee.
- **Appendix 7a** Update to the Treasury Management Strategy.
- **Appendix 7b** Update to the Investment Strategy.

Alex Thompson

Director of Finance and Customer Services
(Section 151 Officer)

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2023/24 Outturn Forecast - Financial Position

2023/24	Revised Budget (NET) £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m	For further information please see the following sections
SERVICE DIRECTORATES				
Adults, Health and Integration	136.5	141.2	4.7	Appendix 1
Children's Services	80.3	91.0	10.8	Appendix 2
Place - Directorate/Growth & Enterprise	24.8	22.9	(1.9)	Appendix 4
Place - Environment & Neighbourhood Services	48.7	52.3	3.5	Appendix 5
Place - Highways & Infrastructure	11.2	12.4	1.2	Appendix 6
Corporate Services	41.2	40.7	(0.5)	Appendix 3
Total Services Net Expenditure	342.7	360.5	17.8	
CENTRAL BUDGETS				
Capital Financing	19.0	19.4	0.4	Appendix 7 Section 5
Transfer to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(7.4)	(7.4)	-	Appendix 7 Section 6
Transfer from MTFES Earmarked Reserve	-	-	-	Appendix 7 Section 6
Corporate Contributions / Central Budgets	(1.2)	(0.7)	0.5	Appendix 7
TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	353.1	371.9	18.7	
Business Rates Retention Scheme	(55.3)	(55.3)	-	Appendix 7 Section 2
Specific Grants	(26.8)	(26.8)	-	Appendix 7 Section 3
Council Tax	(271.1)	(271.1)	-	Appendix 7 Section 2
Net Funding	(353.1)	(353.1)	-	
NET (SURPLUS) / DEFICIT	-	18.7	18.7	

Financial Stability

Introduction

- The Council has a track record of sound financial management. Nevertheless, in common with all UK local authorities the Council finds itself in a position where pressures on the revenue budget are intensifying as a result of inflation, the legacy impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on people and on the economy and increasing cost of living pressure on households. These issues have the effect of increasing the demand for services and increasing costs of services.
- Complexity and market sustainability in Adults' and Children's Social Care remains the most significant financial pressure for the Council in the medium term. The affects of inflation on contracts, utilities and wage levels are affecting costs across all services.
- Table 1** provides a service summary of financial performance. The current forecast is that services will be £18.7m over budget in the current year which includes mitigating actions identified to date. The 2023/24 Approved Budget Policy Changes and Forecast Variances provide further details and changes to service net budgets since the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (Section 2 in the **Appendices 1-6**).
- It also shows that central budgets are forecast to be £0.9m over budget resulting in an overall forecast outturn of £18.7m against a net revenue budget of £353.1m.
- Further items impacting on the level of the Council's balances are detailed in **Appendix 7**.

Table 1 - Service Revenue Outturn Forecasts

2023/24	Revised Budget (NET) £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m	Forecast Variance FR1 £000	Movement from FR1 to FR2 £000
SERVICE DIRECTORATES					
Adult Social Care - Operations	137.9	142.6	4.7	0.2	4.4
Commissioning	(1.4)	(1.4)	0.1	0.1	-
Public Health	-	-	-	-	-
Adults and Health Committee	136.5	141.2	4.7	0.3	4.4
Directorate	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.7	(0.6)
Children's Social Care	49.4	58.8	9.4	4.8	4.6
Strong Start, Family Help and Integration	7.4	6.8	(0.6)	(0.6)	0.0
Education & 14-19 Skills	23.2	25.0	1.8	2.1	(0.3)
Children and Families Committee	80.3	91.0	10.8	7.0	3.8
Directorate	0.2	(0.0)	(0.2)	(0.2)	-
Growth & Enterprise	24.6	22.9	(1.7)	(1.7)	0.0
Economy and Growth Committee	24.8	22.9	(1.9)	(1.9)	0.0
Environment & Neighbourhood Services	48.7	52.3	3.5	4.2	(0.7)
Environment and Communities Committee	48.7	52.3	3.5	4.2	(0.7)
Highways & Infrastructure	11.2	12.4	1.2	1.2	0.1
Highways and Transport Committee	11.2	12.4	1.2	1.2	0.1
Directorate	0.6	0.5	(0.1)	0.2	(0.3)
Finance & Customer Services	12.8	12.9	0.2	0.5	(0.3)
Governance & Compliance Services	10.8	10.3	(0.4)	0.1	(0.5)
Communications	0.7	0.7	0.0	(0.0)	0.0
HR	2.6	2.4	(0.2)	-	(0.2)
ICT	11.8	12.0	0.2	0.3	(0.2)
Policy & Change	2.0	1.9	(0.1)	(0.1)	0.0
Corporate Policy Committee	41.2	40.7	(0.5)	0.9	(1.4)
TOTAL SERVICES NET EXPENDITURE	342.7	360.5	17.8	11.7	6.2
CENTRAL BUDGETS					
Capital Financing	19.0	19.4	0.4	0.4	0.0
Transfer to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(7.4)	(7.4)	-	-	-
Corporate Contributions / Central Budgets	(1.2)	(0.7)	0.5	0.7	(0.2)
Finance Sub-Committee - Central Budgets	10.4	11.3	0.9	1.1	(0.2)
TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	353.1	371.9	18.7	12.8	5.9
Business Rates Retention Scheme	(55.3)	(55.3)	-	-	-
Specific Grants	(26.8)	(26.8)	-	-	-
Council Tax	(271.1)	(271.1)	-	-	-
Finance Sub-Committee - Net Funding	(353.1)	(353.1)	-	-	-
NET (SURPLUS) / DEFICIT	-	18.7	18.7	12.8	5.9
General Reserves Balance					
2023/24 Budget					
	£m	Actual			
Opening Balance April 2023	14.1	Forecast			
2023/24 Impact on Reserves (see above)	(18.7)	Forecast			
Closing Balance March 2024	(4.6)	Forecast			

Appendices to Second Financial Review 2023/24

November 2023

Appendix 2 : Children and Families Committee

Contents

- 1. Changes to Revenue Budget 2023/24 since First Financial Review**
- 2. 2023/24 Approved Budget Policy Changes and Forecast Variances**
- 3. Corporate Grants Register**
 - Table 1: Children and Families Committee Grants**
 - Table 2: Delegated Decision Additional Grant Funding (Specific Purpose) £500,000 or less**
 - Table 3: Delegated Decision Additional Grant Funding (Specific Purpose) previously named in the MTFS**
- 4. Debt Management**
- 5. Capital Strategy**
- 6. Reserves Strategy**

Appendix 2

Children and Families Committee

1. Changes to Revenue Budget 2023/24 since First Financial Review

	First Review Revised Net Budget	Adjustments to FR1 Budget	Second Review Revised Net Budget	Unringfenced Grants to be Actioned
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Children's Services				
Directorate	(824)	1,065	241	-
Children's Social Care	49,708	(300)	49,408	187
Education & 14-19 Skills	7,017	408	7,425	256
Strong Start, Family Help and Integration (Previously Prevention & Early Help)	23,201	-	23,201	-
Children and Families Committee	79,102	1,173	80,275	443

Note the unringfenced grants to be actioned column includes the expenditure part of centrally held unringfenced grants. These budget adjustments will take place once all second financial review ter approvals have been given.

Adjustments of budget since First Financial Review of £1,173,000 include £1,065,000 MTFS planned drawdown from Children and Families Directorate Reserve.

Children and Families Committee

2. 2023/24 Approved Budget Policy Changes and Forecast Variances

Forecast Outturn Commentary:

The Children and Families Second Financial Review for 2023/24 reflects a £10.8m in-year pressure.

The key pressure areas for the directorate include:

- Children's social care agency placements – where the number and complexity of children in care has continued to increase from 521 at April 2022 to 576 at Aug 2023 (compared with 522 at April 2021 to 529 at August 2022) and placement costs are increasing by significantly more than inflation and more than was projected for growth in-year. This has in part been affected by the disproportionate number of asylum seeking children in Cheshire East.
- The increased use and cost of agency staff in children's social care to cover vacant posts.
- Higher legal costs within children's social care with longer processes and more legal challenge.
- Home to school transport costs – where a mix of increasing numbers of pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP), driver shortages and increasing fuel costs have seen overall costs rise.
- Schools Catering – where the costs of the service are above the current charged income level and base budget.

Work is underway in the services with the implementation of mitigating actions which can be taken to reduce this forecast position in-year, and these pressures will be considered as part of the MTFS process for 2024/25.

Mitigating actions include:

- Reduce spend following an in-depth review of Legal Costs and Educational Psychologists.
- Holding none-qualified role vacancies, recruitment drive to reduce the requirement for agency workers including working with regional partners.
- Review subsidy and funding related to school catering services.
- Review of use of grant funding and reserves.

Further mitigations are being explored including benefit from early receipt of safety valve funding through lobbying government.

Dedicated School Grant (DSG)

- The key pressure on DSG relates to the high needs block where the SEND service continues to see a significant increase in the number of pupils with an EHCPs, and the associated school placement costs.

This has placed pressure on the grant used to provide funding for children with SEND in various settings and led to a £21.2m deficit in 2022/23. This adds on to the brought forward deficit of £25.7m to take the DSG Reserve to a £46.9m deficit position.

This is in line with the budget gap as determined by the Council's DSG Management Plan that was reported to Children and Families Committee in September 2022 and set out the planned expenditure and income on high needs over the medium term. An updated DSG Management Plan was presented to Committee in September 2023. This plan forecasts a deficit position at the end of 2023/24 of £85.9m

The deficit is currently being managed by an accounting override until 2026 which allows it to be treated as an un-usable reserve. At this stage the position is not recoverable unless there are significant changes to funding or demand or both. The deficit position is adding to the pressures of the Council as borrowing is required to cover the £46.9m deficit that has not been funded (forecast to increase to £85.9m by the end of 2023/24). This results in annual interest costs of £3.1m.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Service Budget Changes	2023/24 £m	2023/24 Variance £m	Commentary
	Children and Families Committee	5.623		
24	School transport pressures	4.000	1.260	This item includes the growth in special educational needs transport and the planned savings from the review of transport. There are additional pressures in year due to a mix of increasing numbers of pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP), driver shortages and increasing fuel costs have seen overall costs rise. A major work programme is underway (including input from the consultants) to deliver the savings to mitigate those pressures and effectively meet needs. Further updates will be taken to Children and Families Committee.
25	Pay inflation	3.059	0.573	The total cost of pay inflation may exceed 5% based on national pay negotiations. This may be mitigated through management of vacancies.
26	Growth in Children's Social Care	1.900	5.082	The revised position for placements is under review. The service is facing a challenging position given the 2022/23 outturn results.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Service Budget Changes	2023/24 £m	2023/24 Variance £m	Commentary
				Children's social care agency placements – where the number and complexity of children in care has continued to increase from 521 at April 2022 to 576 at August 2023 (compared with 522 at April 2021 to 529 at August 2022) and placement costs are significantly more than inflation and more than was projected for growth in year.
27	Recognise pressures in the Children's Social Care direct payments budget	0.743	-0.070	On track, subject to ongoing monitoring.
28	Statutory Education Psychology Service	0.600	-	On track following indepth review, subject to ongoing monitoring.
29	Reverse travel savings	0.430	-	Achieved.
30	Increase capacity to support statutory SEND service	0.300	-	Achieved although further pressures may emerge.
31	Household Support Fund Grant	-4.400	-	Achieved.
32	Household Support Fund into the Council's base budget (funded from grant)	4.400	-	Achieved.
33	Pension Costs Adjustment	-1.964	-	On track, subject to ongoing monitoring, dependent on in-year staffing costs.
NEW1	Delivering Better Value in SEND grant	-1.200	0.607	Achieved, change in profile.
NEW2	Delivering Better Value in SEND (funded from grant)	1.200	-0.607	Achieved, change in profile.
34	Use of Children & Families Transformation Reserve - estimated balance	-1.065	-	Achieved as a one-off mitigation.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Service Budget Changes	2023/24 £m	2023/24 Variance £m	Commentary
35	Integrated Children's Service Strategy	-0.950	0.116	Project underway. One-off alternative mitigations are closing the gap where identified savings are for part of the year.
36	Holiday Activity Fund Grant	-0.900	-	Achieved.
37	Holiday Activity Fund into the Council's base budget (funded from grant)	0.900	-	Achieved.
38	Review of commissioned services across the Children and Families Directorate	-0.450	-	Shortfall of £0.220m so further work to do to find the whole saving. This is being off-set in-year by alternative mitigations relating to vacant posts.
39	Children's Development and Partnerships Service	-0.300	-	Achieved.
40	Early Help Redesign	-0.200	-	Achieved.
41	Deliver the Family Hub model	-0.150	-	Achieved.
42	Review of funding streams and income opportunities within Education and Skills	-0.230	-	Achieved.
43	Reduce Legacy Pension commitments	-0.100	-	Achieved.
44	Revenue costs for the Crewe Youth Zone (as above) aligned to Supporting Families Funding	-	-	Achieved.
45	Early Help budget to support funding towards the Crewe Youth Zone	-	-	Achieved.
	In-year Pressure Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children		0.776	Shortfall in Home Office grant compared to forecast cost.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Service Budget Changes	2023/24 £m	2023/24 Variance £m	Commentary
	In-year Pressure Legal Care Proceedings		0.606	Higher legal costs within children's social care with longer processes and more legal challenge. Mitigation indepth review of Legal Costs.
	In-year Pressure Staffing		2.775	Increased use and cost of agency staff in children's social care to cover vacant posts.
	In-year Pressure School Catering		0.224	The costs of the service are above the current charged income level and base budget. This has been reduced by mitigation action to review charges and implement a price uplift.
	In-year Pressure		-0.579	Increased demand/costs offset by savings due to vacant posts.
	TOTAL FORECAST VARIANCE		10.762	
	Further Mitigating Actions			<p>Recruitment drive to reduce the requirement for agency workers including working with regional partners.</p> <p>Liaise with Government on opportunities associated with the 'Safety Valve' programme to mitigate impact on the Council's revenue budget from transport and borrowing costs. Also lobby on potential additional funding for new burdens.</p> <p>Increase senior management oversight of care costs to support holistic appraisal of financial impacts and opportunities.</p>
	REVISED FORECAST VARIANCE		10.762	

Children and Families Committee

3. Corporate Grants Register

- 3.1 Cheshire East Council receives two main types of Government grants; specific purpose grants and general use grants. Specific purpose grants are held within the relevant service with a corresponding expenditure budget. Whereas general use grants are held in central budgets with a corresponding expenditure budget within the allocated service area.
- 3.2 Spending in relation to specific purpose grants must be in line with the purpose for which it is provided.
- 3.3 The decrease in specific purpose grants relates to a reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant forecast. There have also been additional, smaller grants and increases to existing grants. Requests for the allocation of the additional specific purpose

and general use grants received are detailed in **Table 2** and **Table 3**.

- 3.4 **Table 1** provides a detailed listing of all Children & Families related grants, their movements between the reporting period and the treatment of the grant.
- 3.5 **Table 2** shows additional specific purpose grant allocations that have been received which are £500,000 or less and are for noting only.
- 3.6 **Table 3** shows delegated decisions for additional specific purpose grants previously named within the MTFs.

Table 1 – Corporate Grants Register

Grants 2023/24	Original Budget	Revised Forecast FR1	Revised Forecast Mid-Year	Change from FR1	Treatment of Grant
	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	Notes 2 - 5
CHILDREN & FAMILIES					
Specific Purpose (Held within Services)¹					
Dedicated Schools Grant	165,459	156,147	152,962	(3,185)	
Pupil Premium Grant	4,500	4,958	4,958	0	
Pupil Premium Plus - Post 16 Funding	0	56	56	0	
Sixth Forms Grant	2,729	2,815	2,833	18	SRE
Universal Infant Free School Meals	1,732	1,926	1,926	0	
Primary Physical Education Sports Grant	981	981	981	0	
Teachers Pension Grant	0	47	47	0	
COVID-19 Recovery Premium	0	150	225	75	SRE
School Led Tutoring Grant	0	221	295	73	SRE
Milk Subsidy	10	20	21	1	SRE
Schools' Supplementary Grant	2,548	2,543	2,543	0	
Senior Mental Health Lead Training Grant	0	2	2	0	
Newly Qualified Teachers (Education Recovery 5% Time off Timetable)	0	0	48	48	SRE
S14 Experts and Mentors Programme Grant	0	0	7	7	SRE
Delivering Better Value in SEND	1,200	593	593	0	
Apprentice Incentive Scheme	0	2	2	0	
Digital Education Platform	0	3	3	0	
National Professional Qualification Grant	0	10	10	0	
Early Years Supplementary Grant	0	1,262	1,262	0	
Total Children & Families - Schools - Specific Purpose	179,159	171,737	168,775	(2,962)	

Grants 2023/24	Original Budget	Revised Forecast FR1	Revised Forecast Mid-Year	Change from FR1	Treatment of Grant
	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	Notes 2 - 5
CHILDREN & FAMILIES					
Specific Purpose (Held within Services)¹					
Asylum Seekers	788	2,893	3,906	1,013	SRE
Supporting Families (previously Tackling Troubled Families)	0	280	384	104	SRE
Supporting Families (Payments by Results) Upfront Grant	719	720	720	0	
Reducing Parental Conflict Grant	0	35	33	(2)	
Adoption Support Fund	28	28	67	39	SRE
KS2 Moderation & Phonics	11	11	11	(0)	
NHS Cheshire CCG Grant to fund CEIAS Services	10	0	0	0	
Skills & Lifelong Learning	903	897	897	0	
Remand Grant	20	107	107	0	
Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Housing Grant	650	663	663	0	
Holiday Activities & Food Programme Grant	900	1,069	896	(172)	
Extension of the Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker Implementation	118	118	118	0	
Homes for Ukraine, education and childcare elements	0	31	31	0	
Household Support Fund	4,400	4,400	4,400	0	
Hong Kong UK Welcome Programme (British Nationals)	0	53	53	0	
Early Years - Professional Development programme	0	8	8	0	
Early Years - Experts and Mentors Programme	0	4	4	0	
Early Years - Childminder Programme	0	12	12	0	
Family Hubs Transformation Funding	0	248	248	0	
Leaving Care Allowance Uplift Implementation Grant (New Burdens)	0	72	72	0	
Staying Close Award	0	602	602	0	
Supported Accommodation New Burdens Grant	0	0	87	87	SRE
Total Children & Families - Children's Services - Specific Purpose	8,547	12,249	13,320	1,070	

Table 2 – DECISION DELEGATED TO OFFICERS

Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding (Specific Purpose) £500,000 or less

Committee	Year	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Children and Families - Schools	2023/24	Newly Qualified Teachers (Education Recovery 5% Time off Timetable) (Specific Purpose)	48	This grant is from the Department for Education (DfE). The Department for Education has provided support to schools with additional funding for ECF-based training. This is paid directly to schools and covers 5% off timetable for early career teachers (ECTs) in year 2 of induction, for induction activities including ECF-based training and mentor sessions. It also includes a dedicated mentor for each ECT, based on 20 hours of mentoring in year 2 of induction.
Children and Families - Schools	2023/24	S14 Experts and Mentors Programme Grant (Specific Purpose)	7	This grant is from the Department for Education (DfE) with the view of offering early years support, delivered either face to face or virtually, by trained experts and mentors. The experts and mentors programme were rolled out nationally across England from September 2022, covering academic years 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024. The experts and mentors programme supports private, voluntary or independent (PVI) nursery settings, maintained nursery schools and school-based nurseries.
Children and Families - Schools	2023/24	COVID-19 Recovery Premium (Specific Purpose)	75	This grant is from the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Recovery premium received on behalf of schools and allocated out as per funding schedule (breakdown by school).

Committee	Year	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Children and Families - Schools	2023/24	School Led Tutoring Grant (Specific Purpose)	73	This grant is from the Department for Education (DfE). This grant will give schools and academy trusts the flexibility in determining how best to provide tutoring intervention to support catch-up for lost education due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
Children and Families – Children’s Services	2023/24	Supported Accommodation New Burdens Grant (Specific Purpose)	87	This is grant from the Department for Education (DfE). The Government is introducing new requirements for providers of supported accommodation for looked after children and care leavers aged 16 and 17. Providers will be required to register and be inspected by Ofsted against new national quality standards and associated administrative requirements. Ofsted will begin registering providers from 28 April 2023, and registration will become mandatory from 28 October 2023. The purpose of this grant is to provide support to local authorities in England towards expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred by them in respect of these changes. Local authorities can use this grant funding to offset the increased costs associated with the impact of these changes.
Children and Families – Children’s Services	2023/24	Supporting Families (previously Tackling Troubled Families) (Specific Purpose)	104	This is an increase on the Financial Review 1 forecast. This grant is from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Supporting Families (previously Troubled Families) this programme focuses on providing targeted interventions for families with complex interconnected problems including unemployment, poor school attendance, mental and physical

Committee	Year	Type of Grant	£000	Details
				health problems, involvement in crime and antisocial behaviour, domestic abuse, and children in need of help and protection. A results-based payment of £800 will be offered for each family for whom the local authority claims a successful family outcome.
Total Specific Purpose Allocations less than £500,000			394	

Table 3 – DECISION DELEGATED TO OFFICERS

Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding (Specific Purpose) previously named in the MTFS.

Committee	Year	Type of Grant	£000	Details
				On 22 nd February 2023 Council delegated authority to the Chief Finance Officer, to approve supplementary estimates if the value of any named grant changes from the figures contained within Appendix C, Annex 7 of the MTFS.
Children and Families - Schools	2023/24	Sixth Forms Grant (Specific Purpose)	18	This grant is from the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Funding is based on Pupil Numbers which makes up the main funding profile, the MTFS estimate will have been based on pupils in 2022/23 being forecast for the remainder of financial year. This will now have been updated for 2023/24 pupil numbers. Sixth Form providers also receive a High Value Course Premium based on the number of pupils taking high value courses.

Committee	Year	Type of Grant	£000	Details
Children and Families - Schools	2023/24	Milk Subsidy (Specific Purpose)	1	Increase on MTFS 2023-27 estimate. This grant is from the Rural Payments Agency. The scheme subsidises the cost of milk, certain milk products and yoghurts for schoolchildren in England, Scotland and Wales. This means that the products can be sold to schoolchildren at a lower price. Schools must offer drinking milk before they can supply other eligible milk products or yoghurts. Schools, local authorities, suppliers or other organisations can claim for the subsidy.
Children and Families – Children’s Services	2023/24	Asylum Seekers (Specific Purpose)	1,013	Increase on MTFS 2023-27 estimate. This grant is from the Home Office (HO). Based on clients’ claims so therefore will fluctuate based on age / numbers of claims – we are also receiving some additional funding from those that move through the National Transfer Scheme. Looking at claims in the current year there have been additions to the UASC population, therefore this has likely seen an increase in the amount receiving the higher rate. In addition, possibly an element of being cautious with MTFS items as this can vary significantly purely based on the numbers as said above.
Children and Families – Children’s Services	2023/24	Adoption Support Fund (Specific Purpose)	39	Increase on MTFS 2023-27 estimate. This grant is from the Department for Education (DfE). The adoption support fund (ASF) provides funds to local authorities and regional adoption agencies (RAAs) to pay for essential therapeutic services for eligible adoptive and special guardianship order (SGO) families.
Total Delegated Decision Specific Purpose Allocations previously named in the MTFS			1,071	

Children and Families Committee

4. Debt Management

	Outstanding Debt £000			Over 6 months old £000		
	Jun-23	Sep-23	Increase / (Decrease)	Jun-23	Sep-23	Increase / (Decrease)
Children and Families Committee						
Children's Social Care (Incl. Directorate)	7	4	(3)	-	-	-
Prevention and Early Help	84	65	(19)	18	11	(7)
Schools	71	9	(62)	-	-	-
	162	78	(84)	18	11	(7)

Note: Schools outstanding debt has decreased partly due to invoice for £42,000 now being paid.

Children and Families Committee

5. Capital Strategy

Children & Families													CAPITAL
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 - 2026/27													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2023/24 £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2023-27 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Childrens Social Care													
Foster Carers Capacity Scheme	634	404	231	0	0	0	231	0	0	0	0	231	231
Crewe Youth Zone	4,200	395	3,047	758	0	0	3,805	1,607	0	0	0	2,198	3,805
Family Hubs Transformation	95	6	89	0	0	0	89	89	0	0	0	0	89
Children's Home Sufficiency Scheme	2,100	0	50	2,050	0	0	2,100	0	0	0	0	2,100	2,100
Strong Start, Family Help & Integration													
Beechwood Nursery Expansion	868	856	12	0	0	0	12	0	0	12	0	0	12
Early Years Sufficiency Capital Fund	1,036	913	123	0	0	0	123	123	0	0	0	0	123
Education and 14-19 Skills													
Adelaide Academy	854	39	59	756	0	0	815	645	0	0	0	170	815
Basic Need Grant Allocation	8,485	0	1,235	4,808	2,442	0	8,485	8,485	0	0	0	0	8,485
Brine Leas High School	700	0	250	450	0	0	700	700	0	0	0	0	700
Congleton Planning Area	5,045	639	4,000	406	0	0	4,406	2,212	2,194	0	0	0	4,406
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (1)	2,209	9	170	500	1,530	0	2,200	900	1,300	0	0	0	2,200
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (2)	628	66	562	0	0	0	562	562	0	0	0	0	562
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (3)	7,504	4	0	250	0	7,250	7,500	4,300	3,200	0	0	0	7,500
Devolved Formula Capital	1,910	0	955	315	330	310	1,910	1,910	0	0	0	0	1,910
Energy Efficiency Capital	713	48	666	0	0	0	666	666	0	0	0	0	666
Handforth Planning Area - New School	13,003	3	0	500	8,500	4,000	13,000	136	12,864	0	0	0	13,000
Holmes Chapel Secondary School	3,631	1,778	1,853	0	0	0	1,853	1,610	243	0	0	0	1,853
Little Angels Satellite Sites	29	3	26	0	0	0	26	26	0	0	0	0	26
Macclesfield Academy Resource Provision	103	3	100	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0	100
Macclesfield Planning Area - secondary	1,591	1,113	100	378	0	0	478	478	0	0	0	0	478
Macclesfield Planning Area - secondary new	603	3	100	500	0	0	600	600	0	0	0	0	600
Macclesfield Planning Area - New school	4,001	1	0	0	0	4,000	4,000	0	4,000	0	0	0	4,000
Malbank High School	1,922	1,861	61	0	0	0	61	61	0	0	0	0	61
Mobberley Primary School	958	23	100	835	0	0	935	635	0	0	300	0	935

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 - 2026/27													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £000
	Total Approved Budget £000	Prior Years £000	Forecast Budget 2023/24 £000	Forecast Budget 2024/25 £000	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £000	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £000	Total Forecast Budget 2023-27 £000	Grants £000	External Contributions £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Prudential Borrowing £000	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Nantwich Planning Area (Primary)	7,861	515	1,000	5,346	1,000	0	7,346	4,326	3,020	0	0	0	7,346
Provision of Sufficient School Places - SEND	7,182	293	3,890	3,000	0	0	6,890	1,361	0	0	0	5,528	6,890
Provision of SEN Unit - Wistaston Primary School	1,506	6	400	1,100	0	0	1,500	1,200	0	0	0	300	1,500
Puss Bank SEN Expansion	532	509	23	0	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	23	23
Sandbach High School - Basic Need	1,776	1,773	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3
Sandbach Boys School - Basic Need	1,742	1,703	39	0	0	0	39	39	0	0	0	0	39
Sandbach Primary Academy	1,583	0	500	1,083	0	0	1,583	1,583	0	0	0	0	1,583
School Condition Capital Grant	9,305	779	2,526	2,000	2,000	2,000	8,526	8,529	0	54	0	0	8,583
Shavington Planning Area - Primary	8,040	131	150	500	5,000	2,259	7,909	5,549	2,360	0	0	0	7,909
Shavington Planning Area - secondary	3,506	168	1,782	1,557	0	0	3,339	3,339	0	0	0	0	3,339
Special Provision Fund Capital Grant	725	603	123	0	0	0	123	116	0	6	0	0	123
Springfield Satellite Site (Dean Row)	6,112	807	4,805	500	0	0	5,305	4,505	0	0	0	800	5,305
The Dingle Primary School Expansion	1,395	67	850	478	0	0	1,328	1,328	0	0	0	0	1,328
Wheelock Primary School	2,400	0	500	1,900	0	0	2,400	1,890	510	0	0	0	2,400
Wilmslow High School BN	14,179	4,923	5,745	3,511	0	0	9,256	7,237	1,971	0	0	48	9,256
Wilmslow Primary Planning Area	626	1	0	625	0	0	625	125	500	0	0	0	625
Total Committed Schemes	131,293	20,443	36,123	34,106	20,802	19,819	110,850	66,975	32,162	73	300	11,398	110,907
New Schemes													
Education and 14-19 Skills													
Adelaide Heath Academy	120	0	120	0	0	0	120	120	0	0	0	0	120
Cledford House	100	0	100	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0	100
Edleston Primary School - Condition Project	30	0	30	0	0	0	30	30	0	0	0	0	30
Future Schemes - Feasibility Studies	250	0	0	250	0	0	250	250	0	0	0	0	250
Oakfield Lodge & Stables	50	0	50	0	0	0	50	50	0	0	0	0	50
Poynton Planning Area	1,500	0	20	480	1,000	0	1,500	697	803	0	0	0	1,500
Sandbach Boys School	20	0	20	0	0	0	20	20	0	0	0	0	20
SEN Free School 1	500	0	0	500	0	0	500	500	0	0	0	0	500
SEN Free School 2	500	0	0	500	0	0	500	500	0	0	0	0	500
Styal Primary School - Condition Project	27	0	27	0	0	0	27	27	0	0	0	0	27
Tytherington High School	2,500	0	0	2,500	0	0	2,500	2,500	0	0	0	0	2,500
Various SEN Sites - Small Works/Adaptations	150	0	0	150	0	0	150	150	0	0	0	0	150
Total New Schemes	5,825	78	367	4,380	1,000	0	5,747	4,944	803	0	0	0	5,747
Total Children and Families	137,118	20,521	36,490	38,486	21,803	19,819	116,597	71,919	32,965	73	300	11,398	116,655

Children and Families Committee

6. Reserves Strategy

Children and Families Committee

Name of Reserve	Opening Balance 1 April 2023 £000	Forecast Movement in Reserves 2023/24 £000	Forecast Closing Balance 31 March 2024 £000	Notes
<u>Directorate</u>				
Childrens Directorate - Transformation Funding	779	(779)	0	Budgeted drawdowns as per MTFS 2023-27.
Childrens Directorate - C&F ED	422	(422)	0	Budgeted drawdowns as per MTFS 2023-27.
<u>Childrens Social Care</u>				
Domestic Abuse Partnership	146	(146)	0	To sustain preventative services to vulnerable people as a result of partnership funding in previous years. Further analysis to be completed by Second Financial Review to assess drawdown requirements.
<u>Strong Start, Family Help and Integration</u>				
Troubled Fams Initiative	1,949	(1,949)	0	Crewe Youth Zone and ACT have been assigned funding from shared outcomes of the Supporting Families Programme.
Public Sector Transformation – contribution to Early Youth Inclusion Fund	57	(57)	0	Revenue grant carried forward, to be fully utilised in year.
Complex Dependencies	21	(21)	0	Revenue grant carried forward, to be fully utilised in year.
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TOTAL	3,374	(3,374)	0	

Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit

Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit	£m
Deficit Balance B/F	46.9
Additional In-year Pressures	38.9
Deficit Balance at 31st March 2024	85.8

- 6.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is ring-fenced funding received for: schools; high needs / special educational needs; and early years provision. In recent years there has been a pressure on the DSG high needs block where funding has not kept pace with the increasing numbers and cost of children with an education, health and care plan. This has created a deficit DSG reserve balance which is held in an unusable reserve. The on-going pressure is regularly reviewed; at the end of 2022/23 the deficit was £46.9m; the deficit is forecast to increase to £85.8m by the end of 2023/24. The Council's DSG Management Plan sets out the planned expenditure and income on high needs over the medium term, these figures are based on the updated plan which will be going to Committee in Sep 2023 for approval.

OPEN

Children and Families Committee

Monday, 13 November 2023

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report 2022/23

**Report of: Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director Children's
Services.**

Report Reference No: CF/38/23-24

Ward(s) Affected:

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report briefs committee on the activity of the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership in 2022/2023. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) is the statutory guidance that underpins the work of the partnership. This guidance stipulates that each safeguarding partnership produces and publishes an annual report on the effectiveness of their arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in the local area. The annual report for 2022/23 sets out examples of the evidence, impact, assurance and learning of the statutory safeguarding arrangements in Cheshire East.
- 2 The work of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership contributes to the council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 priority to protect and support our communities and safeguard children and families from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Executive Summary

- 3 This report will provide the Children and Families Committee with an update on progress against the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership priorities in 2022/2023 and the plans in place to make Cheshire East a safer place for children and young people in 2023/2024.

- 4 The annual report is focused on evidencing what the partnership has done over the reporting year, the impact the partnership has had, the learning that has been identified and the steps taken to ensure the partnership continues to reflect and improve. This report recognises the work of the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership throughout the year whilst being transparent about the areas of improvement that remain. It reports on the following activity:
- The governance and accountability arrangements for the partnership.
 - The context for safeguarding children in Cheshire East, highlighting the progress made by the partnership against our 2022/23 priorities.
 - The lessons that the partnership has identified through the Learning & Improvement subgroup and the actions taken to improve child safeguarding and welfare as a result of this activity.
 - The range and impact of the multi-agency safeguarding training delivered by the partnership.
 - The priorities for the partnership going forward.
 - The key messages for those involved in the safeguarding of children and young people.
- 5 In 2022, the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership had a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) undertaken with a focus on children at risk of exploitation. This highlighted that there was more for the partnership to do to improve outcomes for children and young people in this area and the partnership have been committed to a programme of ongoing scrutiny, oversight, and assurance of the activity in this area, as well as across the safeguarding landscape for vulnerable children and young people.
- 6 To support the improvement activity, the partnership has worked alongside an independent advisor from the Department of Education and commissioned a separate Independent Scrutineer, both of whom have provided valuable oversight and scrutiny of the partnership arrangements. This has provided a springboard upon which the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for the partnership have been designed in preparation for roll out through 2023.
- 7 In 2022/2023, the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership continued to work on three priority areas – Contextual Safeguarding, Neglect and Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Vulnerable Children. Contextual Safeguarding will remain an area of focus for the

partnership and this work will continue into the forthcoming year. The Emotional Health and Wellbeing workstream has closed down recognising that it has now achieved what it was set up to achieve and actions and learning arising from this priority work area are now 'business as usual'. The partnership acknowledge that this will always be a priority, however scrutiny and assurance of this area has been passed back to the relevant teams. The partnership is also looking to close down the Neglect workstream in forthcoming months for similar reasons.

- 8 The partnership focus areas for 2023/2024 will be sexual abuse, children missing from education, and contextual safeguarding; with the voice of the child as an overarching area of focus running through all of the partnership activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. Scrutinise the work of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership from 2023/2023
2. Scrutinise the future plan of work for the partnership to ensure that the right actions are in place to deliver high quality support to children and young people.

Background

- 9 The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership is established in accordance with the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) and the statutory guidance issued within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. The partnership safeguarding arrangements define how safeguarding partners, relevant agencies and other organisations work together to coordinate their safeguarding services. These arrangements meet the requirements of statutory guidance and include details about how safeguarding partners will identify and respond to the needs of children, commission and publish local child safeguarding practice reviews and provide for independent leadership and scrutiny.
- 10 The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership arrangements intend to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.
 - Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children.
 - Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively.
 - There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats.
 - Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice.
 - Information is shared effectively to facilitate accurate and timely decision making for children and families.
- 11 The Partnership has a wide membership of partners and ‘relevant agencies’, including schools, the faith and voluntary sector, probation services, public health, health providers, the police and representatives from the Local Authority. These executive members work together to keep children and young people safe from harm. The partnership is responsible for scrutinising the work of its partners to ensure that services provided to children and young people make a positive difference.

Consultation and Engagement

- 12 The annual report has been written in consultation with the services involved and have incorporated findings from wider consultation with children, young people, families, and practitioners, such as through multi-agency audit opportunities.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 13 One of the key areas of focus for the Children and Families Committee is to review performance and the scrutinise the effectiveness of services for children and young people.

Other Options Considered

- 14 The committee could choose not to receive the annual report of Cheshire East’s Safeguarding Children’s Partnership, but this would limit the committee’s effectiveness in overseeing and scrutinising

services to children and the impact of services on children and young people's outcomes.

Option	Impact	Risk
Don't scrutinise/receive the annual report of the partnership.	The committee does not have oversight of the future plan of work for the partnership and its impact on outcomes for children and young people, or the current quality of services, so limits its ability to drive improvements to services.	There is not sufficient council leadership/ oversight to drive improvements to services.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 15 The Local Authority is defined as a statutory safeguarding partner by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017). The Local Authority works in partnership with the Cheshire and Merseyside NHS Integrated Commissioning Board and the Chief Officer for the police for Cheshire. This partnership operates within that legal guidance.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 16 There are no financial implications or changes required to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as a result of this report.

Policy

- 17 The Children and Families Committee is responsible for services which keep children and young people safe and enable them to achieve to their full potential. The committee is responsible for oversight and

scrutiny of the impact of services on outcomes for children and young people.

	<p>A council which empowers and cares about people</p> <p>Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient.</p> <p>Protect and support our communities and safeguard children and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation.</p>	
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 19 There are no equality, diversity and inclusion implications – children and young people’s diverse individual needs, experiences, culture and backgrounds are considered as part of our support to them.

Human Resources

- 20 There are no direct human resources implications because of this report.

Risk Management

- 21 There is a risk that if the Safeguarding Children’s Partnership is not effective in driving improvements to services that we will not be meeting our statutory requirements under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. This could lead to the work of the partnership to be judged as not being of the required quality during any inspection. We know that when services receive a negative judgement in inspection this impacts on team morale, can result in workforce turnover, and makes it more challenging to recruit.
- 22 Addressing any significant deficits identified during an inspection can also require investment so there is also a financial risk to a negative inspection. A negative inspection also poses a reputational risk to the council.

Rural Communities

- 23 There is no direct impact on rural communities as a result of this report; however our vulnerable children and young people exist in all communities, including in rural communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 24 The work of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership aims to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people. It is vital that we provide high quality support to these children and young people as we know that for some, the experiences they have that lead them to require our support can have an impact on their long-term outcomes, health, and wellbeing.

Public Health

- 25 The work of Cheshire East's Safeguarding Children's Partnership aims to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people and so should have a positive overall impact on the health and wellbeing of these Cheshire East children and young people.

Climate Change

- 26 There are no implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Katherine Oldacre, Head of Service - safeguarding katherine.oldacre@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report 2022/2023 Quick Guide to Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report Easy Read Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements
Background Papers:	

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Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership

Annual Report
2022/23



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		<u>Page 54-60</u>	Key priorities for the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership in 2023/2024

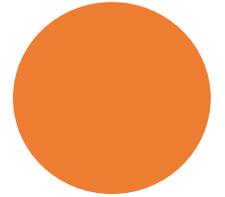
Foreword from the Chair of the Cheshire East Children's Safeguarding Partnership

I am pleased to introduce the annual report of the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. The Annual Report is focused on evidencing what the partnership has done over the reporting year, the impact we have had, the learning we have identified and the steps we have taken to ensure we continue to reflect and improve. The report describes the challenges and opportunities presented to the partnership over the year, and as we move into 2023, the Annual Report also provides an opportunity to reflect on where we need to focus our efforts in the year ahead. This report recognises the work of the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership throughout the year whilst being transparent about the areas of improvement that remain and that we strive to achieve in 2023/2024.

I have been in post as the Executive Director of Children's Services in Cheshire East for over 12 months now and have chaired the partnership executive board for this time. I would wish to begin by thanking all our partnership leaders, staff and volunteers for the work they have done and the sacrifices they have made whilst facing challenges that were unimaginable a few short years ago. Their hard work and determination have undoubtedly helped make many of our children safer.

That said, there is still more to do. In the last year, the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership has seen a Joint Targeted Area Inspection undertaken with a focus on children at risk of exploitation. This was an extremely challenging inspection which highlighted that there was more for the partnership to do to improve outcomes for children and young people in this area. We fully accept the findings from the Joint Targeted Area Investigation and made some immediate changes to practice to ensure children were more effectively kept safe. We are committed to a programme of ongoing scrutiny, oversight and assurance of our activity in this area, as well as across our safeguarding landscape for vulnerable children and young people. It continues to be important to ensure that we are in touch with our most vulnerable children to make sure they can be as safe and healthy as possible.

To support our improvement activity, we have worked alongside an independent advisor from the Department of Education and commissioned a separate Independent Scrutineer, both of whom have provided valuable oversight and scrutiny of our partnership arrangements and invited us to consider how we might wish to arrange our activity in the future. This has provided a spring board upon which the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements have been designed in preparation for roll out through 2023.



Foreword from the Chair of the Cheshire East Children's Safeguarding Partnership

Safeguarding is everybody's business and we are strengthening our relationships as a partnership network to ensure we can be effective in fulfilling our responsibilities to safeguard children in Cheshire East. To that end, in 2022/23, we strengthened the role of education within the partnership, inviting education representatives to become members of the partnership executive. All partners have a role to play and the ambition of our arrangements is that everyone can recognise, respond and fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that children, young people, and families are effectively safeguarded, and their welfare promoted.

This year, the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership have continued to work on our three priority areas – Contextual Safeguarding, Neglect and Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Vulnerable Children. We recognise that Contextual Safeguarding remains an area of focus for the partnership and we will take this work into the forthcoming year. However, we are pleased to report we have agreed to close down the Emotional Health and Wellbeing workstream recognising that it has now achieved what it was set up to achieve and actions and learning arising from this priority work area has now become 'business as usual'. The partnership acknowledge that this will always be a priority, however scrutiny and assurance of this area has been passed back to the relevant teams. The partnership is also looking to close down the Neglect workstream in forthcoming months for similar reasons. This leaves us with an exciting opportunity to turn our attention to other areas of focus in 2023/2024.

The partnership have been involved in three Rapid Reviews with two Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews also underway which will be reported on next year. A summary of learning from these reviews is provided within this report and it is this learning that has led us to identify some new focus areas for the work of the partnership. Looking forward to 2023/2024, the partnership focus areas will be sexual abuse, children missing from education, and contextual safeguarding; with the voice of the child as an overarching area of focus running through all of the partnership activity. We want to be a responsive partnership so whilst we have these areas of focus, we will also be mindful of any new or emerging areas of need that require attention.



Foreword from the Chair of the Cheshire East Children's Safeguarding Partnership

We have reviewed and refreshed our training offer to the partnership over 2022/2023 and we have piloted our first learning hub in relation to sexual abuse. The learning hub model is a means of understanding ourselves, benchmarking our practice against known good or outstanding practice, providing assurance through audit and offering recommendations for future partnership work. This is an exciting step forward for Cheshire East and will be central to our safeguarding arrangements moving forward.

This reporting year has seen significant changes within the partnership with key leadership figures leaving for other opportunities. I would like to record my thanks to those colleagues and formally welcome our new members who have had to hit the ground running with a partnership agenda that has needed to move at pace. Their commitment to our children and their teams is evident in everything they do and I am satisfied we have the right people in the partnership to achieve the changes we wish to make.

I am of the view that, whilst this has been an incredibly difficult year, particularly following the Joint Targeted Area Inspection, this has also been a transformative year for the partnership in considering how we were functioning and what we are striving to improve. The Joint Targeted Area Inspection has, in many ways, assisted in the pace of these changes.

At the time of writing this foreword, I am mindful of the growing cost of living crisis and the impact this will have on everyone. However, I am pleased to say that my engagement with leaders, at all levels reinforces my belief that we are all committed to doing whatever is necessary to support our children and their families in what are increasingly difficult times. We will work actively to protect children from abuse and maltreatment, prevent harm to children's health or development, ensure children grow up being provided with safe and effective care and will take action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes. This commitment is underpinned by our governance and oversight arrangements. Finally, I remain determined to ensure that we maintain momentum, reflect on what could, and indeed what must, be done better for our partnership to be the most effective it can be.

Deborah Woodcock
Executive Director of Children's Social Care, Cheshire East
Chair of the Partnership Executive



About the Annual Report 2022/2023



Reporting requirements for our safeguarding partnership arrangements are set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children on pages 82-83 as follows: “In order to bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, the safeguarding partners must publish a report at least once in every 12-month period. The report must set out what they have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice”.

The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s annual report for 2022/23 sets out examples of the evidence, impact, assurance and learning of the statutory safeguarding arrangements in Cheshire East. It reports on the following activity:

- ❖ The governance and accountability arrangements for the partnership.
- ❖ The context for safeguarding children in Cheshire East, highlighting the progress made by the partnership against our 2022/23 priorities.
- ❖ The lessons that the partnership has identified through the Learning & Improvement subgroup and the actions taken to improve child safeguarding and welfare as a result of this activity.
- ❖ The range and impact of the multi-agency safeguarding training delivered by the partnership.
- ❖ The priorities for the partnership going forward
- ❖ The key messages for those involved in the safeguarding of children and young people.

In line with statutory requirements, the annual report 2022/23 will be sent to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and The What Works Centre for Children’s Social Care within seven days of being published.





The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership

The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership is established in accordance with the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) and the statutory guidance issued within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. The partnership safeguarding arrangements define how safeguarding partners, relevant agencies and other organisations work together to coordinate their safeguarding services. These arrangements meet the requirements of statutory guidance and include details about how safeguarding partners will identify and respond to the needs of children, commission and publish local child safeguarding practice reviews and provide for independent leadership and scrutiny.

The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership arrangements intend to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- ❖ Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.
- ❖ Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children.
- ❖ Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively.
- ❖ There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats.
- ❖ Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice.
- ❖ Information is shared effectively to facilitate accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

The Partnership has a wide membership of partners and 'relevant agencies', including schools, the faith and voluntary sector, probation services, public health, health providers, the police and representatives from the Local Authority. These executive members work together to keep children and young people safe from harm. The partnership is responsible for scrutinising the work of its partners to ensure that services provided to children and young people make a positive difference.

Our vision for 2022/2023

The partnership's vision for children and young people in Cheshire East was agreed in 2019 by the three statutory safeguarding partners. The vision is that:

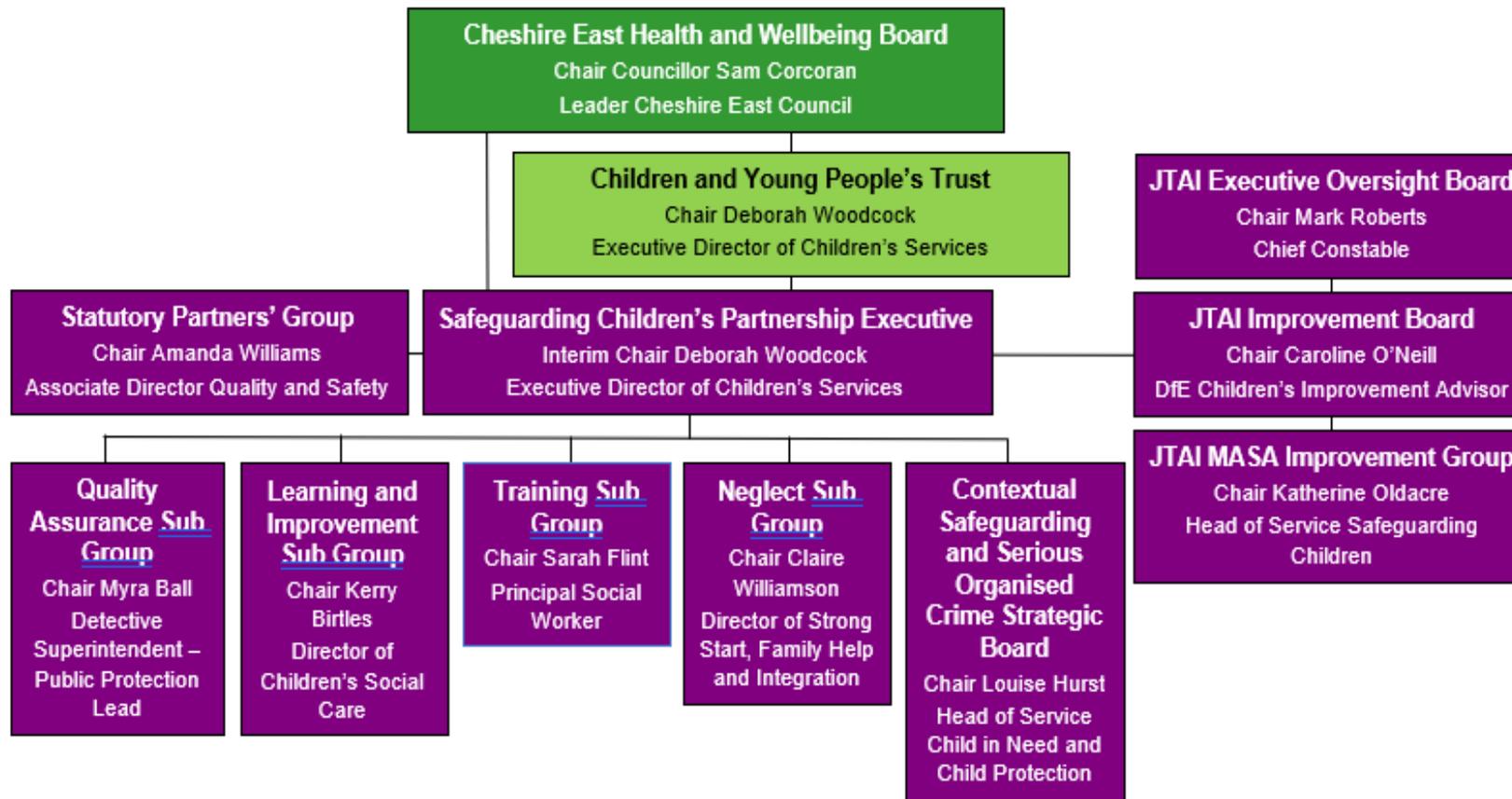
“It is the right of every child and young person in Cheshire East to enjoy a healthy and happy childhood, grow up feeling safe from abuse or neglect and thrive in an environment that enables them to fulfil their potential.”

We aimed to do this through our collective commitment to:

- **strategic leadership across the partnership** – to make the safety of children and young people a priority
- **challenge** – through focused inquiries or investigations into practice or issues based on evidence, practitioner experience and the views of children and young people, for us to improve together
- **learning** – to achieve the highest standards of development and to ensure all practitioners have the skills and knowledge to be effective.

Our vision is being refreshed as part of our new safeguarding arrangements which are due to be published in 2023.





The governance arrangements through 2022/2023

The partnership has organised itself using these arrangements during 2022/2023. This governance structure has been in place now for a number of years. Following the Joint Targeted Area Inspection, the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership commissioned an independent scrutineer to help evaluate the current arrangements. This has led us to refresh our governance arrangements for 2023/2024.

Further information about the independent scrutiny undertaken is available within the body of this report.



Joint targeted area inspection of the multi-agency response to the criminal exploitation of children

On the 26 September 2022, Ofsted published a report with findings from a joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to the criminal exploitation of children in Cheshire East. This was undertaken by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, Ofsted, and the Care Quality Commission. It formed part of a rolling programme of inspections into various areas where different agencies work together to provide support for vulnerable children. The full report can be found here: <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50194535>

The inspection looked at the how each agency (police, health, and the local authority) work together to reduce the risk of harm when children and young people are missing and at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation.

The inspection found that the partnership needed to improve how it protects children and young people from criminal exploitation and those who go missing from home and care. The partnership fully accepted the findings from the inspection and recognised that there were gaps in our work and that this is not good enough.

Some improvements were made very quickly during the inspection to make sure that the children and young people that we were already working with were safe and that we were doing everything we could to make things different for them. However, the partnership recognised that further improvement work was required to ensure this vulnerable cohort of children were safeguarded appropriately within Cheshire East.

To support the partnership in completing the actions to address the report's findings, an Improvement Board was established which continues to scrutinise the work of the partnership.

The findings from the Joint Targeted Area Inspection are presented in more detail in the next few pages alongside an analysis of the improvement work the partnership has undertaken to date.

JTAI – Main Findings

The JTAI report highlighted these points as the main findings within the inspection:

- ❖ **Senior leadership analysis and critical enquiry of the underlying complexities and understanding of the day-to-day experiences of vulnerable children.** The inspection identified that the partnership needed to improve its direct line of sight to frontline practice as although the partnership met regularly and received numerous reports, there was a lack of critical enquiry, combined with limited resources, which led to ineffective independent analysis and challenge. Consequently, despite intentions to work in partnership and collaborate, senior leaders across the wider partnership had failed to evaluate and understand exploited children's lived experiences.
- ❖ **The evaluation of multi-agency partnership work.** There needed to be independent analysis and challenge to systematically evaluate the impact of frontline work across services; instead, the inspection found there was too much focus on process. The inspection found that the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to monitor, promote and evaluate the work of the statutory partners were underdeveloped and the weaknesses were exacerbated by the absence of an independent scrutineer. Subgroups to drive the work of the partnership were not considered effective.
- ❖ **The pace of change.** Whilst the inspection noted that leaders had identified areas for improvement, this activity and the actions identified following learning activities were not prioritised leading to significant delay.
- ❖ **The quality and effectiveness of work.** The inspection reported that assessments were too highly variable with too many plans working in isolation. Contingency planning was absent for too many children and the child's voice was not consistently recorded or considered. The inspection found that some children were waiting too long to have their needs assessed and risks identified. This was exacerbated by the fact that threshold guidance for professionals had not been revised since 2018 and did not include reference to criminal exploitation or contextual safeguarding.
- ❖ **The role of education as a protective factor.** The JTAI considered that the role of education as a protective factor was not high profile enough in multi-agency work. Partners did not challenge each other or have sufficiently robust plans to address low engagement in education.
- ❖ **Children's Social Care caseloads were too high and management oversight was not consistently effective.** Senior leaders across partners did not have an accurate view of the impact of high workloads on their staff. Supervision across the multi-agency partnership concerning exploited and missing children was sometimes infrequent, with little evidence of reflection or consideration of whether plans are effective or sustaining change.
- ❖ **Children at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation are not consistently having their needs and risks considered on presentation at emergency departments.** The JTAI reported that children presenting at the emergency department of Cheshire East NHS Trust were not having their voices heard and staff needed to be more curious so that broader safeguarding needs were identified, understood and responded to quickly.
- ❖ **Police intelligence was not being shared in a timely manner.** Inspectors identified examples where crucial police intelligence concerning children at risk of exploitation was not being shared promptly enough, due to policing capacity.



JTAI – Areas for Priority Action

The JTAI report advised **priority action** should be taken across three main areas:

- ❖ Leaders of the partnership should address the strategic weaknesses in the leadership, function, purpose and impact of the work of the partnership and its sub-groups. This should include gaining a full understanding of the risks of exploitation to children across the local area, and ensuring that this understanding leads to analysis, provision and commissioning of services that reduce risk for children effectively.
- ❖ East Cheshire NHS Trust should improve wider safeguarding practice in emergency departments so that risks to children with additional complex needs are identified, understood and responded to.
- ❖ Across the partnership, leaders should ensure that operational practice reduces risk of exploitation of children:
 - The police should improve the quality and timeliness of recording on systems and ensure prompt intelligence-sharing with partners about exploited children at risk of significant harm and those missing from home and care.
 - All partners in the integrated ‘front door’ and local authority social work teams should ensure that exploited children requiring statutory intervention receive it swiftly from all agencies.
 - Multi-agency partners need to secure appropriate education for exploited children as a protective factor.
 - Health leaders should ensure that children at risk of exploitation are identified when they attend an emergency department and their needs are consistently analysed using the approved screening tool, with findings swiftly communicated to partners.

JTAI – What else needs to improve?

The JTAI also recorded that the following areas needed improvement:

- ❖ The consistent recording and analysis of children’s voices across all agencies’ records.
- ❖ Children missing from home and at risk of exploitation being quickly and consistently identified by the multi-agency integrated front door.
- ❖ The quality and effectiveness of multi-agency strategy meetings across teams and services for children at risk of exploitation.
- ❖ Planning by the multi-agency child exploitation and integrated front door weekly meetings that demonstrates reduced risks to children, evidences a review of actions and is prompt in timeliness.
- ❖ Systematic review of the efficacy of multiple safety plans, child protection plans and care planning for children in care and young people leaving care.
- ❖ The regularity, quality and impact of staff supervision and management oversight across agencies, with clearly recorded analysis by managers about whether children are safer as a result of support and intervention.
- ❖ The partnership strategic oversight and understanding about exploited children’s experiences, including through the quality, accuracy and effectiveness of audits.
- ❖ Evidence-based contingency planning, including challenge by practitioners and leaders who hold each other to account.
- ❖ Systematic reporting, recording and analysis by all leaders to increase understanding of why children go missing.
- ❖ Clarity on expected standards of practice for all staff across agencies, supported by specific multi-agency child criminal and sexual exploitation training.
- ❖ Increased staffing capacity across social work teams and in the police child sexual exploitation and missing children coordinators teams in order to respond to improve the quality of service for children.
- ❖ Fast-track health referrals for exploited children with autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder to ensure that they can access appropriate support.



JTAI – What were our strengths?

The inspection also highlighted some strengths that we can build upon to improve the effectiveness of the partnership:

- ❖ It was noted that partners were receptive to the feedback from this inspection and are motivated to make the necessary changes to drive the much-needed development and reform.
- ❖ The inspection found emerging evidence of targeted disruption work in the community by youth justice staff, youth workers and police officers.
- ❖ There were experienced local authority '@ct staff' with an array of relevant skills, expertise, knowledge, and passion which provided intensive support to exploited children and their family members.
- ❖ Children benefited from bespoke targeted multi-agency early help work delivered at their pace, reducing risk of exploitation to children.
- ❖ The safeguarding children in education settings (SCIES) team was considered to be highly valued by schools. School leaders found the advice and support they receive from the SCIES team beneficial in helping them make safer decisions for children.
- ❖ The inspection reported there was recognition of the links between exploited children's poor mental health, sexual health and substance misuse which had resulted in effective commissioning and collaboration across the health networks between child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), youth justice services, young person's recovery service and children in care teams.

The inspection also highlighted the commitment and dedication of the people who work directly with the partnership.



JTAI Improvement Board

Our progress against the action plan for children at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation is monitored through the Improvement Board that was set up following inspection. This is supported by an independent advisor from the Department of Education who has facilitated the oversight and scrutiny of the partnership work in this area.

The JTAI action plan has been driven through partnership meetings and has driven improvement at pace. The impact of these improvements can be seen in more detail in the analysis of the partnership activity around the Contextual Safeguarding priority.



Independent Scrutiny

In October 2022, the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership commissioned an Independent Scrutineer. The purpose was to ensure multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Cheshire East are effective and comply with statutory guidance set out in Working Together 2018 (last updated 9 December 2020) with a particular focus on the following:

- ❖ children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
- ❖ partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
- ❖ organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
- ❖ there is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- ❖ learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- ❖ information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

This work invited the partnership to consider the following areas:

- ❖ A different way of organising and presenting governance arrangements.
- ❖ Developing the Cheshire East quality and learning framework
- ❖ Changing the CESP approach to multi-agency auditing
- ❖ What a year long campaign might look like

The new governance arrangements have been co-produced with the partnership and quality and learning frameworks have been considered. A priority for the partnership in 2023/2024 is to implement these new arrangements alongside a new quality assurance framework and approach to multi-agency auditing. This will be coupled with a communication strategy that supports ongoing partnership campaigns and messaging to partners across different platforms and forums.



Our Priorities 2022/2023

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership set these three priorities for our activity through 2022/2023.

Contextual Safeguarding

Neglect

Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Vulnerable Children



125,058	154,568	95,054	124,500
125,487	56,845	97,511	125,000
124,000	110,000	99,011	154,000
105,450	150,000	99,216	95,000
86,502	35,000	101,090	154,200
	83,000	101,684	110,000
	45,000	101,962	89,000
		102,747	50,000
			68,700
			123,000



Contextual Safeguarding

Since April 2022 there has been a significant amount of activity under this priority area and the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) and subsequent improvement plan have been key drivers in the momentum.

During the JTAI, immediate action was taken by Children's Social Care to change processes within Cheshire East's Consultation Service (ChECS) to eradicate the potential for delay in the identification of risk. This immediate change was for ALL Child Exploitation Screening Tools to be risk assessed on the day they were sent into our Integrated Front Door as opposed to waiting for the weekly screening meeting. Whilst no children were found to have been at risk of significant harm for a delayed period of time, we acknowledged that this process built in a delay and immediately sought to rectify this. This is 'business as usual' practice now.

As a partnership, we assured ourselves of the identification and risk management of ALL children who were flagged as being at risk of exploitation. This piece of work was quickly and effectively completed and remedial work for a small number of children was actioned as a priority. We have also undertaken a data cleansing exercise to ensure that only those children who are still 'assessed' as being at risk of exploitation, are flagged. We have seen the number of children reduce from 118 to 68 by the end of March 2023. This is a far more accurate number for Cheshire East.

In 2022/23, ChECS received 505 Contacts with Contextual Safeguarding and Exploitation being an identified area of risk; this related to 396 children. Of those, 143 became referrals to Children's Social Care and went on to have a full Child and Families Assessment. Of the 505 Contacts, 64% were accompanied by a Child Exploitation Screening tool, to support the rationale and decision making – this is a really healthy figure.

We have also developed a 'Cheshire East Profile' regarding our highest risk children alongside our colleagues in the Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB). This identifies those children at most risk and the collective plan to protect them. It also considers how we are pursuing perpetrators and how we are proactively preparing the community to have increased resilience in this area. We understand the risk of Serious and Organised Crime in Cheshire East and can respond accordingly.

Contextual Safeguarding and Serious Organised Crime Strategic Board Activity

In December 2022, Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership finalised the work to provide a strategy which outlines our approach to protecting children, adults and communities from exploitation and serious and organised crime across Cheshire East. This is a complex area of risk that requires the partnership, agencies and stakeholders within Cheshire East, to have clear objectives with measurable outcomes to demonstrate the **IMPACT** we are having on improving the lives of children, adults and communities from the effects of exploitation and organised crime. The specific deliverables within this strategy and supporting actions will allow the partnership to respond to the full range of serious and organised crime threats and thus make Contextual Safeguarding and Serious Organised Crime '**Everybody's Business**'. This strategy is relevant for children, adults and communities and incorporates all individual agency strategies that link to Contextual Safeguarding, Complex Safeguarding and Serious and Organised Crime. This was launched at a Child Exploitation in January 2023 with Dez Holmes from Research in Practice and was extremely well received.

We have also been working closely with our colleagues in Stockport Children's Social Care to develop a dedicated Contextual Safeguarding Team. We have been able to meet together with Stockport, Greater Manchester Police and key Partners in Cheshire East to consider the best elements of their practice and how we can bring that into Cheshire East. Stockport assisted us in facilitating a Partnership session on the Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Practice Principles which were launched nationally in early March 2023. Senior Leaders and Practitioners engaged in how we can bring this to life in Cheshire East and have further sessions planned throughout 2023/24.

The Contextual Safeguarding and Serious and Organised Crime Strategic Group meet quarterly and measure success against the objective outlined within this Strategy. The Strategic Group scrutinise data through a Partnership scorecard and narrative from all of the Operational Meetings to ensure we are effectively allocating resource, delivering a high standard of practice and evidencing IMPACT. This Group reports into the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Executive Board and Safer Cheshire East Partnership.

The development of the infrastructure around Contextual Safeguarding has been achieved and we can focus on the IMPACT and quality of practice early in 2023/24.



Impact and Success Measures

The strategy states we will know we have raised awareness regarding exploitation and serious organised crime when we see:

Increased number of frontline practitioners across the Partnership accessing training regarding Exploitation – At the point of the JTAI inspection in July 2022, there had been a significant gap in the training offer across the partnership linked to exploitation. Since this time, training has been delivered on 4 occasions to frontline practitioners across all organisations and services with over 200 attendees.

Feedback received on this Training has been positive and we are seeking further information from those attendees regarding the IMPACT this has had upon their practice since attending the training. A direct quote from a Health Professional:

I have used this knowledge in my day-to-day work to help make better decisions and have consideration towards the experiences [of children and young people at risk of exploitation]

All levels of Practitioners, Managers and Senior Leaders to have an awareness of this Strategy and how this is being driven from their role – This was achieved through the Conference in January. This was well attended with a range of Practitioners, Organisations and Senior Leaders

Increase in the use of Exploitation Screening Tools for children at risk – 64% of contacts which identified CSE as a risk factor were accompanied by an Exploitation Screening Tool. This is compared with 42% the year before.

Increase in the use of National Referral Mechanism – We are collectively working on the data report for NRM's however through manual counting we have seen a significant rise in not only the discussions around NRM but the completion of these by Agencies such as Social Care, Police and Youth Justice.



NEXT STEPS

- ❖ As part of our Quality Assurance Framework, auditing of this work will take place early in 2023/24 to understand the IMPACT for our children and the improved practice in key areas identified within the JTAI relating to timeliness of risk identification and multi-agency Strategy Meetings.
- ❖ Establish an integrated Contextual Safeguarding Team across Cheshire East to respond collectively to the risk presented by organised Crime and Child Exploitation.
- ❖ PanCheshire All Age Exploitation Strategy to be launched and aligned to our CS/SOC Strategy
- ❖ Develop a shared data set across Police and Children's Social Care to support information sharing
- ❖ Continue recruitment across Health and Police to embed an integrated Contextual Safeguarding Team
- ❖ Continue to use the support of Stockport Children's Social Care to develop our approach to practice, using national guidance to embed a culture

Neglect

In November 2019, Cheshire East had an Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS). The inspection recognised areas for improvement specifically in relation to the cohort of children open for reasons relating to neglect. In February 2020, the partnership agreed to make neglect a priority and neglect has continued as an area of priority for the partnership in 2022/2023.

The neglect strategy was refreshed and launched in 2021. The strategy has now been embedded across organisations and services with professionals having an increased understanding of how to identify the early signs of neglect, the screening tools that can support professionals' curiosity and intervention/support for children and families as well as how to escalate to statutory services if the children continue to experience neglectful parenting and are deemed to be in need of protection.

Following the successful bid for the Family Hub Model in Cheshire East, we are looking to develop an even more localised and targeted response to those children experiencing or at risk of neglect. The Threshold of Need Guidance of 'Right Help, Right Time' will be launched in 2023 which will enhance the work of the partnership in identifying children and families that require extra help and targeted support through a co-ordinated plan.



Neglect subgroup activity

During 2022/23 the Neglect board has progressed the following actions:

A multi-agency audit was conducted regarding sexual abuse and neglect which highlighted that

- ❖ Professional challenge was lacking across all agencies
- ❖ Some decisions were seen as a single agency action when they need to have multi-agency input.
- ❖ Practitioners were not confident in decision making around sexual abuse cases.

In response to these the escalation process was reviewed and now are now scrutinised within a multiagency operational group. Also, the partnership has reviewed and refreshed its training offer to provide specific input on neglect and the role of professional challenge is integrated into all training sessions.

Health partners now:

- ❖ Include Neglect as part of the Level 3 Safeguarding training and links to the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Neglect Strategy are shared at training.
- ❖ All practitioners working with children subject to a child protection or child in need plan for neglect will receive safeguarding supervision and supervisors will refer practitioners to the neglect strategy and screening tools where appropriate.
- ❖ Reports on the number of neglect screening tools are now reported on a quarterly dashboard to Commissioners.
- ❖ The neglect strategy and screening tools have been shared as a reminder via the Safeguarding Newsletter and the partnership has continued to provide a Graded Care Profile training offer.



Impact and Success Measures

The neglect strategy defined the following measures as a way of identifying practice improvements:

- ❖ **Safely and appropriately reduce the number of children becoming Cared For due to Neglect** – The overall number of cared for children has risen in Cheshire East for a number of reasons throughout the year with our biggest rise being our unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). Children becoming accommodated due to neglect has risen however only by 5 children in a year compared with a rise of 19 children the year before. This is positive.
- ❖ **Reduce the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan for Neglect for a second or subsequent time to 20%** - Out of the 177 Children who went onto a plan for Neglect in 22/23, 42 were repeat plans. Out of those 42, 28 were repeat plans for Neglect . This means that children subject to a child protection plan for neglect for a second and subsequent time has reduced to 16% which is an improvement.
- ❖ **Increase the number of Early Help Assessments where Neglect has been identified as a key factor – Currently 10%.** In 22/23 this increased to 11% which is positive.
- ❖ **Education attendance will improve and the number of children who are NEET will reduce** – This has not been achieved. Absence for all pupils in Cheshire East across primary and secondary education has increased in 2022/2023, however this pattern is replicated across national figures also and relates to the impact of Covid on children’s attendance. The number of children who are NEET has also increased by 0.6% from 1.9% to 2.5% although our numbers regionally and nationally are lower by comparison.



Impact and Success Measures

- ❖ **Reduction in repeat MARAC referrals** – This has not been achieved. April 21 to March 22, there was 114 repeat referrals to MARAC. In April 22 to March 23, there were 129. Whilst this is a small increase, it is still significant, and we would want to understand this in more detail through the Domestic Abuse commission and if they are seeing an increase overall in reported Domestic Abuse and their number of open cases increasing. An increase may not necessarily be a negative result, if this means that the victims are feeling more confident to report the abuse they are experiencing. It would be useful moving forward, to understand if the repeat referrals to MARAC have been children that are also on repeat Child Protection Plans and what the impact of this repeat and replicative behaviour has had upon their development to inform us of how we intervene and support.
- ❖ **Increase in the number of children receiving Universal Plus offer** – In 2021/2022, there were 908 children receiving the Universal Plus offer from the 0-19 service. In 2022/2023, there has been a significant increase with 1195 children receiving the offer in Q1, 1546 children in Q2, 1665 children in Q3 and 1738 children in Q4. Therefore an increase of 91% on the previous year of children receiving the Universal Plus offer from the 0-19 service, which evidences more families are accessing early help and support from health services.



Next Steps



- ❖ Continue to promote the Graded Care Profile Training across all Partners
- ❖ Continue to increase the number of Early Help Assessments where Neglect has been identified as a key factor
- ❖ Launch the Right Help, Right Time Threshold of Need Guidance
- ❖ All partners to ensure the Neglect Strategy is continuously part of all practitioner induction programmes to support the continued improvement of early identification.
- ❖ Quality Assurance Framework to include a regular review of the progress being made regarding neglect and the impact of intervention from across the partnership on the lives of our children and families.



Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Vulnerable Children

The Emotional Health and Wellbeing task and finish group was established in December 2018 following a recommendation from a serious case review. The purpose of the group was to establish information sharing pathways between acute hospital providers, child and adolescent mental health services and schools. Prompt and timely information sharing pathways would both allow appropriate support for children and young people attending schools following an episode of self-harm which had required medical intervention or assessment in an emergency department by a mental health practitioner and facilitate risk assessments for the child or young person to be shared.

The task and finish group has met quarterly since December 2018 and a self-harm information sharing pathway has been introduced.

Since then, the group has ensured that the pathway has been fully imbedded in practice and has worked with public health directors contributing to the self-harm joint strategic needs analysis. The data from the group will be used to determine future service provision.

The emotional health and wellbeing group has achieved the objective of introducing a self-harm information sharing pathway. In addition to this the task and finish group has implemented a directory of mental health services supporting practitioners.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Vulnerable Children subgroup activity

The emotional health and wellbeing of vulnerable children subgroup have continued to work on the actions identified below:

- ❖ **Prompt and timely information sharing pathways would both allow appropriate support for children and young people attending schools following an episode of self-harm which had required medical intervention or assessment in an emergency department by a mental health practitioner and facilitate risk assessments for the child or young person to be shared** - The self-harm information sharing pathway was implemented in March 2020 to share information from Emergency Departments when there has been a self-harm episodes and Education. The launch was accompanied by an education programme for school staff who would receive a copy of the notification, a one-minute briefing for staff and a power point presentation. The information sharing pathway is now fully imbedded in practice. The data from this has contributed to the self-harm joint strategic needs analysis and to determine future service provision.
- ❖ **The impact of the self-harm pathway was reported in March 2022, and an audit of the pathway was completed.** The evaluation captured the impact of the pathway from both children and young people. An example included that a child had identified a key member of staff to have regular contact with; twice weekly calls were then made from both that member of staff and the pastoral lead for that year. The work we completed with the student has highlighted her struggles around gender identity and we are working with the family to offer advice and support. The provision of a support card was also offered to enable child to access our support room if they feel anxious.
- ❖ **A comprehensive directory of mental health services in Cheshire East was produced.** This was shared with all schools in addition to early help services and the wider multi agency through the emotional health and wellbeing group and the safeguarding children partnership executive meeting. This allowed for the early identification and intervention of mental health services for children and young people. The directory will be updated annually and is now available on the LiveWell Cheshire website.



Impact and Success Measures

The following are examples of feedback from schools and other education professionals who have used the Pathway for Sharing information When a Child has Attended Hospital Following an Incident of Self-Harm

Following receipt of the self-harm notification the school completed work with a student which highlighted her struggles around gender identity and work was undertaken with the family to offer advice and support.

“This is a brilliant initiative. Really helpful.”

“The information provided on the Self-harm pathway notification is professional, factual and enables me to add to our safeguarding database as a record of the incident.”

One notification was for a child attending an independent school out of area. SCiES contacted the school to explain the initiative and shared the notification to safeguard the child.

Another notification was for a child who was electively home educated therefore the contact was shared with the manager of the Elective Home Education Officers. As a result of this, the Elective Home Education Officer contacted the family to establish a support network and to offer a visit. The parents made an in-year application to move the child back to school and a school place was found; the team then offered support for the child's transition back into a school environment.



Quality Assurance Subgroup Activity

During 2022/23 the Quality Assurance subgroup:

- ❖ Considered the implications for Cheshire East children of the Unannounced inspection of Youth custody at Werrington Young Offenders Institution. The Youth Justice Service provided assurance that they were in close contact with children currently placed there and had advocated for placement moves. However, placement decisions are made by the national Youth Custody Service and are not local ones.
- ❖ Agreed a refresh of the scorecard that the quality assurance subgroup will scrutinise that would focus upon following areas, Contacts, Strategy meetings, Number of children placed on a child protection plan for a second subsequent time, arrested children, Police Protection Orders.
- ❖ Undertook audits to offer assurance following Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Audits were completed the following topics:
 - Children open for concerns relating to sexual abuse
 - Safe sleep
 - Children who are missing from home
 - Quality of work undertaken by the Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS front door) on a variety of themes
 - Contextual Safeguarding
- ❖ Scrutinised the Section 175 submissions from Cheshire East schools. 95% of schools submitted their audits. Those schools that did not submit their audits were subsequently contacted by the SCiES team. The responses were detailed and gave a clear outline of what schools have in place and what they are developing. This provided the partnership with the reassurance they needed around safeguarding practice in those schools. Actions were identified for SCiES to progress via Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Multi-Agency Audits 2022/2023

In 2022/2023, the following multi-agency audit activity has taken place:

- ❖ Sexual Abuse and Neglect in May 2022
- ❖ Safe Sleep in May 2022
- ❖ Child Exploitation during the JTAI in June 2022
- ❖ Contact Audits of the 'Front Door' in January to March 2023
- ❖ Missing trigger meetings in February 2023

The outcome of these audits continue to drive partnership improvement activity in these areas.



Learning and Improvement Subgroup Activity

During 2022/23 the Learning and Improvement subgroup has:

- ❖ Overseen and scrutinised the implementation of the learning from the Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Rapid Reviews.
- ❖ Coordinated the review and update of the partnership escalation process. The multi-agency operational group now track escalations and report learning to the Learning and Improvement group.
- ❖ Received partners outline of what their services have been doing to promote an understanding amongst practitioners of ICON (abusive head trauma) and how the touch points work. This included Health Trusts providing inhouse level 3/4 training, Childrens Social Care Team Managers being briefed by the Child Death Overview Nurse and the SCIES briefing on approach ICON. ICON training was also available as part of the partnership training offer.
- ❖ Scrutinised the Local Authority Designated Officer annual (LADO) annual report for 2021/22.
- ❖ Scrutinised the Safeguarding Service returned to face-to-face child protection conferences from 1 August 2022 as part of the covid recovery journey. Child Protection Independent Reviewing Officers feedback that face-to-face conferences provide a better opportunity to support families. All requests for a fully virtual conference now must be approved by the Safeguarding Service Manager. Being able to offer agencies a chance to join virtually however has meant that meetings have been able to go ahead where they may have had to be stepped down previously. Key agencies with vital information and input have been able to participate virtually.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (SPRs)

We are all responsible for Safeguarding!

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews - An overview

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (reviews) are undertaken on 'serious child safeguarding cases' to learn lessons and improve the way in which local professionals and organisations work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. These reviews were previously known as Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) but were transitioned to this alternative model in July 2019. The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel has emphasised the responsibility of safeguarding partners to decide upon whether a review is needed or not.

The safeguarding partners are responsible for making arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which, in their view, raise issues of importance in relation to their area. The safeguarding partners commission and supervise independent reviewers for these reviews. In all cases the partnership considers whether the reviewer has the following:

- ❖ professional knowledge, understanding and practice relevant to local child safeguarding practice reviews, including the ability to engage both with practitioners and children and families
- ❖ knowledge and understanding of research relevant to children's safeguarding issues
- ❖ ability to recognise the complex circumstances in which practitioners work together to safeguard children
- ❖ ability to understand practice from the viewpoint of the individuals, organisations or agencies involved at the time rather than using hindsight
- ❖ ability to communicate findings effectively
- ❖ no conflict of interests

In the period of 2022/ 2023, Cheshire East Safeguarding Partnership have undertaken 3 Rapid Reviews and separately 4 Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews. These were initiated the previous year and have only recently concluded in 2022/2023.

All of the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review reports can be found on the [partnership's website](#).



Child H and I - published 21 December 2022

WHAT HAPPENED?

The children who are the focus of this report, and referred to as Child H and Child I, are the youngest of five children; their older siblings all being adults at the time of the review. They are members of a large extended family, many of whom have also been known to agencies for several years. Agencies have had considerable levels of engagement with the family for many years and mother herself had a history of abuse as a child. Concerns for the subject children and/or their siblings are recorded from 2000. The review was prompted by the discovery of serious sexual offences which only came to light in 2021 but took place in 2013. The partnership established the review in order to identify any learning from practice at that time, and to satisfy itself that any practice deficits were no longer present within current practice. It was of concern that these offences took place within the context of extensive multi-agency involvement with the family.

Criminal proceedings re the 2013 offences were running in parallel with this review. This process was managed by West Midlands police, not the local police force. Good communication was established with the Senior Investigating Officer and consultation arrangements established with the Crown Prosecution Service to ensure neither process compromised the other. Convictions were brought against the adults of serious sexual offences and are now serving substantial prison sentences. The children were subject of Care Proceedings during the course of the Review.

GOOD PRACTICE

Good practice was identified in the schools, who were involved with this family showed real strength in capturing the lived experiences of the children and recording their voices. They showed considerable persistence in exposing their concerns and provided a safe space for the children. There are many examples of practical support to the children and to their mother. The chronology prepared by education was particularly thorough – this was possible due to the level of detail held in their school records. The Health Visitor was also praised for her tenacity in raising her concerns about potential risks from sex offenders in the extended family is to be commended. During the course of the review, Cheshire Police undertook an internal review which was of high quality, detailed and formed the basis of further action to continue the improvements which have a been evidenced.

Child H and I – published 21 December 2022

LEARNING

The recommendations identified that Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership should ensure that, where convicted sex offenders are in contact with children that appropriate and effective risk management mechanisms are in place. It should consider with partners the arrangement for risk assessments and safety planning where the allegation is regarding an alleged offender rather than one with convictions and agencies should work together to ensure that potential risk from sex offenders in the family network are assessed in respect of other children with whom they have contact.

Other recommendations included that Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership should continue to receive updates from the Director of Children’s Social Care regarding the completion and effective implementation of the action plans made in response to Ofsted inspection activity and that the planned review of the escalation policy is completed.

ACTION

Following the review, Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership developed an escalation tracker to feed into the Learning and Improvement Group on a quarterly basis and there is an Improvement Board in place to address actions and recommendations from Ofsted.

There are regular reviews of the Pan Cheshire Policies and procedures and the importance of specific risk assessments, such as the “Persons who Pose a Risk of Harm” tool has been reinforced. RASAC and SARC training, as well as Trio of Vulnerabilities and ACEs training is offered across the partnership. Sexual Abuse is also highlighted in training courses such as ‘Basic Safeguarding’, ‘Complex Neglect’, ‘Child Protection Processes’ and ‘Digital Safeguarding’. Additionally, Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership are making efforts to facilitate the ‘Persons who Pose a Risk’ training.

OFFICIAL



Child J – published February 2023

WHAT HAPPENED?

Child J was less than one month old when he tragically died. At the time of his death, he was being cared for by his father and after a feed in the early hours, Child J was placed on a pillow on a sofa, where he was later found not breathing.

The review considered the professional involvement with this family in order to identify learning for the wider systems and practice in cases where safe sleep messages have not been effective, and there are risk indicators in relation to high-risk domestic abuse, alcohol use and mental health.

The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership agreed to undertake a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review by considering a case to be referred to as Child J. They recognised that lessons could be learned from reviewing the practice in the case, with the aim of better safeguarding the children of Cheshire East. The Local Safeguarding Practice Review report was published in February 2023.

LEARNING

It was recommended that the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership should seek assurance that safer sleep messaging is embedded into multi-agency safeguarding practice, includes fathers and where they provide significant care or are named in safety plans, wider friends and family. Also, assurances should be sought that fathers are fully involved and engaged in assessment and planning processes. It was recommended that the partnership should ensure that there is a robust approach to Child in Need planning and where this is not the case, professionals challenge and hold each to account. Finally, it was proposed that a multi – agency audit focussed on the impact of domestic abuse on parenting and to ensure that changes to the pathway are embedded and effective.



Child J – published February 2023



ASSURANCE

Evidence of progress to date is that there has been a roll out of the ICON and safe sleep training across all partners. The aim of this was to make safe sleep awareness everybody's responsibility. The Local Authority added a mandatory question in the Children and Families assessment that asks whether safe sleep and ICON has been discussed.

IMPACT

There is currently a Rapid Review being undertaken by Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership which has already identified good practice in that safe sleep and ICON was discussed with both parents by a number of professionals.

Child K – published February 2023

WHAT HAPPENED?

Child K was a 17 year old child in the care of Cheshire East local authority at the time of the review. She was subject to a care order under s31 of Children Act 1989. This requires the local authority to provide accommodation for him or her, to maintain and safeguard him or her, to promote his or her welfare and to give effect to or act in accordance with the other welfare responsibilities set out in the Children Act 1989. It gives the local authority shared parental responsibility for the child and the power to determine the extent to which the child's parents and others with parental responsibility may exercise their responsibility, where this is necessary to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

Child K was experiencing significant difficulties in her life that resulted in her being exposed to significant and serious harm. The increased concerns for the welfare of Child K included several serious and life-threatening attempts to self-harm requiring resuscitation on at least two occasions. Child K was frequently missing from placements with another child in the care of another local authority. There were increasing concerns about exposure to child sexual exploitation, substance misuse and criminal behaviour including carrying a knife. Her vulnerability was recognised by the professionals working with her, they were concerned about risks she was being exposed to, her erratic behaviour and her lack of awareness about the dangers she was exposed to. She was described as impulsive.

Her presenting behaviours made identifying and engaging an appropriate placement to meet her needs very challenging and she had somewhere in the region of nine placements during the review period, including extended stays on acute hospital wards as no suitable placement could be identified to facilitate a safe discharge.

Child K was made subject to a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard (DOLs) on 2 December 2021 and moved to her current placement in January 2022. She is no longer subject to a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard and is making steady progress. Risks have considerably reduced though remain present and plans are well underway to support transition to adult services.

The review considered the professional involvement with Child K and her mother to identify learning for wider systems and practice in cases where children are experiencing significant contextual safeguarding issues, including child sexual exploitation, self-harm and how these impact on placements, professionals' approach to safety plans and multi-agency management of risk.



Child K – published February 2023

GOOD PRACTICE

Good practice was identified as part of the review process, examples of this include the pharmacy that Child K presented to when she was missing from her placement, for her medication and the morning after pill. They realised she was a child in care and arranged for her to return the next day for her medication, they contacted her placement who were able to locate her the following day and return her to her placement. Also, the tenacity of individual workers, in locating Child K when she was missing, including her social worker going to London to try and locate her and return her to a safe placement. Local services remaining in contact with Child K, including local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) visiting when she was on an acute ward in another area. There was also good practice identified with joint working with another local authority as Child K was frequently missing and with another child who was looked after by the other local authority.

ACTION

The outcome of the report was for Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership to seek assurance that when children are cared for and there are significant safeguarding risks, care planning meetings take place at a frequency that reflects the needs of the child. These meeting should involve the Independent Reviewing Officer to contribute to planning and to offer scrutiny. Professionals must challenge and hold each other to account to ensure that these meetings take place. Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership should also seek assurance that the partnership, understands each other’s roles and works collaboratively to ensure the child is at the centre of all decision making. To support this, the development of a briefing or joint training that explains Mental Health Act Assessments, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, Tier 4 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and Secure Welfare will help enhance practitioners understanding and enable them to hold each other to account.

It was recommended that Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership should seek assurance that whenever a child is admitted to hospital following a significant incident, a multi – agency meeting is held to formulate and agree the multi – agency safeguarding plan and holistic plan of support prior to discharge. In addition, Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership should consider developing a multi -agency Team around the Team approach to support frontline practitioners who are working with high-risk children, to support reflective practice, reduce risk of vicarious trauma for practitioners and improve decision making.

Joint thematic review – originally published October 2021 and updated March - July 2022

WHAT HAPPENED?

Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Safeguarding Children’s Partnerships jointly commissioned a review following an incident in a public space where a group of adults and a number of young people were reported to be involved in a disturbance. The incident resulted in three adults being stabbed, one of whom ultimately died of their injuries.

The incident triggered a cross-border meeting at which it was agreed that the criteria for a Local Safeguarding Child Practice Review was met and that this would be conducted as a joint thematic review. The two Partnerships saw this as an opportunity to test the local contextual safeguarding system, specifically in relation to Child Criminal Exploitation.

LEARNING

At the time of this incident Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester’s Safeguarding Children’s Partnerships were working within the guidance set out in the Pan-Cheshire Contextual Safeguarding Child Exploitation Pathway 2019, which contained a ‘route-map’ for identification, risk assessment and referral to be used by local areas when child criminal exploitation risks are suspected or known. The pathway includes a screening and assessment tool to be used where child exploitation, or the risk of it, is suspected and the pathway guides frontline practitioners to complete the tool which is then sent to the relevant local authority Children’s Service ‘front door’. The ‘front door’ reviews information and instigates appropriate next steps for example children and family single assessment, Section 47, Strategy Meetings as required. All exploitation assessments are shared with a multi-agency panel in the respective areas who make a multi-agency decision on level of risk in relation to child exploitation.

The Pan-Cheshire system was said by practitioners participating in the review to be embedded in the local areas and clearly there was benefit in the approach. However, the review found that aspects of the system require refreshing based on local conditions, particularly the increasing demand; professional and agency interpretation of risk; professional interpretation of vulnerability, and the availability of local resources to provide interventions at varying levels of risk. The issue of thresholds was also identified as a potential barrier to interventions.

GOOD PRACTICE

The review highlighted that there was much good practice to commend in both areas. The review heard many examples of innovative practice, a willingness to challenge and be challenged and a workforce that, at every level, was committed to developing a specific ‘whole system’ approach to Child Criminal Exploitation.

Joint thematic review

RECOMMENDATIONS

Alongside commitment and willingness, the review identified that workforce development in relation to Child Criminal Exploitation should be prioritised. All the focus groups recognised that greater confidence and understanding, coupled with access to skills development and management supervision was needed to support practitioners in working effectively in identifying, assessing and providing interventions to children and families at risk of or involved in Child Criminal Exploitation.

The review recommended that the Safeguarding Children's Partnerships shared the learning from this review with the Pan Cheshire All-Age Contextual Safeguarding Task Group so that it informed and directed developments in relation to policy and practice e.g. assessment tools, workforce development and referral systems (including managing demand on the system). It was proposed that the Safeguarding Children Partnerships, Community Safety Partnerships and Local Safeguarding Adult Boards should receive assurance that current work to create a PanCheshire all age Child Criminal Exploitation strategy developed at pace. Assurance needed to be sought by the partnership that the local early help offer focused and responded to known vulnerability indicators associated with Child Criminal Exploitation and that there was a shared and widely understood definition of vulnerability to Child Criminal Exploitation. The review also recommended the Safeguarding Children's Partnerships should be assured that the Child Criminal Exploitation system gives sufficient focus to the physical and mental health needs of young people at risk of or involved in Child Criminal Exploitation and that pathways, such as for ADHD and CAMHS, are appropriately linked to Child Criminal Exploitation pathways so that non-engagement is assessed in the context of potential increased vulnerability.

It was recommended that the Safeguarding Children Partnerships should work alongside the Community Safety Partnerships to communicate prevention messages to local communities and all the services that work to recognise indicators of Child Criminal Exploitation, including the police power to stop and search. Also, the Safeguarding Children Partnerships should work with the Local Safeguarding Adult Boards to seek assurance that young people transitioning to adult services are offered a transition plan and appropriate ongoing support into adulthood.





Change

Joint thematic review

IMPACT

Since the above review took place, a Serious Organised Crime and Criminal Exploitation subgroup has taken responsibility for updating the Cheshire East strategy and creating a practice guidance document that will reflect the learning from the review. The training offer has been reviewed and Contextual Safeguarding is now offered to all practitioners across the partnership. The updated strategy is in progress and Cheshire West and Chester have been consulted. This continues to be a live action tracked through the Learning and Improvement board and will remain open until there is assurances that learning from the review has been appropriately reflected.

The current pathway is inclusive of Low, Medium and High Risk concerns and the Contextual Safeguarding meeting ensures that all children, irrespective of risk grade, are discussed. All services can refer to the Contextual Safeguarding Hub using the Pan Cheshire Screening/Assessment Tools. The Timely Support for Children and Families in Cheshire East, Guidance on Thresholds of Need document is being updated to specifically include child exploitation.

The Integrated Front Door hold weekly meeting child missing exploitation and missing from home meeting. The Child Exploitation Specialist Nurse participates in this and provides information from health providers.

In July 2022 the Integrated Front door changed its procedures to enable a speedier response to communications by telephone or email to families or professionals seeking advice or highlighting concerns about a child due to safeguarded support needs, including child exploitation.

Police stop and search has been a focus of engage with Cheshire Youth Commission and the data report around this will become part of the regular reporting in the new arrangements.

Multi Agency Training and Learning subgroup

Working Together (2018) identifies that the three safeguarding partners have a responsibility to consider what training is needed locally and how they will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of any training they commission.

In November 2022, Cheshire East's Safeguarding Children's Partnership appointed a new, dedicated training and development manager for the partnership to refresh, strengthen and develop the training offer that is available to the safeguarding partnership in its widest sense.

We have developed a meaningful, dynamic training programme that is linked with, and responds to, current focused partnership work areas. The training programme also addresses wider issues to encourage seamless ways of working together across Cheshire East. Core topics, and consistent threads running through each subject, continue to be identified through service consultations to recognise needs and we are constantly reviewing our current programme in response to on-going audit and practice case review findings as well as emerging ideas in research.

The training subgroup have been responsible for supporting the co-ordination of the new training programme.



Learning Week

At the end of January 2023, the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership delivered its first learning week. This was a ‘first of a kind’ event for Cheshire East, hosted across 5 consecutive days.

The week included an ‘in person’ conference with an esteemed guest speaker, alongside 24, one hour, on-line, back-to-back sessions with hosts and audiences coming from across the entire partnership’s range of services with invites automatically dropped into calendars from a partnership-wide distribution list.

This activity was appreciated by over 2000 practitioners who ‘tuned in’ with an attendance average of 85 professionals in any given session. Due to its success, another Learning Week is being planned for Spring 2024.

The learning week had five themed days, one of which was a Child Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding conference with a key note speaker from Research in Practice.

Over five days, the following training was delivered:

<p>Neglect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Neglect • Single Stories • Safe Sleep, Cold Rooms, Out of Routine • Coercive and controlling behaviour and links with neglect • The Child’s Voice • Household Support Fund and Holiday Activity and Food Programme 	<p>Sexual Harm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of Digital Safeguarding • Signs and Indicators of Child Sexual Exploitation • How to... Learning about case reviews • Managing Sexual Behaviours
<p>Child Wellbeing and Mental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Allegations • Bullying • ICON • Impact of Parental Challenges • School as a protective factor • Understanding ACEs • An overview of the wellbeing for children in education offer 	<p>Joined Up Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of Safety Briefing • Recognising Child Protection in Disability • How to... Attending a Strategy Discussion • How to... Make a referral • ‘DadPad’ • Missing From Home Protocol • Engaging dads to support their children

Partnership Conference: Contextual Safeguarding

The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership held their first 'in person' partnership conference. The event, part of a week of learning, was held in response to the government's Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership last year.

Around 100 staff heard from guest speaker for the morning, Dez Holmes, director of Research in Practice (RiP), a national organisation that brings together academic research, practice expertise and the experiences of those accessing services. Dez is currently the director of the 'Tackling Child Exploitation' (TCE) programme, which RiP leads in partnership with University of Bedfordshire and the Children's Society. The conference considered the eight Child Exploitation principles.

The conference also included short sessions from contributors across the partnership on:

- ❖ 'The Contextual Safeguarding and Serious Organised Crime strategy objectives'
- ❖ 'School attendance – everyone's business'
- ❖ 'Forced Internal Concealment'
- ❖ 'Celebration of Successful practice (Positive interventions work!).



Feedback from Learning week

" Definitely loved invites dropped into calendar. Makes it so accessible! Many thanks."

"Loved the short snippet training options and coupled with really useable resources to take away and try with families :)"

"Have attended two sessions and it's been great. The timetable has helped to prioritise"

"I think this week has been so worthwhile and the short sessions have been great to be able to fit in around other work."

"I have a large team which will really benefit from me cascading the info from today session to them. Thank you so much. 😊"

"Threshold of LADO and professional responsibility was helpful. Ability to contact is great don't get that in every LA."

"Thank you, this week has been so useful, thank you"

"What a brilliant way of presenting training for various subjects all in one place and not having to travel to different places. Thankyou"

"Thank you - I don't work directly with children but as a Safeguarding Business Support Officer, its makes documenting notes during conferences, easier to understand the reasons why things are done 😊"

"Thank you for your time - this week of online training is a fantastic opportunity"

"I wanted to say thank you so much for all the training this week. It has been invaluable"

Training Offer

The review of the training offer was concluded with a new training programme offer being developed for 2023. The following training offer reflects the feedback from learning around 'what works' for the partnership training programme. Topics and learning threads were identified for the training programme through consultation with services, reviewing the existing programme, exploring research and in response to audit and practice case review findings.

A highlight outcome from Learning Week has been the introduction of three separate series of short (1hour) lunchtime sessions, each held monthly throughout the training year:

- ❖ 'How to...?' are practical guides for using shared tools, policies and practices.
- ❖ 'Spotlight on...' are dedicated to opening relationship networks where service sectors and agencies have a platform for introducing themselves and sharing what they do, advertising their skills and child focused support.
- ❖ 'CESCP Bitesize' facilitate opportunities for the Partnership team to share key messages from audits and case reviews, as well as exchange news coming in and out of the Partnership such as new services or policies being launched. We also use this opportunity to share examples of good practice to build an evidence-based understanding of what is working well in multi-agency, partnership working.

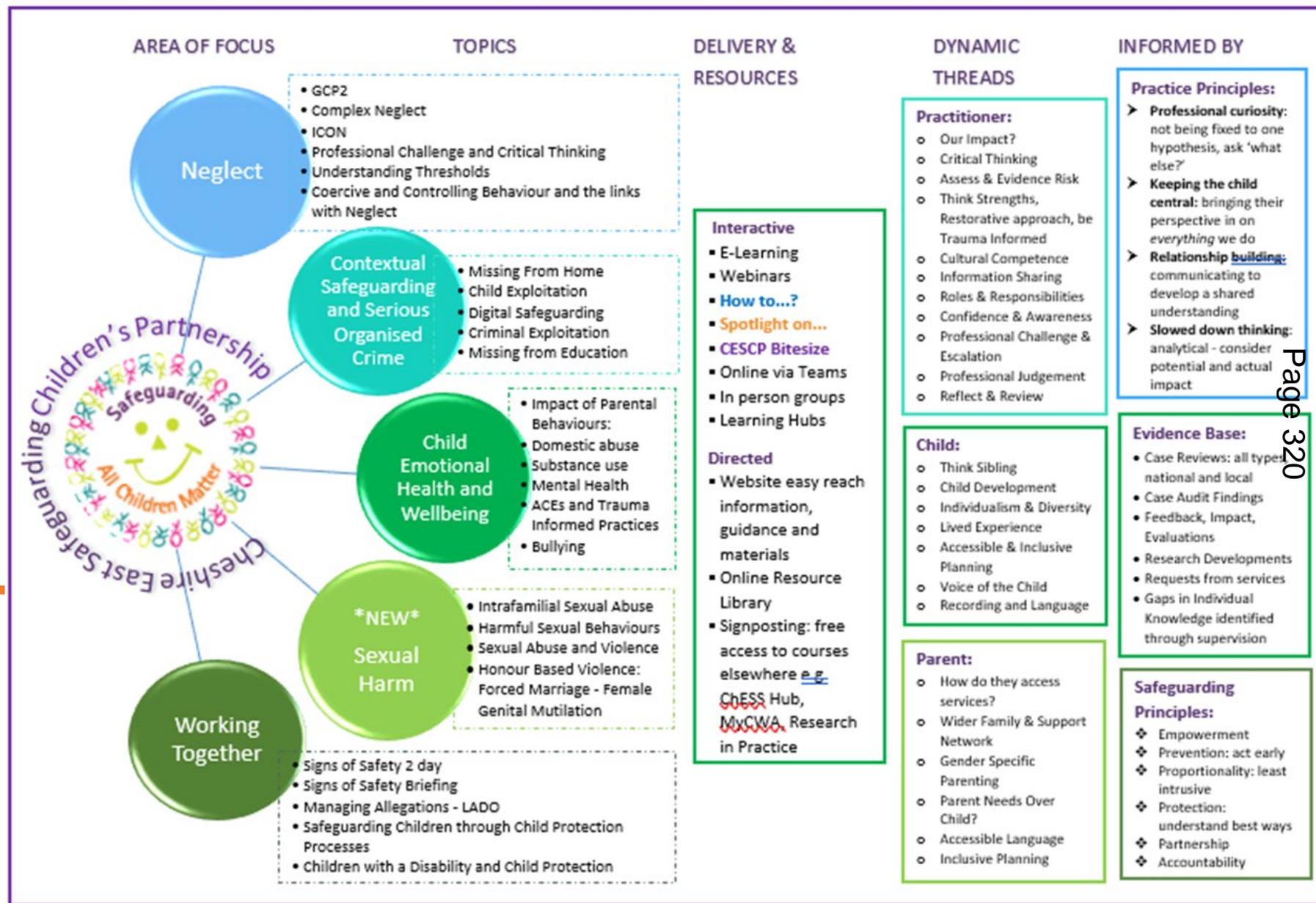
The training offer is evolving and growing in line with service need.

To find out more and to browse the detail of the training offer available, please follow the training link shown here:

https://form.cheshireeast.gov.uk/service/CESCP_Training_Booking_2023_24



Training Programme



Learning Hub – Sexual Abuse

The partnership conducted its first Learning Hub on the 22 March 2023. The aim of this was to:

- ❖ draft a partnership statement on what good should look like for Cheshire East Safeguarding practice around sexual abuse
- ❖ identify priorities for improvement in the local safeguarding practice response to child sexual abuse.

The event was held at Oakenclough Children’s Centre and had 23 professionals from across the partnership in attendance. The learning hub activity supported the partnership to adopt sexual abuse as one of its focus areas for 2023/2024.

The learning hub provided an opportunity for practitioners to benchmark current practice against national and local information and supported the attendees to draft summaries of what good looks like for the partnership to consider adopting. The learning hub identified priorities for improvement in the local safeguarding practice response to child sexual abuse. These priorities will form the activity of the partnership for our sexual abuse focus area for 2023/2024.

Priority actions:
Identification of risk and the undertaking assessment of risk when likelihood of sexual abuse
Good available training to support identification, managing sexual abuse and information sharing
Support for victims, both children and adults
Stronger response to single agency investigations
Practitioners are well supported to identify vulnerabilities and report abuse
Strong culture of consultation with children
Clear policy on child-on-child abuse
Develop a culture of creativity, reflection and active problem solving – building on existing strengths
Community level awareness



Voice of the child



In 2022/2023, The partnership has developed guidance around how we capture the voice of children and young people and their lived experience with over 24 teams contributing to the research and drafting of this guidance. We know that capturing the voice of children and young people and understanding their lived experiences reduces the risk of harm and improves outcomes for children and young people.

As a partnership, we have a variety of toolkits we use for capturing the voice of children and young people and their lived experience at all stages and ages. The guidance aims to:

- ❖ ensure that we all consistently work to the same set of standards
- ❖ give professionals confidence and guidance in recording the child's voice effectively.

The partnership has also developed an annual programme for senior leaders to visit and speak to children and young people about their experiences.

The partnership starts each meeting with the voice of the child with different agencies bringing examples of a young person's lived experience of their practice to life within the meeting. This supports the partnership to reflect upon its work and the impact this has on our children and young people and helps to keep the voice of the child central to partnership activity.

Communication Activity

Over the course of the reporting year, the Cheshire East Children’s Safeguarding Partnership website attracted 19, 717 visitors to the Cheshire East Children’s Safeguarding Partnership website. A further page breakdown is shown below:

Page	No. views	% views
1. Home page	2,829	11.24%
2. Professionals	1,889	7.50%
3. Learning and Development - Training	1,688	6.71%
4. Guidance on using Signs of Safety	1,346	5.35%
5. Procedures and Guidance	1,237	4.91%
6. Contextual Safeguarding	1,153	4.58%
7. About us	1,013	4.02%
8. Multi-Agency Toolkit	905	3.60%
9. Learning and Development – e-learning	796	3.16%
10. Signs of Safety	725	2.88%

With the growing use of technology and social media, all professionals need to adopt a much more sophisticated approach to their safeguarding responsibilities. They need to reflect on the changing nature of communication and how this impacts upon practice issues, particularly those focused on the identification and assessment of potential risk. To do this successfully, professionals need to recognize that children and young people do not use technology and social media in isolation. Their offline and online worlds are converged, and both need to be understood when trying to identify the type of support that a child, young person and their family might need.

To this end, Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership are ambitious in 2023 to refresh and update our website, have a more active presence on Facebook and Twitter and consider the use of apps and YouTube videos to promote partnership messages to reach more people.



Partnership Budget Contributions

Working Together (2018) stipulates that the safeguarding partners should agree the level of funding secured from each partner, which should be equitable and proportionate to support the local arrangements. The funding should be sufficient to cover all elements of the safeguarding arrangements, including the cost of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

Funding for 2022/23 continued in accordance with previous arrangements and had not changed for some years, with the local authority absorbing the budget deficit. The partnership recognises this is not sustainable and an increase in contributions will be sought in 2023/2024. This increase in contributions was also a recommendation from the independent scrutineer.

An internal benchmarking exercise has been undertaken to determine whether the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership's budget was in line with other partnership budgets. This supported the recommendation that contributions from across all partners, and in particular, the local authority needed to increase to support the business of the partnership.

Income	22/23
East Cheshire NHS Trust	£5,000
PCC	£25,000
Cheshire & Wirral Partnership	£4,093
NHS Cheshire CCG	£37,556
HMP Styal	£2,000
Wirral Community NHS Trust	£5,500
Mid Cheshire Hospital NHS Trust	£6,772
CEC	£47,468
Schools	£30,000
Total income	£163,389

Expenditure	22/23
Staff Salaries	£172,017
Car Allowances	£204
Professional fees	£27,774
<u>On line</u> procedures	£2,369
Telephone/ICT	£194
Total expenditure	£202,558





Areas of focus 2023/2024

Looking forward, the partnership have identified the following areas of focus for its activity in 2023/2024:

- ❖ Contextual Safeguarding
- ❖ Children missing from education
- ❖ Sexual Abuse

It has also been agreed that the voice of the child will be an overarching area of focus for the partnership running through all our activity in the year.

Key priorities for the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership in 2023/2024



Listening to and acting on the voice of the child to place them at the heart of the partnership

Embedding the new arrangements to ensure strategic oversight and line of sight to frontline practice

Improving quality assurance and routine, robust performance scrutiny and challenge

Creating a learning culture that takes action to improve practice

Ensuring there is transparent, decisive and evidence-based decision making in all partnership meetings to support improved outcomes

Create a highly effective partnership with communication based on positive relationships, shared values and clear vision



Hearing the voice of the child



This is an area identified as a focus for development for the partnership in 2023/2024. It is our ambition that we will increase the extent to which children and young people are involved with the safeguarding arrangements in Cheshire East. With the support of the Councils Participation Team, the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership business team will meet with a group of children and young people to talk about how they might become involved in the work of the partnership, be sighted on partnership arrangements and how their views can be heard to influence and shape service delivery. This needs to be routine and regular.

It is a partnership ambition that we will create a shadow partnership executive of young people to support the activity of the partnership in future years.

In 2023/2024, we are looking to hold partnership meetings in community spaces to enable children and young people to speak with the partnership on a more regular basis. This will inform the work of the partnership in a more responsive way.

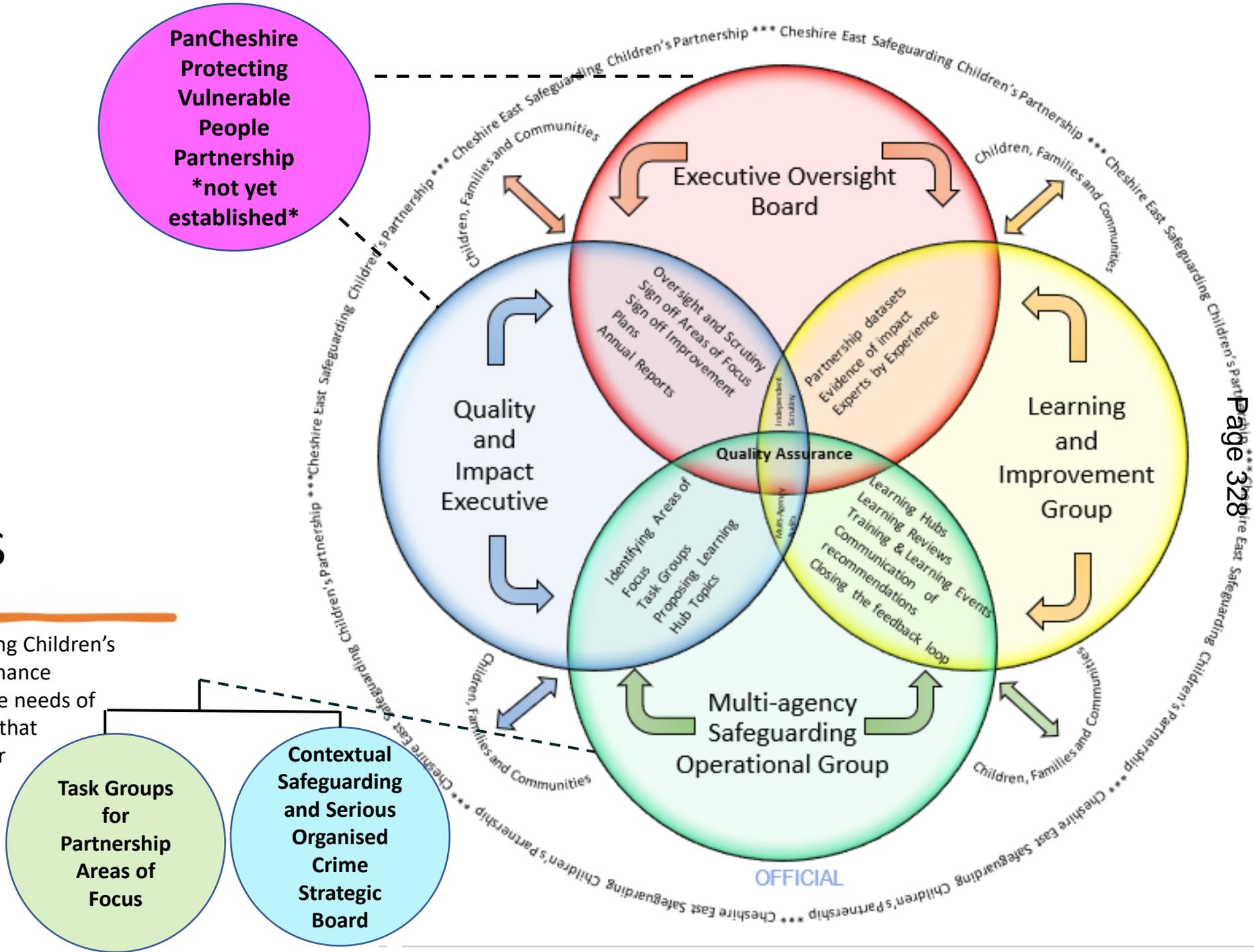
All partnership multi-agency audit activity will be ambitious to involve the experiences of children and young people to ensure there is effective triangulation of information being provided from frontline practice.





The new governance arrangements

In 2023/2024, the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's partnership will look to embed these governance arrangements to identify and respond to the needs of children in Cheshire East. We are confident that these new arrangements will provide a clear line of sight to frontline practice but we will be reviewing this routinely to ensure the arrangements are effective; this will include commissioning an independent scrutineer to provide scrutiny and oversight of the arrangements after a year.



Improving Quality Assurance



In 2023/2024, the partnership will be refreshing its quality assurance framework and activity. This will be aligned to the new arrangements where quality assurance will be the golden thread to support all partnership work. Under the new framework, quality assurance activity can be 'stepped up' at any time in a responsive manner to support partnership understanding of any new or emerging issues as well as undertake planned quality assurance work over the course of the year that will be linked to the partnership's areas of focus as well as the learning hub process.

The refresh of the quality assurance framework will also go alongside a refreshed partnership data set to support the scrutiny and oversight of performance aligned to the partnership areas of focus.





Creating a learning culture



In 2023/2024, the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership aspires to be a learning partnership; a partnership that can 'acquire new knowledge and innovate quickly enough to survive and flourish in a rapidly changing environment' (Senge, 1990).

We are establishing a learning culture that demonstrates and encourages individual and organisational learning, and where both gaining and sharing knowledge is prioritised, valued, and rewarded. It becomes part of the ecosystem of the organisation.

Effective communication and feedback is woven throughout the architecture of the revised arrangements and will be encouraged and expected as a part of the norm to support the development of our learning culture. This will be supported by the refreshed training programme being offered to the partnership as well as the refreshed quality assurance framework where we will scrutinise audit activity and performance data to better understand our gaps and/or identify good practice.

We will then look to establish a clear learning framework in which action is taken to 'close the loop' on learning activity from audit, data, rapid reviews and local safeguarding practice reviews.

This will also include working with partners to establish the Learning Hub model within the partnership.

Transparent decision making



In 2023/2024, we will work towards being more responsive and transparent as a partnership. We recognise that the annual report is written in retrospective and as a result is not the most effective tool to analyse and scrutinise partnership activity in the moment.

In 2023/2024, we will move to a quarterly method of partnership reporting to ensure partners understand the progress we are making against our areas of focus and agreed action plans. We will identify within this report any outstanding actions where there is drift and delay and make clear, confident decisions about how we can achieve these actions in the next quarter.

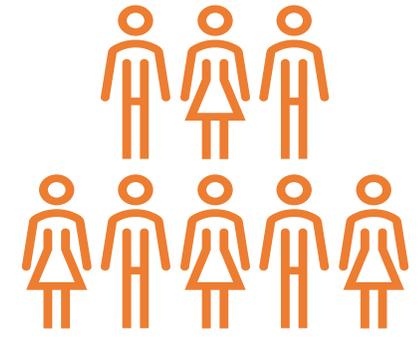
The quarterly partnership report will then support the communication of these targets and ensure there is responsibility and accountability by the partnership to drive this forward with timescales for review and measurable impact outcomes. In addition, the ambition will be to publish the quarterly reports on our social media accounts and on the partnership website to ensure that there is transparency of our activity across the year.

These quarterly updates will also support the completion of the annual report.



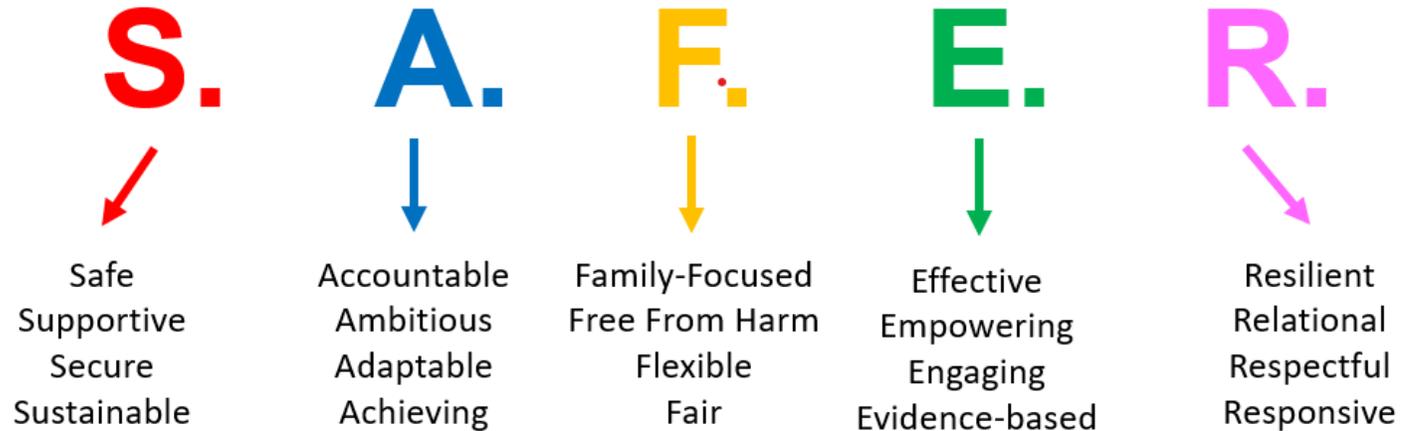


Shared vision and values to improve partnership working



The partnership have agreed that our vision should be updated to reflect the changes that have been made as part of our new arrangements. In 2023/2024, the partnership will be...

Working **TOGETHER** to make children, families and communities



In line with the revised governance arrangements, we will be rebranding the partnership to complete the cycle of transformation. This will include a refresh of the partnership logo, an overhaul of the partnership website and agreement of a communication strategy to enable partnership messages to be heard 'live' and in multiple formats to best meet the needs of our frontline practitioners. We recognise that an effective partnership is a partnership where frontline practitioners and strategic leaders have a symbiotic relationship. Frontline practitioners need access to the partnership to understand the strategic plan of work to improve outcomes and to drive the strategic plans on the ground and the revised partnership arrangements alongside a clear communication strategy will support this more effectively.

We are ambitious that our refreshed and rebranded partnership will enable us to work **TOGETHER** to make children, families and communities **S.A.F.E.R** in 2023/2024.

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership

Annual Report **2022/23**

Quick guide to the activity of
the partnership in 2022/203



About the Annual Report 2022/2023



Reporting requirements for our safeguarding partnership arrangements are set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children on pages 82-83 as follows: “In order to bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, the safeguarding partners must publish a report at least once in every 12-month period. The report must set out what they have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice”.

The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s annual report for 2022/23 sets out examples of the evidence, impact, assurance and learning of the statutory safeguarding arrangements in Cheshire East. It reports on the following activity:

- ❖ The governance and accountability arrangements for the partnership.
- ❖ The context for safeguarding children in Cheshire East, highlighting the progress made by the partnership against our 2022/23 priorities.
- ❖ The lessons that the partnership has identified through the Learning & Improvement subgroup and the actions taken to improve child safeguarding and welfare as a result of this activity.
- ❖ The range and impact of the multi-agency safeguarding training delivered by the partnership.
- ❖ The priorities for the partnership going forward
- ❖ The key messages for those involved in the safeguarding of children and young people.

In line with statutory requirements, the annual report 2022/23 will be sent to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and The What Works Centre for Children’s Social Care within seven days of being published.





The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership

The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership is established in accordance with the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) and the statutory guidance issued within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. The partnership safeguarding arrangements define how safeguarding partners, relevant agencies and other organisations work together to coordinate their safeguarding services. These arrangements meet the requirements of statutory guidance and include details about how safeguarding partners will identify and respond to the needs of children, commission and publish local child safeguarding practice reviews and provide for independent leadership and scrutiny.

The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership arrangements intend to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- ❖ Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.
- ❖ Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children.
- ❖ Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively.
- ❖ There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats.
- ❖ Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice.
- ❖ Information is shared effectively to facilitate accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

The Partnership has a wide membership of partners and 'relevant agencies', including schools, the faith and voluntary sector, probation services, public health, health providers, the police and representatives from the Local Authority. These executive members work together to keep children and young people safe from harm. The partnership is responsible for scrutinising the work of its partners to ensure that services provided to children and young people make a positive difference.



Joint targeted area inspection of the multi-agency response to the criminal exploitation of children

On the 26 September 2022, Ofsted published a report with findings from a joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to the criminal exploitation of children in Cheshire East. This was undertaken by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, Ofsted, and the Care Quality Commission. It formed part of a rolling programme of inspections into various areas where different agencies work together to provide support for vulnerable children. The full report can be found here: <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50194535>

The inspection looked at the how each agency (police, health, and the local authority) work together to reduce the risk of harm when children and young people are missing and at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation.

The inspection found that the partnership needed to improve how it protects children and young people from criminal exploitation and those who go missing from home and care. The partnership fully accepted the findings from the inspection and recognised that there were gaps in our work and that this is not good enough.

Some improvements were made very quickly during the inspection to make sure that the children and young people that we were already working with were safe and that we were doing everything we could to make things different for them. However, the partnership recognised that further improvement work was required to ensure this vulnerable cohort of children were safeguarded appropriately within Cheshire East.

To support the partnership in completing the actions to address the report's findings, an Improvement Board was established which continues to scrutinise the work of the partnership.

Independent Scrutiny

In October 2022, the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership commissioned an Independent Scrutineer. The purpose was to ensure multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Cheshire East are effective and comply with statutory guidance set out in Working Together 2018 (last updated 9 December 2020) with a particular focus on the following:

- ❖ children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted
- ❖ partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children
- ❖ organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively
- ❖ there is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats
- ❖ learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice
- ❖ information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

This work invited the partnership to consider the following areas:

- ❖ A different way of organising and presenting governance arrangements.
- ❖ Developing the Cheshire East quality and learning framework
- ❖ Changing the CESP approach to multi-agency auditing
- ❖ What a year long campaign might look like

The new governance arrangements have been co-produced with the partnership and quality and learning frameworks have been considered. A priority for the partnership in 2023/2024 is to implement these new arrangements alongside a new quality assurance framework and approach to multi-agency auditing. This will be coupled with a communication strategy that supports ongoing partnership campaigns and messaging to partners across different platforms and forums.



Our Priorities 2022/2023

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership set these three priorities for our activity through 2022/2023.

Contextual Safeguarding

Neglect

Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Vulnerable Children



Impact

Contextual Safeguarding

- Reduction in number of children flagged as at risk of exploitation.
- Cheshire East profile developed to identify children most at risk.
- Criminal Exploitation and Serious Organised Crime Strategy developed.
- Increase in numbers of practitioners who have received training around contextual safeguarding.

Neglect

- Refreshed and relaunched the Neglect Strategy
- Family Hub Model will develop an even more localised and targeted response to those children experiencing or at risk of neglect.
- The Threshold of Need Guidance of 'Right Help, Right Time' has been launched in 2023 to enhance the work of the partnership in identifying children and families that require extra help and targeted support through a co-ordinated plan.
- There has been a decrease in the number of children on repeat child protection plans for neglect.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Vulnerable Children

- Introduction of a self-harm information sharing pathway.
- Implementation of a directory of mental health services to aid practitioners.

IMPACT?





Areas of focus 2023/2024

Looking forward, the partnership have identified the following areas of focus for its activity in 2023/2024:

- ❖ Contextual Safeguarding
- ❖ Children missing from education
- ❖ Sexual Abuse

It has also been agreed that the voice of the child will be an overarching area of focus for the partnership running through all our activity in the year.

Key priorities for the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership in 2023/2024



Listening to and acting on the voice of the child to place them at the heart of the partnership

Embedding the new arrangements to ensure strategic oversight and line of sight to frontline practice

Improving quality assurance and routine, robust performance scrutiny and challenge

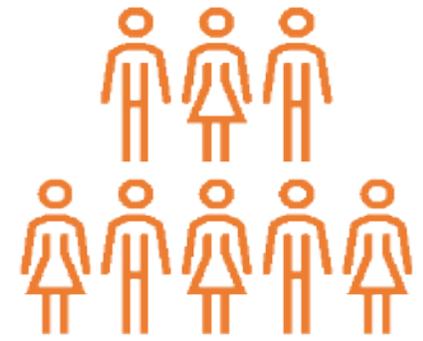
Creating a learning culture that takes action to improve practice

Ensuring there is transparent, decisive and evidence-based decision making in all partnership meetings to support improved outcomes

Create a highly effective partnership with communication based on positive relationships, shared values and clear vision

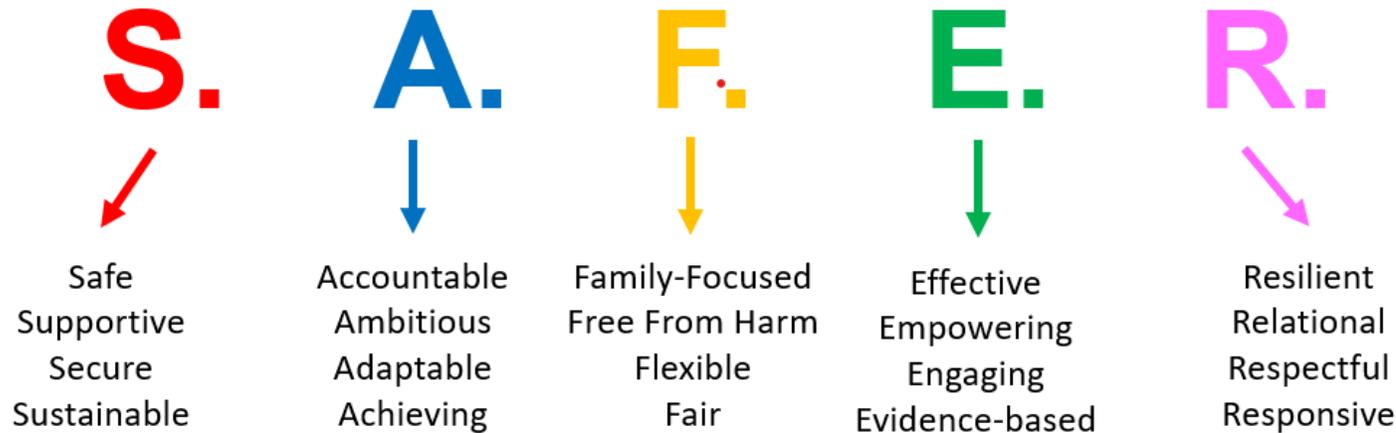


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The partnership have agreed that our vision should be updated to reflect the changes that have been made as part of our new arrangements. In 2023/2024, the partnership will be...

Working **TOGETHER** to make children, families and communities



In line with the revised governance arrangements, we will be rebranding the partnership to complete the cycle of transformation. This will include a refresh of the partnership logo, an overhaul of the partnership website and agreement of a communication strategy to enable partnership messages to be heard 'live' and in multiple formats to best meet the needs of our frontline practitioners. We recognise that an effective partnership is a partnership where frontline practitioners and strategic leaders have a symbiotic relationship. Frontline practitioners need access to the partnership to understand the strategic plan of work to improve outcomes and to drive the strategic plans on the ground and the revised partnership arrangements alongside a clear communication strategy will support this more effectively.

We are ambitious that our refreshed and rebranded partnership will enable us to work **TOGETHER** to make children, families and communities **S.A.F.E.R** in 2023/2024.

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership



Quick Guide to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

There are three agencies in Cheshire East who are jointly responsible by law for keeping children safe. These are called the 'Statutory Partners' and they are the key decision makers who form the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership **Executive Oversight Board**. They are responsible for the work of the partnership and the impact it has on children, families and communities.

The work of the partnership is undertaken by the three statutory partners and other relevant agencies and is carried out by partnership subgroups and task and finish groups. Children, families and communities are invited to share their views to shape this work.



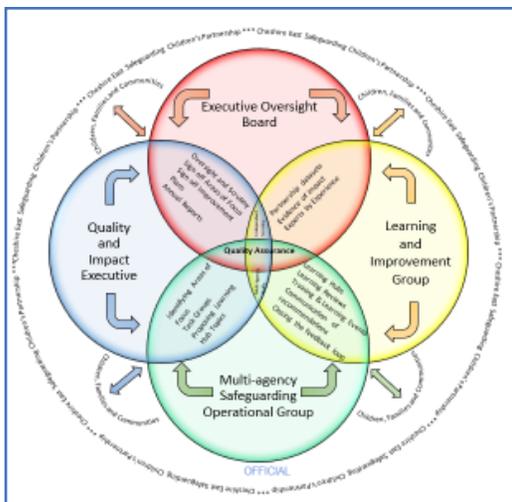
Our Statutory Partners
(key decision makers)



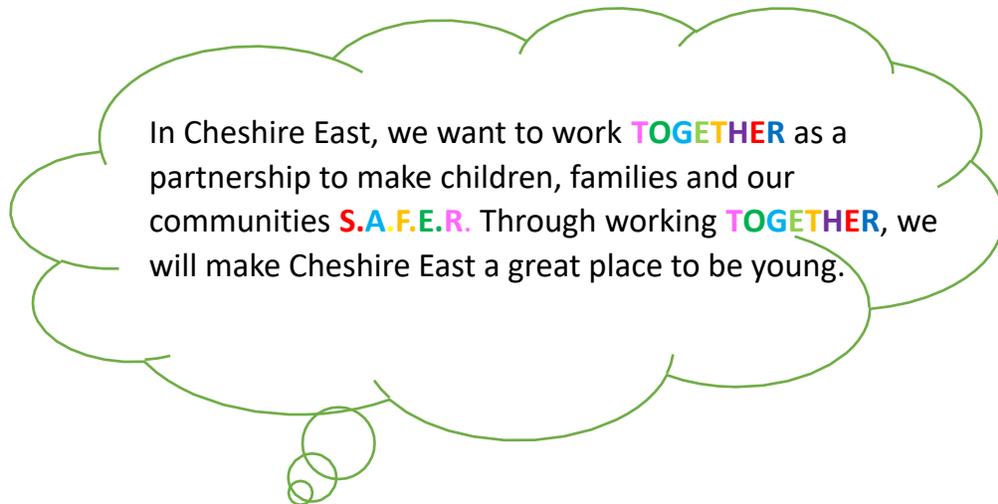
Cheshire and Merseyside



Our Structure



Our Vision



Working **TOGETHER** to make children, families and communities

S.

Safe
Supportive
Secure
Sustainable

A.

Accountable
Ambitious
Adaptable
Achieving

F.

Family-Focused
Free From Harm
Flexible
Fair

E.

Effective
Empowering
Engaging
Evidence-based

R.

Resilient
Relational
Respectful
Responsive



Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership

Our Areas of Focus

The priorities of the partnership are set by the **Outcomes and Impact Executive**. This meeting ensures the work of the partnership is having a positive impact and is achieving better outcomes for children and young people.

Learning Hubs

Learning Hubs are held to find out how well Cheshire East are working in these areas. The learning hubs look at what is good practice and then identifies actions we need to take in the partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people.



Subgroups

The actions identified by the Learning Hub are undertaken by task and finish subgroups in the partnership. The impact of this work is scrutinised by the **Outcomes and Impact Executive**.

Learning and Improvement

The partnership are continually looking to improve practice. The **Learning and Improvement Group** considers learning from recent inspections and from Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews and thinks about whether this is 'true for us'. The **Learning and Improvement Group** also considers the learning from any escalations between partner agencies where we believe things could have been done differently to support better outcomes.

This scrutiny informs a programme of training for workers across the partnership.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is the golden thread that helps us to understand whether the work of the partnership is making children safer and where we still need to learn and improve.

A structured programme of quality assurance takes place throughout the year but there is also the opportunity to learn about our work when new or emerging themes come to light. This helps us to consider future priorities for the partnership.



Multi-Agency Safeguarding Operational Group



The **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Operational Group** is where themes or issues can be raised by practitioners for consideration by the partnership at the earliest possible opportunity. It is also where learning from the partnership can be circulated to workers to improve practice, where actions are held that need to be driven by operational teams so that workers have impact for the children they work with. This allows for a continual cycle of feedback into and out of the partnership.

OPEN

Children and Families Committee

Monday, 13 November 2023

Children's Services Improvement Plan

Report of: Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report Reference No: CF/16/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: (All Wards);

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report briefs committee on Ofsted inspections of local authority children's services (ILACS), our improvement and impact plan which addresses previous inspection findings, and the findings from our self-evaluation of the impact of early help and social care practice on outcomes for children and young people.
- 2 Our improvement plan contributes to the council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 priority to protect and support our communities and safeguard children and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation, and to be the best corporate parents to our children and young people in care.

Executive Summary

- 3 We are currently expecting two major Ofsted inspections of children's services in Cheshire East. This report provides a briefing on the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS). ILACS inspections inspect children's services across the levels of need, including prevention and early help, child in need and child protection, cared for services, care leavers, and education for vulnerable pupils.
- 4 Cheshire East Council is expecting to receive a standard inspection, which takes place over three weeks and covers all the areas listed above. The inspection findings are included in an inspection report which will be published on the Ofsted website following the inspection.

- 5 The early help and children's social care improvement and impact plan (appendix 1) sets out how we will continue to improve and develop the quality of services which fall under the ILACS framework. The plan is based on Ofsted's evaluation criteria from the ILACS framework, so assessed our services against what good quality services look like, and identified areas where we want to strengthen our practice.
- 6 Every local authority is required to complete a self-evaluation of the quality of services each year for their annual conversation with Ofsted. The self-evaluation is also required to be submitted in an ILACS inspection. The self-evaluation is designed to give an overview of the quality of services and their impact on children and young people, including strengths, areas of weaker practice, challenges and key priorities for the year. The key findings from the current self-evaluation will be provided as a presentation to committee. The findings from the self-evaluation have informed the improvement and impact plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. Note that Cheshire East Council is expecting to receive a standard inspection of local authority children's services.
2. Scrutinise the early help and children's social care improvement and impact plan to ensure that the right actions are in place to deliver high quality support to children and young people.
3. Scrutinise the findings from the self-evaluation of early help and social care practice (these will be provided in a presentation during the meeting).

Background

- 7 We are currently expecting two major Ofsted inspections of children's services in Cheshire East:
 - An inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS)
 - A special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) area inspection.
- 8 This report provides a briefing on the ILACS inspection.
- 9 ILACS inspections inspect children's services across the levels of need, including prevention and early help, child in need and child protection, cared for services, care leavers, and education for vulnerable pupils. Although it is a local authority inspection, inspectors will review how

effectively we work together as a partnership to protect children and young people.

- 10 There are different types of inspections local authorities can receive under the [ILACS framework](#). Cheshire East Council is expecting to receive a standard inspection, which covers all the services listed above, as these usually take place every three years, and our last standard inspection was in November 2019.
- 11 A standard inspection takes place over three weeks. During week one, the local authority is required to submit performance and management information on our services for inspectors to review and analyse. In weeks two and three, inspectors are based in Cheshire East and meet with children and young people, families, foster carers and adopters, practitioners, managers, and partners and review the quality of our work with families. Inspectors review children's case records, shadow workers in day-to-day practice and observe practice in multi-agency meetings. The inspection focuses on practice within the last 6 months.
- 12 Inspectors judge practice under the following areas:
 - Overall effectiveness
 - The experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection
 - The experiences and progress of children in care
 - The experiences and progress of care leavers
 - The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families.
- 13 Inspectors will judge each area as either:
 - Outstanding
 - Good
 - Requires improvement to be good
 - Inadequate.
- 14 The findings of the inspection and the judgements will be included in an inspection report which will be published on the Ofsted website following the inspection. Cheshire East's previous inspection reports are available on the [Ofsted website](#).

- 15 The early help and children's social care improvement and impact plan (appendix 1) sets out how we will continue to improve and develop the quality of services which fall under the ILACS framework. The plan will be reported regularly to an improvement and impact board which will evaluate the impact of improvements on frontline practice and outcomes for children and young people. This board will be accountable to the corporate safeguarding accountabilities group and the Children and Families Committee. As our action plan on how we will continue to improve services, this will be a key document which will be scrutinised by inspectors during an ILACS inspection.
- 16 A new plan has been created to cover this year's activity from September 2023-2024. The plan is based on Ofsted's evaluation criteria from the ILACS framework, so assessed our services against what good quality services look like, and identified areas where we want to strengthen our practice. The plan also addresses the areas for development identified in previous inspections, except the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) carried out in July 2022, as there is a separate partnership JTAI action plan already in place (progress on this plan has been previously reported to committee).
- 17 Key performance measures will be used to evaluate progress against the improvement and impact plan, and it is proposed that these will be shared with committee on a six monthly basis.
- 18 Every local authority is required to complete a self-evaluation of the quality of services each year for their annual conversation with Ofsted. The self-evaluation is also required to be submitted in week one of an ILACS inspection. The self-evaluation is designed to give an overview of the quality of services and their impact on children and young people, including strengths, areas of weaker practice, challenges and key priorities for the year.
- 19 It is important that the self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of the quality of practice. Inspectors will test how accurate the self-evaluation is to inform their judgement on how well leaders understand the quality of support, any gaps/weaker areas of practice, and whether leaders respond quickly and effectively to improve areas for development and address challenges.
- 20 The self-evaluation will be reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis as part of our regular evaluation and quality assurance activity. This will support us to address any areas for development that are identified through the self-evaluation in our improvement and impact plan.

- 21 The key findings from the current self-evaluation will be provided as a presentation to committee. The findings from the self-evaluation have informed the improvement and impact plan.

Consultation and Engagement

- 22 The improvement and impact plan and self-evaluation of practice have been completed in consultation with the services involved and have incorporated findings from wider consultation with children, young people, families and practitioners, such as the compliments and complaints process and staff surveys.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 23 One of the key areas of focus for the Children and Families Committee is to review performance and the scrutinise the effectiveness of services for children and young people.

Other Options Considered

- 24 The committee could choose not to receive the improvement and impact plan, and/or the findings from the self-evaluation of practice, but this would limit the committee's effectiveness in overseeing and scrutinising services to children and the impact of services on children and young people's outcomes.

Option	Impact	Risk
Don't scrutinise/receive the improvement and impact plan and/or the self-evaluation findings	The committee does not have oversight of the plan and its impact on outcomes for children and young people, or the current quality of services, so limits its ability to drive improvements to services.	There is not sufficient council leadership/oversight to drive improvements to services.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 25 The local authority is statutorily required to provide social care services for children, young people and their families.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 26 There are no financial implications or changes required to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as a result of the recommendations in this report.

Policy

- 27 The Children and Families Committee is responsible for services which keep children and young people safe and enable them to achieve to their full potential. The committee is responsible for oversight and scrutiny of the impact of services on outcomes for children and young people.

	<p>A council which empowers and cares about people</p> <p>Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient.</p> <p>Protect and support our communities and safeguard children and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation.</p> <p>Be the best Corporate Parents to our children in care.</p>	
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 28 There are no equality, diversity and inclusion implications – children and young people’s diverse individual needs, experiences, culture and backgrounds are considered as part of our support to them. ILACS inspections will consider the extent to which the local authority complies with the relevant legal duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Human Resources

- 29 Recruitment and retention of practitioners and managers within frontline services is essential in building high quality services. We have experienced staffing challenges in some teams but we are now in a more positive position. Recruitment and retention will continue to be a key area of focus over 2023/24.

Risk Management

- 30 There is a risk that if our improvement and impact plan is not effective in driving improvements to services, and/or that if our self-evaluation is not an accurate reflection of the quality of our practice, that our services and/or leadership will be judged to not be of the required quality during an inspection. We know that when services receive a negative judgement in inspection this impacts on team morale, can result in workforce turnover, and makes it more challenging to recruit. Addressing any significant deficits identified during an inspection can also require investment so there is also a financial risk to a negative inspection. A negative inspection also poses a reputational risk to the council.
- 31 Challenge sessions have been held with heads of service to ensure that our self-evaluation has a strong evidence-base that we can demonstrate on inspection. A peer challenge on our self-evaluation will be held with another North West local authority in January 2024 to assess its accuracy, our impact on outcomes for Cheshire East children and young people, and the effectiveness of our plans to drive improvements.

Rural Communities

- 32 Our vulnerable children and young people exist in all communities, including rural communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 33 The improvement and impact plan aims to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people. It is vital that we provide high quality support to these children and young people as we know that for some, the experiences they have that lead them to require our support can have an impact on their long-term outcomes, health and wellbeing.

Public Health

- 34 The improvement and impact plan aims to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people and so should have a positive overall impact on the health and wellbeing of these Cheshire East children and young people.

Climate Change

- 35 There are no implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Lauren Conway lauren.conway@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Early Help and Children's Social Care Improvement and Impact Plan
Background Papers:	None

Early Help and Children's Social Care Improvement and Impact Plan

September 2023 - 2024



Foreword

Cheshire East Council is **highly ambitious** in the delivery of its statutory services to children and young people. We believe that all children in the borough deserve the very best opportunities to support them to succeed to adulthood and realise their potential.

For a **small but significantly vulnerable** group of children and young people early help and prevention and statutory safeguarding services are provided to mitigate harm, increase safety, and support children to progress in all aspects of their life, in the context of the circumstances they came from.

We want to be **consistent** in our approach whilst being **flexible** enough to respond to individual circumstances. The improvement and impact plan will drive practice improvements and will be governed by an improvement and impact board which will **evaluate of the impact** of improvements on frontline practice and outcomes for children and young people.

We will improve our practice to ensure that children are safer as a result of the help that they receive. Alongside this our refreshed process of live self-evaluation will **identify weaknesses** in

practice and enable leaders to develop **credible plans** to take clear and appropriate **action** to address this.

As leaders we are clear in our responsibilities for:

- helping and protecting children and young people
- the experiences and progress of children in care wherever they live, including children who return home
- arrangements for permanency for children who are looked after, including adoption
- the experiences and progress of care leavers
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers, and the impact they have on the lives of children and young people
- the quality of professional practice.

This improvement and impact plan will **tackle delay** and **improve practice** by giving greater visibility to **what we know** about the lived experiences of children and young people, being curious about **how we know** this and the validity of this information and having a clear plan to address areas for continuous improvement. Individual service plans will set out the actions in more detail.

Our improvement and impact board will be accountable to the corporate safeguarding accountabilities group and our committees.

12-month improvement and impact plan

Current Performance

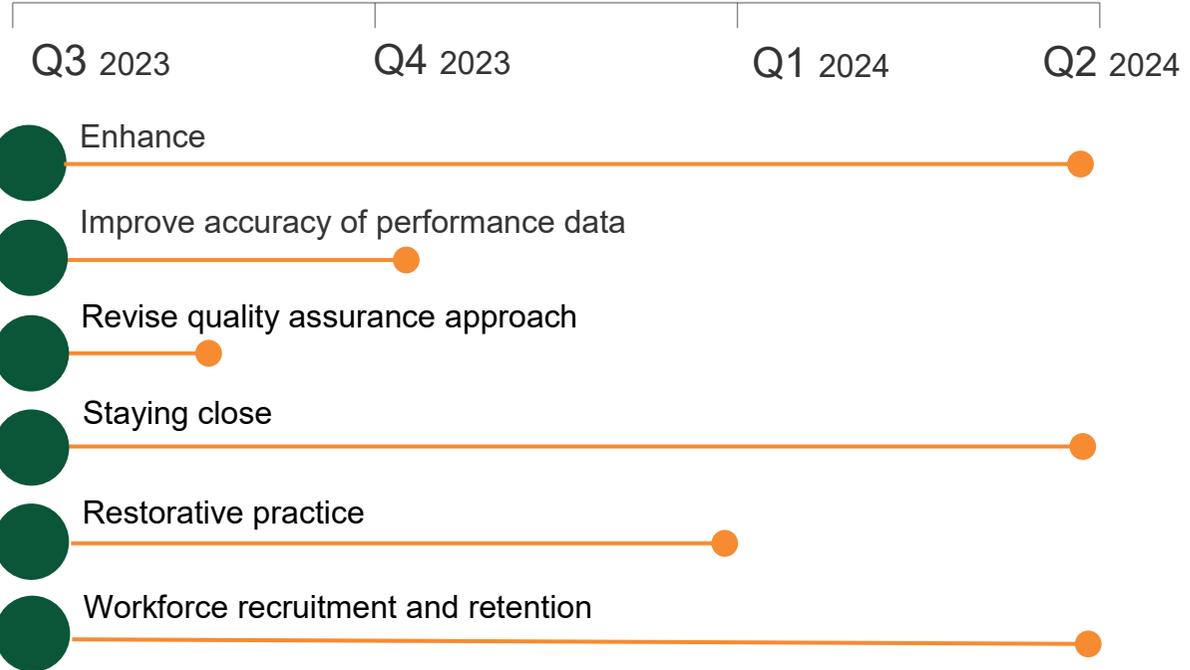
Performance

In Cheshire East, at quarter 1 2023/24 (Q1) we had:

- 1179 children and young people with early help assessments or plans
- 2031 children in need
- 190 children and young people on a child protection plan
- 576 cared for children, of which 55 are UASC
- 259 former relevant care leavers aged 17-21, of which 58 are UASC.

The latest children’s social care audit (in the first 5 months of 2023/24 found that:

- 68% cases (20 cases) were good
- 36% required improvement (11 cases)
- 6% were inadequate (2 cases).



Improvement and Impact Plan

Objective of Plan	Improve the quality and consistency of frontline practice and measurable impact for children and young people
Plan Owner	Kerry Birtles – Director of Early Help and Children’s Social Care

Pillars	How will we succeed?	Impact/KPIs
<p>High quality and timely assessments and plans lead to improved outcomes.</p> <p>Effective leadership and management leading to consistency in frontline practice.</p> <p>Achieve compliance with statutory/legal obligations.</p> <p>Integrated services delivering holistic services to meet the needs of children, families and communities.</p>	<p>Using lead practitioners to address areas of underperformance and poor quality.</p> <p>Supporting leaders to be accountable for their role in quality and compliance.</p> <p>Supporting the frontline to be confident in their knowledge and implementation of quality and compliance.</p> <p>Creating greater consistency and measurable impact in frontline practice.</p>	<p>Assessments will be timely and quality assurance dip samples will evidence more good practice and less inadequate practice.</p> <p>Management oversight will be consistently visible and lead to timely and quality decisions.</p> <p>Key performance indicators (KPIs) - 90% achieved for all compliance measures/margins understood and management oversight in place.</p> <p>More timely interventions with a focus on exit destinations and sustained change.</p>

Children and young people are listened to, practice focuses on their needs and experiences and is influenced by their wishes and feelings.

Improvement and Impact Plan

1. Early intervention and prevention

Overall Effectiveness		Children, young people and families are offered help when needs and/or concerns are first identified. The early help improves the child's situation and supports sustainable progress. The interface between early help and statutory work is clearly and effectively differentiated.		
Ref	Intended impact	Action <i>What we will do</i>	Action Owner	Due by
1.1	Early help improves the child's situation and supports sustainable progress	Coproduce a set of practice and performance standards with children's social care which are explicit about the purpose and impact of the family help service.	Head of Service Early Help and Prevention	Sept 2023
1.2		Develop performance reporting for the family help service to evaluate compliance with the practice standards.	Head of Service Early Help and Prevention Business Intelligence Manager	Oct 2023
1.3		Integrate quality assurance activity with children's social care to evidence the impact of intervention and sustainable progress.	Head of Service Early Help and Prevention	Jan 2024
1.4		Recruit to a family networking service to prevent families' needs from escalating and to support children and young people to make sustainable connections with their communities.	Principal Social Worker	Jan 2024
1.5	The interface between early help and statutory services is clear and effective.	Embed the new thresholds guidance across the partnership.	Head of Service Early Help and Prevention	Nov 2023
1.6	Professionals understand thresholds and make	Increase the amount of early help work completed by partners through support from the practitioner family help officers and appropriate challenge through tracking children who are stepped down to partner agencies.	Head of Service Early Help and Prevention	Jan 2024

1.7	appropriate referrals to children's social care and are able to access social work expertise and advice. Timely and effective response to referrals.	Track and monitor the timeliness of decision making in the integrated front door through weekly performance clinics.	Head of Service Early Help and Prevention Head of Service Child Protection and Child in Need	Weekly
1.8		Evaluate effectiveness of decision making, including step down, and continue to strengthen the quality and consistency of practice through the bi-weekly multi-agency audit in the front door.	Head of Service Early Help and Prevention Head of Service Child Protection and Child in Need	Quarterly reports to the Improvement and Impact Board from November 2023 (Q2)
1.9		Recruit a dedicated mental health worker in the front door to provide specialist knowledge and advice around mental health needs and support a graduated response to meeting needs.	Head of Service Early Help and Prevention	Dec 2023

2. Help and Protection

Overall effectiveness	Identifying and responding to children's needs appropriately. Making good decisions and providing timely and effective help.			
Ref	Intended impact	Action <i>What we will do</i>	Action Owner	Due by
2.1	Professionals identify children and young people in need of help and protection.	See actions 1.5-1.8		
2.2		Develop and roll out partnership training on consent, engagement and having difficult conversations.	Head of Service Early Help and Prevention	Oct 2023

	Timely and effective response to referrals.		Head of Service Child Protection and Child in Need	
2.3		Dip sample management oversight on contacts to strengthen recording the rationale for decision making.	Service Manager Integrated Front Door	Fortnightly
2.4	Timely and effective response to referrals out of hours.	Audit contacts to EDT including availability of response, quality, and timeliness of service delivery.	Service Manager Integrated Front Door	Quarterly
2.5	Timely, effective response to referrals to the designated officer. Allegations of abuse, mistreatment or poor practice by professionals and carers are taken seriously.	The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) to provide support and challenge to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) role, its function and impact.	Head of Service Children's Safeguarding	Annual
2.6	Child protection enquiries are thorough and lead to timely action, which reduces the risk of harm to children.	Continue to improve the timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC).	Head of Service Child Protection and Child in Need	Oct 2023
2.7		Scrutinise the length and impact of child protection plans via quality assurance activity.	Head of Service Children's Safeguarding	Nov 2023
2.8	Assessments are timely, dynamic and change in light of emerging issues and risks, informed by historical context (children's journeys and contingency plans) and significant events.	Provide targeted support to frontline teams to improve the focus on histories and contingency plans.	Principal Social Worker	Monthly
2.9		Hold weekly performance clinics to address the timeliness of visits, assessments and plans.	Head of Service Child Protection and Child in Need	Jan 2024

	Plans are dynamic and change in the light of emerging issues. Direct support is offered as a result of effective assessment and planning leading to sustained change. Action is taken to avoid drift and delay.			
2.10	Children and young people are protected through effective multi-agency arrangements. Key partners attend multi-agency meetings where timely information sharing, planning, decision making and monitoring takes place to reduce risk.	Improve the quality and effectiveness of strategy discussions Ensure partners are invited to attend multi-agency meetings	Head of Child Protection and Child in Need Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers	Oct 2023 Oct 2023
2.11	Social workers recognise the factors that can make children more vulnerable and tailor interventions more appropriately, including children with disabilities, private fostering, children not attending school, vulnerable adolescents,	Deliver training to frontline colleagues around factors which increase vulnerability for children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).	Principal Social Worker CESCP Training & Development Manager	Jan 2024
2.12		Embed the work of the Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) to ensure high quality early help and social care input and engagement with the education, health and care (EHC) needs assessment and planning process.	Designated Social Care Officer (DCSO)	November 2023
2.13		Ensure a lead champion is in place for private fostering and audit the experiences of young people on a quarterly basis.	Service Manager CIN/CP	Quarterly monitoring

	radicalisation, exploitation and gangs.	Private Fostering assessments will be completed within the same timescales of a C&F assessment and will tracked by Team Managers in the same way to increase the timeliness of assessments.		
2.14		Ensure a lead champion is in place for care leavers accessing emergency accommodation and audit the experiences of young people on a quarterly basis.	Service Manager Care Leavers and UASC	Quarterly monitoring
2.15		Develop the process in Liquid Logic for service manager or head of service oversight of private fostering assessments to support consistency in practice.	Business Intelligence Team	Dec 2023
2.16		Running a private fostering awareness campaign across the partnership to ensure private fostering arrangements are recognised and children and young people receive appropriate support.	Service Manager CIN/CP CESCP Training & Development Manager	TBC
2.17		Regularly update the JTAI improvement plan to reflect the response of the partnership in relation to all forms of exploitation.	Head of Service Children's Safeguarding	Monthly monitoring
2.18		Review our processes to improve how we prepare young people for adulthood and support the transition between children's and adults' services.	Service Manager CINCP Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO)	Jan 2024
2.19		Improving the quality and impact of practice, ensuring themes from return home interviews are addressed within plans, and increasing young people attending trigger meetings and helping develop their plans.	Interim Service Manager Cared for/ Contextual Safeguarding	Dec 2023
2.20		Understanding why cared for children decline return home interviews through the cared for children's survey.	Interim Service Manager Cared for/ Contextual Safeguarding	Nov 2023
2.21	Effective and timely planning, support and decision making takes	Follow the recommendations and complete the actions from the Public Law Outline (PLO) peer review.	Head of Service Child Protection and Child in Need	Quarterly Monitoring

place during pre-proceedings work.			
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3. Cared for children

Overall effectiveness The experience and progress of children in care. Making good decisions and providing timely and effective help. Providing stability and permanence.

Ref	Intended impact	Action <i>What we will do</i>	Action Owner	Due by
3.1	Children and young people become looked after in a timely way and in their best interests, based on clear, effective, comprehensive and risk-based assessments involving professionals.	Track and monitor any delays being experienced from Legal Advice Meetings (LAM) to the issue of care proceedings, and ensure appropriate plans are in place to avoid these.	Head of Service Child Protection and Child in Need	Oct 2023
3.2		Ensure there are senior management observations and oversight of LAM.	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care	Oct 2023
3.3	Supporting children to achieve rehabilitation ensuring purposeful work is carried out with the family.	Provide additional investment into edge of care and the @ct team, targeting children with multiple vulnerability indicators, to offer additional support for rehabilitation.	Head of Service Child Protection and Child in Need	January 2024
3.4	There are a wide range and choice of placements available to meet the needs of children in care.	Review the sufficiency strategy and report to the November Children and Families committee for endorsement, giving forensic examination to the needs of our cared for population now and in the future.	Head of Service Integrated Commissioning Head of Service Children's Provision	January 2024

3.5		Developing our own in-house residential provision and continuing to improve opportunities for children and young people to live closer to home.	Head of Service Children's Provision	April 2024
3.6		Improving our internal foster care capacity and retention through marketing, streamlining and tracking our application process.	Head of Service Children's Provision Fostering Service Manager	Jan 2024
3.7		Recruiting a placements manager and coordinator as a joint role between children's social care and commissioning to deliver our sufficiency strategy, quality assure placements, and build relationships with providers and develop the market.	Head of Service Integrated Commissioning Head of Service Children's Provision	Oct 2023
3.8	Suitable and timely plans for permanence are made for children and young people to live away from their family if a return home is not possible.	Endorse and complete the actions within the Local Family Justice Board (LFJB) action plan.	Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers	Quarterly
3.9		Develop practice standards for IROs to ensure that suitable and timely plans are made for children and young people, specifically including permanence at second reviews, and that is clear in expectations for 16+ in relation to planning for the transition to independence.	Head of Service Children's Safeguarding	Nov 2023
3.10	Assessments of family members as potential carers are carried out promptly and to a good standard.	Develop a family group networking service to ensure families are involved in planning and developing strong, resilient support networks around children and young people.	Principal Social Worker	Jan 2024
3.11	Children in care and care leavers are helped to understand their rights and entitlements and know how to give feedback.	Annual advocacy and IV report to be accountable to the ILACS improvement and impact board.	Head of Service Children's Safeguarding	Nov 2023
3.12	Children and young	Participation team to review 'coming into care' information for children and young people	Youth Support Manager	Oct 2023

3.13	people have access to an advocate and independent visitor (IV) when needed.	Ensure all children receive material or are afforded the opportunity to understand their rights and entitlements.	Youth Support Manager	Oct 2023
3.14		Increase the membership of My VOICE to ensure it is more representative of our cared for population, and launch a junior youth group to represent younger people's views.	Youth Support Manager	Oct 2023
3.15	Any risks associated with children in care offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, going missing or being sexually exploited are understood and responded to. Children receive help to reduce the risk of harm or actual harm.	Develop an integrated children services data set to ensure that children with multiple indicators are strategically understood, and practice is responding to their needs.	Supporting Families Manager Business Intelligence Manager	Oct 2023
3.16	Cared for children and care leavers who live out of the borough have access to education and health services that meet their needs.	Ensure there is Director of Children's Services (DCS) approval of all out of borough placements.	Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers	Quarterly review
3.17		Deliver twice yearly audits.	Head of Service Children's Safeguarding	Quarterly review
3.18		Performance clinics will scrutinise holistic outcomes for children placed out of borough.	Head of Service Children's Safeguarding	Quarterly review
3.19	Children and young people make good educational progress at school or other provision since being in care.	Continue to provide support and interventions for schools and children to improve education outcomes and attendance.	Head of Service Inclusion	Termly and annual review
3.20		Continue to improve the completion rate and quality of personal education plans (PEPs).	Head of Service Inclusion	Termly review

3.21		Reduce fixed term exclusions within secondary, working with our partners to develop alternative strategies to inclusion.	Head of Service Inclusion	Monthly
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4. Children missing from education

Overall Effectiveness

Children and young people who are missing from full-time school education (including those who are excluded from school) receive well-coordinated responses that reduce the harm or risk of harm to them. The local authority has arrangements in place to identify the number of children not in full-time school education and to respond if there are concerns about their welfare.

Ref	Intended impact	Action <i>What we will do</i>	Action Owner	Due by
4.1	Children and young people who are missing from full-time school education receive well-coordinated responses that reduce the harm or risk of harm to them.	Develop a three-year strategy to improve academic outcomes for disadvantaged learners.	Head of Service: Pupil Participation and Support	Dec 2023
4.2		Embed 'attendance is everyone's business' across the partnership through awareness raising sessions and training.	Head of Service: Pupil Participation and Support	Termly
4.3		Improve cross-service oversight of children missing out on education through a weekly head of service escalation meeting.	Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Integration	Sept 2023
4.4		Track and monitor that transition plans are being reviewed and increased and provide support and challenge to schools.	Team Manager: Attendance and Children Out Of School Team	Every 8 weeks
4.5		Provide support and challenge to schools for pupils that are persistently or severely absent or are at risk of becoming so through termly targeted support meetings	Team Manager: Attendance and Children Out Of School Team	Termly
4.6		Lead the development of the North West framework for alternative provision which will provide a set of approved providers, increase provision	Head of service: Pupil Participation and Support	Oct 2023

		available, reduce the time taken to arrange a place and allow more rigorous quality assurance systems.		
4.7		Develop our REACH programme – 3 day a week provision targeting young people who are risk of exploitation and have low attendance.	Youth Support Service Manager	Oct 2023

5. Care leavers

Overall Effectiveness	The experience and progress of care leavers. Professionals are committed to protecting them, promoting their emotional health and well-being, acting in their best interests and helping them to understand what is happening in their lives. They are ambitious for young people's futures and celebrate their achievements.
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Ref	Intended impact	Action <i>What we will do</i>	Action Owner	Due by
5.1	Care leavers have positive, trusting and stable relationships with their personal advisors, carers and other professionals.	Performance clinics consider workforce and longevity of relationship.	Service Manager Care Leavers and UASC	Quarterly review
5.2	We can evidence that we are in touch with young people and co-produce timely and qualitative assessments, including planning for leaving care starting early enough.	Proactive approach is taken to creating opportunities to engage with care leavers, including those not regularly in touch twice yearly.	Service Manager Care Leavers and UASC	Quarterly review
5.3	Assessment and planning considers specific circumstances including	Ensure quality assurance processes are in place, which are timely and focused on the individual circumstances of young people.	Service Manager Care Leavers and UASC	Quarterly review

	whether they are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), a young parent or have had contact with the criminal justice system.			
5.4	The local authority works effectively with their partners in the health sector to ensure that care leavers can access good physical and mental health services	Health passports (which support care leavers to understand their health history) need to be visible in performance clinic information and evaluation of the impact of this is to be considered at pathway plan reviews.	Service Manager Care Leavers and UASC Independent Reviewing Officer	Quarterly review
5.5	The Local Offer for care leavers is ambitious, clear and accessible, and takes account of the corporate parenting principals and statutory and discretionary support.	Consultation with care leavers is regular and effective – using a ‘you said we did’ approach – and informs reviews of the Local Offer.	Service Manager Care Leavers and UASC Cared for Children and Care Leavers’ Committee	Quarterly review
5.6		Launch the app for the Local Offer	Service Manager Care Leavers and UASC	Jan 2024
5.7	Any risks associated with children in care offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, going missing or being sexually exploited are understood and responded to. Children receive help to reduce the risk of harm or actual harm.	Ensure quality assurance processes are in place and timely, to evaluate the impact of integration across the partnership and the impact of individual risk assessments for care leavers (increasing safety/reducing harm to self and others).	Service Manager Care Leavers and UASC Independent Reviewing Officer	Quarterly

5.8	Care leavers develop skills and confidence to become independent and successful adults. They move from care towards independence at a time that is right for them	Increase the number of staying put arrangements.	Fostering Service Manager	Nov 2023
5.9	The local authority works closely with its partners, education providers, the virtual school and local businesses to secure a range of employment, education and training opportunities for care leavers, including work experience, apprenticeships and further and higher education.	Developing opportunities for apprenticeship within the council and local businesses. Developing a care leavers apprenticeship strategy based on an outstanding local authority's model.	Service Manager Care Leavers and UASC	Dec 2023
5.10	Care leavers make progress in employment, education or training that they enjoy, which meets their needs and interests and helps them achieve their potential.	Implementing a dedicated education worker within the Staying Close project to support care leavers to access education and employment.	Service Manager Care Leavers and UASC	Oct/Nov 2023

6. Fostering and adoption

Overall Effectiveness

Adoption is considered carefully and promptly for all children who are unable to return home or to their birth families, and who need a permanent alternative home. Fostering and adoption panels, and the respective decision-makers, ensure that children are effectively matched with families.

Ref	Intended impact	Action <i>What we will do</i>	Action Owner	Due by
6.1	Service delivery to foster carers is understood specifically in relation to visiting frequency (including unannounced visits) and reviews.	Performance clinic reports to be accountable to the ILACS improvement and impact board.	Fostering Service Manager	Dec 2023
6.2		Develop a data set to outline statutory performance.	Fostering Service Manager	Dec 2023
6.3	Service response to early disruption is timely and resources accessed to prevent home and relationship breakdown for children and young people	Stability is prioritised and resources utilised through commissioning, @ct and @CE.	Head of Service Children's Provision	Oct 2023
6.4	Fostering and adoption panels and respective decision makers ensure that children are effectively matched with families.	Ensure there are arrangements in place to provide regular feedback on the effectiveness of the work of panels.	Head of Service Children's Provision Head of Service Cared For Children	Jan 2024

7. Quality of professional practice

Overall Effectiveness

Cheshire East is a learning organisation with a social care workforce that is sufficient, suitably qualified and accredited to deliver high-quality service to children and their families.

Ref	Intended impact	Action <i>What we will do</i>	Action Owner	Due by
7.1	Leaders and managers have created an environment where good social work can flourish	Embed a restorative approach to support consistently good practice.	Principal Social Worker Workforce Development Advisor	March 24
7.2		Promote letter writing to the child/ young person within case recording.	All managers	Oct 2023
7.3		The training plan, masterclasses and bespoke lead practitioner support (targeted from performance clinics) support frontline practitioners to deliver good practice.	Principal Social Worker Workforce Development Advisor	Monthly
7.4	Management oversight of practice, including practice scrutiny by senior managers, is established, systematic and used clearly to improve the quality of decisions and support to children and families.	Continue to deliver the management and leadership training programme to embed outcome focused management oversight.	Principal Social Worker	Quarterly
7.5		Monitor compliance with supervision through performance clinics	Heads of service	Weekly
7.6	Decisions are made by suitably qualified and	Develop a workforce strategy.	Principal Social Worker HR Business Partner	Oct 2023

7.7	experienced social workers and managers. Children, young people and families benefit from stable and meaningful relationships with social workers.	Collaborate with the North West to support the region to respond effectively to peaks in demand or workforce pressures through developing a non-profit bank of workers.	Principal Social Worker	August 2024
7.8	Careful monitoring of workloads and oversight of working conditions ensure that practitioners have the capacity to develop meaningful relationships with children and families.	Ensure systems are in place to monitor and report workforce data.	Director of Children's Social Care Executive Director of Children's Services	Quarterly

8. Impact of leaders

Overall Effectiveness

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families.

Ref	Intended impact	Action <i>What we will do</i>	Action Owner	Due by
8.1	The leadership of the council recognise and prioritise the needs of children.	Ensure the key priorities for children's services are reflected in the council's new corporate plan and that these are based on what is most important to children and young people.	Executive Director of Children's Services	Feb 2024
8.2	The chief executive and lead member hold the	Continue to provide reports for scrutiny through the corporate safeguarding accountabilities meeting.	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care	Quarterly

	DCS and the leadership to account			
8.3	Strategic leaders ensure that relationships with key partners provide an effective context for practitioners to work effectively with children and families.	Embed the new arrangements for the Safeguarding Children's Partnership, ensuring there is a clear focus on the impact on outcomes for children and young people.	CESCP Business Manager	Dec 2023

9. Quality Assurance

Overall Effectiveness

The local authority responds appropriately, effectively and quickly to areas for development, service deficiencies or new demands, and shows resilience to new challenges. The local authority has detailed and relevant knowledge of its local communities and uses this knowledge effectively to meet their needs.

Ref	Intended impact	Action <i>What we will do</i>	Action Owner	Due by
9.1	Children and young people are listened to, practice focuses on their needs and experiences and is influenced by their wishes and feelings. Accurate assessments of practice drive improvement.	Ensure that integrated quality assurance activity is focused on the lived experience of children and young people.	Audit Officer	Sept 2023
9.2		Develop an integrated quality assurance framework that aligns with QA arrangements for children with SEND.	Audit Officer	Oct 2023
9.3	Feedback from children and families informs	Triangulate the quarterly reports from the complaints and compliments service with other forms of intelligence to inform service development.	Complaints Support Officer	Quarterly

	practice and service delivery.		Head of Children's Safeguarding	
9.4	Practice scrutiny by senior managers, is established, systematic and used clearly to improve the quality of decisions and support to children and families.	Projected quality assurance activity to be tracked and scheduled and accountable to the ILACS improvement and impact board.	Head of Children's Safeguarding	Oct 2023
9.5		Continue weekly performance clinics to focus on improving timeliness and compliance.	Heads of Service	Weekly

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OPEN

Children and Families Committee

13 November 2023

Mental Health Spotlight Review: Working together to protect, promote, prevent, empower and intervene early for all involved.

Report of: Matt Tyrer, Director of Public Health

Claire Williamson, Director of Strong Start, Family Help, and Integration

Shelley Brough, Acting Director of Commissioning

Report Reference No: CF/29/22-23

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 To update the Children and Families Committee on emotional and mental wellbeing need seen in children and young people across Cheshire East, and the support currently available to support this need.
- 2 To outline the next steps to be taken in addressing the need seen across Cheshire East.
- 3 This report marks a fresh perspective and assessment approach further to the Spotlight Review on Children's Mental Health Services received by the Cabinet in October 2020, and the previous Joint Strategic Needs Assessment review on children and young people's mental health published in 2016. Since these reviews, there has been considerable changes to the health and care infrastructure and further impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4 The review aligns with the priority within Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan: 'a Council which empowers and cares about people'. It also aligns with the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the population of Cheshire East 2023/2028: 'our children and young people experience good physical and emotional health and wellbeing'. The recommendations presented are underpinned by the outcomes detailed

in Cheshire East Children and Young People's Plan (2022 – 26), which focuses on providing CYP access to help when they need it, to prevent problems from getting worse.

Executive Summary

- 5 There has been evidence of increasing levels of mental health need and demand in children and young people across Cheshire East over the last four years. There is also evidence of increasing rates of some factors that increase the risk of poor mental health, as well as potential erosion of some of the factors that provide our children and young people with resilience and good mental health and wellbeing. Of particular note, there is considerable mental health and wellbeing need amongst the adults who support them professionally and at home.
- 6 Furthermore, there is a growing body of evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted not only on mental health in some of our residents, but also on the risk factors that lead to mental health problems if not addressed early. Also, these impacts have not been experienced equally across our population.
- 7 The report highlights key findings from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), reflects on progress since the previous spotlight review and proposes next steps promoting the best possible health and wellbeing across all our children and young people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families / Adults and Health committee is recommended to:

1. To note and endorse the findings and recommendations of the latest spotlight review.
2. To continue to champion mental health and wellbeing as a priority across all agendas.

Background

- 8 The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines mental health as 'a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being

that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in'¹

- 9 It is estimated that around 50% of all lifetime mental health problems start by the mid-teens, and three quarters by the mid 20s².
- 10 There has been increasing focus on emotional and mental wellbeing in our children and young people of recent years and particularly since the start of the COVID 19 pandemic, both nationally and locally³. In July 2022, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published guidance on social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education⁴.
- 11 This review highlights the findings and recommendations from our recent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) review into emotional and mental wellbeing in children and young people across Cheshire East (Appendix A). This marked a refreshed consideration of key priorities and scope in relation to mental wellbeing and was developed through extensive collaboration across the Council, the NHS, the Volunteer Community and Social Enterprise sector and local schools. In addition, this spotlight review also reflects upon the recommendations from the previous mental health spotlight review in 2020 and provides an update on progress in relation to each recommendation (Appendix B and Appendix C).
- 12 Health and Wellbeing Boards have a duty to produce JSNA for their area. JSNAs are assessments of the current and future health and social care needs of the local community. These are needs that can be met either by the local authority or by the NHS or other partners. JSNAs are informed by a wide range of sources including research, evidence, local insight, and intelligence to help to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities. They also consider wider factors that impact on their community's health and wellbeing, produce recommendations, and

¹ World Health Organization. Strengthening mental health promotion. Geneva: WHO; 2001. Cited within Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (2022) Wellbeing and mental health: Applying All Our Health. Guidance. 28 February 2022. Available Wellbeing and mental health: Applying All Our Health GOV.UK Mental health (who.int) int) (Accessed 5 April).

² Public Health England (2019) Mental health and wellbeing JSNA toolkit: Guidance. 5. Children and young people. Updated 25 October 2019. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-mental-health-jsna-toolkit/5-children-and-young-people> (Accessed 28 June 2022)

³ Parkin et al. (2022) Support for children and young people's mental health (England). Research Briefing. Published Wednesday, 01 June, 2022. Available from: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7196/7196/>(Accessed 29 June 2022)

⁴ NICE (2022) Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education. [NG223]. 6 July 2022. Available from: Recommendations | Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education | Guidance | NICE (Accessed 5 April 2023).

identify where there is a lack of evidence or research⁵. The programme is overseen by the JSNA Steering group, which includes representation from across the Council, the NHS and the VCFSE sector.

- 13 The JSNA steering group agreed emotional and mental wellbeing to be a key priority within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment work programme, and it formed one of the first deep dive reviews in the JSNA work programme since the emergence of COVID-19.
- 14 The JSNA review was produced through the Children's and Young People's Emotional and Mental Wellbeing JSNA Working Group, including representation from the following:
 - (a) Cheshire East Council: Early years, education, public health, commissioning, educational psychology and communities.
 - (b) NHS: Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board, designated safeguarding nurse; Healthy Child Programme representatives.
 - (c) Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise.
 - (d) Schools: representation on the working group and then additional representation via a larger school representatives group.
- 15 The working group contributed to the development of the scope; analysis; and narrative development.
- 16 Additional conversations and engagement regarding the scope was carried out via the:
 - (a) Education Recovery Group
 - (b) The Children and Families Directorate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group
 - (c) The Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People service recommission project Group
- 17 The working group agreed that the review should address the following questions:
 - (a) What is the emotional and mental wellbeing need in children and young people in Cheshire East by geography and by protected characteristics where possible?

⁵ Gov.UK. Statutory guidance on Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies. Available from: Statutory guidance on joint strategic needs assessments and joint health and wellbeing strategies (publishing.service.gov.uk) (Accessed 21st November 2022)

- (b) What are our assets in support emotional and mental wellbeing and how effective and consistent are they?
- (c) How are we identifying children earlier? How are we supporting early years provision to identify complex needs early?
- (d) How are we supporting children in crisis?

18 **Key findings from the review (please review Appendix A for further details and references)**

Children and young people's emotional and mental wellbeing in Cheshire East

- (a) Many children and young people experience good mental wellbeing. However, in England the rates of probable mental health disorder for children and young people aged 7-19 increased from 11.8% in 2017 to 19.8% in 2022. This means that in Cheshire East in 2022, there may have been somewhere between 8,606 to 13,525 children and young people with a probable mental health disorder.
- (b) Between 2021-2022 services such as, CLASP, Visyon and Just Drop In have seen an increase in the number of children and young people needing to use the services. More girls than boys are using these services.
- (c) Between 2021-2022 poor mental health was the most common reason for children and young people needing one on one tuition in their home or in other settings due to being unable to attend school.
- (d) Prevalence of mild to moderate mental health conditions seen in general practice ranged from:
 - (i) 1.6%-3.0% in 0-17 year olds
 - (ii) 17.8%-21.3% in 18-24 year olds
- (e) In Cheshire East during 2021/22 there were 450 admissions for self-harm in children and young people aged between 10 and 24. This is 130 more admissions than the previous year. The admission rate has been consistently higher since 2013/14 in Cheshire East compared with England. There is also variation across the geography of Cheshire East, with pockets of significantly higher rates in the north, central and south of the Borough.

What might be contributing to poor mental health?

- (f) Poverty can be associated with poor mental wellbeing (please see the poverty JSNA for more information) JSNA Food and Fuel Poverty: Spotlight review (cheshireeast.gov.uk).
- (g) Wards in Crewe and Macclesfield have a high proportion of children eligible for free school meals over the past few years. However, there has been an increase in eligibility in wards such as, Wrenbury, Audlem and Handforth over the past 4 years.
- (h) The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on physical and mental development for some children and young people.
- (i) The number of children and young people with Educational Health Care plans has been steadily rising year on year with a growth of 63% in the last three years.
- (j) The rate of young people being admitted to hospital as a result of substance misuse in Cheshire East is higher than the England and North West average.
- (k) The rate of domestic abuse related incidents and crimes increased across Cheshire East more rapidly than across England as a whole.
- (l) It was estimated that between April 2017 and March 2018 that 17% of young people aged between 10 and 15 years old in England in the previous 12 months, were bullied in a way that made them frightened or upset.
- (m) There has also been an increase in the number of adults in Cheshire East reporting a “high anxiety score” with 23.3% of people reporting this. Similarly the rate of adults being diagnosed with depression is also increasing in Cheshire East, which is important to consider given the number of adults that care for or work with children and young people.

Important factors that can maintain good mental health and wellbeing

- (n) Good education is an important factor for maintaining a positive emotional and mental wellbeing. However, the uptake of free early years education in 3 and 4 year olds is very high, but uptake is lower in our eligible 2 year olds. Also, the rate of absences across secondary school aged children was higher than the national average. On average, educational attainment across

Cheshire East is good, however, educational attainment is worse in children experiencing deprivation.

- (o) It is also important to consider the 5 ways to wellbeing:

Connect- Connecting with the people around us is a great way to remind ourselves that we're important and valued by others.

Be active- We know that there's a link between staying active and positive mental health and wellbeing. By making sure we are regularly moving our bodies, we can look after our mental and physical health at the same time.

Take notice- Taking notice of our thoughts, emotions and surroundings is a great way to stay present and pay attention to our needs. Taking notice of things we're grateful for, big or small, is a great way to boost our mood and appreciate our surroundings.

Keep Learning- Learning new things is a good way to meet new people and boost our self confidence, which in turn improves our mental health and wellbeing.

Give- Research has found a link between doing good things and an increase in wellbeing.

- (p) Digital media brings with it potential risks and benefits to mental wellbeing.

Support for mental wellbeing

- (q) There is a wide variety of services and support for individuals' mental wellbeing.



- (r) There is also additional support for schools to support children and young people with their mental wellbeing. However, needs assessment suggest that:

- The current offer can be overwhelming.

- There are too many people trying to do too many roles.
 - Regarding special educational needs coordination very confusing system with extensive paperwork jumping through hoops rather than actually doing the job in hand.
 - There are capacity challenges training space, timetable, curriculum pressures.
 - There are obstacles referring a young people into CAMHS and them getting swift and immediate support.
 - There is inconsistency in the support available across schools dependent upon staff skills/funding etc.
 - Schools feel they are increasingly expected to manage support beyond the experience of a school intervention/workshop.
- (s) The review has highlighted is that it can be difficult to find the right support at the right time and sometimes there are ways to get children and young people help earlier before things have progressed in the first place.

Recommendations

The overarching recommendations from the review is the need for:

- (i) **Holistic approaches** that encompass the physical and mental wellbeing needs of the child, their families and professionals that work with them.
- (ii) **Early intervention on risk factors for mental health problems and mental health presentations.**
- (iii) **Robust approaches to promote protective factors and resilience**
- (iv) Consideration of **root causes** as part of mental health presentations.
- (v) **Integrated care** that is **easy to navigate** and that **empowers** children and their families.
- (vi) **Care for all with greater support to areas in greatest need.**

More detailed recommendations include:

- (t) When considering children and young people's mental wellbeing we need to consider the wellbeing of; the **child/young person, the household and the professionals** (across education, health, the local authority and the community).

We need support and empower children, their families and professionals:

- To **promote wellbeing and resilience**, and take pride in this rather than waiting to react. (for example through improving the uptake of the 2 year old early education, supporting implementing the whole school framework and promoting school attendance)
- To **support risk factors early**. (for example, bullying; SEND; LGBTQ+; trauma; parental mental health; parental substance misuse; and cost of living) We also need to better understand the difference in mental wellbeing in genders.
- To **consider and communicate the risks and benefits of digital media**.
- To **manage poor emotional wellbeing early**- for example, self care for **anxiety**.
- To improve **navigation** to support when there are mental health and wellbeing problems or **risk factors** for mental health and wellbeing problems.
- To **consider mental health when physical health problems and risk factors present, AND to consider physical health and risk factors when mental health problems present**.
- To ensure provision of **appropriate support for schools to implement evidence-based tools** and resources to create an emotionally healthy school environment across all age groups.
- A **universally proportionate approach** that recognises and supports those areas in greater need with more intensity BUT recognises the need that is everywhere.
- **Continue to refer to CAMHS** where necessary, rereferring if needed.

- **To continue to feed into the further developments** of the CAMHS service as a result of the North West CAMHS review.
 - Continue to promote **suicide prevention training** in schools including **R;pple**.
 - Promote use of the **NICE guidance** on assessment and management of self harm and prevention of its recurrence across all key partners.
 - To expect that these **changes will take time**.
 - To further **evaluate** our approaches.
- (u) The Health and Wellbeing Board has agreed to holding a conference on the JSNA in light of the extent and range of recommendations included in this, and other recent JSNA reviews. The conference will aim to build consensus about the best approach to prioritisation of these recommendations over the short and longer term.
- (v) In addition, to address the above recommendations, we need to identify key forums for action, progress tracking and rationalise conversations and progress across these. This includes the:
- Education Reference Group
 - Family Hubs Steering Group
 - Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Recommissioning Steering Group, which will become the Healthy Young Minds Alliance Partnership
 - Cheshire and Merseyside forums including the Beyond Programme and the Gateway Programme.
 - Health and Wellbeing Board
 - Children and Young People's Trust
 - The Youth Council
 - Mental Health Partnership Board and the All Age Mental Health Plan
 - Investing in Children and Young People Partnership

- Learn from other JSNAs including: Crewe; poverty; and substance misuse reviews.
- Identify and monitor some key measures in the longer term including through the Cheshire East Joint Outcomes Framework.

There are particular opportunities to act on these recommendations through: the recommissioning of the **Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People's Service (Healthy Young Minds)**; the development of family hubs, further roll out of the **Mental Health Support Teams**; further development of a schools directory and **Wellbeing for Education support**.

Consultation and Engagement

- 19 The JSNA review was aligned to coproduction and engagement activity for the new Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People's Service. This involved engagement with a large range of stakeholders, including parent/carers, education providers, professionals (including health, social care, police) and most importantly children and young people.
- 20 Feedback from CYP, parents/carers and stakeholders during the coproduction journey has been very valuable, and they have been offered the opportunity to remain engaged in this process into procurement and contract management in relation to the Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People's Service. We have worked with the Cheshire East Participation Team and other forums throughout the recommissioning process, so relationships have been developed and will remain through the lifetime of the contract.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 21 The recommendations reflect our JSNA review findings and meet strategic priorities by aligning with the Cheshire East Corporate Plan (2021 – 2025), Cheshire East's Children and Young People's Plan (2022 – 26) and The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the population of Cheshire East (2023 – 2028).

Implications and Comments

Legal

- 22 Local authorities and the Integrated Care Boards have a joint statutory responsibility to produce joint strategic needs assessments through the Health and Wellbeing Board, under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Finance

- 23 There are no financial implications or changes required to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) because of the recommendations in this report.
- 24 The health inequalities highlighted by this work do have the potential to result in a greater level of demand for council services in the future. However, information found in these reviews will help with planning and targeting of preventative services, therefore helping to ensure that expenditure to address these inequalities is incurred in line with the councils MTFS. Any future new investments being made will require compensating savings in order to not adversely affect the current MTFS. In addition, partnership working on the JSNA review recommendations will help to optimise usage of available resources across both the Council and the wider health and care system.
- 25 Any costs linked to JSNA production and ongoing monitoring are funded by the Public Health ringfenced grant.

Policy

- 26 It is intended that the findings and recommendations from this review will inform future strategic development across a wide variety of workstreams within Cheshire East Place, including, but including but not limited to:
- The recommissioning of the **Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People's Service (soon to be renamed Healthy Young Minds)**
 - **The development of family hubs**
 - **Further roll out of the Mental Health Support Teams**
 - **Further development of a schools directory**

- **Further development of *Wellbeing for Education* support.**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 27 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in parallel with the joint strategic needs assessment.

Human Resources

- 28 There are no direct Human Resources implications at this stage of the briefing, as resourcing is being drawn from the existing team.
- 29 JSNA reviews are part of the JSNA, which is a statutory duty. The resources required to provide further updates will be drawn from the existing Public Health Intelligence Team. The current process is being streamlined using Microsoft products which will make it less labour intensive. If there are any changes proposed as a result, the HR implications may need to be addressed. It is important to keep under review whether existing resources (employees) are doing what they are contracted to do and that there is no shift in job description. Any changes in requirements of the work and resources to undertake that work will be reviewed and dealt with in line with CEC policies and procedures.

Risk Management

- 30 The JSNA aims to identify avoidable harms within local communities that can be addressed by working together to better understand the local challenges and need and identifying gaps and opportunities to address them.

Rural Communities

- 31 The JSNA considers variation of health and wellbeing across Cheshire East, including at smaller area level. This supports us in our understanding of health and wellbeing in our rural communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 32 The focus of this review was children and young people, who were extensively engaged with as part of this review. Promoting the mental wellbeing of our children and young people is vital in optimising the health and wellbeing of our entire population and in addressing health inequalities.

Public Health

- 33 Commissioning intentions for the new EHCYP service will be underpinned by early help and prevention. The service is aligned to the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy Cheshire East 2023-2028 and performance management will be guided by the Joint Outcomes Framework. Service design will be informed by the JSNA (Tartan Rug) and wider Marmot Communities developments in Cheshire East.

Climate Change

- 34 Recommendations made to address inequalities will include consideration of the wider determinants of health and may include approaches that reduce our carbon footprint or mitigate the consequences of climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Dr Susan Roberts, Consultant in Public Health Susan.roberts@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A –Emotional and mental wellbeing in children and young people joint strategic needs assessment-Executive Summary Appendix B- An update on individual recommendations from the Mental Health Spotlight Review-February 2020 Appendix C-Children’s Mental Health Services. Spotlight Review – Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee. February 2020.
Background Papers:	

JSNA Deep Dive Review: Emotional and Mental Wellbeing in Children and Young People (CYP)

Working together to protect, promote, prevent, empower and intervene
early for all involved

Executive Summary
November 2023



“Over the past year, we have been working together to better understand emotional and mental wellbeing in our children and young people. It is clear that there is passion and dedication across Cheshire East to support our children and young people in experiencing the best emotional and mental wellbeing possible, and to support them and their families in times of need. I have seen how joint working between Council, schools, the NHS and volunteer organisations is making a really positive difference to children and young people.

This review considers all the hard work already going on and identifies challenging areas for further action and support.

To make the changes needed, we must continue to work together: children and young people; parents; school staff; health and social care staff; and volunteers. We must continue to recognise where people have made a difference, and to recognise our strengths and build on them.

Importantly, we won't get this right for our children and young people unless we make sure we also have the very best systems in place to promote emotional and mental wellbeing in those who support them too. Hopefully, this review will help to underpin the changes needed”.

Dr Susie Roberts, Lead for the Children and Young Peoples Emotional and Mental Wellbeing JSNA Review

**Consultant in Public Health
Cheshire East Council**



Introduction

“Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right. And it is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development”¹.

It is estimated that around 50% of all lifetime mental health problems start by the mid-teens, and three-quarters by the mid-20s².

There has been increasing focus on emotional and mental wellbeing in our children and young people of recent years and particularly since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, both nationally³, and locally.

This review was considered a key priority by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Steering Group as one of the first deep dive reviews in the JSNA work programme since the emergence of COVID-19.

1. World Health Organization. Strengthening mental health promotion. Geneva: WHO; 2001. Cited within Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (2022) Wellbeing and mental health: Applying All Our Health. Guidance. 28 February 2022. Available from: Wellbeing and mental health: Applying All Our Health - GOV.UK [Mental health \(who.int\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-mental-health-who-int) (Accessed 13th September 2023)
2. Public Health England (2019) Mental health and wellbeing JSNA toolkit: Guidance. 5. Children and young people. Updated 25 October 2019. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-mental-health-jsna-toolkit/5-children-and-young-people> (Accessed 28 June 2022)
3. Parkin et al. (2022) Support for children and young people’s mental health (England). Research Briefing. Published Wednesday, 01 June, 2022. Available from: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7196/> (Accessed 29 June 2022).

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What are our recommendations following this review?

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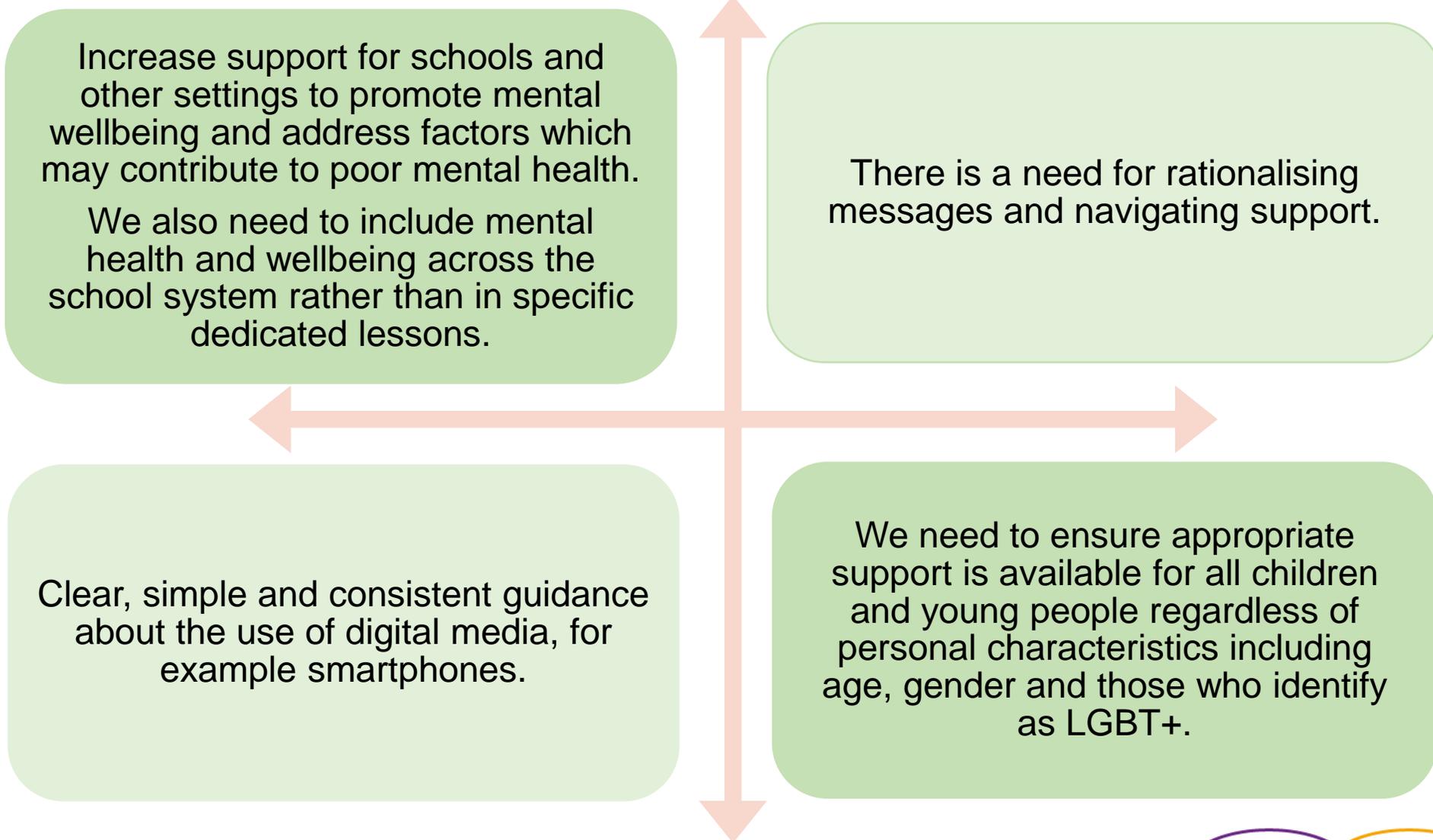
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It is important to note

- We were unable to obtain information on variation in mental wellbeing across Cheshire East according to the following characteristics:
 - Marriage and Civil Partnership
 - Religion
 - Sex
 - Gender Reassignment
 - Race

Summary of gaps in support



Overarching recommendations from the review are that we need to have:



Holistic approaches that encompass the physical and mental wellbeing needs of the child, their families and professionals that work with them.



Early intervention on risk factors for mental health problems and mental health presentations.



Robust approaches to promote protective factors and resilience.



Consideration of root causes as part of mental health presentations.



Integrated care that is easy to navigate and that empowers children and their families.



Care for all with greater support to areas in greatest need.

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Detailed recommendations (1)

When considering children and young people's mental wellbeing we need to consider the wellbeing of; the child/young person, the household and the professionals (across education, health, the local authority and the community).

We need to support and empower children, their families and professionals to...

- Promote wellbeing and resilience and take pride in this rather than waiting to react. (for example, through improving the uptake of the 2-year-old early education, supporting implementing the whole school framework and promoting school attendance)
- Address risk factors at an early stage. (for example, bullying; SEND; LGBT+; trauma; parental mental health; parental substance misuse; and cost of living) We also need to better understand the difference in mental wellbeing in genders.
- Consider and communicate the risks and benefits of digital media.

Detailed recommendations (2)

We need to support and empower children, their families and professionals to...

- Address poor emotional wellbeing early- for example, self care for anxiety.
- Improve navigation to support when there are mental health and wellbeing problems or risk factors for mental health and wellbeing problems.
- Consider mental health when physical health problems and risk factors present, AND to consider physical health and risk factors when mental health problems present.
- Ensure provision of appropriate support for schools to implement evidence-based tools and resources to create an emotionally healthy school environment across all age groups.
- Universally proportionate approach that recognises and supports those areas in greater need with more intensity BUT recognises the need that is everywhere.
- Continue to refer to CAMHS where necessary, referring more than once if needed.
- Continue to feed into the further developments of the CAMHS service as a result of the North West CAMHS review.
- Continue to promote training on suicide and self-harm prevention and online support.
- Continue to promote the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Training.
- Promote use of the NICE guidance on assessment and management of self-harm and prevention of its recurrence across all key partners.
- Review capacity within the health and social care system, to support the recommendations within this JSNA.
- Expect that these changes will take time.
- Further evaluate our approaches. The continued quality improvement work on CAMHS data will be vital as part of this.

**Universally proportionate approaches seek to support the whole population with greater intensity of support to those with greater need.*

*Please note recommendations will be subject to funding availability, existing contract timescales, clinical guidance and capacity across the Health and Social Care system and will be looked at outside the JSNA production.

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To address the above recommendations, we need to:

- Identify key forums for action and progress tracking and rationalise conversations, progress across these. This includes the:
 - Education Reference Group
 - Family Hubs Steering Group
 - The Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service Recommission Project Group which will become the Healthy Young Minds Alliance
 - Cheshire and Merseyside forums including the Beyond Programme and the Gateway Programme
 - Health and Wellbeing Board
 - Children and Young People’s Trust
 - The Youth Council
 - Mental Health Partnership Board and the All Age Mental Health Plan
 - Investing in Children and Young People Partnership
 - The Cheshire East Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Partnership Board
- Learn from other JSNAs including
 - Crewe, poverty and substance misuse reviews
- Identify and monitor some key measures in the longer term including through the Cheshire East Joint Outcomes Framework
 - Joint Outcomes Framework
 - CORE 20Plus5

What were the findings that led to these recommendations?

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What might be contributing to poor mental health?



- Poverty can be associated with poor mental wellbeing. There are focussed areas of deprivation in Crewe and Macclesfield, but also smaller areas in Alsager, Congleton and Handforth¹ (please see the Poverty JSNA for more information) [JSNA Food and Fuel Poverty: Spotlight review \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/jsna-food-and-fuel-poverty-spotlight-review) .
- Wards in Crewe and Macclesfield have a high proportion of children eligible for free school meals. However, it is interesting to see the increase in eligibility in wards like Wrenbury, Audlem and Handforth over the past 4 years².
- There has been an increase in the rate of substance misuse admissions³. Conversely, there has been a decrease in rate of alcohol admissions in under 18 year olds, however, Cheshire East remains significantly worse than the England average⁴.
- The rate of domestic abuse related incidents and crimes has increased⁵.
- During 2020/21, emotional wellbeing is a cause for concern in just under 40% of children in care across Cheshire East⁶.

1. Deprivation in Cheshire East, Available from: <https://cheshireeast.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=531d13bb1eb24f918c71259138dc000c> , Accessed on: 01 October 2022

2. Spring (January) School Census, Public Health Intelligence Team © Crown Copyright and database right 2022. Ordnance Survey 100049045 SMASH – Sandbach, Middlewich, Alsager, Scholar Green, Haslington

3. Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [20/09/22] <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk> © Crown copyright [2022]

4. Calculated by OHID: Population Health Analysis (PHA) team using data from NHS Digital - Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) and Office for National Statistics (ONS) - Mid Year Population Estimates. 'Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [20/09/22] <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk> © Crown copyright [2022]'

5. Crime Survey for England & Wales, Kantar Public on behalf of Office for National Statistics (ONS). Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [28/01/23] <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk> © Crown copyright (2023).

6. Department for Education 'Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [26/07/23] <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk> © Crown copyright (2022)'

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What else might be contributing to poor mental health?



- The COVID-19 pandemic has been experienced in varied ways across the country with some evidence of negative impact on early years development and school aged children and young people's mental wellbeing^{1,2}.
- Bullying was highlighted as a key issue for children and young people during engagement³. All schools are required to have an anti-bullying policy. Schools address bullying issues as they arise and will also cover bullying through the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum or via in house or commercial. The local authority doesn't endorse any one programme however, one example of this is KiVa, an anti-bullying programme for primary schools. Nearly 7% of primary schools in Cheshire East, a total of 8 schools are actively engaging with this programme. The Safeguarding Children in Education Settings (SCiES) team also support schools with bullying by: developing a bullying prevention strategy; reviewing bullying during their Safeguarding review visits; and providing a helpline which can advise on bullying issues. However, only 14 calls were received by the SCiES team during an 11 month period. ChatHealth also received very few texts^{4,5,6}.
- Some of our CYP identifying as LGBT+ highlighted challenges of not getting support until in crisis, being at risk of bullying, and feeling expected to fit in³.
- The number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care plans has been steadily rising year on year. Growth of 63% in the last three years⁷.

1. Education recovery in early years providers: spring 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

2. Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (2022) COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing surveillance: report. Research and analysis. Children and young people. Updated 12 April 2022. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report/7-children-and-young-people> (Accessed 13 June 2022)

3. Emotionally healthy children and young people service recommissioning engagement during Autumn/Winter 2022/23

4. Email correspondence Education COVID response and Project Manager (02/02/23, 24/02/23, 07/08/23, 12/09/23, 28/09/23 & 24/10/23)

5. Email correspondence Education COVID response and Project Manager (31/01/23 & 28/09/23)

6. Email correspondence (0-19+ Service Leader, 21/10/22)

7. Cheshire East Council (2022) Single SEND Forecast Data document. May 2022. Available from: <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/livewell/local-offer-for-children-with-sen/single-send-forecast-data-document/single-send-forecast-data-document-v1.0-final-may-2022.pdf> (Accessed 11 May 2023)

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The benefits and risks of digital media

Digital media was highlighted as having both a positive and a negative effect on mental health during our engagement with children and young people¹.

Whilst acknowledging there may be different individual circumstances requiring individualised advice, the Royal College of Psychiatrists provides the follow general advice on using digital media safely for all:

- Set time limits
- Get some sleep
- Stay safe
- Don't believe everything you read
- Keep perspective-when seeing people online looking their best and having fun
- Think first before sending a message or posting online
- Don't let the internet get expensive

Additional general advice for parents:

- Model sensible use
- Set parent controls
- Look at age recommendations
- Talk about online safety, information sharing, mental health



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1. Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service recommissioning engagement during Autumn/Winter 2022/23
2. Royal College of Psychiatrists (2022) Use of digital media for children and young people. Available from:
<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/parents-and-young-people/young-people/use-of-digital-media-for-young-people>
(Accessed 07/03/23).

What protective factors can help to maintain a good mental wellbeing?

Physical activity is a protective factor.

- Across Cheshire East it is estimated that 45.1% of children aged 5-16 years old are "active" and meeting the Chief Medical Officer recommendations for physical activity.¹

Good education is also an important protective factor for emotional and mental wellbeing:

- Whilst the uptake of free early years education in 3 and 4 year olds is very high, uptake is lower in our eligible 2 year olds, with 3 out of 10 of those eligible not taking up the offer during 2022².
- During 2021-22, the rate of absences across secondary school aged children was higher than the national average*.³
- On average, educational attainment across Cheshire East is good, however, educational attainment is worse in children experiencing deprivation.⁴

Mental wellbeing of key adults in a child's life :

- Positive parental relationships and good staff wellbeing are important in promoting good wellbeing in our children and young people^{5,6}. Whilst we don't have good measures of these factors, we do have some indicators.
- Data suggests that many adults across Cheshire East have a good mental wellbeing. However, between 2012/13 and 2021/22 across Cheshire East, self-reported "low happiness" levels have stayed fairly stable, however, there has been an increase in the proportion of adults in reporting a "high anxiety score" (23.3%)⁷.
- As of 2021/22 the proportion of adults thought to be diagnosed as having depression by their GP is approximately 14%. Rates have increased since 2012/13⁸.
- According to Labour Force Survey estimates, across Great Britain: education staff have a significantly higher than average rate of work-related stress, depression or anxiety⁹.

1. Sport England. Active Lives Survey. Children and Young People data. Available from: <https://activelives.sportengland.org/Home/ActivityData> (Accessed 12 January 2023) © Sport England 2023.

2. Email correspondence (Intelligence Manager, (11.10.22) Taken from [Local authority interactive tool \(LAIT\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

3. DfE statistical release published 20 Oct 22. Figures are for state-funded secondaries. Received by email (Business Intelligence Officer 25/11/23)

4. 2022 DfE statistics published 6 October Key stage 1 and phonics screening check attainment, Academic Year 2021/22 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk) 2019 and 2022 LAP results calculated in house by Cheshire East Received by email from Business Intelligence Officer (30/11/22) & Cheshire East and National pupil characteristic groups from DfE statistics published 22 December 2022 and Table "ks2_regional_local_authority_and_pupil_characteristics_2019_and_2022_revised" - National figures based on state funded schools and academies Key stage 2 attainment, Academic Year 2021/22 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk) 2019 and 2022 Local Area Partnership (LAP) results calculated in house by Cheshire East based on the location of the school Received by email from Business Intelligence Officer (01/02/23)

5. Available from: Vulnerabilities: applying All Our Health - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). (Accessed 27/01/23).

6. NICE (2022) Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education. [NG223]. 6 July 2022. Available from: Recommendations | Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education | Guidance | NICE (Accessed 5 April 2023)

7. Annual Population Survey (APS), Office for National Statistics (ONS). Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. (30th June 2023) <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk> © Crown copyright [2023].

8. Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF), NHS Digital 'Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [06/02/22] <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk> © Crown copyright [2022]

9. HSE (2022) Work-related stress, anxiety or depression statistics in Great Britain, 2022. Available from: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.pdf> (Accessed 2 February 2023).

*statistical significance of this comparison has not been determined



The 5 Ways to Wellbeing are a way of summarising important steps to promote mental wellbeing

Connect	“Connecting with the people around us is a great way to remind ourselves that we’re important and valued by others”.
Be active	“We know that there’s a link between staying active and positive mental health and wellbeing. By making sure we are regularly moving our bodies, we can look after our mental and physical health at the same time”.
Take notice	“Taking notice of our thoughts, emotions and surroundings is a great way to stay present and pay attention to our needs”.
Keep learning	“Learning new things is a good way to meet new people and boost our self confidence, which in turn improves our mental health and wellbeing”.
Give	“Research has found a link between doing good things and an increase in wellbeing”.

What are the mental health needs seen in schools across Cheshire East?

- In England the rates of probable mental health disorder for children and young people aged 7-19 increased from 11.8% in 2017 to 19.8% in 2022. This means that in Cheshire East in 2022, there were somewhere between 8,606 to 13,525 children and young people with a probable mental health disorder. A higher proportion of those with a probable mental disorder lived in households that experienced a reduction in income¹.
- Across Cheshire East, three separate providers support children and young people through the Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service this includes Visyon (Mid & South), South Cheshire CLASP (South), and Just Drop In (JDI) (North)². During the Covid-19 pandemic years 2020-22 the services had to adapt to support the unprecedented demand and complexity². Feedback from our school engagement echoes the challenge of increased numbers of young people with mental health difficulties without increased provision of support and identified a gap in services for those not meeting CAMHS threshold³.
- Girls present to our Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service more than boys. Our more ethnically diverse communities and our children identifying as LGBT+ may be under-represented in these services though it is difficult to confirm².
- Between April 2022 and March 2023 nearly all referrals made to our Mental Health Support Teams in Crewe and Macclesfield were made due to concerns about anxiety⁴.
- Also, mental health was the most common reason for one to one medical needs tuition in their home or other setting during 2021/22⁵.



1. NHS England (2022) Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2022 - wave 3 follow up to the 2017 survey. Official statistics, Survey. 29 November 2022. Available from: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2022-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey#:~:text=Key%20findings,between%202020%2C%202021%20and%202022> (Accessed 22 December 2022)
2. Recommissioning Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People. Early Help and Prevention Service slides (Q1-Q3) (received by email on 13.04.22) & Q4 received by email from Commissioning Officer on 08/12/22.
3. Feedback from Heads (Cheshire East primary and secondary school representatives and the Cheshire East Education Reference Group)
4. Email correspondence Cheshire MHST Team Manager (04/08/23 & 17/08/23)
5. Email correspondence (Tuition Team Manager, 09/02/23)

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Feedback from our children and young people about mental health in schools

Our primary school aged children engagement focussed on what happiness was:

“Playing with my toys”

“Being outdoors”

“Smiley people at school”

“Pets”

“Hobbies”

“Playing with friends and family”

“Having a role in school to make me feel important”

“I like to talk to people about my feelings, but they need to someone I have a relationship with (parent, friend, teacher etc)”

We talked more broadly around mental health with our secondary school aged children who helped us identify common themes:

“Issues are intensified at school”

“Academic pressure”

“Struggling to socialise and reintegrate into school following covid lockdown”

“Services have their own agenda – more about them than the YP*”

“Trusted relationship needed for YP* to open up about their feelings”

“Bullying inside and outside of school, worried about consequences of speaking out, schools don’t implement policies to address bullying”

“Too much focus on academia, need more lessons on life skills”

“Teachers are stressed and unapproachable”

“Future is intimidating, lacking optimism and aspirations”

“Social media – lack of respect, hiding behind keyboard, inappropriate content, addictive, FOMO, encourages discrimination, unreasonable body image expectations”

“Young children have access to phones causing anxiety”

“One size does not fit all in terms of support available”

“Concerned about national & international issues – cost of living, war, covid, news is scary”

“Offending behaviour is normalised amongst peers”

Source: Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service recommissioning engagement during Autumn/Winter 2022/23

*YP –young people

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What are the mental health needs seen in primary care?

- The prevalence of mild to moderate mental health conditions recorded on GP registers for children and young people varies across Cheshire East, with between 1.6%-3% in 0-17 year olds and 17.8%-21.3% in 18-24 year olds¹.
- The prevalence of mild to moderate mental health conditions in the 0-24 year olds registered with Crewe GHR Primary Care Network (PCN) is statistically the highest in Cheshire East¹. Crewe GHR PCN is also significantly higher for Suicide, Self-harm and Serious Mental Illness (SMI) cohorts in this age group⁵. Macclesfield is significantly higher for the General MH cohort which encompasses mild and moderate, self-harm and suicide⁵.
- Self-harm and suicidality were looked at in more detail, Nantwich and Rural PCN and Macclesfield PCN have statistically worse rates. However, individual GP practices within the PCNs of Crewe GHR, Crewe EB and Nantwich and

- Rural have high rates. Other areas of concern are Middlewood and SMASH which have large numbers⁶.
- There looks to be a higher prevalence of asthma and learning disability in children and young people with a mental health condition than in all children and young people, suggesting an important cohort of young people with both a physical and a mental health condition. Overall, there was also a higher prevalence of non-mental health conditions (physical conditions, or a neurodiverse diagnosis) in children that also had mental health condition in Crewe GHR and Knutsford practices.^{2,3}
- The prevalence of obesity in patients presenting to primary care with a mental health condition seems to be lower than national estimates of obesity prevalence, suggesting it could be under recorded.^{2,4}

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) abbreviations:-

Crewe GHR = Grosvenor, Hungerford, Rope Green Practices

SMASH = Sandbach, Middlewich, Alsager, Scholar Green and Haslington Practices

Crewe EB = Eagle Bridge Practice

CHOC = Congleton, Holmes Chapel Practices

CHAW = Chelford, Handforth, Alderley Edge, Wilmslow Practices



1. Email Correspondence (Project Manager- Mental Health 18/08/22) Data source Primary Care EMIS (May 2022)
2. CIPHA as 12/01/23 received by email from Project Manager- Mental Health and Neurodiversity (13/01/23)
3. LTC Benchmarks taken from: [Workbook: Population and Person Insight - Working Version \(england.nhs.uk\)](#) received by email from Project Manager- Mental Health and Neurodiversity (14/03/23)
4. Public Health Profiles [Public health profiles - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#) (accessed 05/04/23)
5. CIPHA (09/03/23) received via email from (Project Manager- Mental Health and Neurodiversity 14/03/23)
6. NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB – QlikSense (ECDS) Cheshire BI

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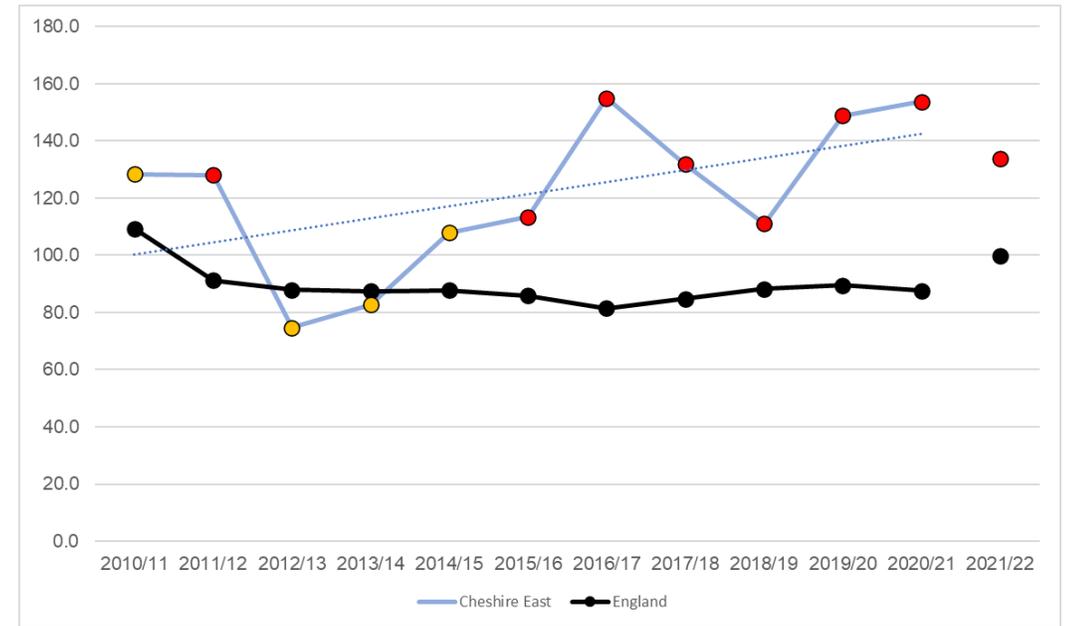
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Who is presenting to hospital for mental health conditions?

- Since 2015/16, Cheshire East has seen higher rates of children under 18 years admitted to hospital for mental health conditions than the England average¹.
- The current rate for admissions for a mental health condition in young people (under 18s) in Cheshire East is 133.9 per 100,000.
- Between April 2019 and August 2022 where a possible mental health problem was identified, the most common reason for admission in children and young people aged 25 and under was for Mental Health Disorders with substance misuse (alcohol/substance misuse/ tobacco) followed by anxiety and then depression². From data provided in October 22 we predicted that admissions for depression in 0-17 and MH disorders with substance misuse in both 0-17s and 18-24s are likely to have returned to pre-Covid19 levels by end of 2022.

Hospital admissions for mental health conditions (<18 yrs-2020/21)



● Better 95% ● Similar ● Worse 95% ○ Not applicable

The data point for 2021/22 is kept separate. This is because it is calculated using population estimates based on the 2021 Census. Prior data points have not yet been recalculated.

1. Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [07/07/23] <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk> © Crown copyright [2023]. Historic data supplied by OHID received by e-mail on (01/08/23)

2. Reference: NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB – QlikSense (ECDS) Cheshire BI. Received by email from ICB (27/10/22)



Who is presenting at hospitals for self-harm and suicidality?

Self-harm data at our two hospital A&E departments shows:-

- that nearly three times as many females than males are presenting at both Trusts. The highest rates are in the 13-15 age group, followed by the 16 and over group^{4,5}.
- The top 5 reasons for attendance is the same at both hospitals. The majority relate to overdose; Mid Cheshire Hospital (MCHT) 41% and East Cheshire Hospital (ECHT) 48%. The next highest is self-harm* (MCHT 23% and ECHT 26%)^{4,5}.

*Attendances will have been considered self-harm on arrival but if intent to self-harm cannot be established on examination, the primary reason for attendance may change.

- Although the data is for different time periods, both trusts show peaks in May, September and November; these seem to coincide with return to school and possible exam pressures^{4,5}.

A lot of these patients are already known^{4,5}:-

- Over half of patients presenting with self-harm were known to CAMHS.
- At MCHT 52% of patients had previous attended, whereas only an estimated 35% were previous attenders at EHCT. However, one individual had attended 15 times in the 12-month period.

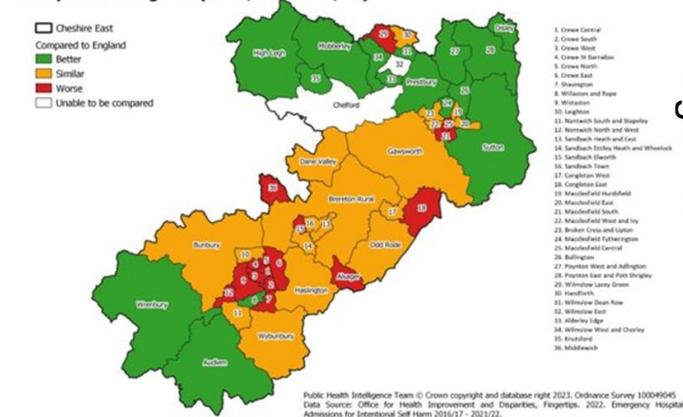
Some analysis could only be done for Mid Cheshire Trust, this showed that^{4,5}:-

- The rate of previous attendance increased with age.
- 90% of patients had planned follow up, only 3% had no clear follow-up or pathway.
- 21% (68) were recorded as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- 21% of the attendances for previous attenders had a SEND condition recorded.

Note : MCHFT Safeguarding Children Team generate this information through monthly data collection and analysis, which is then shared through email correspondence with the Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children @Cheshire East place and Cheshire West and Chester place.

- Rates of suicide in people aged 10+ across Cheshire East are similar to the England average and have been since 2004-06³.
- In Cheshire East, admission rates for self-harm in children and young people (10-24 years) have been increasing since 2013/14 and have been consistently worse than the England average. In 2021/22 there was a significant increase that cannot be explained by the change in the denominator population. There were an average of 7 admissions for every 1,000 10–24-year olds¹.
- Wards with worse than England rates of admissions for all age self-harm include:- many in Crewe, Macclesfield South and Macclesfield Central, Alsager, Congleton East, Sandbach Elworth, Wilmslow Lacey Green, Wistaston, and Nantwich North and West (see map)².

Map of emergency hospital admissions for intentional self harm (all-age) compared to England (2016/17 - 2020/21)



1. Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [28/04/23] <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk> © Crown copyright [2022]. Historic data provided by OHID by e-mail on 2nd May 2023
2. Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [18/04/23] <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk> © Crown copyright [2023]
3. Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Public Health Profiles. [01/08/23] <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk> © Crown copyright [2023]
4. Mid Cheshire data source: Email correspondence Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children @Cheshire East place and Cheshire West and Chester place.
5. East Cheshire data source: Email correspondence Head of Safeguarding /Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children East Cheshire Trust on 26 January 2023

Feedback from our paediatricians

What is it like now?

- “Increase in unhappy children”
- “Neurodiverse cohort – more complex, long waiting lists, crisis management, results in children entering care system”
- “Journey and pathways are not clear enough”
- “Value VCFSE sector services”
- “Waiting list for neurodiverse services up to 4 years”
- “Hormones in teenagers play havoc”
- “Need to improve parent understanding around self harm”

At its best, what would it look like?

- “Plotting journey, although difficult to anticipate”
- “Resilience support for parents”
- “Equality across system in eligibility criteria (age)”
- “Posters, leaflets, comms in A&E”
- “Better information and signposting in GP practices”
- “Parents able to self-navigate”
- “One stop shop for information and resources”
- “Parents need coping strategies for hormonal teenagers”
- “CYP Vulnerable Person Liaison Nurse in both NHS Trusts”
- “Improved MDT across NHS providers – multi-agency peer review / challenge. Liaison Forum for acute and MH practitioners”
- “A&E Frequent Flyer meetings for paediatrics – specifically around mental health”

Findings from the North West CAMHS review, August 2021:

- The experiences of services have at times been inappropriate, frustrating and countertherapeutic.
- No “core offer” for Tiers 2 and 3.
- Unclear provision for mental wellbeing where the child or young person also has a learning disability, a neurodevelopmental disorder such as autism or an eating disorder.
- Many CAMHS services feel overwhelmed with the demand.
- Staffing recruitment crisis within many services.
- There is a lack of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) or equivalent for escalation and resolution between partners to support a proactive approach.
- Significant health inequalities exist across the North West.

Recommendations:

1. Core CAMHS offer for tier 2 and 3 services
2. Specific CAMHS Tier 2 service offer (to children and young people with learning disabilities, a neurodevelopmental disorder such as autism or an eating disorder and eating disorders)
3. Commissioning and contracting to reflect “core” and “specific” offers
4. “Alternatives to hospital”
5. “Workforce Plan”
6. “Individual service development”
7. “Parent Carer Forums”
8. “Royal College of Psychiatry Quality Networks”
9. Plan to address Health Inequalities
10. Sharing the NW CAMHS review report

What are our assets to support emotional and mental wellbeing and how effective and consistent are they?

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Summary of range of support and advice for schools in relation to the "Thrive" framework¹ and NICE guidance²

	Count of Staff training - national/external	Count of Staff training - CE	Count of Information	Count of Interactive online personalised advice/support to CYP or adult	Count of CE teams who can give advice	Count of In school programmes - whole school approaches to develop skills to thrive	Count of School based interventions delivered by school staff	Count of School based interventions/assessments delivered by external partners	Count of Interventions/support by external partners	Total
Thriving	10	11	7	2	3	13	1	1	1	49
Getting Advice	2	2	28	2	7		7	2	17	67
Getting help	5	6	14	4	14	6	7	5	32	93
Getting more help		1	1		1			1	2	6
Getting risk support								1	17	18
Identification	6	2	3							10
Staff wellbeing	3	3	12	3	2				16	39
Transitions			6							6
Grand Total	26	25	71	11	27	19	15	10	86	290

- See narrative on next slide

1. Wolpert, M et al. (2019) THRIVE framework for system change. Available from: THRIVE-Framework-for-system-change-2019.pdf (implementingthrive.org) (Accessed 18 April 2023).
2. NICE (2022) Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education. [NG223]. 6 July 2022. Available from: Recommendations | Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education | Guidance | NICE (Accessed 5 April 2023).
3. Table sent by email from Education COVID response and Project Manager (27/07/23)

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Overall assessment of support for mental wellbeing by JSNA working group

- Complex and numerous resources were collated (see previous slide) and there is overlap and duplication in messaging between resources. Some providers give advice, whilst others provide interventions. A lot of information is available online.
- There were fewer assets, for identification, “getting more help”, and transition in particular, but also for thriving.
- There was evidence of comprehensive work on the whole-school approach across Cheshire East.
- There are some gaps which have been identified in terms of age ranges, less advice available for children aged under 11.
- Children and young people in our youth council highlight that children want to be able to access support directly. However, there were low numbers of upstream contacts (Kooth and Chathealth) and more stable rates, whereas there were increasing rates of more severe presentations, for example to hospital.
- The offer for support to parents includes children’s centres, Visyon workshops, the Contact Hub, in addition to school, GP, hospital and CAMHS support.

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Services to support children and families with their emotional and mental wellbeing

- The Healthy Child Programme
 - ChatHealth
 - Contact Hub
 - Health Visitors and School Nurses
 - Mental Health Practitioners
 - SEND support
- Schools
 - Wellbeing for Education Programme
 - myHappyMind
 - Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in Crewe and Macclesfield
 - Suicide Prevention Training
- Community
 - Kooth
 - Visyon/Just Drop In/CLASP
 - General practice
 - CAMHS
 - Acute hospitals

Feedback from some of our schools is...

- The current offer can be overwhelming.
- There are too many people trying to do too many roles.
- Regarding special educational needs coordination- very confusing system with extensive paperwork - jumping through hoops rather than actually doing the job in hand.
- There are capacity challenges – training space, timetable, curriculum pressures
- There are obstacles referring a young people into CAMHS and them getting swift and immediate support.
- There is inconsistency in the support available across schools dependent upon staff skills/funding etc.
- Schools are increasingly expected to manage support beyond the experience of a school intervention/workshop.

Reference: Cheshire East primary and secondary school representatives and the Cheshire East Education Reference Group

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Insights from our Youth Council on mental wellbeing in school aged children (from the Taboo Conference)

30th November 2021

- The aim was to reach out to as many young people as possible to discuss mental health issues and to understand how professionals can best support them within their service settings and wider community.
- Around 84 young people attended the conference from mainstream schools, colleges, partner organisations and special schools.
- In addition, 55 adults also attended who were decision makers, elected members, teachers, workshop leads.

Students shared what is important to them in schools by undertaking a prioritisation exercise. The two areas that were most important to them were*:

“All staff understand that mental health needs such as anxiety might appear as disruptive or aggressive behaviour which could include problems with attention or focus.”

“Key wellbeing staff know how to help a young person to access the right support and have greater depth of knowledge and understanding of how MH difficulties may appear.”

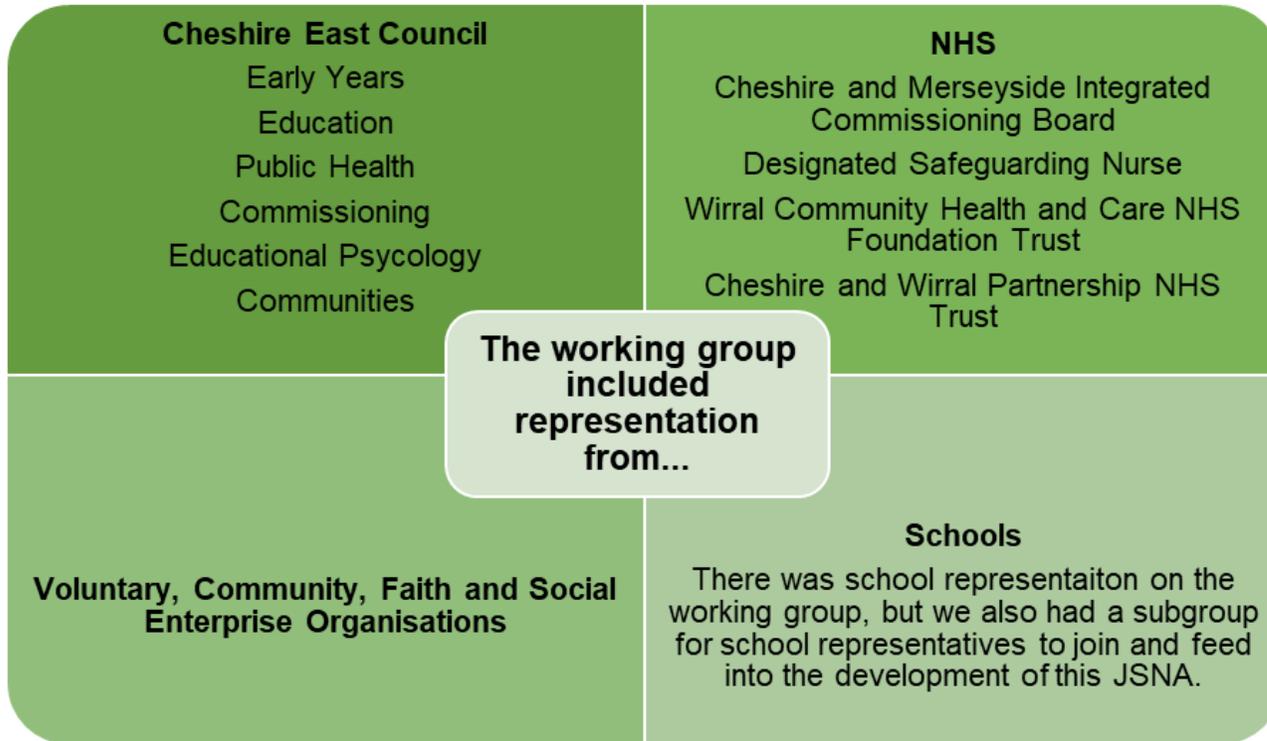
* response rates vary dependent on the question.

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How we went about this review



This review was produced through the Children's and Young People's Emotional and Mental Wellbeing JSNA Working Group.

The working group contributed to the development of the scope; analysis; and narrative development.

Additional conversations and engagement regarding the scope was carried out via separate schools' representative groups such as:

- Education Recovery Group
- The Children and Families Directorate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group
- The Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service Recommission Project Group which will become the Healthy Young Minds Alliance.

Consultation and Engagement work (September – December 2022)

This work was steered by a subgroup led by Children and Young People's commissioning. Qualitative opportunistic conversations were carried out with both children and young people as well as with a range of stakeholders such as:

- Teachers
- Commissioned providers
- Health professionals

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What did this review cover and what questions did it address?

Issues to be addressed:

1. Wider determinants and wellbeing
2. Risk factors and protective factors
3. Early years
4. Parenting and resilience
5. School staff wellbeing
6. Mental wellbeing and mental health presentation in schools
7. Primary care presentations
8. Secondary care presentations
9. Self harm and crisis

Questions to be addressed:

1. What is the emotional and mental wellbeing need in children and young people in Cheshire East by geography and by protected characteristics where possible?
2. What are our assets to support emotional and mental wellbeing and how effective and consistent are they?
3. How are we identifying children earlier? How are we supporting early years provision to identify complex needs early?
4. How are we supporting children in crisis?

Exclusions: Perinatal mental health as an exclusion

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Contributors

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Schools

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- Jordan Swift
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Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations/ Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People support services

- Keri Smith (Making Space)
- Cath McGee (Making Space)
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- Jane Reeves (Making Space)
- Joanne Priest (Cheshire East Carers Hub)
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- Sam Ruck (Visyon)
- Ann Wright (JDI)
- Julia Wood (CLASP)
- Sarah Skelton (Kooth)

NHS

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Additional Forums

- Education Recovery Group
- The Children and Families Directorate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group
- The Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service Recommission Project Group which will become the Healthy Young Minds Alliance.

There were many other professionals, community groups, children and parents that contributed as part of the Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service Recommission engagement process.

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Appendix B- An update on individual recommendations from the *Mental Health Spotlight Review-February 2020*

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only had wide impacts on population health and wellbeing need, but also on ways of working across education, health and social care. Health and care transformation following the Health and Care Act 2022 has added to changes in the health and care landscape and to the health and care workforce. As such, the overarching recommendations included in the main body of this latest mental health spotlight review reflect a refreshed sense of priority and the newly evolving landscape as described in the Children and Young People’s Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) (Appendix A). Nevertheless, work still continues in relation to all recommendation areas included in the 2020 mental health spotlight review (some of which were outside the scope of the latest JSNA). The commentary in this update has been provided through collaboration between:

- The Leader of Cheshire East Council
- Representatives from
 - Cheshire East Council Public Health
 - Cheshire East Council Education and Special Educational Needs teams
 - Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board
 - Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
 - Cheshire East Council Commissioning
 - Cheshire East Council Children in Care
 - Cheshire East Council Early Help

	Spotlight Review 2020 recommendation	Update
1	That the council and partners endeavour to create a clearer pathway and screening tool for assessing the needs of children and young people presenting with mental health issues, with standardised outcome measures across services to make it easier to identify where other improvements may be made in the future.	The latest National Institute for Health and Care Excellent (NICE) guidance on social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education highlights the importance of identifying risk factors for poor mental wellbeing and protective factors to good mental wellbeing. https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng223/chapter/recommendations#identifying-children-and-young-people-at-risk-of-poor-social-emotional-and-mental-wellbeing Our latest Joint Strategic Needs Assessment review into emotional and mental wellbeing highlights worsening trends in mental health and wellbeing risk factors and opportunities to improve upon protective factors. It will be important that family hubs, the recommission of emotionally healthy children and young people provision (now known as “Healthy Young Minds”, and school local strategic development in particular are mindful of this and link residents up with the support available. Promotion of, and reference to, the wider JSNA across all key forums, including reviews on poverty, SEND and Crewe for example can support this https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/jsna/jsna.aspx#overview .

	<p>Screening and identification is a core recommendation within the latest NICE guidance on https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng223/chapter/recommendations#tools-and-techniques and a variety of tools are available. It recommends that: “When selecting a tool or technique to assess social, emotional and mental wellbeing, take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the child or young person's needs, wishes and feelings • the purpose of the assessment • how the tool or technique fits with the school culture and ethos <p>contextual factors, such as the child or young person's chronological or developmental age or ethnicity and any communication needs (being aware that assessment tools are context specific and vary in quality)”. The Cheshire East Wellbeing for Education Programme supports schools in considering the range of tools available and also regarding the range of resources available to support children identified to be in need. In addition to this, a schools directory of services has been developed in collaboration with the Integrated Care Board. The directory is mapped to iThrive which means it provides a clear language to understand both levels of need and service thresholds. Supporting documents incorporate Department for Education guidance of identifying and assessing the needs of children and young people. Early feedback from schools is very positive. We are now capturing pupil and parent voice and exploring how wider implementation of thrive will enable the system change required.</p> <p>Furthermore, Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) are available in Crewe and Macclesfield currently and will be rolled out further over the coming years. MHST representatives have contributed to the JSNA review and can use the consensus built to inform their further roll out. As of 24 October 2023, 38 schools have access to MHST and it is expected that as of January 2024, around an additional 20 will have onboarded with the programme. For schools who do not have access to MHST, they are currently able to access advice in terms of which support is likely to have the best impact from Emotionally Healthy Schools consultation.</p> <p>The JSNA outlines a wide variety of relevant measures that should be considered by a wide variety of work streams, including the Mental Health Partnership Board, Family Hubs implementation and the recommissioning of the Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People provision.</p> <p>Also, good level of development at 2.5. years and self-harm admissions are included as a key indicator within the Joint Outcomes Framework, and the Phase 2 development of this framework will build</p>
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		<p>consensus regarding additional delivery-based measures to be monitored to contribute to improvements in these overarching measures. <u>Cheshire East Joint Outcomes Framework</u></p> <p>In addition, the Health and Wellbeing Board have approved the convening of a JSNA conference to further build consensus as to priority actions and outcomes measures that will monitor these.</p>
2	<p>That commissioners review the current service provision, and access to services, with a view to ensuring that services are commissioned for children and young people up to the age of 25.</p>	<p>The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment summarises current service, information and advice provision across Cheshire East. In addition, a schools directory has been developed to support schools and parents in seeking support, and a digital platform is being developed. The Wellbeing for Education team are working with the Inclusion team to incorporate this information into the updated SEND Toolkit.</p> <p>An 18-25 model has been developed as set out in the planning and delivery requirements for Children and Young Peoples Mental Health in the NHS Long Term Plan and is in its implementation phase to be delivered by March 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultation and advice service went live in July 2023 and in pilot phase. • We are currently working with a small number of pilot cases. • Processes, pathways and clinical model are under active development. • A trust wide ‘soft launch’ and communication strategy is being employed.
3	<p>That a review be undertaken of the Cheshire East Live Well programme, and that as part of this, the council specifically considers access and availability to wellbeing support services for children, young people and their parents/carers.</p>	<p>This review is being undertaken as part of the development of the Family Hubs digital platform. The latest JSNA reviews will help to further underpin this development. Our JSNA review into Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), which is currently still in progress, explores use of the Live Well website in relation to SEND queries.</p>
4	<p>That Cabinet look to use and prioritise the Troubled Families process to improve the level and breadth of support available for parents and carers of children and young people experiencing mental health issues.</p>	<p>There is a wide variety of evidence in relation to trends in risk factors contributing to poor mental wellbeing included in our latest JSNA review.</p> <p>In addition, the specification for the recommissioned Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People’s service (now renamed “Healthy Young Minds”) service includes a requirement to screen referrals against the Supporting Families criteria, with onward referral where needed.</p>

		<p>Furthermore troubled families are also consider in our Poverty JSNA, which includes a summary of the Supporting Families Programme at Appendix A of the Poverty JSNA full report: https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/jsna/healthier-places/poverty-jsna-full-report.pdf</p> <p>Finally, we have jointly commissioned (with the Integrated Care Board) a new family support framework, which has been live since May 2023. Amongst a wide range of support available from (currently) 17 providers on the framework, accessible on a demand-led call-off basis is options which include step-up and step-down support for young people either being discharged from inpatient mental health treatment to community-based support, or those at risk of admission.</p>
5	<p>That commissioners be asked to provide a further update to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2021, on the progress of implementing the Thrive model and an update on service accessibility.</p>	<p>The Wellbeing for Education programme, service directory and emotionally healthy children and young people service (now known as Healthy Young Minds) are all aligned to the Thrive model. The JSNA involved a detailed asset mapping process against the Thrive model and also NICE recommendations. The results of this are being used to further inform support for schools through the Wellbeing for Education programme.</p> <p>Each school is being supported to develop its own directory in relation to the Thrive framework. Schools have had opportunities to receive individual or group training.</p> <p>Further funding is being sought to deliver training through Family Hubs and wider funding streams to engage the system in implementing THRIVE to ensure local understanding of the framework and its key principles:</p> <p>1. One off engagement event The National i-THRIVE Programme can facilitate a cross-sector engagement event to ensure local understanding of the <u>THRIVE Framework</u> and its <u>key principles</u> and to identify good THRIVE-like practice already happening and any gaps in provision. Together with the local site, an agreement will be made on priorities to take forward and to support the creation of an action plan. This is often a large event, with up to 120 cross-sector professionals in attendance.</p> <p>Who to invite: As a guide, sites have found it important to have representation from across the system. This tends to include universal and specialist health and mental health services (including GP representation, perinatal services, and adult mental health), social care and safeguarding, local authority services (including youth justice, early help, LAC etc), education (including children’s centres, primary, secondary and specialist provision including for those NEET), commissioners, the police, the</p>

		<p>ambulance service, a whole range of voluntary sector providers, and appropriate representation of service users (children and young people representatives and/or parents/carers).</p> <p>2. Series of events Building on the initial engagement event, this package includes additional follow up events at the six month and twelve month mark (as a minimum) to review progress made. The National i-THRIVE Programme acts as a ‘critical friend’ throughout the process to support fidelity to the THRIVE Framework and its key principles and to agree local definitions of the five needs based groups.</p>
6	That commissioners and providers ensure that the eligibility and accessibility criteria for services is clear and transparent for children and young people and their families/carers.	Work on the school directory has attempted to clarify eligibility and accessibility, however, the JSNA review has highlighted that there is further work to do. The JSNA can inform further family hub information and support development. In addition, promotion of the JSNA across all key partners can also help to facilitate this. Finally the JSNA review evidence is underpinning the current recommissioning of the Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People’s service (now “Healthy Young Minds”, which has clear accessibility.
7	That Cheshire CCG, CAMHS and the council ensure that all staff who support both children’s and adults’ services, undertake transition training to secure safe and reasonable handovers of cases when young people leave children’s services and enter the adult social care system.	<p>We are currently defining the parameters for a JSNA informed workstream on Preparing for Adulthood more broadly. Transition between children’s and adults services will form one part of this. We aim to agree an outcome dataset that will give us clear information via indicators and proxy indicators how well we are doing with respect to the 4 ‘pillars’ of Preparing for Adulthood, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher education and/or employment – including exploring different employment options • independent living – this means young people having choice, control and freedom over their lives and the support they have, their accommodation and living arrangements, including supported living • participating in society – including having friends and supportive relationships, and participating in, and contributing to, the local community • being as healthy as possible in adult life. <p>All of the above contribute to good mental wellbeing</p>
8	That commissioners endeavour to ensure that services provided by Visyon are equitable and available across the whole borough of Cheshire East.	The JSNA review has highlighted that service provision still differs across Cheshire East in terms of age group. The offers are the same geographically, as they are all commissioned under the same specification. There are currently 5 providers of the Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People Service (Healthy Young Minds) across Cheshire East: Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust are lead and the subcontractors are Visyon, Just Drop In, CLASP and Kooth. In addition, Mental Health Support teams have been implemented in Crewe and Macclesfield with a view

		<p>to further roll out in the coming years. The JSNA review can inform ways of optimising equity across the borough. In order, to address health inequalities, it will be important to consider ways to supporting residents with wider determinants of health, as well as health and wellbeing issues themselves. This is highlighted within the Children and Emotional Health and Wellbeing JSNA, but also within the JSNA Tartan Rug tool, and local place-based JSNA. Our first place-based JSNA was published on Crewe this year https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/jsna/healthier-places/crewe.aspx. A new interactive dashboard on the Tartan Rug, will support local areas to address these wider determinants in their local areas, as partnerships Overviews of health and wellbeing (cheshireeast.gov.uk).</p> <p>The latest service specification for the soon to be recommissioned Emotional Healthy Children and Young People service (now “Healthy Young Minds”) asks providers to fulfil the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Implement an integrated and collaborative model which prioritises therapeutic interventions and provides clear pathways into support, ensuring there is ‘no wrong door’ • Create and clearly communicate a single point of contact for CYP, families and professionals who require low level emotional health and wellbeing support for CYP aged 0 – 19 (up to 25 years for SEND). The point of contact should be a physical asset (e.g. community building) and telephone / online referral portal. • Create a clear and effective referral pathway into the Healthy Young Minds service, which is accessible (at a minimum) Monday to Friday, 9am until 5pm for CYP, families and professionals (including schools and primary care) • Work with other Healthy Young Minds providers to create clear and simple referral criteria and assessment processes, ensuring consistency in approach across the service. Referral criteria and service thresholds must align to the THRIVE framework detailed above and be agreed with Cheshire East Council commissioners during mobilisation process”
9	That Cabinet reviews the council’s commission for the Emotionally Healthy Children Programme, with a view to ensure that there is a single commissioning strategy that is aligned to the CCG Mental	Future funding for the Emotional Healthy Children and Young People’s service (now renamed “Healthy Young Minds”) is secured through Public Health grant. The process of recommissioning has been underpinned by the latest JSNA review, which has involved significant contributions from the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (formerly Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)). Through the recommissioning engagement work, an alliance has been created to provide a solid footing to draw down external funding into the system to expand early help provision for children and young people experiencing emotional wellbeing issues.

	Health Trailblazer project and make it easier to secure future funding.	
10	That the Leader of the council write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Minister for Education, to request further investment to improve the access to therapeutic support services for children and young people in Cheshire East.	<p>The funding made available to the NHS locally from the Department of Health and Social Care or the Department of Education nationally has not been enhanced to meet these needs specifically. Notwithstanding that, we would acknowledge that the waiting times for both speech, language and communication needs, and broader therapies in Cheshire East still need to be shorter. In light of this, at local level additional investment has been made in both speech, language and communication need services (by both the local authority and NHS Integrated Care Board) and also broader therapies including physiotherapy and occupational therapy in education settings over the last 2 years. Whilst that has not yet resulted in bringing down waiting times to the desired level, we are working with the two NHS providers that deliver these services across Cheshire East to make continued efforts to improve.</p> <p>In view of the substantial shifts in population need, and health and care landscape over the course of the pandemic, the Leader of the council plans to write a letter informed by the latest mental health spotlight review and children and young people emotional health and wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment review.</p>
11	That the council and NHS partners work together to review the way in which data relating to children and young people's mental health is collected, to more consistently align to national targets and measures	<p>There are still a variety of different reporting mechanisms (across education, health and care) in relation to children's mental health and wellbeing and the risk and protective factors that relate to these. The JSNA highlights the extent of potentially relevant data available.</p> <p>It has however, also built consensus on the current picture of emotional health and wellbeing across Cheshire East and wider Cheshire and Merseyside. It has connected a wide variety of partners. Continued promotion of the JSNA, and further collaboration through existing workstreams and forums will remain vital: the Healthy Young Minds Alliance Partnership; the Family Hubs steering group; Mental Health Support Team development; the Cheshire East Education Reference Group; the Senior Mental Health Leads Network; the Mental Health Partnership Board; and the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership; the Children's and Young People's Partnership Trust; and the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board.</p>
12	That the Leader of the council write to the Department of Education to request that funding for the Adoption Counts service be continued	In view of the substantial shifts in population need and health and care landscape over the course of the pandemic, the Leader of the council plans to write a letter informed by the latest mental health spotlight review and children and young people emotional health and wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment chapter.

	and prioritised, and encourage each of the partner authorities receiving the Adoption Counts service to do the same, to lobby for more funding for this important service.	
13	That full Council be asked to ensure its Budget is adjusted to accommodate the cost required to re-commission Adoption Counts, provided that the other local authorities put forward their contributions also.	This recommendation remains important for Cheshire East. The pressure on the adoption counts budget relates to post-adoption psychology support when the adoption support grant comes to an end and the sustainability from adopters, often approaching the local authority to bridge the gap.
14	That the council and partners ensure that the joined-up working arrangements relating to adoption are sustained and properly funded, to secure positive long term outcomes for adoptive children and families in Cheshire East.	This recommendation remains important for Cheshire East. The pressure on the adoption counts budget relates to post-adoption psychology support when the adoption support grant comes to an end and the sustainability from adopters, often approaching the local authority to bridge the gap.
15	That the outcomes of the council's Bespoke Project be reviewed, and its successes be used to inform future commissions and projects.	The regional adoption agency is now a sustained model rather than a pilot, hosted by Manchester but we are in fully formed regional arrangements.
16	That a review be carried out to ascertain best practice in areas where a 24/7 crisis offer is already in place, and how this type of crisis service could be provided in the most effective, joined-up way in Cheshire East.	The North West CAMHS review 2021 reviewed care and support for children and young people most in need across the region and resulted in a list of recommendations, which are starting to be implemented across the region. The Cheshire and Merseyside Gateway Programme uses specific tools to identify unmet need reduce likelihood of admissions through a multiagency approach. As set out in the planning and delivery requirements for Children and Young Peoples Mental Health in the NHS Long Term Plan, 100% coverage of 24/7 crisis provision for CYP which combines crisis assessment, brief response and intensive home treatment functions must be delivered by March 2024.

		Urgent Support Teams (USTs) have now been established along with All Age Crisis Lines although it is unclear whether USTs will be 24/7 by April 2024.
17	That the council and Cheshire CCG work together to ensure that commissioning and contract management arrangements are more closely and effectively integrated.	<p>The Council and now Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (Former Cheshire CCG) are working towards a shared agenda of prevention and early intervention. They work closely together in relation to key Cheshire East Place and Cheshire and Merseyside children and young people emotional and mental wellbeing forums including: the Emotional Healthy Children and Young People Recommission Steering Group, which is becoming the Healthy Young Minds Alliance Partnership; the Family Hubs steering group; the Cheshire East Education Reference Group; the Senior Mental Health Leads Network; the Mental Health Partnership Board; and the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership; the Children's and Young People's Partnership Trust; the JSNA steering group and the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board. In addition, the Family Hubs mental health workstream is chaired by a representative from the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB).</p> <p>From a commissioning perspective the children's (Strong Start) commissioning teams of both the Council and Cheshire & Merseyside ICB (Cheshire East Place), as well as those for Mental Health, Learning Disability and Neurodiverse have been brought together under one Head of Integrated Commissioning for Children, Families & (all-age) Complex Needs, with the intention to develop better integrated pathways and joint commissioning activity from late 2023 onwards.</p>
18	That the council monitors the impact of alternative education service provisions to support young people and reduce rates of exclusions.	Cornerstone has been set up to support primary school aged children at risk of exclusion. This is an independent special school established for this purpose. With regards to secondary school exclusions, more places in alternative provision have been commissioned for children at risk of exclusion in the cared for sector. We have supported two new alternative provision schools. Applications have been accepted and they will be able to provide support to additional children at risk of exclusion. Exclusion rates have increased further since the spotlight review (from 46 between 2020 and 2021 to 130 between 2022 and 23) and this new provision should help address this need. The emotional and mental wellbeing JSNA highlights a wide variety of social and community pressures that could be contributing to these increased rates and wide community action is required to address these and support residents with them.
19	That CAMHS and commissioners urgently review the support provided to children and young people who are unable to leave their	As set out in the planning and delivery requirements for Children and Young Peoples Mental Health in the NHS Long Term Plan 100% coverage of 24/7 crisis provision for children and young people, which combines crisis assessment, brief response and intensive home treatment functions must be delivered by March 2024

	homes to attend their scheduled appointments.	<p>However, it is not clear if Home Treatment Functions will cover children and young people who are unable to attend their scheduled appointments or whether this only applies to Crisis</p> <p>Urgent Support Team would see children and young people in their homes if they have presented in Crisis, either via Accident and Emergency or Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CWP) Crisis Line. Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust children and young people mental health services would only see children and young people in their home only if it is done within the context of a care plan that indicates a clinical need for this approach.</p> <p>Support for children out of school will be provided by a digital component of the Healthy Young Minds service (formerly the Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People's Service).</p>
20	That commissioners consider the commissioning of specialist health visitors to support schools in their teaching and managing of students' mental health and wellbeing.	Mental health specialist support is available within the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme offer. This includes support via Chat Health, and the Contact Hub, for example.
21	That CAMHS, Cheshire CCG and the council work together to review and improve the way in which support is targeted and provided to young people that do not attend school, college, training or work due to their mental health struggles.	<p>The recent JSNA highlighted that the Council Medical Needs tuition team are supporting many children and young people with mental health needs unable to attend school and that mental health was the most common reason for requiring support from this team.</p> <p>To meet the increased need of the young people, they have included online tuition to complement the face to face work to support those children at a point when anxiety prevents them from leaving the house or interacting. However, support is only available to those children and young people who are under CAMHs.</p> <p>In addition, however, there will be a digital offer within the Healthy Young Minds service (Formerly the Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People service).</p> <p>Also, the Cheshire East Council children and young people participation team are fully inclusive of those children who do not leave their home, and some of these young people have been pivotal in shaping services.</p>
22	That the council and partners work together to make sure that the offer of online support	The JSNA has highlighted that a wide variety of online support is available and if anything, the offer has become even more complex over the course of the Pandemic. Work is underway to simplify this offer including through the online schools directory, the Family Hubs digital platform and also through

	services is refreshed and promoted, and that it is equitable for all young people in the borough.	workshops over the coming year to provide greater clarity on the most consistently endorsed resources. The digital offer will be a key component of the recommissioned Healthy Young Minds service (formerly the Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People service). In addition, the Cheshire East Council is
23	That schools in Cheshire East be asked to use a consistent title for the designated Mental Health Leads.	Titles of designated Mental Health Leads still vary in schools, with some leads being designated leads supported by a Senior Leadership Team member and others being “Senior Mental Health Leads” having undertaken the national formal training. Through the Wellbeing for Education programme, Cheshire East Council has a good understanding of this landscape and is supporting whole school approaches that follow best practice guidance but are still tailored to local school circumstances. It is expected that in time every school will have a Senior Mental Health Lead, however, the speed at which schools move towards this will vary. As part of the Department for Education offer for Mental Health Support Teams, grants were awarded to schools for training Senior Mental Health Leads

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Children's Mental Health Services

Spotlight Review – Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee



February 2020

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Chairman's Foreword

As members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee we had become increasingly aware of the challenges faced by children and young people in Cheshire East in terms of mental health and wellbeing services. We had heard anecdotal evidence of families becoming distressed at not being able to access services in a timely way, and that there was inequity in terms of the services provided across the borough.

This committee is committed to ensuring that our children and young people receive a service that enables them to face the many challenges that mental health issues bring, and therefore decided to hold a one-day spotlight review on Children's Mental Health Services in February 2020. Service users, providers and commissioners were all invited to present evidence to enable the committee.



Since this spotlight review took place, Cheshire East, like the rest of the country has been rocked by the public health and mental health and wellbeing challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The long-term impacts of 'lockdown' – which has involved some of our children missing up to six months of normal schooling – are not yet known, however, we already know that it has adversely affected the mental health of many of our children and young people. The recommendations made by the committee are therefore even more pertinent in light of this.

The committee would like to thank all of those who contributed to the spotlight review, especially the children and young people who shared their experiences with us.

Special thanks also go to Joel Hammond-Gant and Helen Davies for their assistance in compiling this report.

Councillor Jos Saunders, Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Recommendations

The committee made a total of 23 recommendations following its findings from the spotlight review. The full list of recommendations is set out below, and they are also included within the main body of the report after the end of each report section.

1. That the council and partners endeavour to create a clearer pathway and screening tool for assessing the needs of children and young people presenting with mental health issues, with standardised outcome measures across services to make it easier to identify where other improvements may be made in the future.
2. That commissioners review the current service provision, and access to services, with a view to ensuring that services are commissioned for children and young people up to the age of 25.
3. That a review be undertaken of the Cheshire East Live Well programme, and that as part of this, the council specifically considers access and availability to wellbeing support services for children, young people and their parents/carers.
4. That Cabinet look to use and prioritise the Troubled Families process to improve the level and breadth of support available for parents and carers of children and young people experiencing mental health issues.
5. That commissioners be asked to provide a further update to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2021, on the progress of implementing the Thrive model and an update on service accessibility.
6. That commissioners and providers ensure that the eligibility and accessibility criteria for services is clear and transparent for children and young people and their families/carers.
7. That Cheshire CCG, CAMHS and the council ensure that all staff who support both children's and adults' services, undertake transition training to secure safe and reasonable handovers of cases when young people leave children's services and enter the adult social care system.
8. That commissioners endeavour to ensure that services provided by Visyon are equitable and available across the whole borough of Cheshire East.
9. That Cabinet reviews the council's commission for the Emotionally Healthy Children Programme, with a view to ensure that there is a single commissioning

strategy that is aligned to the CCG Mental Health Trailblazer project and make it easier to secure future funding.

10. That the Leader of the council write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Minister for Education, to request further investment to improve the access to therapeutic support services for children and young people in Cheshire East.
11. That the council and NHS partners work together to review the way in which data relating to children and young people's mental health is collected, to more consistently align to national targets and measures.
12. That the Leader of the council write to the Department of Education to request that funding for the Adoption Counts service be continued and prioritised, and encourage each of the partner authorities receiving the Adoption Counts service to do the same, to lobby for more funding for this important service.
13. That full Council be asked to ensure its Budget is adjusted to accommodate the cost required to re-commission Adoption Counts, provided that the other local authorities put forward their contributions also.
14. That the council and partners ensure that the joined-up working arrangements relating to adoption are sustained and properly funded, to secure positive long-term outcomes for adoptive children and families in Cheshire East.
15. That the outcomes of the council's Bespoke Project be reviewed, and its successes be used to inform future commissions and projects.
16. That a review be carried out to ascertain best practice in areas where a 24/7 crisis offer is already in place, and how this type of crisis service could be provided in the most effective, joined-up way in Cheshire East.
17. That the council and Cheshire CCG work together to ensure that commissioning and contract management arrangements are more closely and effectively integrated.
18. That the council monitors the impact of alternative education service provisions to support young people and reduce rates of exclusions.
19. That CAMHS and commissioners urgently review the support provided to children and young people who are unable to leave their homes to attend their scheduled appointments.

20. That commissioners consider the commissioning of specialist health visitors to support schools in their teaching and managing of students' mental health and wellbeing.
21. That CAMHS, Cheshire CCG and the council work together to review and improve the way in which support is targeted and provided to young people that do not attend school, college, training or work due to their mental health struggles.
22. That the council and partners work together to make sure that the offer of online support services is refreshed and promoted, and that it is equitable for all young people in the borough.
23. That schools in Cheshire East be asked to use a consistent title for the designated Mental Health Leads.

Committee Membership



Cllr James Barber



Cllr Michael Beanland



Cllr June Buckley



Cllr Carol Bulman



Cllr Penny Butterill
(Vice-Chairman)



Cllr Sally Handley



Cllr Marilyn Houston



Cllr Arthur Moran



Cllr Jos Saunders
(Chairman)



Cllr Nicky Wylie



Cllr Steve Edgar (sub)



Cllr Liz Wardlaw (sub)

Introduction & Purpose

Overview and Scrutiny and the Cheshire East Corporate Plan

Cheshire East Council is committed to “Working for a brighter future together” through the delivery of its Vision, Values and Corporate Plan. There are six strategic outcomes included within the Plan, outlining the vision for the borough, the priorities to focus resources on, and the approach for how these are delivered.

The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee use two of these outcomes to underpin its Work Programme:



Outcome 3: People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive.

Outcome 6: People should live well and for longer.

The committee works with these outcomes squarely at the front of decisions and recommendations relating to the scrutiny and overview of work contained within its work programme.

What is children and young people’s mental health?

Statistics from the Mental Health Foundation show mental health issues affect about 1 in 10 children and young people, and that up to 70% of those who experience a mental health problem have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.

The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health. Good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults. Given that approximately one third of the UK’s population is made up of children and young people up to the age of 25, it is vital that their health and wellbeing is invested in to ensure future generations of prosperity.

Children’s and adults’ services have traditionally been separated by the turning of age 18. The council operates using a social model definition, rather than this longstanding medical definition, with a view to caring more holistically for young people up to the age of 25. Many partner organisations, including the NHS, have begun to adopt this newer way of developing models of care and providing services.

Background and Rationale

Why are we scrutinising children and young people's mental health?

The committee had been made aware of anecdotal reports to suggest that access to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) had been difficult, and felt that this spotlight review presented a good opportunity to open dialogue across the borough to understand what the mental health offer was to Children and Young People, where they could turn to and what the data in this area reflected.

Mental health conversations have been an emerging trend within the wider public for several years. Numerous high-profile individuals across sport, television, performing arts, and even the Royal Family have led the way in campaigning to remove the stigma around mental health and treatment for people of all ages.

The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is united in its desire to try and achieve positive, sustainable change in the way mental health issues for children and young people are perceived and appreciated across Cheshire East. It is keen to ensure that this area is appropriately resourced with effective services for our young people and that crucially appropriate funding is identified, pursued and awarded.

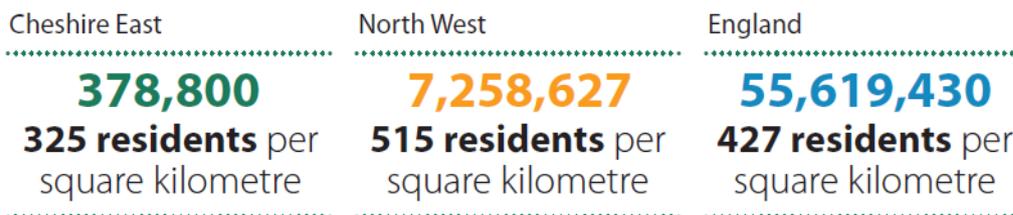
Covid-19 – the global pandemic

This spotlight review was carried out on 24 February 2020, not long before the government instructed the UK enter 'lockdown' on 23 March, following the serious threat of Covid-19. In order to slow the spread of the virus, the whole of the UK had to operate differently; people remained in their homes and worked from home where possible, whilst nearly all other activities ceased.

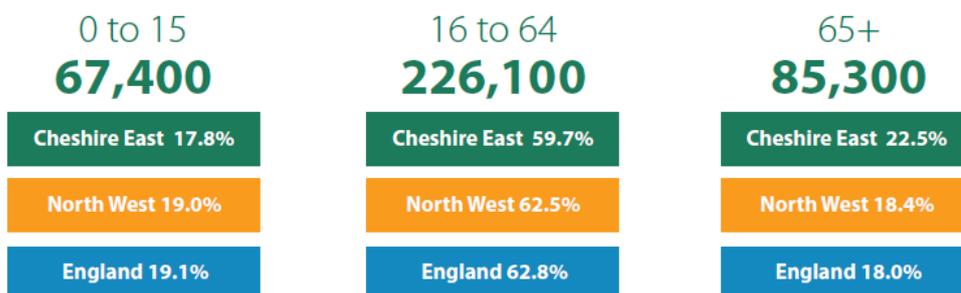
The total impacts of the global pandemic on peoples' physical and mental health are not yet truly understood. However, it has already been recognised that there will be short and long-term impacts on the mental health of people of all ages. It is anticipated that the impacts of Covid-19 on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing will be closely monitored and scrutinised in the future.

Children and young people in Cheshire East by numbers





Age profile



Between the 2001 and 2011 Census, the median age of residents has increased from 40.6 years to 43.6 years. By 2030, the median age of residents is expected to further increase to approximately 47 years.

Population Estimates for UK, Mid-2017, ONS

The Office for National Statistics suggested that through 2027, the numbers of children and young people will only increase marginally. However, if local economic and housing policies are taken into consideration, this figure could rise to around 5,300 over the same period. This emphasises the importance of having the right models of care and support networks in place to ensure that the council and partners can sustainably care for the mental health needs of an increasing population of children and young people.

Personal Accounts from Service Users

The committee watched a video that outlined recent feedback from the Cheshire East Youth Council on the range of mental health services in Cheshire East. The video showed questions posed to the Youth Council and their responses to them.

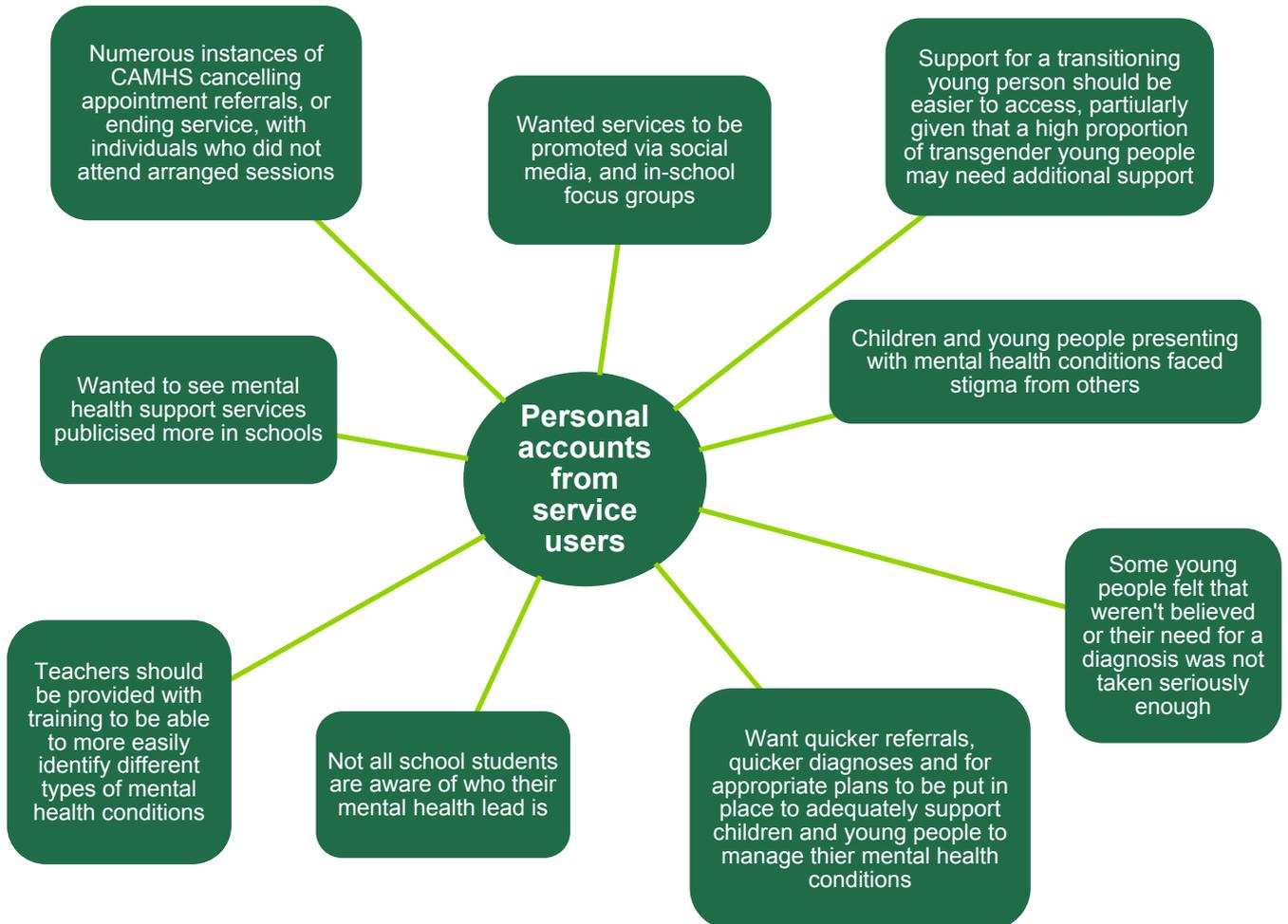


Figure 1 – a summary of the personal accounts of young people who had experienced mental health problems and had sought support from different places.

When asked specifically about what services young people may access if they did not feel they could talk to friends or family, members were advised that there was a range of support that could be accessed, including;

- youth workers;
- pastoral staff in schools (although there was a perception amongst service users that they couldn't do anything about it);
- KOOTH, the online mental wellbeing community;
- Visyon (although the drop-in services and out of hours number wasn't known about); and
- CAMHS (although a referral would most likely be needed in order to access support.)

CAMHS
It appeared to take a long time to receive initial assessments from CAMHS and diagnoses
It was evident that referrals were often complex.
A screening by CAMHS was one step in an assessment process, and it was a challenge to align measurable outcomes.
Mental health is a spectrum and it is complicated. As such, people may need a range of different services, and clinical CAMHS was not always the correct pathway for people.
The link between CAMHS and adults' services is not integrated enough to ensure the right services continue for young people entering adulthood.
Multiple issues were raised regarding CAMHS cancelling or ending services with people who did not attend arranged sessions. This is a significant issue for those whose mental health issues affect them and may prevent them from attending appointments.

Figure 2. a summary of the accounts of services users in respect of CAMHS

The responses of services users in respect of CAMHS were mixed. Whilst some were positive and advised that it had “helped me get back on track and feel more like myself again,” the majority who had taken part in this survey exercise appeared to have been put off by the negative feedback about CAMHS from their peers. These service users noted that CAMHS had not reacted quickly enough to their needs and the time to wait from referral to appointment was too long. Some service users were not aware of the negative stigma surrounding CAMHS, however, the Youth Council identified that it was important that CAMHS promoted its positive news stories and endeavoured to better promote its services through social media and communications.

It was a common thread amongst the feedback from service users that there was a desire for service providers to more regularly and effectively use social media to provide information on available services. Young people also felt that focus groups could be used within school settings to encourage healthy discussions around mental health.

Finally, one young person had noted that, as a transitioning young person, it had not been easy for them to access the basic support that they had felt was necessary and should be available, for a young, transgender person.

Other Available Help
Adults had to meet different criteria than children in order to access services, and it was noted that there was potentially less intensive help and support available for adults. This could have an impact on our young people when they reach the age of 18.
There appeared to be several expert professionals concentrated to one child without any obvious screening tools.
Services need to be joined up to reduce the number of people “falling through the cracks”.
Concern about the effectiveness of Personal, Health, Social and Economic (PHSE) lessons in schools that are currently delivered by teachers who may not have quality knowledge of mental health issues. Suggestion that schools should try to use professionals to teach students about this.
Lot of variation between schools and how they manage PHSE / pastoral support, with some doing this more effectively than others. Is there a way that good models can be replicated between schools in the borough?
Would want to see mental health being publicised more in schools and care for those with mental health needs within a school setting should be fit for purpose for the individual with a dedicated teacher for early intervention.
Ultimately need to have more resource available to provide the range and quality required to support all children and young people in the borough, and to remove the stigma surrounding mental health and accessing support.
When diagnoses are given, a long-term plan needs to be quickly put in place.
Earlier interventions needed at a younger age for children displaying behaviours that could infer mental health struggles.
Should there be an expert in teaching emotional/mental health and dealing with these issues that is in every school. Should a councillor/social worker be attached to every school to provide support and expert advice?
Need to have a better means of measuring what ‘good’ is, and better measure whether services are making children and young people feel better.

Figure 3. a summary of the accounts of service users in respect of other available support and help

The committee was advised that often there was stigma for children and young people who present with a mental health condition. Some young people who knew friends or peers with mental health diagnoses aspired or wanted to receive the same diagnosis. Many young

people had trouble opening up to people and trusting them at times, when they had done so, they hadn't been believed which created a much bigger barrier in the long run. There were issues when young people had an existing condition, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), alongside a separate mental health diagnosis and the pathway for that individual.

Often agencies would refer children and young people back to a department they knew would get support to the individual or they would find an appropriate solution to the situation, rather than spending time assessing who had responsibility for the individual which in turn masked the issue. Young people were clear in their thinking and feedback that people need a range of help and support as mental health needs can be specific to a situation in their life or be part of a long-term condition. They were also clear that preventative support that enables young people to support each other and their own wellbeing was important.

It was noted that the development of mental health issues in young people can often be caused by problems within the family unit. Twelve/six-week programmes that finish at aged 16 are not enough, they should extend to the point at which the young person is ready to finish.

The committee asked the following three key questions:

- 1) What else do you believe young people of Cheshire East need more of to help them be happy and safe?
- 2) If money was no object- what would you like to see transformed across Cheshire East in respect of service provision for Children and Young Peoples Mental Health?
- 3) What would your top two recommendations be to overview and scrutiny committee as a result of this review?

Officers present felt that there was an evident need for more targeted and stigma-free resources available to young people, alongside the offer of in-house services; and that there should be more training in schools to ensure the most effective, holistic support networks are in place for young people in Cheshire East.

Members agreed there was not enough emphasis on personal development delivered by expert services and that not all schools had a full-time counsellor or nurse to enable drop-in sessions for students.

Conclusions

1. Service users did not consistently feel believed and/or understood when they presented with mental health issues.
2. A number of service users had had negative experiences with CAMHS, namely long waiting times to receive an appointment, and the cancellation of service appointments if they had been unable to consistently attend (even if the reason for absence related to their mental health difficulties.)

3. There was a consistent message from service users that organisations and providers could and should make better use of social media to raise awareness of what services are available to young people experiencing mental health difficulties, as well as to try and reduce the stigma surrounding the accessing of these services.
4. Some young people felt that they were prematurely discharged from their services, and that they should be able to identify when they are ready for the support to end.
5. Young people with mental health issues needed consistency and familiarity in their service provision and felt that the relationships and support they had received during childhood should be maintained after turning 18 and transitioning to adulthood.
6. The council, schools, NHS partners and other organisations needed to work together to ensure the most effective, 'wrap-around' service was available to support Cheshire East children experiencing mental health difficulties.

Recommendations

1. **That the council and partners endeavour to create a clearer pathway and screening tool for assessing the needs of children and young people presenting with mental health issues, with standardised outcome measures across services to make it easier to identify where other improvements may be made in the future.**

The ideal situation would be for children and young people to receive a timely diagnosis and a supportive treatment plan that continues until they feel well and able to manage their mental health and wellbeing. As young people grow older and move into adults' services, service quality should not be compromised, and allowances should be made to ensure familiarity between different consultants and services.

2. **That commissioners review the current service provision, and access to services, with a view to ensuring that services are commissioned for children and young people up to the age of 25.**

Evidence received from the entire spotlight review, particularly the feedback from service users, revealed that young people needed more consistency and familiarity from the services they receive. This could be improved by commissioning services for young people up to the age of 25.

3. **That a review be undertaken of the Cheshire East Live Well programme, and that as part of this, the council specifically considers access and availability to wellbeing support services for children, young people and their parents/carers.**

The committee felt it was important that some of the work already underway by the council through the Live Well programme be reviewed, to determine whether certain

strategies or programmes could be improved through pragmatic adaptations that would potentially better meet the needs of children, young people and parents.

4. **That Cabinet look to use and prioritise the Troubled Families process to improve the level and breadth of support available for parents and carers of children and young people experiencing mental health issues.**

The committee recognised the need to offer support to parents struggling with their mental health and as the struggle to parent their children as well as they might. The committee recommended that the Family Focus (Troubled Families) process be utilised and prioritised to improve support for parents.

NHS Commissioners and Providers of Children's Mental Health Services in Cheshire East

The committee considered a shared presentation, provided by NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. Members were informed of how Cheshire CCG and CAMHS work together to provide these services for the young people of Cheshire East, as well as the specific projects and pieces of work being undertaken to make services more resource-effective and provide better outcomes for service users.



Figure 4. Statistics relating to the mental health issues experienced by children and young people in Cheshire East

i-Thrive

Officers explained i-Thrive, part of the new Thrive model, an integrated, person-centred and needs led approach to delivering mental health services for children, young people and families which conceptualises need in four categories: Getting Advice, Getting Help, Getting Risk Support and Getting More Help. The committee heard that commissioners had begun to move towards the Thrive model – to replace the tiered system of defining services and cases – but noted that the current provider still preferred this older system.

A number of recent developments included: an All Age Wellbeing Hub (a single point of referral and triage for both professionals and the public); a single advice line for professionals (health workers, teachers or carers) between 1-5pm for advice and information that follow the Thrive model quadrants; support for KOOTH delivery (online support; and counselling and weekend assessments for children and young people (thereby saving over 40 beds over the last 12 months).

Families with nursery aged children that presented with mental health difficulties were supported through a 12-step programme. The NHS had begun to operate on more of a needs-based approach at a wider community level, however, despite the introduction of the Thrive model, staff were still using the tiered system internally to organise referrals. This led the committee to ask how successfully the new model had been integrated from within the NHS outwards.

CAMHS
CAMHS only provides services to 35% of the children and young people with mental health issues that need support. The other 65% “can’t access” the services due to not meeting accessibility criteria.
CAMHS informed that it had noticed an increased number and proportion of complex cases, particularly of children and young people diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder, as well as other mental health needs.
CAMHS insisted that they do not have a waiting time issue – approximately 3 weeks for appointment (this has never exceeded 8 weeks) and 7 weeks for treatment to begin. CAMHS was clear that the public concern about waiting times is caused by the eligibility criteria and children and young people not being able to access services because they are not eligible. This has gone from a 4 year wait to an 8 week wait within 18 months.
CAMHS had tried to improve wider understanding of what the service can provide, and for which types of symptoms, by sending short information sheets to GPs and other potential referrers.
One of the biggest barriers is enabling commissioners to commission mental health services that move away from mental health belonging to CAMHS. Mental health should be embedded within everything and everyone needs to own this and support this work.
CAMHS / NHS are currently looking at the whole picture of children’s and adult’s mental health services, reviewing the differences in thresholds to determine how improvements could be made to improve the ease of transition for patients.
Central funding is the biggest obstacle to NHS / CAMHS providing the services they need to, to the children that need them.

Figure 5. a summary of the key points made regarding CAMHS

Long Waiting Times

In response to the anecdotal evidence of long waiting times, CAMHS advised that the NHS had begun to review moving away from the traditional ages 0-16 for children's support services, to a 0-25 years approach. It was noted that the eligibility criteria for accessing children's and adult's services were different, but that discussions had commenced on how to resolve this issue.

The committee was alarmed by issues raised by service users, commissioners and provider, regarding service eligibility and the low proportion of children and young people unable to meet eligibility criteria, or being stuck on waiting lists for extensive amounts of time (one particular case reported to the committee noted a child had spent two years on a waiting list before receiving an appointment.)

Early Years

It was also recognised that young people can be on waiting lists for so long that they can fall into crisis before being able to access services. A pilot had been carried out with nursery-aged children to support the early identification and support of mental health difficulties; however, it did not receive further funding to be carried out on a wider scale.

The committee heard that there was a provision for young children aged 0-2 years, related to maternal depression and its impacts on young peoples' mental health, but that this was provided at a Cheshire and Merseyside regional level, not specifically in Cheshire East.

It was reported that there was a greater need for mental health early intervention in Crewe and parts of Macclesfield. Members were keen on the use of all-age assessments and noted that more needed to be done on the provision of early intervention for younger children.

Trailblazer Scheme

Members heard how a 'Trailblazer' bid has been secured, which would enable the piloting of two teams working with a Clinical Lead across 11 schools in Cheshire in Ellesmere Port, Winsford and Crewe. It was anticipated that this would serve around 16,000 pupils, with selection being completed through a needs assessment analysis.

There were a number of other bids planned to be submitted to try and extend this offer across the rest of Cheshire. NHS partners had worked closely with heads of education, reviewed deprivation markers, and used data on A&E admissions to determine which areas the 'Trailblazer' schools would be placed in.

Out of Hours and Crisis Support

An out of hours advice line was open from 5.00 to 11.00pm on weekends and 12.00 to 8.00pm on weekdays. A separate offer of a crisis support line was in development, which

would be 24/7 and provide young people with fast responses in a parallel model to the home support and home crisis service already provided for adults.

Mental Health Leads in Schools

The Department of Health and Social Care and Department for Education (in 2018) introduced the need for schools to have a designated Mental Health Lead, whose role was set out as to:

- coordinate the school's provision for young people's mental health needs;
- build clear working links with children and young people's mental health services so that the school can refer to the NHS when appropriate;
- oversee the mental health interventions that take place in school; and
- give members of staff the knowledge and skills they need to support children with emerging mental health issues.

It was noted that in order for mental health issues to be more effectively managed by schools, general ICT systems needed to be improved to enable concerns to be flagged and referred to the appropriate persons or organisations quicker.

In order to support disengaged students that did not attend school – sometimes owing to their mental health struggles – a peer support network for parents, school nurses and teachers had been established. A peer-to-peer support network was in development to be in place around the end of 2021.

Conclusions

7. CAMHS and the NHS has begun to consider extending its provision of mental health services for young people from up to the age of 16, to the age of 25, including a review of the differences between the accessibility criteria for children's and adult's services.
8. There has been an increased proportion of complex cases, such as children or young people diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder, as well as other mental health needs.
9. It can often be confusing for families to manage referrals and visits to a variety of services, which was hoped to be improved and resolved by the introduction of the iThrive model.
10. Visyon provides services only in the north of the borough; the NHS is looking to extend the offer and commission equitable services across Cheshire East.

11. Although there is some provision of support services for young children aged 0-2, this is provided on a regional basis across Cheshire and Merseyside. There is need for this to be improved at a local level in Cheshire East.
12. Through Early Help and the Emotionally Healthy Children Programme, training has been undertaken to embed mental health support as a priority throughout service provision.

Recommendations

5. **That commissioners be asked to provide a further update to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2021, on the progress of implementing the Thrive model and an update on service accessibility.**

The committee noted that commissioners had introduced the new Thrive model to replace the previous tiered system for defining services. It supports the value of an improved needs-based approach being adopted.

6. **That commissioners and providers ensure that the eligibility and accessibility criteria for services is clear and transparent for children and young people and their families/carers.**

The committee acknowledged the widespread perception and experiences from service users of council services that CAMHS has very long waiting times for appointments in relation to the screening, assessment, diagnosis and treatment of children with complex needs. There was a reality that the longer that young people stay on waiting lists the quicker the likelihood will be they fall into crisis which can result in inappropriate attendance at A&E and admission to hospital.

The committee also noted that Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, who provide CAMHS locally in Cheshire East, was clear they do not have a waiting time issue and stated there was an approximate 3 week waiting time for an appointment and 7 weeks to wait before treatment begins. They stated that public concern about waiting times is caused by the eligibility criteria, and that children and young people not being able to access services is due to them not being eligible.

7. **That Cheshire CCG, CAMHS and the council ensure that all staff who support both children's and adults' services, undertake transition training to secure safe and reasonable handovers of cases when young people leave children's services and enter the adult social care system.**

The committee understood that once a care leaver is over 25 and has technically 'left' the councils children's services umbrella, teams would still try to get in contact up to twice a year (text / email etc.) to check in and see how they are doing.

The committee advocated for the need to extend care up to 25 years by recommending that any future redesign of CAMHS services for those in greatest need should extend up to age 25, rather than 19. This should particularly consider a continuous care plan for those children who are care leavers and those who have been exposed to violence, abuse and trauma as children into adulthood.

8. **That commissioners endeavour to ensure that services provided by Visyon are equitable and available across the whole borough of Cheshire East.**

As at the time of this spotlight review, Visyon was commissioned to provide services in the north of the borough. It was reported that commissioners had begun to look into extending this offer, and the committee agreed that this was important and necessary.

9. **That Cabinet reviews the council's commission for the Emotionally Healthy Children Programme, with a view to ensure that there is a single commissioning strategy that is aligned to the CCG Mental Health Trailblazer project and make it easier to secure future funding.**

The committee understood that mental wellbeing should be embedded in everything that is done through both through the Emotionally Healthy Children Programme, and the Council. One of the biggest barriers to achieving this was the funding available to commission services, with one solution to this being a shift away from CAMHS being responsible for providing all mental health services.

10. **That the Leader of the council write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Minister for Education, to request further investment to improve the access to therapeutic support services for children and young people in Cheshire East.**

The committee heard considerable evidence that the perception and reality of service users and Council Officers that CAMHS service currently has long waiting times for screening, assessment, diagnosis and treatment of children with complex needs. CAMHS contradicted this view stating that the discussed waiting times were a myth, however; CAMHS had quoted that they currently operate a service of approximately 3 weeks for appointment and 7 weeks for treatment to begin.

Whilst it was acknowledged that there was a funding gap for CAMHS (only 35% of children with a clinical need able to access services,) the committee noted that young people can remain on service waiting lists for so long that they experience crisis, sometimes resulting in avoidable A&E presentations and hospital admissions.

11. **That the council and NHS partners work together to review the way in which data relating to children and young people's mental health is collected, to more consistently align to national targets and measures.**

The committee understood that the national target is to provide services to 35% of children and young people, however, data is not collected in the same, consistent way by all organisations and authorities. The committee recommended a change in the way data is collected to align as a consistent measure.

Children's Social Care

The committee were given an overview of the current position on young peoples' mental wellbeing within the children's social care setting, with a focus on cared for children, care leavers, as well as the Child in Need and Child Protection services.

Several pertinent points were put to the committee, including that:

- most referrals that were made to Children's Social Care came from the police and related to domestic abuse;
- all cared for children have experienced trauma and loss – some children in care will be at higher risk of placement instability and thus, ensuring their mental health needs are identified and supported is key;
- statistics showed that there had been an increase in the number of children in need of additional support;
- As a council we do not have a high number of cared for children that end up in the justice system, however, usually when cared for children have offended, they have been high risk cases;
- the current training offer on supporting children's mental health needs for foster carers should be reviewed to ensure it is robust and fit for purpose; and
- there was a need for clearer service pathways and screening tools to be in place to more efficiently and effectively assess children.

In addition, the committee were made aware of two specific projects that had been undertaken by the council:

Bespoke Project

A specialised children's home, operating with a new model of care that sees services come in to visit and support children, rather than them having to go out to speak to lots of different professionals.

Mockingbird Project

Creating a network of foster carers, similar to receiving support from the extended family network, making sure that they have the right support and advice to enable them to be effective carers and provide the best possible care for the children they look after.

Early Help

Following members' questions, it was noted that the Early Help offer could be improved by ensuring that robust plans were put in place around whole families, and that the child in need of support, their parents/carers, siblings and other close supports understand any plan put in place and how they each can support it.

Furthermore, it was suggested that a review of the eligibility criteria for accessing services be undertaken, for more young children in need to be able to receive the support they require.

Leaving Care or Transitioning to Adult's Services

Once a care leaver turns 25, they will have technically left the council's children's services 'umbrella'. However, it was made clear that over-25s that return to the children's services teams are not turned away and will always be supported helped when in need and crisis, such as taking a person to A&E, or with advice on higher education. Children's services teams carry out welfare checks up to twice a year, usually via text or email, to check in and see how the person is managing.

It was reiterated to the committee that there was a shift in thinking towards asking children and young people what they believe the most suitable solutions would be for them, and to from there, work together to find the best solutions and outcomes.

Gaps in Service Provision

There is a gap in service provision for children and young people with mental health issues that are at risk of committing crimes. At present, these young people will only receive fast-tracked help from CAMHS once a crime has been committed, and/or if they are in the youth justice system. This fast-tracking of services is not available for other Early Help services.

This does not help the early intervention/prevention agenda and, if it were to be revised, a greater number of children could be provided with the support and mental health services they need that could prevent them from committing crimes and ending up in the youth justice service.

Adoption Counts

Within the wider update on Children's Social Care, the committee received information from Adoption Counts – a new, collaborative adoption agency that has brought together the professional expertise of five local authorities including Cheshire East Council – who work with adopters and ensure that adopted families have the most stable and supportive environment possible.

The key points made during this presentation to members were:

- Statistics showed that approximately one quarter to one third of all adoptive families are struggling significantly, to the extent that they require a considerable amount of support.
- Adoption Counts works with adopters before they adopt to prepare discussions around adoption and the birth family.
- Of the five local authorities that co-commissioned Adoption Counts, Cheshire East has the highest numbers of referrals, which is significant when considering that its population size (roughly 380,000) is a lot lower than that provided for by Manchester City Council (approx. 550,000 residents).
- It had been recognised in national research that CAMHS had not always been as responsive as it had needed to be to meet the specific needs of adoptive families.
- If CAMHS, Education and Children's Social Care services were integrated more effectively, the services available to adoptive families would improve.
- Adoptive children need tailored and sophisticated mental health services too, which needed to be acknowledged properly by commissioners. A lot of the time, adoptive children may not have diagnosable mental health issues, but the majority have still benefitted from some form of therapeutic intervention, and that this has helped to prevent the development of more significant mental health issues.
- Children's mental health should be at the forefront of health agendas with a view to securing long-term solutions for affected children.

Following further questioning by the committee, it was noted that the service provided by Adoption Counts was both ground-breaking and evidently effective in making sure that the needs of adoptive children and their adopters are met. With the commission for this service due to end soon, it was made clear to the committee that, were the five local authorities not to re-commission the service, it would increase the pressure and cost on other council services, and result in potentially less support available for adoptive families.

The committee heard that the Adoption Counts model had proved to be an effective invest-to-save model for each of the involved local authorities and that last summer, all five had written to the Department of Education to request an increase in funding to support the continuation of the service, but that this was rejected.

Conclusions

13. The council has undertaken two important and innovative pieces of work through the Bespoke and Mockingbird Projects, the successes of which should be monitored and considered as to whether their models of work could be replicated on a wider scale.
14. Children and young people who are at risk of entering the youth justice system need earlier intervention and preventative support.
15. A more joined-up approach to the commissioning of children and young people's mental health services, between Cheshire CCG and the council, would help to ensure that the right type, amount and coverage of services were provided.

16. The threshold for accessing CAMHS is too high, which has resulted in too many children and young people in need of help, being without support.
17. There is a need for clearer pathways and screening tools to be implemented, to more efficiently and effectively assess and refer children to the correct services.
18. The service model used by Adoption Counts had proven to be cost effective and provided local authorities with an opportunity to invest-to-save, whilst providing a highly effective service for adoptive children and families.
19. If CAMHS, Education and Children's Social Care services were better integrated, adoptive families would likely receive a more effective, holistic service.
20. Adoptive children, even those who may not have diagnosed or suspected mental health difficulties, need tailored and sophisticated support. Many have benefitted from therapeutic interventions, and it is thought that such support can help to prevent the development of mental health issues.

Recommendations

12. **That the Leader of the council write to the Department of Education to request that funding for the Adoption Counts service be continued and prioritised, and encourage each of the partner authorities receiving the Adoption Counts service to do the same, to lobby for more funding for this important service.**

The committee noted how important it was that adoptive children and families receive the right, timely services that they need, and that Adoption Counts had supported Cheshire East Council to do this in a cost-effective manner.

13. **That full Council be asked to ensure its Budget is adjusted to accommodate the cost required to re-commission Adoption Counts, provided that the other local authorities put forward their contributions also.**

Were additional funding not to be available to renew the Adoption Counts commission, it is important that the council, and the four other local authorities partnered in the commission, take the initiative to ensure that it is accounted for in their budgets.

14. **That the council and partners ensure that the joined-up working arrangements relating to adoption are sustained and properly funded, to secure positive long-term outcomes for adoptive children and families in Cheshire East.**

The committee agreed that adoptive parents should have the same rights as any other parents. There was a risk attached to the cessation of funding. The committee recommended writing to the Department of Education to express concerns and ask

what its plan is for continuation. Scrutiny do not want short termism, want long term outcomes.

15. That the outcomes of the council's Bespoke Project be reviewed, and its successes be used to inform future commissions and projects.

Through the Bespoke Project, the council had been able to trial an innovative and new approach to providing services in an efficient and effective way to children and young people. If this new model of delivery proves to be successful and create positive outcomes for service users, the committee agreed that it should be used as part of the development of future commissions and projects.

16. That a review be carried out to ascertain best practice in areas where a 24/7 crisis offer is already in place, and how this type of crisis service could be provided in the most effective, joined-up way in Cheshire East.

The committee understood that Street Triage was standardised across the borough and it actively worked to dissuade children and young people from being taken to custody suites by Police when suffering a mental health breakdown typically on a Friday and/or Saturday evening.

Council-Commissioned Services

The committee was informed that the Cheshire East All Age Mental Health Strategy 2019-22 was in development; the overview and scrutiny of the strategy was undertaken around the time this review was undertaken (February 2020). The strategy was intended to provide better outcomes for all living in Cheshire East who had a functional mental health condition, i.e. one that has a predominant psychological cause, such as depression, schizophrenia, mood disorders and anxiety.

The strategy proposed a whole system approach to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people, adults and their families, and was supported by integrated health and social care services, resilient communities, inclusive employers and services that maximise independence and choice.

Further scrutiny and questioning by the committee revealed that:

- statistics and performance measures needed to be analysed further to assess the gaps in funding and success of joint contract management arrangements with Cheshire CCG;
- there was a proposed offer of establishing Early Start Hubs, targeted at bringing different agencies and services together to 'wrap around' support for families; and
- the integration of commissioning and delivery needs had to be the way forward, to ensure the most effective provision and outcomes of services.

The committee also heard that the council had worked to establish a new school in Crewe, which would be opened to specifically support children and young people with mental health needs, who due to their needs, cannot be supported effectively within a mainstream school.

As a follow-up to the previous presentations it had received, the committee queried the experiences of long waiting times for children to receive appointments from CAMHS. Members heard of the case of one child who unfortunately had to wait two years for an appointment, following their referral to CAMHS.

Conclusions

21. The voice of children, and the priorities of children and young people, were central to the commission of any service and performance review of any ongoing commission.
22. The Cheshire East All-Age Mental Health Strategy 2019-22 had been recently developed, with a view to ensuring mental health support is in place for people from birth.

Recommendations

- 17. That the council and Cheshire CCG work together to ensure that commissioning and contract management arrangements are more closely and effectively integrated.**

It was clear from the committee's investigations that through more effective joint-arrangements and co-commissioning, the council and partners would be able to reduce the gaps in services and improve outcomes for service users.

Education

The council has two teams under the service area of Education, which directly support children and young people with mental health difficulties:

- (1) the Medical Needs Tuition Team
- (2) Safeguarding Children in Education Settings (SCIES) Team

The committee was informed that there had been increased number of children not able to access/attend school due to mental health problems. Furthermore, there was a cohort of young people who are unengaged and potentially unknown to services, they spend their time in their bedrooms and are becoming a growing concern for the council and schools.

There was some anecdotal evidence to suggest that CAMHS will not go out and visit disengaged young people to provide them with appointments. The committee was concerned to hear that home visits were not undertaken, even if service users had missed appointments due to their mental health and wellbeing issues preventing them from leaving their homes. It was reported that if service users missed three appointments, their service with CAMHS would be ended.

Cornerstones Project

This project was established to support primary school children on the cusp of exclusion, with a focus on understanding and resolving behaviour escalations. Since the project had been put in place, there had not been any primary school exclusions in the last year. Following its early success, the project had been extended to work with children that had struggled to adjust and adapt to moving from primary to secondary school.

Support in Schools

Ofsted had changed some of its focus from being target and achievement focused, to prioritising the welfare and emotional support needs of children as part of the curriculum, which has influenced how schools formed their curricula.

It was noted by the committee that teachers – already under the pressure and strain of delivering more with less resources – did not always have the capacity to take on further responsibility with regards to supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing. Too much pressure and responsibility can lead teachers to feel mentally unwell themselves and as such, the Council had begun working with trade unions to improve stress awareness and resiliency.

Elective Home Education

The council had overhauled its systems and approach towards children who are electively home educated. After being notified of a parent(s)/carer(s) wanting to electively home

educate, the council will visit the family and provide advice on the impact of elective home education, especially if there are students with mental health conditions.

The key to effectively managing a request to electively home educate is to support a full understanding of the rationale behind the decision, for example, if this is due to issues within the school such as bullying, which could potentially be resolved.

Ultimately, the council is always supportive of families' decisions to electively home educate, however, if there are concerns that this may not be suitable or ideal for students, the council would quickly raise these with the parent(s) and if required, challenge them on their decision.

The Lodge

The committee was informed of the Lodge – an alternative education provider that can deliver quality, short-term, alternative provision for the most vulnerable learners. Testimonials from schools that had used the Lodge noted that it offered a structured programme for attendees that facilitated personal development and focused on supporting students to ready themselves for returning to their school environment.

Placements at the Lodge had been found to be popular with both students and parents, with transition into the provision, communication, safeguarding and transition back to school being highly effective.

It was noted that the Lodge was just one alternative education provider that had been used by schools in Cheshire East. Funds had been allocated to clusters of schools from across the borough, which had then determined what alternative education provision was required on a more local level.

Conclusions

23. The Medical Needs Team reported that approximately 80% of cases they had supported had related to mental health issues.
24. The Cornerstones Project had successfully supported primary schools to more effectively manage pupil behaviour escalation and resolve issues before the need for school exclusion arose.
25. Although CAMHS had reported undertaking home visits to disengaged young people, there was anecdotal evidence that there was resistance to undertake these.
26. The Lodge was one example of an alternative education provider that had been used to provide vulnerable pupils with short-term structured programmes for vulnerable learners that support them to return to their usual school environments.

Recommendations

- 18. That the council monitors the impact of alternative education service provisions to support young people and reduce rates of exclusions.**

Although the council does not have capacity to put further funding into this type of provision, the committee recommended that the successes of the Lodge be considered when its annual funding review is carried out.

- 19. That CAMHS and commissioners urgently review the support provided to children and young people who are unable to leave their homes to attend their scheduled appointments.**

The committee was concerned by the evidence it had received throughout the spotlight review that had revealed that in some instances where young people had not been able to attend three service appointments – reportedly due to the impacts of their mental health and wellbeing issues preventing them from feeling able to leave their homes to attend these – CAMHS had ended their services.

The committee agreed that, in cases such as these, it was unacceptable that CAMHS should end services without a home visit.

- 20. That commissioners consider the commissioning of specialist health visitors to support schools in their teaching and managing of students' mental health and wellbeing.**

The committee stressed how important it was that schools were able to provide the right amount of information and teaching on young peoples' mental health and wellbeing, and in the most effective format. Specialist health visitors coming into schools would be able to support teachers and help to deliver lessons on this, and reduce the pressure on teaching staff to be the primary source of support for matters relating to student's mental health and wellbeing.

Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS)

The committee received information on the work of the Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS), and the wide range of support (including an allocated worker) provided to young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) – which in Cheshire East is approximately 150 people.

Most children and young people accessing the service have complex needs (often attributed to mental health issues) and there are notably fewer requiring less intervention. The young people traditionally have low aspirations and ambitions, and do not work well within an education setting therefore creative alternatives and solutions must be found. Importantly the work being done with this cohort of young people is not just about qualifications, but also about social interactions. This is especially true for those that do not have a diagnosable mental health issue (e.g. this could be low self-esteem or, isolation), yet they are still struggling and require some type of mental health support as part of their solutions.

There had been an increase in mental health issues experienced by young people identifying as lesbian, bi-sexual, gay or transgender (LGBT+). Moreover, of the 40 young people that had attended and found support with the Utopia Group in Crewe, notably a large percentage have a mental health condition – workers are available to support these young people.

Training Opportunities

It was reported that there was a proportion of young people each year (approximately 100) who were not able to access apprenticeship opportunities, despite there being a prevalence of such opportunities in both Crewe and Macclesfield.

This meant that different, more creative approaches were needed for young people across the borough that need more supported help, work experience with a dedicated support and/or mentoring system in the workplace. Supported Internships are effective but are only available for people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND.)

In order to provide better support for young people who are NEET, there needs to be more training providers, providing a wider range of opportunities. The model of supported internships could be used to help improve the opportunities on offer and improve the positive outcomes of young people who are NEET.

Supporting Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training

Following questions from members regarding what can be done to better support these young people, it was heard that there needed to be an improved solution for supporting disengaged young people.

The courses provided by the IYSS were available for Key Stage 4 students and those that had dropped out of school, but colleges were prepared to offer reduced-hour approaches if this would better suit a young person's needs better.

Conclusions

27. There is a potential for young people who are NEET to feel mental health challenges as a result of their situation.
28. The cases presented to the service are often complex and require a multidisciplinary approach to find a solution and identify the correct support.
29. There is potentially a gap in the provision of services in the summer holiday period, particularly for students preparing to transition from secondary school to college.

Recommendations

21. **That CAMHS, Cheshire CCG and the council work together to review and improve the way in which support is targeted and provided to young people that do not attend school, college, training or work due to their mental health struggles.**

The committee acknowledged that disengaged young people residing in their bedroom are becoming a growing concern for council and schools. This cohort of young people typically do not attend school, college or work due to poor mental health.

The committee accepted the anecdotal evidence that CAMHS will not go out and visit disengaged young people to give them their appointments and recommended improved access and closer links to CAMHS for disengaged young people who are struggling to attend school, training or work, as the current service design does not result in home visits being delivered by qualified nurses or therapists.

Some young people may not have a diagnosable mental health issue (e.g. they could have low self-esteem or isolate themselves,) but they still clearly require some type of mental health support as part of their solution that parents, schools and youth services are not equipped to deliver currently.

Participation Service

The council's Participation Service is closely linked to the Integrated Youth Support Service. The committee heard that the Youth Council and young people working with the Participation Service were keen to influence the delivery of mental health support and services.

Members were advised that, whilst there was a lot on offer to young people, the feedback from the Youth Council and other groups was that the young people did not know enough about what was on offer.

It was reported that users of the Participation Service had reported a negative stigma regarding CAMHS, and that many of the personal accounts of service users (as aforementioned in this report) had also been reported to this service. For example, there was feedback from some young people that they were not aware of schools having designated Mental Health Leads. As there had been no specific direction or requirement for these posts to have a uniform title, schools named the role differently, which had made it unclear to students who to go to for mental health queries and support.

The committee heard that the service had worked with young people on the awareness and impacts of cyber bullying, and how social media posts are monitored. It was noted that better awareness of KOOTH – how to access it and what benefits young people could gain from using it – would be beneficial, and that school social media accounts and communications to students and parents could be used to promote it.

Conclusions

30. The Participation Service had received feedback that there had been confusion regarding the designated mental health leads at schools, and that across different schools they had different titles.
31. The council and partners ensure a broad provision of effective services for children and young people, however, feedback suggested that there could be greater awareness and understanding of the offer and how to access services.

Recommendations

22. **That the council and partners work together to make sure that the offer of online support services is refreshed and promoted, and that it is equitable for all young people in the borough.**

The committee recognised that KOOTH, and other similar services, could be better promoted. Given the inequality at present, the committee acknowledged there was a feeling of postcode lottery with KOOTH, as only two thirds of the service is commissioned by the CCG.

23. That schools in Cheshire East be asked to use a consistent title for the designated Mental Health Leads.

In order for young people to have the awareness and understanding of who their school's mental health lead is and what they do, it would be helpful for there to be a consistent approach to the name used by Cheshire East schools to identify this role.

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OPEN

Children and Families Committee

Monday 13 November 2023

Unregulated and Unregistered Provision Protocol

**Report of: Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's
Services**

Report Reference No: CF/30/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is for committee to consider the challenges locally and nationally in relation to the use of unregulated and unregistered provision for cared for children and to offer scrutiny of the protocol that will offer frontline practitioners and managers a practice framework in these situations.
- 2 The report aims to:
 - Outline the local and national context in which sufficiency challenges are leading the arrangements being used
 - Identify the extent of usage of unregulated and unregistered placements for children in Cheshire East, establishing the potential risks associated with these arrangements.

Provide members with the opportunity to scrutinise the protocol in its intention to safeguarding vulnerable children and young people.

Executive Summary

- 3 This report addresses the critical issue of unregulated and unregistered placements for cared for children. The local authority has a legal obligation to cared for children and young people in placements that are regulated by fostering regulations, Ofsted or the Care Quality

Commission. Nationally sufficiency challenges are well evidenced and it is recognised that for a small but significantly vulnerable group of children and young people, local authorities are left with no other option but to source care arrangements that operate outside of the regulatory and legal framework. These are always time limited and run parallel to extensive searches for regulated homes to ensure that children don't drift in these arrangements. These arrangements often incur higher costs and reputational risk from an Ofsted perspective.

- 4 Historically when we have needed to temporarily source these types of arrangements the DCS has shared information with Ofsted to offer transparency.
- 5 In Cheshire East the number of children in these arrangements is low, never more than three in the past three years and currently (October 2023) we have one child in this arrangement however a regulated setting has now been identified and a transition plan is in place
- 6 Developing safe practices whilst in these temporary arrangements, is essential to ensure that any risk associated with these arrangements to the child, the organisation and in relation to our regulator are sufficiently mitigated.
- 7 The service has developed a protocol to offer an operating model for frontline colleagues and partners and also offers a direct line of sight to the DCS, who is accountable for these arrangements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider the challenges leading to the use of unregulated and unregistered placements, the extent of the use of these placements in Cheshire East, and the implications for children and young people in these placements.
2. Scrutinise the protocol to ensure it effectively safeguards children in these arrangements and that there is appropriate oversight from the Executive Director of Children's Services.

Background

- 8 The local authority has a statutory duty to safeguard children and young people who are at risk of or who are experiencing significant harm. When that threshold is met, the local authority is required to identify a suitably matched home, which can take the form of a family

arrangement, a fostering arrangement, residential care where needed, supported accommodation for older young people or where the permanency plan is adoption, an adoptive placement.

- 9 Cheshire East is an outlier in relation to the population of cared for children comparable to our statutory neighbours and England average and therefore our ambition and need to create the right amount of provision in the most appropriate settings is required. This approach is underpinned by a sufficiency strategy and regional engagement. Cheshire East are also currently mobilising our own residential provision with the first home due to open in December 2023. However, there is more to do to locally and nationally to ensure that the number of homes required matches the demand. In Cheshire East we need more foster carers to be able to provide short- and long-term care arrangements so that children can remain within their communities, connected to family, friends and existing services such as schools and health organisations.
- 10 Covid-19 had a significant impact on the availability of suitable homes for children and young people. Prior to the pandemic Cheshire East had not mobilised an unregistered care arrangement, however during the pandemic there was a requirement to operate in this way for 3 children. The impact of increased demand for care and a reduction in the volume of new providers registering with Ofsted resulted in the use of unregulated and unregistered arrangements for many local authorities.
- 11 The regulators, Ofsted are very clear in the application of the law and these arrangements must only be ever used when absolutely no other option is available.
- 12 Services worked hard to ensure that these arrangements were temporary and grounded in clear risk assessment, in recognition that these arrangements are illegal. Senior managers offer scrutiny of these arrangements to ensure that any risk associated is mitigated and to ensure that drift does not occur.
- 13 Currently Cheshire East has only one young people in an unregistered childrens home arrangement and a transition plan is in place to move this young person to a regulated placement imminently.
- 14 The service has developed a working protocol to ensure that practice standards are clear, and expectations are met if we were to require to operate in this way in the future.
- 15 The sufficiency strategy is currently under review to ensure that the demand for our services can be met without the necessity for the use of unregistered or unregulated arrangements. This strategy will be presented to the children and families committee in January 2024.

Consultation and Engagement

- 16 Consultation has taken place in the coproduction of the protocol to ensure that key stakeholders are cited on the practice approach.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 17 The recommendations have been made in order to mitigate risks to children during any unregistered/unregulated arrangement.

Other Options Considered

- 18 An options appraisal must be completed for:

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	The safeguarding of our children in unregistered/unregulated settings may be compromised.	Children are not adequately safeguarded. We break the law.

Legal Implications

- 19 Every Local Authority has a duty to accommodate children, the range of placements is set out in Section 22C CA 1989 where they cannot safely live with a parent, someone with Parental Responsibility or who previously held it however, if such a person is unavailable or it is inconsistent with a child's welfare to do so, a Local Authority must place a child in the 'most appropriate placement available'. Of the range of placements set out in S22c, if a placement is proposed with a family member, it is regulated under the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010.
- 20 Where a placement cannot be with a family member then accommodation other than with a foster carer but involving a care element in a care or residential home requires OSTED registration. This is unlawful for children under 16 who are cared for, and such providers are committing a criminal offence not registering with OFSTED.
- 21 The High Court may authorise the deprivation of liberty of a child in an unregistered provision so long as this is in the best interests of the child (President of the Family Division's Guidance September 2023). For clarity, the criteria must be met for such a deprivation of liberty, and it is a matter of last resort as opposed to a way of regulating care provision.
- 22 It is unlawful for a child under 16 to be in unregulated provision and for 16 and over unregulated accommodation must as of October 2023 be regulated by OFSTED following the introduction of the Supported Accommodation

(England) Regulations 2023. The Statutory Guidance underpinning these regulations clarifies that although 16- and 17-year-old looked after children may be in supported accommodation requiring no care element that the sector is now subject to OFSTED oversight and practice standards.

- 23 This protocol enables practitioners to make lawful decisions in a climate of increased regulation and scarce provision.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 24 The protocol for unregulated and unregistered children's placements can potentially contribute to cost savings for Cheshire East Council in alignment with their medium-term financial strategy in the following ways:
- 25 **Improved Efficiency and Accountability:** By implementing a robust protocol, the council can ensure that placements are well-regulated and compliant with safety and quality standards. This reduces the risk of placements being disrupted and the need for an unregulated/unregistered placement.
- 26 **Preventive Measures:** The protocol raises awareness which can impact practice, this can ultimately reduce the occurrence of issues that require costly interventions or remediation.
- 27 **Reduced Legal and Liability Expenses:** Implementing a strong regulatory framework can help reduce the likelihood of legal and liability issues arising from poorly managed placements, saving the council significant legal fees.
- 28 **Minimised Emergency Placements:** With a well-regulated system, the need for emergency placements due to the breakdown of existing arrangements may decrease. Emergency placements are often more costly than planned, stable placements.
- 29 **Streamlined Monitoring:** An effective protocol includes comprehensive monitoring systems that can identify and address issues at an early stage, reducing the likelihood of severe problems that would necessitate significant resources to rectify.
- 30 **Improved Outcomes:** Placing a stronger emphasis on the well-being of children through regulated placements can lead to better educational and developmental outcomes, potentially reducing the long-term financial pressures associated with children requiring additional support services.
- 31 **Positive Public Perception:** A council that is actively ensuring the safety and well-being of children in its care through regulated placements may

enhance its reputation, which can positively impact its ability to attract funding, grants, and partnerships.

- 32 While implementing and maintaining a robust protocol may require initial investments in training, and leadership oversight, the long-term benefits of reducing risks, improving outcomes, and mitigating costly issues can contribute to cost savings in line with Cheshire East Council's medium-term financial strategy.

Policy

33

<p>An open and enabling organisation</p> <p>(Include which aim and priority)</p>	<p>A council which empowers and cares about people</p> <p>(Include which aim and priority)</p>	<p>A thriving and sustainable place</p> <p>(Include which aim and priority)</p>
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 34 Equality and impact assessment has been completed in relation to the overarching cared for children and care leavers strategy.

Human Resources

- 35 No Implications.

Risk Management

- 36 No Implications.

Rural Communities

- 37 No Implications.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 38 This report aims to ensure the highest safeguards are in place to support our vulnerable cared for children and young people.

Public Health

- 39 No implications.

Climate Change

- 40 The service is committed to the council priority to become carbon neutral.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Samantha Walker samantha.walker@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Unregulated and Unregistered Provision Protocol
Background Papers:	

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Unregulated and Unregistered Provision Protocol

1. Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to outline the definition of unregulated/unregistered provision, state our clear zero tolerance position in relation to their use and outline the process for social workers, managers, senior leaders, and decision-makers should we find no other option for placing a child in an emergency.

This protocol forms an important element of Cheshire East's Sufficiency Strategy for Cared for Children and should be read in conjunction with this document.

2. Scope

Cheshire East are clear that unregulated and unregistered provision should not be used for any child under the age of eighteen, or for any young person who requires a level of care as opposed to support based on their level of need.

However, due to ongoing sufficiency demands, there may be exceptional circumstances whereby the need for an unregistered or unregulated provision may be necessary, when all other options have been explored, exhausted, and evidenced.

3. Background

Due to a rise in demand for children's placements and a lack of suitable placements being available, more and more unregistered, and unregulated arrangements are being made nationally. The rise in demand is causing a huge spike in the cost of registered placements, but also means unregistered arrangements are now becoming hugely expensive and are increasingly unsafe. Local investments are being made into solutions for registered provision and increasing our foster carers within Cheshire East. This protocol aims to ensure that if we do have a need for an unregistered/unregulated arrangement, that we ensure the highest level of safeguarding and wrap-around support, with clear senior management oversight, and that it is used for the shortest possible length of time.

Under the Care Standards Act (2000), settings and domiciliary services that provide both care and accommodation for young people under the age of 18 are required to register with the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). These include children's homes and fostering services, in which most children in care are accommodated (registered provision).

Provision for children in care that is not required to register with Ofsted (unregulated provision) includes:

1. Accommodation for children (usually over the age of 16) who need support to live independently rather than full-time care (Ofsted, 2017a).
 - This comprises of 'Independent living' (such as in a flat, lodgings, bedsit, bed, and breakfast accommodation, or with friends) with or without formal support.

2. Temporary care and accommodation for children in mobile settings or lettings arrangements e.g., boats, holiday cottages and static caravans (Ofsted, 2017a, 2017b). Ofsted report that this exemption is for leisure, cultural or educational activities and is about the **purpose/intent** of a placement.

If a provider meets the definition of care and accommodation in the Care Standards Act but does not register with Ofsted, then they are operating illegally and are open to prosecution (unregistered provision).

4. Definition

The legal definition of unregulated and unregistered placements are as follows:

Unregulated accommodation is defined in section 22(c)(6)(d) Children Act 1989 as being permitted as 'other arrangements' in accordance with any regulations issued. These kinds of provisions include supported living arrangements for 16- and 17-year-olds. Regulations issued in 2010 make it illegal to place any child under 16 in unregistered accommodation (ref 1*). **Unregulated accommodation is not overseen by OFSTED.** The only exception is for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children whose age is disputed (ref 2*). **It is intended minimum standards will be introduced in regulations for the placement of 16- and 17-year-olds in unregulated provision.** The regulation of these types of provision is covered by the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and the amendment regulations at Ref 1 below.

Unregistered accommodation is where a child is being provided with some type of 'care' but the provider is not registered with OFSTED the regulator. Unregistered children's home providers may not realise they require registration with OFSTED to provide care. However, under section 11 of the CSA (Care Standards Act 2000) and Section 5 of RISCA (Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Act Wales 2016), there is such a requirement where registration may not be required, because the provision falls within the terms of "unregulated provision" set out above which falls outside Ofsted and CIW's scope of registration, or that a statutory exemption applies. (ref 3*)

Regulations issued in 2010 make it illegal to place any child <16 in unregistered accommodation (ref 1*).

**Ref 1: The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021*

**Ref 2: the same, Regulation 28B (whilst age remains disputed).*

**Ref 3: regulation 3(2) of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.*

Ofsted's definition: -

Unregistered provision is when a child who's being provided with some form of 'care' is living somewhere that is not registered with Ofsted. **This is illegal.** Once a provider delivers a care element as well as accommodation, they must register as a children's home. It's an offence not to.

Unregulated provision is allowed in law. This is when children (usually over the age of 16) don't need full-time care and maybe in a placement that isn't quality assured such as flat by themselves. It can also include when an emergency has happened causing children on a Care Order or Interim Care Order to need to returned home.

It is important to note that **Unregulated provision** also applies to cared for children who are living with family and friend's foster carers, where they have not been approved by the fostering panel under the relevant fostering regulations. These placements may have arisen in the following circumstances:

- a child is placed with relatives or family and friends, and a viability assessment has not been completed or signed off by the agency decision maker (ADM).
- Where a child is living with a family member, and this is a 'family arrangement' but the local authority has been significantly involved in the arrangement e.g., advising parents that the child cannot removed from the family member or that they need supervised contact.
- The temporary foster-care approval under Regulation 24 agreement has lapsed, in that it has gone beyond the 16-week assessment period and an extension for a further eight weeks under Regulation 25 (CPPCR Regs 2010), has not been sought from the Fostering Panel.
- The Regulation 25 agreement has lapsed after 24 weeks, and the completed full fostering assessment has not yet been presented to Fostering Panel within this timescale.
- The Connected Persons fostering assessment has been presented to Fostering Panel and Panel have not recommended approval; the child remains in the care of the adults who are being assessed but are not approved.
- Where the court has granted an Interim Care Order (ICO) and decide to place a child with a carer who is not approved as a foster carer as they do not meet fostering regulations, or where the carer has never been assessed.
- The Police have used their powers to intervene and remove a child from home into a place of safety for 72 hours; and have placed the child with a family or friend's carer where an initial viability assessment has not been completed.

5. Management oversight and decision making

An unregulated or unregistered setting cannot be approved without authorisation from:

- **Deborah Woodcock – DCS Executive Director of Children’s Services**
- **Kerry Birtles – Director of Children’s Social Care**

Process for escalation:



Audit and oversight will include the following:

- At least weekly visits to the child/young person within the unregistered/unregulated placement
- Management case notes added on Liquid Logic reviewing the placement
- Placements team to update Liquid Logic each week on their progress with new searches or alternatives
- Review at Triple S panel, notes to be added to Liquid Logic
- Standard item on SCLT agenda
- Review at DMT
- Reviewed monthly in the provision meeting with head of service, DCS and director of children's social care
- Monthly audits
- Corporate Parenting committee notified in regular reporting

6. Supporting information:

Where a local authority is considering applying for deprivation of liberty order (DOLS) authorisation to restrict liberty the President of the Family Division has released a practice note regarding unregistered provision to support the local authority [PG-Placements-in-unregistered-childrens-homes-in-Eng-or-unregistered-care-home-services-in-Wales-NOV-2019..pdf \(judiciary.uk\)](#).

EXAMPLES FOR PRACTICE:

The Department for Education released a research report Feb 2020 ' Use of unregulated and unregistered provision in children in care' which includes example see page 48 [Research report template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).

Placement	Type	Reason	Notification process
Children's Home	Unregistered	Crisis & no other placement options available	Executive Director of Children's Services notified as per process
16+ Supported Accommodation	Unregistered as of 28 th October 2023	16+ semi-independent supported accommodation providers are now subject to a registration process by Ofsted, will be unregistered from 28 th October 2023 if application is not made.	Executive Director of Children's Services process to be followed

Rented, B&B, hotel accommodation	Unregulated	Crisis & no other placement options available	Executive Director of Children's Services notified as per process
Short breaks in caravan, holiday cottage, boats	Unregulated	Crisis & no other placement options available or preparation for a placement, needing some time away with a provider to reset prior to transition.	Executive Director of Children's Services notified as per process
Connected Persons (Family and Friends, Kinship)	Unregulated	24-week timescale reached but assessment has not been to Fostering Panel - information missing	Director Children's Services is notified of CSC exceeding 24-week timeframe Notify: 1. Panel Advisor (Fostering), 2. Fostering ADM, 3. Fostering Service Manager
Child on CO or ICO returns to parents	Unregulated under 2010 regs	Unplanned or emergency (can include Parent and Child placement in some circumstances)	Approval by AD Corporate Parenting following recommendation by social workers

Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2023-24

Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item
CF/34/23-24	11/12/2023	SENIF policy with consultation	Change allocation of funding from an hourly rate to a banding formula aligning with reforms to EHCP funding.	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	Yes	Yes	Fair; Open	No	No
CF/20/23-24	18/01/2024	Speech and Language Therapy	The Paediatric Speech and Language service (SALT) – The Council has a duty to provide speech, language and communication (SLCN) services to children under the Children's and Families Act 2014 Part 3. This is for children with a EHCP Part F (Education), but also with a need for early identification, prevention and support. The service pathways are linked to the health provision including access to health clinics and a need for service continuity within education and community settings. The Council needs to review and recommission this service, preferably in-conjunction with our health partners to provide a service that will be fit for the future and that rises to the increasing demands for better identification of children's needs within the community.	Director of Commissioning	Yes	Yes	Fair	Yes	No

Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2023-24

Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item
AH/20/2023-24 & CF/45/23-24	18/01/2024	One You Recommission	Seek approval for reprourement and delegation of award decision to Executive Director	Director of Commissioning	TBC	TBC	Fair	TBC	TBC
AH/22/2023-24 & CF/18/23-24	18/01/2024	Substance Misuse Recommission	To be confirmed	Director of Commissioning	Yes	Yes	Fair	No	No
CF/19/23-24	18/01/2024	Children and Families Scorecard Q2	To ensure the Committee has oversight of Children and Families performance	Executive Director of Children's Services	No	No	Open	No	No
CF/31/22-23	18/01/2024	School Catering Review Outcomes	To consider the options appraisal for school catering	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	No	Yes	Open;#Fair	No	Yes
CF/57/22-23	18/01/2024	Development of Family Hubs Update Report	To provide Children and Families Committee with an update on the development of family hubs in Cheshire East, review progress of the transformation so far, and next steps.	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	No	No	Fair	Yes	No
CF/08/23-24	18/01/2024	Third Financial Review of 2023/24 (Children & Families Committee)	This report outlines how the Council is managing resources to provide value for money services during the 2023/24 financial year. The purpose of the report is to note and comment on the Third Financial Review and Performance position of 2023/24 and approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	Open	Yes	No

Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2023-24

Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item
CF/10/23-24	18/01/2024	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2024/25 - 2027/28 Provisional Settlement Update (Children & Families Committee)	All Committees were being asked to provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2023. Responses to the consultation would be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee to support that Committee in making recommendations to Council on changes to the current financial strategy.	Director of Finance & Customer Services	Yes	No	Open	Yes	No

Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2023-24

Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item
CF/29/23-24	18/01/2024	Cheshire East Sufficiency Strategy for Cared for Children 2024-25	<p>The Statutory Guidance for Sufficiency (s22 of the Children Act, 1989) sets out a requirement for Local Authorities to work with key partners to be in a position to secure, where reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in care in their local authority area which meets the needs of children and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area ('the sufficiency duty').</p> <p>The sufficiency duty requires local authorities to do more than simply ensure that accommodation be 'sufficient' in terms of the number of beds provided. They must also have a regard to the benefits of securing a number of providers and a range of services. Fundamentally, the accommodation available must meet the needs of children cared for by Cheshire East Council.</p>	Director of Commissioning	Yes	No	Fair	No	No

Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2023-24

Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item
			This updated Strategy details current needs across the Borough, documents progress made to deliver the plans within the current (2021-2023) Strategy and our plans to meet emergent needs in 2024-25 and beyond.						
CF/35/23-24	18/01/2024	Basford East New Primary School Postponement to Scheme	The purpose of the report is to request a postponement to the scheme and explain the reasons for the delay.	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	Yes	Yes	Open	No	Yes
CF/41/23-24	18/01/2024	Together Strategy 4 year plan	To inform committee of the 4 year integrated strategy to deliver the together vision and achieve excellence for our children and families as described in the 2023/24 MTFS.	Executive Director of Children's Services	No	Yes	Open	Yes	No
AH/23/2022-23 & CF/33/23-24	12/02/2024	Supported Employment Strategy and Implementation Plan	This report sets out the recommendations for a strategic approach to supported employment.	Director of Commissioning	Yes	Yes	Open;#Fair;#Green	Yes	No

Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2023-24

Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item
			This is about adult social care customers with complex needs and support into work						
CF/36/23-24	12/02/2024	Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 including schools and early years funding formula	To approve the planned use of the different elements of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2024/25 in terms of schools, high needs, early years and central blocks. To include specific approval of the schools funding formula and early years funding formula	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	Yes	No	Open	Yes	No
CF/01/24-25	03/06/2024	Service Budgets 2024/25 (Children & Families Committee)	The purpose of this report is to set out the allocation of approved budgets for 2024/25 for services under the Committee's remit, as determined by Finance Sub Committee	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	Open	Yes	No
CF/44/23-24	03/06/2024	Councillor Frontline Visits Annual Report	The report provides an update to committee on the themes, strengths and issues raised through councillor frontline visits to the Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS), Child in Need and Child Protection (CIN/CP) Teams, and the Children with Disabilities Social Work Team and Short Breaks Team over the last 12 months.	Director of Children's Social Care	No	No	Fair	No	No