

Corporate Parenting Committee

Agenda

Date: Tuesday, 2nd May, 2017
Time: 5.00 pm
Venue: Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and in the report.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

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 3 - 8)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2017 (attached) and 18 April 2017 (to follow)

4. **Children's Social Care Recruitment and Retention Update** (Pages 9 - 26)

To receive an update on Social Care recruitment activity and workforce stability

5. **Corporate Parenting Update** (Pages 27 - 34)

To receive an update on national and local developments in relation to cared for children and young people and care leavers

Contact: Cherry Foreman
Tel: 01270 686463
E-Mail: cherry.foreman@cheshireeast.gov.uk

6. **Update on Health of Cared for Children and Young People** (Pages 35 - 42)

To receive an update on the Health of Cared for Children and Young People

7. **Improvement Plan Monitoring Quarter 3 Progress Report** (Pages 43 - 72)

To receive the Quarter 3 report

8. **Input from Children and Young People**

To receive a verbal report from the Chairman

9. **Draft Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report** (Pages 73 - 94)

To consider the Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report (to be tabled at the meeting)

10. **Meeting Dates 2017/18**

The schedule of meeting dates for the next municipal year has been agreed as follows:

Tuesday 4 July 2017
Tuesday 19 September 2017
Tuesday 14 November 2017
Tuesday 23 January 2018
Tuesday 20 March 2018
Wednesday 9 May 2018

All meetings will begin at 4.00pm

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Committee**
held on Tuesday, 7th March, 2017 in Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor G Hayes (Chairman)
Councillor G Merry (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors

P Butterill, B Dooley, S Edgar, D Flude, M Grant, J Saunders, L Smetham and
M Warren.

Officers in attendance:

Gill Betton – Head of Children’s Development and Partnerships
Elise Cox – Service Co-ordinator Children, Families and Adults
Tom Dooks – Team Manager Youth and Engagement Services
Pete Lambert – Head of Cared for Children
Anji Reynolds – Service Manager, Permanence and Through Care Team
Cherry Foreman – Democratic Services Officer

34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

36 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2017 be approved as
a correct record.

**37 UPDATE ON RESPONSE FROM COMMITTEE TO CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE'S INPUT IN JANUARY****RESOLVED**

That an update be made to the next meeting as it had not been possible to
have a meeting with the Shadow Board since the last meeting of the
Committee.

38 PROVISION AND OUTCOMES FOR CARE LEAVERS

The Committee considered the care provision and key outcomes for service leavers. In July 2016 the Government had published their strategy, 'Keep on Caring' Supporting People from Care to Independence, which set out its vision in 5 key outcomes for care leavers, these being

1. Better prepared and supported to live independently
2. Improved access to education, employment and training
3. Experiencing stability and feeling safe and secure
4. Improved access to health support
5. Achieving financial stability

The report gave a resume of the history and development of the Care Leavers Service in Cheshire East in recent years, and of the work streams and champion roles which had been introduced to support these outcomes. In addition it was reported there had been a drive to improve the quality of both the pathway plans and tools used with care leavers, a new Plan having gone live in January this year.

As part of the wider position presentations had been given to the Fostering Forum and to the Skills to Fostering training programme, aimed at helping all those involved with cared for children to think about independent living and the skills needed for moving on. Personal Advisors were now allocated to an eligible child on turning 16, or no later than ahead of their first pathway plan review.

With regard to the five key outcomes specific details were given of what was being done for each along with an assessment of how successful these had been to date; it was intended to carry out a review of the service plan and to refocus in 2017/18 and for there to be a survey this year to obtain feedback from all the care leavers being worked with.

Members received clarification concerning the suitability of some properties for care leavers especially in the Crewe area, the position concerning the age at which housing benefit was awarded, and assistance for unaccompanied asylum seekers over 16 years of age. Concern was expressed about the number of young people in care who had their own children taken into care, although it was recognised this was not out of line with other areas.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

39 CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Committee received information on national developments in respect of changes to the apprenticeship levy and the new Children and Social Work Bill, and on the following local developments:

- Arrangements for carrying out inspections of Children's Homes (Reg 44)
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- Corporate parenting training for elected members
- The foster carer survey 2016 and action plan
- Foster carer fortnight
- Post 16 tutor
- Corporate parenting annual report
- Signs of safety innovation bid

In considering the content of the Annual Report it was agreed that the subjects suggested, set out in para 5.19, be included, with the addition of

- reference to reports produced by the service such as those on the current agenda on the Provision and Outcomes for Care Leavers, and the Service Improvement Plan for Children's Social Care,
- the 'deep dives' of specific topics made by the Committee during the year,
- a section to highlight what had been achieved and remained to be done in the coming year.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That approval be given to the content of the Annual Report set out in para 5.19 with the addition of the points identified above.
3. The aims and learning outcomes of the corporate training for elected members, set out in para 5.6 of the report, be endorsed.

40 SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Consideration was given to the Service Improvement Plan for Children's Social Care. Following discussions with children, young people, parents and carers on what they most wanted the Plan focussed on the four key things thought to make the most difference:

1. We always put children and young people first.
2. We understand what impact the situation is having on the child or young person.
3. We take action to make positive changes a reality.
4. We work with families to achieve long lasting change. Children and young people get the right service for them at the right time.

The Committee was told how the delivery of services would be changing this year. The report set out the approach which included ensuring our professionals have the right support and tools in place to enable them to conduct high quality work, an aligning of the audit and quality assurance process with the Signs of Safety approach, master classes for all social work staff, and a campaign for a change across the partnerships involved so as to develop a shared culture and ambition for children and young people in Cheshire East. It was intended that progress be reviewed by senior managers on a quarterly basis.

Particular interest was expressed in the way in which the health partners could be held to account and to the role played by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and the Cheshire East the Health and Wellbeing Board. With reference to the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) it was agreed that be added the Committee Work Programme as a subject for a 'deep dive'.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that a deep dive on CAMHS be added to the Work Programme for the Committee.

41 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

42 REPORT ON CARED FOR CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS - VULNERABLE GROUPS

Consideration was given to this report. It was requested that in future reports a comparison of year on year data be included so as to assist in identifying any areas that might need to be focussed on. It was also suggested that the scorecard be reassessed at the end of the year to ensure it provided the necessary information.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 6.45 pm

Councillor G Hayes (Chairman)

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Children's Social Care Recruitment and Retention Update

Corporate Parenting Committee: May 2017

Introduction:

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on recruitment activity and workforce stability since these issues were last considered by the Children & Families Scrutiny Committee in November. As then, we are aware from discussions around the region that the recruitment and retention of social workers and team managers remains a challenge for all local authorities. Therefore whilst improvements in Cheshire East's ability to attract permanent experienced staff are to be welcomed, there is still an ongoing need for a small cohort of agency workers as identified below.

2. Activity is planned and monitored by the Recruitment and Retention Task Group, under the leadership of the Children and Families Social Care senior management team. Membership of the group includes senior managers from across the service, representatives from Workforce Development, HR and the Communications Team. The Recruitment & Retention Strategy for 2015-17 retains four key priorities:

- to recruit sufficient permanent high quality staff with suitable qualifications and experience;
- to retain existing employees by ensuring they have the right skills, equipment and support to carry out their roles effectively;
- achieve manageable social worker caseloads; and
- increase engagement and communication with social work staff.

Background Context:

3. At the time of the last Ofsted Inspection in July 2015 it already felt as though significant progress had been made in relation to recruitment and retention and this was recognised in the final report. As we moved into 2016, it was apparent that we had entered a new phase of our improvement plan: turnover had continued to reduce and the workforce had stabilised; we were therefore able to move from a rolling programme of social worker recruitment to a more targeted approach as individual vacancies in the various parts of the service arose. Over half of the appointments made in 2016 were of experienced workers from other authorities which suggests that Cheshire East is increasingly seen to be an 'employer of choice' in the region. The social work microsite has recently been updated and was Highly Commended at the *Children and Young People Now Awards* at the end of last year.

4. Just as importantly, we have moved from a position in which the service has been heavily reliant on expensive agency management to only requiring agency cover for temporary situations as they arise. The Children in Need/Child Protection (CiN/CP)

Team in Crewe is now fully staffed with five permanent Team Managers; the final agency manager in the Permanence and Throughcare Team will be replaced next month and there is currently one short-term cover arrangement in the CiN/CP team in Macclesfield. Permanent managers are key to providing a sound base for the longer term development of practice and the nurturing of new students and workers.

Retention:

5. Cheshire East has a comprehensive two year programme for newly qualified social workers which involves completion of the ASYE (Assessed & Supported Year in Employment) and a further year of consolidating practice. The programme is supported by colleagues in Workforce Development and involves extensive additional training, supervision and peer support; feedback from new social workers to the service is consistently positive and it therefore fosters staff retention by supporting and mentoring staff at this most vital part of their careers.

6. Turnover in the social work teams is currently stable with any recent departures being essentially due to personal circumstances and the desire of people to reduce expensive and time-consuming commutes. 'Internal turnover' ie SWs looking to move out of the CiN/CP Teams as soon as they have finished the ASYE programme remains an issue on occasion albeit one over which we are able to retain a level of control and influence. Despite the high volume of referrals and the increase in the cared for children population, caseloads are currently proving manageable and in the busiest area of the service in Crewe for example, only two social workers are marginally over the agreed target level of 25 cases.

7. Sometime around July 2017 we expect training to start in the implementation of our Signs of Safety programme and it is expected that this will also have a positive impact on staff retention through the development of a single and coherent working model across the department.

Summary of Recent Activity:

- Recruitment activity has continued with a number of appointments made across the service as identified below. Social Worker interviews for Crewe and Macclesfield were completed in February; Team Manager interviews for Macclesfield have been arranged for April.
- Changes to the way in which agency staff who operate as limited companies pay their taxes (the IR35 reforms) have led to a small increase in enquiries on the website from people who are considering the option to return to a substantive post in a local authority; two of the applications for the Team Manager role in Macclesfield looked to be of this type. We will be meeting

again with the main agencies at Cheshire West and Chester Headquarters in May to review the effectiveness of the salary cap.

- A potential concern for future recruitment activity is something of a downward trend in the number of applications we have recently received for social worker posts. One possible explanation for this is our geography (ie we are generally too far north to be considered 'midlands' and too far south to be thought of as North West) and our absence from the two main recruitment websites used by north-west authorities (<https://greater.jobs/>) and those in the midlands (<https://www.wmjobs.co.uk/>). As a trial, we have advertised the Head of Service for Cared for Children role on WM Jobs (including a slot as 'Job of the Week') and because they issue a daily update of the number of times our listing has been viewed, we will be able to monitor its effectiveness and make a judge local authorities for Greater Jobs, we are unable to advertise on this platform.
- As the contract for The Children's Society has been reduced, it relies on the service to identify, train and support young people to take part in recruitment. This is a challenge and our pool of young people for interviews has become depleted of late. We have names for two young people who can be trained up and we are also looking at generating further interest through the Care Leavers Forum.

Area Updates

Crewe: five agency workers are still in post covering the skills gap arising from the higher numbers of ASYE and inexperienced workers in the team; we recently appointed a part time senior practitioner from Staffordshire, a progressed SW from Buckinghamshire and an ASYE applicant currently on placement in the team.

CHECS: there are no social worker vacancies; a consultation exercise has recently been conducted to reduce the number of Team Managers to two.

Permanance and Throughcare: a Team Manager from Bucks who is relocating will join the service in June; a new social worker started as an ASYE on 3rd April and we are looking at an internal transfer from the Youth Offending Service in May.

Macclesfield: various workers are due to return from maternity leave in the coming months; with the recent appointments of a part time progressed social worker from Gloucester and an ASYE applicant with 5 years' Police Public Protection Unit experience, the team will essentially be fully staffed again.

Fostering: two appointments were made in the recent round of interviews; two agency staff are covering acting up arrangements and the agency panel advisor is likely to leave at the end of April.

Adoption: interviews for a social worker post in the Regional Adoption Agency will take place in April and there is one agency social worker covering an acting up arrangement.

Independent Reviewing Officers: two permanent appointments from the last round of interviews are due to start on 5th April and 22nd May; there will shortly be a leaver due to retirement and an additional post has been agreed subject to two year funding.

Recruitment Activity: further advertisements and interviews will be scheduled for the coming months as per the requirements of the service outlined above.

Steve Nevitt, Service Manager, Resources

Career Discussions Analysis

- **Theme one: Do Social Workers want to stay at CEC?**
 - 80% of respondents said yes
 - 52% raised issues with being supported to stay, particularly around progression and development opportunities.
 - 33% said they felt well supported
- **Theme two: Can they see opportunities to progress? Is the route clear?**
 - Respondents mainly said the route was clear but identified barriers eg.
 - Routes other than management?
 - Development is not always accessible
 - Staff turnover and high caseloads prevent development
 - Several respondents identified wanting an advanced practitioner route
- **Theme Four: What are the categories for aspiration?**
 - There was a range of aspiration at all levels
 - Several ambitions around specialist or advanced practice

Theme 3: What are the gaps in skills, knowledge, experience, CPD?

Categories	Gaps identified at all grades
Relationships and effective direct work	Direct work tools especially for younger children
Communication	Makaton, PEX NLP
Child Development	Attachment and trauma Therapeutic attachment Attachment theory and Neuroscience (practical)
Adult mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical ill health and disability	Co-working links/shadowing Adult mental health assessment
Abuse and neglect of children	Paedophile behaviours Threshold & risk Progression in safeguarding
Child and family assessment	Tools of assessment Sibling assessments Parenting assessment – good practice CAF training
Analysis, decision making, planning and review	Risk Care planning – joint working
The law and family and youth justice systems	Interview training – ABE – legislation around cared for children Formatting court documents Law – Disability – Family Effective use of rights research Court statements & skills Youth justice experts training Case law
The role of supervision	Mentoring and supervision training Reflective supervision
Organisational Context	Negotiating internal relationships in co-working context Roles of other agencies and links Links with research departments Managing potential interagency conflict
Practice Education	

Social Work Professional Mandatory Training – March 2017

- This document outlines the **core training for all child social workers** at Cheshire East Council.
- Training topics are broken down, grade by grade, from grade 8 (ASYE) through to grade 10.
- It should be noted that the Core Offer outlines the expectations for training and development undertaken at each grade. Social Workers and Managers should seek to ensure that ongoing development is prioritised as appropriate to role to allow social workers to progress to the next grade with appropriate knowledge and skills.
- All social workers will be expected to update and refresh their skills and knowledge by attending those training sessions they have not attended in the previous three years.

Grade 8 (ASYE) – Induction Programme

Topic	Learning Outcomes	Session Length & frequency	Provider & cost	Link to K&S and PCF
ASYE	One year mandatory programme for NQSW, development assessed against assessment framework combining PCF and Knowledge and Skills Statements (DfE). Aim is to support NQSW in transition between student and effective practitioner. Support including regular supervision, protected caseloads, regular progress reviews and monthly peer network meetings which provide peer support along with practice focused development sessions. Assessment and development expectations include portfolio development with detailed evidence from 3 direct observations, supervision records, 5 pieces of service user feedback, 3 and 6 month reviews and holistic assessment. Candidate must also provide reflection on their practice for reviews, reflection on CPD throughout ASYE programme and two academic critical reflections on practice.	1 yr		As per programme instructions.
Level 1 Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		LSCB £0 Learning lounge	K&S 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10 PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,
Adult Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		LSAB £0	K&S 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10 PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,
Safeguarding Children with Disabilities	<p>By the end of the training, delegates will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the impact that disabilities have on children, their environment, the care they receive and their families. Know why children with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse and understand the ways in which the abuse or neglect may happen. Be able to recognise the warning signs of abuse and neglect of disabled children. Understand the best practice in responding to safeguarding concerns, including knowing how to talk to children and parents about the abuse. Know where to access further information. 		LSCB/Keith Martin £0	K&S 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10 PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,

Safeguarding/Section 47/Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved confidence in section 47 investigations. An awareness of the process and the importance of how this can effectively protect children. A greater awareness of the issues of child sexual abuse. 	1 day External provider x 4 sessions	Steve Withington? tbc	K&S 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10 PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,
Child Sexual Exploitation & Missing from Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have an understanding of the prevalence locally and nationally of child sexual exploitation and trafficking. Be aware of the behaviours a young person may demonstrate which increase the risk of sexual exploitation. Be aware of the guidance and legislation specific to safeguarding children and young people who are being sexually exploited, trafficked or otherwise exploited. Understand the difficulties in safeguarding children and young people who are being exploited. Begin to understand the routes into and out of sexually or otherwise exploitative relationships. Understand the local and national commitment to safeguard children and young people from all types of exploitation. 	20-30 mins & 1.5hr workshop X 4 sessions	tbc	K&S 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10 PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,
Toxic Trio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify how the risk factors of parental mental illness, substance misuse and domestic abuse co-exist within families and the implications thereof for safeguarding children To understand how the cumulative issues impact on children and young people, in relation to immediate risk, their day to day lives and long term implications. To describe the impact of parental substance misuse, mental ill health and domestic violence on parenting capacity To explore learning from Serious Case Review findings and current research to inform evidence based practice. To be familiar with local procedures and national guidance relating to domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and parental mental illness To understand the need for joint assessments, and how effective joint working can reduce harm To know how to adopt a child focussed approach To understand the cycle of change, both as it relates to substance misuse, mental health, domestic violence and parenting To have an opportunity to reflect on their practice 	1 day 4 sessions Shared with adults (how many do they need?)	LSCB £0 Talking life?	KSS: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, PCF: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand what works well in responding to the 'Toxic Trio' using the cycle of change. 			
Graded Care Profile 2 - Assessing Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand how to recognise neglect. To understand engagement with children and families. To understand when and how to use the GCP. To understand achieving change with children and families. 	Workshops .5 day 8 half days	CSC specific? LSCB?	KSS: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 PCF: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Child Development		Full day session (also for all SW, FSW, EH) 2 sessions x 30	Rebecca Brown	KSS: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, PCF: 3, 5, 6, 7,
Basic Legal Training (including PLO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per court skills (theory) Include youth justice systems 	Half-day 2 sessions	Bond Solon	KSS: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Court Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the adversarial system works (practice) The procedures, order of events and roles of those in the adversarial system Effectively taking the oath/affirmation Techniques lawyers use in cross examination and how to handle them How to prepare to give clear, honest and objective evidence How to make appropriate use of supporting evidence, documents when giving evidence How to give confident and clear testimony under cross examination 	1 day 2 sessions	Bond Solon	KSS: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Grade 8/9 – Practice Enhancement Programme

Topic	Learning Outcomes	Session Length & Frequency	Provider & cost	KSS & PCF links
Progression – Year 2 Programme	One year mandatory programme for post-ASYE year, development assessed against PCF, KSS and CEC standards. Aim is to provide focus on developing high quality practice with full caseload and developing core skills to a high standard. Support including regular supervision, regular progress reviews and regular peer network meetings which provide peer support along with practice focused development sessions. Learning modules provide CPD on areas deemed priority at this level. It includes assessment and development expectations include portfolio development expectations to be assessed at panel.	1 yr Re-commission masterclasses. 1x RiP + other experts.	AC education (Communicating with children) £600 + VAT + travel RiP – Dr. Rebecca Brown critical analysis (day 1) costs outlined in Grade 9 Emotional intelligence - tbc	KSS: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Assessment & Analysis (to include Risk Assessment Analysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the current strengths and areas for development in your assessment practice To identify the different thinking processes that you use as part of assessment practice To understand the five anchor principles that can be used as a framework for analytical thinking in assessment To examine how a good analytical assessment can be used as a basis or an evidence-informed plan. Identify risk and threshold of need 	Full day 2 sessions	Tbc	KSS: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 PCF: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8
Risk assessment and positive risk enablement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern Assessment practice Risk assessment, management & enablement Safeguarding & protection Empowerment & socially inclusive practice Cultural, spiritual & religious dimensions Integrating methods, skills & values Evaluation & evidence based practice 	Full day 2 sessions	Andrea Collins/ Keele University £1000 per session, 2 sessions of 4 with adults	
Parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Particular focus on use in court 	Masterclasses with	n/a	KSS: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8

Assessments		JS or Advanced Practitioners. Half day		PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Care Planning & Planning for Permanency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve understanding of practice and guidance requirements employed in care planning process. To increase awareness of the differentiation between private vs. public care arrangements. To achieve proficiency in navigating through statutory requirements relating to care planning and review processes To develop a better understanding of overall underpinning principles: CA 1989, vol.2/ 3 case management, care planning and review 2010 and IRO Handbook 2010 	Full day, 4 sessions Louise Hurst/ Anna Connelly?	n/a	KSS: 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 PCF: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Topic	Learning Outcomes	Session Length		
An Attachment Trauma Perspective on Child Development	<p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the origins and patterns of attachment Identify attachment styles and associated behaviours Explore the impact of attachment and trauma on child development Explore the impact of parenting capacity and family and environmental factors on early attachment and later attachment behaviours <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants will be able to recognise their own attachment styles and behaviours, making links to their own practice Participants will be able to recognise attachment styles and behaviours in the children and families they work with 	Full day 9.30am-4pm Tracy Cooper 4 sessions	n/a	KSS: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9 PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants will have a greater understanding of the impact of attachment and trauma difficulties on child development Participants will be able to recognise and understand the differences between emotional and chronological ages 			
Learning Disability & Mental Health (in adults and children)	<p>To understand:</p> <p>Learning disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of LD; Health v Social services criteria i.e. 70; Presumption of capacity and capability/Mental Capacity Act 2005; Dementia; Reasonable adjustments. <p>Mental health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of mental disorder; Treatment of mental disorder; Secondary mental health services criteria; Presumption of capacity and capability; Mental Health Act 1983 Guiding Principles. <p>Practical application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What to take into account when doing assessments eg. PAMS/Cognitive assessments How to use understanding to make assessments effective 	<p>Internal delivery: LD and children with disabilities. Keith Martin 2 sessions, full days</p> <p>Combined with adults: Mental health types and treatment of mental disorders External provision (see adults plan) 2 sessions, full days Ability awareness</p> <p>Mental capacity basic awareness</p> <p>MHA/MCA/DoLS relating to children and impact of adults under the acts. Combined with adults. Tbc 2 sessions, full days</p>	<p>Tbc</p> <p>£500 per session, 2 sessions of 4 with adults</p> <p>2 sessions (of 4 joint) £300 per session</p> <p>£850 per session, 2 sessions of 4 with adults</p> <p>MCA (SCIE) module on learning lounge</p>	<p>KSS: 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 PCF: 1, 3,4 5, 6, 7, 8</p>
Topic	Learning Outcomes	Session Length		

Domestic Abuse Basic awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase knowledge of the scale, dynamic and impact of domestic abuse To examine the links between Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding To embed good practice responses which empower survivors and promote accountability by perpetrators Improve information sharing process, risk assessment and safety planning To enhance joint working with local provision and processes 	Full day LSCB/ Judith Gibson 4 sessions Alongside adults	n/a	KSS: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Risk assessment where the child is at risk of sexual harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To know how to assess risk where family member is convicted sex offender Where people pose a risk 	Jane Lang 2 sessions, full days	Tbc	KSS: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Understanding parental motivation to change/ resistant families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resistance to change Disguised compliance Dealing with motivation to change 	2 sessions Full days	Tbc	KSS: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 PCF: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9
Reflection, wellbeing and emotional intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding personal triggers Reflection techniques and embedding Resilience Emotional intelligence 	Corporate Training programme resilience sessions ongoing, full day Event with adults for Ei and wellbeing, full day	n/a £2000	KSS: 7, 9 PCF: 1, 2, 5, 8, 9
Harmful sexual behaviour		Tbc	tbc	KSS: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 PCF: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Grade 9

Topic	Learning Outcomes	Session Length & Frequency	Provider & cost	KSS & PCF links
Age assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good quality 	Half day	Internal n/a	KSS: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 PCF: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
PAMs ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify the major differences between the PAMS evidence based approach to the assessment of vulnerable families and other assessment approaches. To learn about the theories and working model underpinning the PAMS 3.0 software and how these interface with the Assessing Children in Need Framework and Common Assessment Framework. To be able to use the PAMS 3.0 software in everyday practice and within the context of the courts. To practice and gain confidence in using the PAMS 3.0 software. To apply the PAMS 3.0 software to the measurement of interventions. To explore how PAMS can assess complex and diverse family situations. 	2 days As needed	As arise	KSS: 5, 6, 7 PCF: 5, 6, 7, 8
Achieving Best Evidence (ABE)	<p>Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) is the national protocol for interviewing children as part of a criminal investigation; it is also relevant for other section 47 enquiries when criminal proceedings are not a likely outcome. This training programme has been designed to equip social workers and specialist police officers with the necessary skills to plan and undertake Visually Recorded Witness Interviews in a format suited to the criminal justice system.</p> <p>Module 1 – Social Care – Investigation Skills Program – specifically for social workers To enable social workers to develop their investigative skills in preparation for undertaking module 3 (the Joint Interview course).</p>	<p>Nominations required from SM for 3 places per year.</p> <p>2 days</p>	Contribution to Police delivery costs: £600	KSS: 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 PCF: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

¹ This is not compulsory for all staff

	<p>Workshop for Practice Managers/Detective Sergeants – Assessment of Interviews To increase managers’ confidence, knowledge and understanding of how to assess ABE interviews undertaken by their staff and to provide constructive feedback to support ongoing development.</p> <p>Module 3 – Multi-Agency Joint Interview Program Day 1 & 2 will focus on the development & understanding of Social Workers in relation to ABE/Interview Modules and the Visually Recorded Interview Process. Police Officers will join the programme at day 3 to undergo practice and assessed interviews involving actors.</p> <p>To improve skills in interviewing children and to ensure that social workers /police officers completing the programme reach an agreed standard of practice in how to plan, coordinate and conduct an interview of a child, so that they can continue to develop safely within the work place.</p>	<p>Half day</p> <p>7 days</p>		
<p>Grade 9 – 10 progression</p>	<p>•</p> <p>Following identification through PDR and confirmation from service manager meeting, candidates complete the Cheshire East CPD requirement including academic modules and in-house CPD related to advanced social work practice, including practice education and practice development. Following successful completion of the CPD element and ongoing application to practice, candidates undergo an application and interview process in order to confirm eligibility for progression to grade 10 Advanced Practitioner role. From this point they take on a more advanced role within the team, working towards specific outcomes around developing others, sharing good practice and supporting complex case work.</p>	<p>Keele Practice Educator module. 7 days plus student placement</p> <p>Risk assessment and analysis at advanced practitioner level 2 days plus half day reflective peer session and assessment</p> <p>Critical analysis (day one and two) Two days plus half day reflection peer session and</p>	<p>£1150 per place £600 to PE for 100 day placement. (funded by student budget)</p> <p>£3000 Salford University, Michael Murphy</p> <p>£2717 + VAT + Travel Research in Practice – Dr. Rebecca Brown</p>	<p>KSS: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9</p> <p>PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9</p>

		assessment		
		Direct work with children	tbc	
Risk assessment where there is a risk of sexual harm (grade 9 & 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family perpetrators – convicted and unconvicted Tactile and digital offences Online and social media risks 	1 day 2 sessions	Martin Calder £800 per day	KSS: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 PCF: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Grade 10 – Management Training

Topic	Learning Outcomes	Session Length & Frequency	Provider & cost	KSS & PCF links
Effective Supervision - Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applying models of critical reflection to working as a manager Exploring the barriers to reflection within supervision, and the impact on supervision Ensuring supervision is meaningful and reflective Addressing difficult supervisees and developing practice through supervision *also open to practice educators 	1 day 2 sessions	Siobhan Maclean £750 per day With adults	KSS: 7, 9 PCF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9
Manager training – team managers, service managers and aspiring managers where appropriate				
Safer Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand some key principles about child abuse, those who abuse children and the relevance of this to safer recruitment. To understand why it is important for each organisation and workplace to have safer recruitment procedures in place. To identify safer recruitment practices and take you through the recruitment procedure step by step. To remain updated on changes to the former CRB and ISA system and explain the function of the Disclosure and Barring Service. To develop the skills needed to put safer recruitment processes in place. 	1 hour Ongoing licences for those needing	e-learning £30 per licence	KSS: PCF: 6, 8, 9
Managing allegations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	1 day	LSCB	KSS:

			n/a	PCF: 6, 8, 9
Management Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioner vs manager –developing skills and style • Managing others • Difficult decisions and conversations • Developing others • Quality in practice • CEC processes and policies 	2 days external provider 1 day internal sessions 2 cohorts	c. £10000 Tim Curtis, Talking Life HR/professional services	KSS: 6, 8, 9

Cost estimate where costs already known = £50,000. Costs do not include VAT or room hire/refreshments.

Specialist roles core training?

IRO?

FSW? (which of these might be open to FSW?)

PAs?

Links with Early Help? Open these up and offer others?

Additional training not grade bound or required for progression? Eg. WBS training, signs of safety plan, channel/prevent/wrap (with adults, internal no charge), transition training (with adults, £700 per session, 2 sessions), MARAC (LSCB, £0), adult sexual violence workshops (with adults, Judith Gibson £0), Appropriate adult and PACE (police, with adults, £tbc), Legal Literacy level 1(with adults, internal solicitor £0)

Cost considerations: In 16/17, £122,000 was shared by CSC, EH, Education. This year the budget may be lower, however, we expect an income of around £40,000 for ASYE and student placement payments for CSC.

£10,500 was raised for RiP subscription from 2016/17 however the expected £10,000 for the management training was not entirely allocated so will fall into 17/18.

Ad-hoc requests through CPD panel should be taken into account – monthly allowance for CPD and conferences?

GYO course fee commitments estimated £15,000.

Can additional training be sourced as e-learning, through partnership with TP? How do we want to use our 1 day RiP tailored support?

Cheshire East Council

Corporate Parenting Committee

Date of Meeting: 2nd May 2017

Report of: Pete Lambert, Head of Cared for Children

Subject/Title: Corporate Parenting Update

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Liz Durham

1. Report Summary

1.1. This report provides an update to the Corporate Parenting Committee on national and local developments in relation to cared for children and young people and care leavers.

2. Recommendation

2.1. Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to:

2.1.1 Note the contents of the report;

2.1.2 Endorse the corporate parenting training for elected members set out at Appendix 1.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

3.1. The Corporate Parenting Committee is as advisory group to the Cabinet and, as such, needs to be aware of any national or local issues that are likely to impact on cared for children and care leavers. The Corporate Parenting Committee need to be able to scrutinise and challenge performance to improve outcomes for cared for children and young people.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1. None; this is an update report.

5. Background

National Developments

New Ofsted framework

5.1. A range of children's social care settings are subject to the same social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) from 1 April 2017. The following three principles ink all Ofsted's inspections of children's social care providers:

- to focus on the things that matter most to children's lives;
- to be consistent in our expectations of providers; and
- to prioritise our work where improvement is needed most.

5.2. Prior to April there were several variations in the inspection guidance for social care providers across the range of settings, and differences in the criteria used by Ofsted to make judgements on each type of service. The experiences and progress of children are central to the new SCCIF. The framework will support inspectors to focus on the difference the provider makes to the lives of children and other service users. The framework is tailored to reflect and address each distinct type of children's social care provider. These are:

- children's homes, including secure children's homes;
- independent fostering agencies;
- voluntary adoption agencies;
- residential family centres;
- residential holiday schemes for disabled children;
- boarding schools and residential special schools;
- the residential provision of further education colleges; and
- adoption support agencies.

Homeless Reduction Bill

5.3. The government has announced the planned introduction of a Homeless Reduction Bill for Autumn 2017. It is currently working its way through the Parliamentary process, but is expected to be passed. The Bill includes the following:

- An extension of the period during which Cheshire East should treat someone as threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days.
- Clarification of the action Cheshire East should take when someone applies for assistance having been served with a valid section 21 notice of intention to seek possession from an assured shorthold tenancy.
- A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness.
- A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants.
- A new duty on public services to notify the Council if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

5.4. In terms of specific reference to care leavers, there is the provision that a local connection criteria will apply where a young homeless care leaver has a local connection to the area of the local authority that looked after them or, if it is different, the area where they normally live and have lived for at least 2 years including some time before they reached 16. This will make it easier

for them to get help in whichever of these areas they feel most at home (rather than the previous law where if they had no connection to a local area then the local authority would have no duty to provide accommodation).

Local Developments

Letter to Health from Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee

- 5.5. Following the last Committee, the Chair has written to the Chief Executives of the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to seek assurance around performance on carrying out initial health assessments for cared for children within the statutory timescales.

Regional Adoption Agency

- 5.6. In quarter 4 final plans were completed for the launch of our Regional Adoption Agency, called Adoption Counts. This is a partnership with Stockport, Trafford, Salford and Manchester Councils, which will be one of the first new adoption agencies to open for business in July this year. The aim of 'Adoption Counts' will be to maximise the economies of scale and expertise so that more children are matched with adopters much sooner and locally within the geographical boundary of the agency. There will be a particular focus on placing more children for adoption who; have complex needs, are part of a sibling group, and are from black and ethnic minority backgrounds. Adopters and children will also benefit from a regional approach to post adoption support.

Signs of Safety

- 5.7. Cheshire East Children's Services will be implementing the 'Signs of Safety' approach as our way of working with children, young people and families in quarter 1 this year. 'Signs of Safety' is widely recognised internationally as the leading approach to casework. The project, along with 30 local authorities, was not successful in securing DfE Innovation funding. However, the council has agreed to fund the core aspects of the model which will ensure that 'Signs of Safety' is implemented and that Cheshire East continues to put children and young people first in everything we do.

Residential Homes re-design

- 5.8. The commissioning process for the redesign of the borough's residential homes for children in care was completed in quarter 4 and a contract was awarded to BetterCare Keys, a national children home provider, to run from 1 April 2017. The aim is to provide a more flexible range of children homes and to increase the capacity to care for more of our children within the borough. An update on the status of each home is as follows:
- **Claremont** – the transfer from a Council run home to Bettercare Keys was effectively managed and Bettercare Keys started operating the home from 1 April 2017 under the new contractual arrangements.

- **Victoria Lodge and Ivy Lane** – Together Trust (the existing provider) offered all the staff group at both homes opportunities to stay with the organisation and the vast majority decided to stay rather than TUPE to Bettercare Keys. Bettercare Keys are now in the process of establishing new staffing teams and Ofsted registration can only follow once a Registered Manager is appointed. In order to manage the transition, Together Trust have agreed to continue to run Ivy Lane for a further 3 months (1 April to 30th June 2017) and Victoria Lodge has been mothballed whilst a staff team is mobilised and Ofsted registration complete.
- **New home 1 & 2** – the properties for the two new two bed homes in Crewe have been sourced and ward members updated on their location. Bettercare Keys are currently recruiting new staff teams and planning Ofsted registration. The opening of the two new homes will be dependent on the speed of recruitment.

Head of Service, Cared for Children

- 5.9. The current Head of Service, Cared for Children is due to leave Cheshire East on 8th June. Recruitment is underway to fill the post and interim arrangements will be in place.

Adoption breakdowns and Foster Placement Disruptions

- 5.10. An operational Placement Stability Task and Finish Group was convened in January in order to consider what we need to learn from, amongst other areas, placement disruptions and breakdowns. A review of placement disruptions was completed in 2016 and key learning will feed into this workstream. This is a complex area of work with implications across the service. A review of the actions taken and progress made can be added to the future work plan of this committee.

The Cynget Programme

- 5.11. The Cynget Programme is a commissioned service to provide bespoke traineeships with enhanced 1:1 support. The tender process took place recently and the contract was awarded to Total People from March 2017. They will work with the Council to provide traineeships which are personalised and so more accessible to our young people not in education, employment and training (NEET). Sessions will be held at venues and times to match the young people's needs. The intention is that 10 young people are enrolled through this and supported to move onto apprenticeships or work.

Corporate Parenting Training

- 5.12. Further work has taken place around safeguarding and corporate parenting training, The proposed programme is set out at Appendix 1.

6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members

- 6.1. Although the number of Cheshire East cared for children and young people is relatively small, they are a vulnerable cohort, who live across Cheshire East and in other local authority areas.

7. Implications of Recommendation

7.1. Policy Implications

- 7.1.1. There are a number of policy implications as a result of local and national developments and these will be reported, as appropriate to the relevant Committee.

7.2. Legal Implications

- 7.2.1. The national and local developments described in this report are wide ranging and will in many particulars have legal implications. Legal advice will be sought, as appropriate, upon all relevant emerging issues.

7.3. Financial Implications

- 7.3.1. The Innovation Fund Bid to implement signs of safety has not been approved. This means that the Council will need to ensure that implementation of the programme will need to be completed withing a much reduced transition funding budget.

7.4. Human Resources Implications

- 7.4.1. The recruitment for a new of Head of Service for Cared for Children is currently underway.

7.5. Equality Implications

- 7.5.1. There are no equality implications as a result of this paper.

7.6. Rural Community Implications

- 7.6.1. None.

7.7. Public Health Implications

- 7.7.1. None identified at this stage.

8. Risk Management

- 8.1. Cared for children and care leavers are a vulnerable group that are at risk of a number of factors – poor education and training, health, safeguarding and transition into adulthood.

9. Contact Information

Contact details for this report are as follows:-

Name: Pete Lambert
Designation: Head of Cared for Children
Tel. No.: 07870 896895
Email: pete.lambert@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Proposed Programme – Child and Adult Safeguarding Training for Members

Suggested Content

3-3.5 hr session - Objective for the session – To raise awareness of what is meant by the term 'safeguarding' for both children and adults.

Aims:

- Promote the welfare of children and adults at risk;
- Raise awareness of the key risk factors of abuse and neglect and how to identify signs and symptoms of concern;
- Have an understanding of current legislation with regard to safeguarding children and adults at risk;
- Know what to do if there are concerns that a child or adult at risk is being abused and how to respond to disclosure;
- Have an understanding of what LADO is and what to do if they are concerned about the behaviour of someone in a position of trust;
- Have an awareness of the role of a council member in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk;
- Who are our cared for children - understand the profile and needs of our cared for children, the challenges they face and current outcomes;
- Understand legislation with regard to cared for children;
- Elected members role as corporate parents;
- The role of the corporate parenting committee.

Suggested Timetable

	Date	Venue	Seats	Delivered By	Lead	Supported by	Cost
1	September 2017 9.30-12.30 13.00-16.00	Sandbach Sandbach	20 20	Commissioned Provider (with support from Heads of Service)	Workforce Development (with Di Moulson)	Content agreed with K Rose & S Murphy before C&F OSC	Indicative costs from potential commissioned provider - £675 per day. Dependent on venue availability also potential cost for venue hire & refreshments.
2	January 2018 9.30-12.30 13.00-16.00	Crewe Crewe	20 20	Commissioned Provider (with support from Heads of	As above	As above	As above

				Service)			
3	April 2018 9.30-12.30 13.00-16.00	Macclesfield Macclesfield	20 20	Commissioned Provider (with support from Heads of Service)	As above	As above	As above
4	Rolling programme thereafter offering a refresher update						

Additional Comments

- Dates to be agreed and schedule in advance and published and promoted from July 2017.
- Historically children's safeguarding training for Members has been funded and delivered internally by the Corporate Training Programme held by the Workforce Development Team.
- Serious Case Reviews to be used as case studies within the session.
- Same content used in rolling programme, with updates on statistics, legislation and SCRs taken into account each year.
- Agree training requirements with opposition leader and independents (KR & SM by 31/03/17)
- Develop content and schedule dates and venues (AR to lead in conjunction with KR & SM by 30/04/17)
- Content to be agreed by C&F OSC (KR by 30/05/17)
- Content to be agreed by MP & Cllr J Clowes – then Health Social Care OSC (SM to lead by 30/05/2017)
- Content to be agreed by Corporate Parenting Board Committee (PL to lead by 30/06/2017)
- Ensure content is consistent with LSC/AB expectations (WFD/LSCB/LSAB by 31/07/17)
- Delivery commences, supported by Workforce Development where required – (Sept 2017)

Cheshire East Council

Corporate Parenting Committee

Date of Meeting:	2 nd May 2017
Report of:	Sheila Williams Designated Nurse Cared for Children NHS Eastern and South Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Groups
Subject/Title:	Update on Health of Cared for Children and Young People

1. Report Summary

This report provides information the Cheshire East Corporate Parenting Committee in their role as corporate parents regarding of the health and well-being of the children in their care. It is important to recognise both the statutory responsibilities for this vulnerable group of children and young people, and the role of agencies working together as corporate parents, in having “high aspirations”:

“Parents want their child to be healthy and happy and to reach their full potential.”
(DfE & DoH, 2015).

This report is to provide assurance to the Board and to highlight any potential areas for service improvement. Feedback on the content of this report would be most welcome.

In Cheshire East, Looked after Children are referred to as Cared for Children. For the purposes of this report the terms are synonymous.

Multi agency partnerships are being strengthening by the developing via the Corporate Parenting Operational Group which reports to the Corporate Parenting Committee. This will enable greater scrutiny of how the local authority and health services work together in relation to Cared for Children’s health. With this in mind the Corporate Parenting Committee and Health and Wellbeing Board have requested update reports on a six monthly basis.

2. Recommendation

Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to:

- 2.1.1 Receive the information contained within this report and to scrutinise the contents.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. As an advisory Committee to Cabinet, it is important that Corporate Parenting Committee has a comprehensive overview of the health of Cheshire East cared for children and care leavers.

4. Care Quality Commission Inspection

During September 2016 the Care Quality Commission (CQC, 2016) conducted an inspection of health services for Looked After Children and Safeguarding in Cheshire East. A narrative report was produced overall this was a positive report however a number of recommendations were made and an action plan subsequently been agreed. These actions all related to areas previously identified and included in the 2015-16 annual report.

The following recommendations relate to Cared for Children:

1.5 Implement plans to introduce health passports for all children leaving care so that they have access to their health histories.

Update: This work is in progress but not yet embedded in service provision. It will develop further over the course of 2016-17.

2.2 Ensure that a named nurse for cared for children is employed to lead the operational delivery of the service that is separate from the quality monitoring role carried out by the designated nurse.

Update: With changes to commissioning arrangements the role of Named Nurse Cared for Children has been combined with Named Nurse Safeguarding Children Wirral Community NHS Foundation Trust. This Nurse line manages the Specialist Nurses and admin staff based at Cledford House.

7.3 Ensure that the role of designated nurse for cared for children is carried out by a person who is not also employed by the provider as part of the service delivery.

Update: Staff changes have provided an opportunity to separate the two roles. These changes will be implemented during Summer 2017.

8.1 Develop the systems for notifying medical professionals of the requirement for both initial and review health assessments for cared for children, and for completing the health assessments within statutory timescales so that cared for children are not disadvantaged in having their health needs planned for, and met in a timely way.

Update: This work continues to progress with the development and embedding of shared systems for reporting using liquid logic.

8.2 Ensure that all cared for children and young people have the opportunity to choose where to have their health assessments carried out.

Update: Practitioners are being actively encouraged to consider the most appropriate location for health assessments.

8.3 Provide information or training to all school nurses about expected standards for completing looked after children review health assessments, particularly in relation to capturing the wishes and feelings of children and young people.

Update: Arrangements for training are being reviewed in light of the transfer to Wirral Community NHS Trust. Compliance with training is currently above 90%.

5. Root cause analysis of compliance with Initial Health Assessments:

In response to poor compliance with timescales for initial health assessments (IHA) a root cause analysis has been undertaken across four Cheshire CCGs and recommendations made. It has been agreed that dedicated admin support and dedicated IHA clinics will take place in Cheshire East and are becoming established. A refreshed pathway for IHA has been agreed. Further scrutiny and monitoring is required however improvements are at last becoming established.



IHA Pathway April
2017.pdf



IHA Escalation
Pathway.pdf



Cheshire Root Cause
Analysis of Initial Health

6. Key performance indicators

Data regarding statutory health assessment, dental care, immunisation status and emotional and mental health screening (based on Goodman's' strengths and difficulties questionnaires) is currently being agreed as part of the local authority end of year returns to government. A verbal update will be provided to the meeting.

7. Changes to commissioning arrangements

From February 1st 2017 the Cared for Children's Health Team commissioned by NHS Eastern and South Cheshire CCGs have transferred provider to Wirral Community NHS Foundation Trust (WCNT). This means that WCNT now provide services 0-19 services and the Cared for Children's Health Team. This has been a smooth transition with the benefits of shared electronic record keeping.

There are potential benefits to Cared for Children in the development of an integrated commissioning process between CCGs and public health. With this in mind the Designated Nurses are working together make recommendations to the CCGs which reduce unwarranted variation in service provision to Cared for children and maximise service provision.

References:

Care Quality Commission “Review of health services for children looked after and safeguarding” (2016)

http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20161115_clas-cheshire_final.pdf

DfE and DoH (2015) “Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked after children”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-health-and-wellbeing-of-looked-after-children--2>

RCN and RCPCH (2015) “Looked after children: knowledge, skills and competence of health care staff”

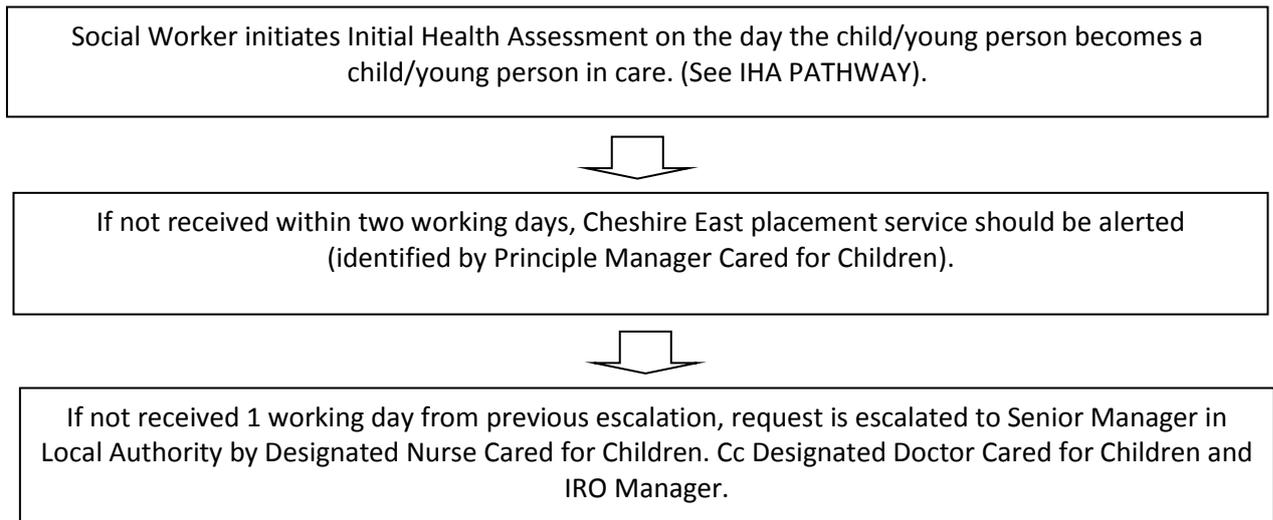
<http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/LAC>

8. Contact Information

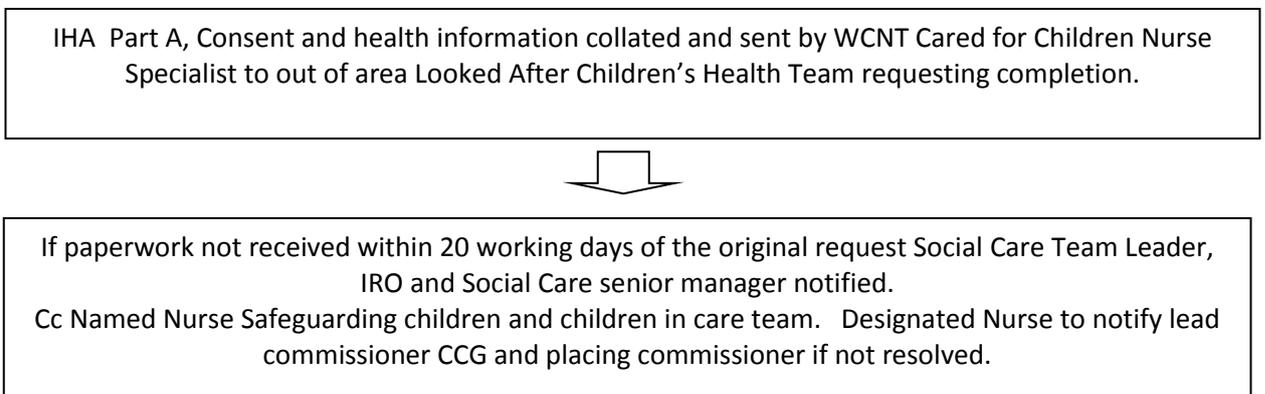
8.1. Contact details for this report are as follows:-

Name: Sheila Williams
Designation: Designated Nurse Cared for Children
Tel. No.: 0777502 6943
Email: sheilawilliams3@nhs.net

Escalation Pathway for all requests to complete an Initial Health Assessment which have made been more than 48 hours after a child/young person has become a Cheshire East Cared for Child/young person



Children living outside of Cheshire East



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Initial Health Assessment Pathway for Child/Young Person becoming Cared for (Looked After) by Cheshire East Council (0-18 years)

Within 2 working days

Placement service notifies Cared for Children’s Health Team of child becoming cared for by Cheshire East Council.
The child’s Social Worker initiates Initial Health Assessment (IHA) by completing part A of IHA form on child’s liquid logic record and attaching a copy of the delegated health consent (signed by Parent, Group Manager or young person if over 16yrs depending on legal status).
This is sent to the Cared for Children’s Health Tray on Liquid logic.

C4CHT to:

Notify School Health Nurse, GP, Health Visitor, School Health Advisor and Family Nurse Practitioner (as appropriate)

Cared for Children’s Health Team (C4CHT) ensures that a statutory health assessment appointment with a paediatrician is requested:

- NHS Eastern CCG Paediatric Secretary MDGH (ECNT) via secure email to: enc-tr.Paediatrics@nhs.net
- South CCG Paediatric Secretary Leighton Community Paediatrics MCHFT) via secure email to: tmc-tr.initialhealthassessments@nhs.net
- Arrangements for children placed out of area are co-ordinated via the C4C Nurse Specialists Health Assessment.
- CG Gold and System One Child Health Records will be attached as a PDF

An appointment is arranged for Paediatrician to complete Initial Health Assessment within 20 working days of the child or young person being received into care.

Designated Doctor to Quality Assure the IHA & highlight significant health conditions prior to returning it to the C4CHT who will distribute to:

- Social Worker via Liquid logic
- Lead health professional and GP
- Carer and young person (dependent on age and understanding)

C4CHT will create liquid logic Part C in the child’s record and attach the BAAF summary and health care plan into the record. This will include an update: date of health assessment, dental checks, immunisations and any significant health conditions.

Part C of Initial Health Assessment Form should be available at Child/Young Person at Cared for Review.

By 20th working day

C4CHT will liaise with Social Worker, Carer /Young person (dependent on age and understanding) to offer an appointment to complete a health assessment or questionnaire and create a health care plan.



When a Child/Young Person does not consent to see a Paediatrician the Social Worker should discuss this refusal with the Cared for Children's Health Team (C4CHT) who will record that the initial health assessment has been refused.

Additional Notes

- The aim of this health assessment pathway is to provide a simple visual guide for both health and social care colleagues.
- Delegated health consent should be obtained from a person with parental responsibility at the point of entry into care. Dependant on the child's legal status this is likely to be the child's birth parent, social care group manager or other legal guardian.
- It is a social work statutory requirement to ensure that initial health assessments are requested and that delegated health consent is available. Senior Unit Co-Ordinators will have a pivotal role in relation to communication between the C4CHT and social care.
- Coram BAAF documentation will be used supported by Cheshire East Liquid logic health assessment forms.
- The IHA form is created on the child's Liquid logic record this is referred to as part A. This form is sent to the C4CHT shared "Health" work tray on Liquid logic.
- Arrangements for Children in Eastern Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) will usually be made via Paediatricians at Macclesfield Hospital. Arrangements for children from South Cheshire CCG will usually be made via Community Paediatrics at Leighton Hospital. Where this is not possible responsible commissioner arrangements will be adhered to.
- Appointments letters should be sent to the child's carer with a copy for the child's social worker and C4CHT.
- Every effort will be made to combine any existing appointments and assessment information in order to avoid duplication.
- Once the health assessment is complete a Liquid logic part C is completed by the C4CHT and the health care plan attached.
- The health care plan for will routine SDQ screening for 5-16 year olds (see separate pathway).
- The wishes and feelings of a Gillick competent Child/Young Person should be taken into account. When a young person refuses a health assessment / or questionnaire the Social Worker should discuss refusal C4CHT. (See separate 16+ health assessment did not attend and refusal pathway.)
- In some circumstances and dependent on the nature of the case, the Social Worker may need to seek legal advice, or in extreme circumstances, present the matter to the Court for direction.
- Where compliance with the pathway is not achieved the IHA escalation pathway should be followed.

Relevant Statutory Guidance:

"Promoting the Health and Well Being of Looked After Children" (DfE & DoH, 2015)



Improvement Plan Monitoring

Quarter 3

Progress Report



Overview

This report reviews our activity and progress to date against our Service Improvement Plan for Children's Social Care.

Our priorities are:

1. We **always** put children and young people **first**
2. We understand **what impact** the situation is having on the child or young person
3. We **take action** to make positive change a reality
4. We work **with** families to achieve **long lasting** change. Children and young people get the **right service** for them, at the **right time**

This report details:

- Our achievements
- Key areas for improvement
- Improvements to services
- Quality of our services
- Planned future improvements

Executive Summary

There has been an **increase in good quality practice** taking place with families. Children and young people receive the right service for their needs and are experiencing **improved outcomes** as a result of intervention.

Children, young people and parents are positive about their relationships with their workers. Children and young people's views and wishes are sought, and reflected in multi-agency meetings, assessments and plans. Families are involved in planning, and understand why they have a plan.

Considerable service improvement activity has taken place to support professionals to deliver best practice, improve multi-agency working, increase scrutiny, ensure services are child-focused, and ultimately to improve outcomes for children.

We know ourselves well, and detailed knowledge of the quality of our services and areas for improvement is supporting senior managers to effectively drive improvements. Service improvements have resulted in better quality services and improved decision making which has been confirmed through repeat audit. Significant improvements have been achieved.

Although the quality of practice continues to improve, the majority of practice requires improvement, and is not yet at the quality and consistency we want for our children and

young people. Long-lasting change is not always achieved within children's timescales, and will still have more to do to ensure our work is truly child-focused.

Large scale changes are planned to drive further improvements, including the adoption of Signs of Safety as our way of working with families. This will support our practice and our organisation to be child-focused, solution-orientated, and respectful and inclusive of families.

Achievements

Significant Improvements Achieved

- There has been an **increase in good quality practice** taking place with families. Overall judgements show **an increase in the percentage of cases considered to be good and outstanding** (42% cases), along with a 17% decrease in those cases judged to be inadequate or requiring improvement. This continues to build on the increase in good practice achieved in Q2 and shows a positive trajectory in improvements to practice.
- The Making Children Safer Conference model has been shown to support **more evidenced decision making and SMARTer Child Protection Plans**. Initial evidence suggests that this model is having a positive impact on the effectiveness of plans and is reducing the number of children and young people subject to repeat plans. Through using this model, **Child Protection IRO's, Social Workers and partners are becoming more skilled at developing effective Child Protection plans and measuring their impact on children and young people**. This demonstrates the impact that Signs of Safety practice has made to children and young people and indicates the further scope for improvements to the quality of our practice once we adopt this approach across all of our practice.
- **Children on a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time** (within 2 years) **is showing a reduction over the last quarter**, which suggests that we may now be seeing the benefit of improved planning over the last two years, resulting in more sustainable changes achieved for families.
- **Improvements made to services in response to previous themed audits has resulted in better quality services and improved decision making:**
 - Awareness raising and communication with teams and partners following a previous audit which showed inappropriate use of the category for emotional abuse has resulted in a **decrease of 10% of plans in this category**. There will be a further audit in 2017 to assess progress in this area and the appropriate use of categories.
 - **Work around strategy discussions has significantly improved. Decisions to proceed to a Strategy Discussion are more considered**. There has been a decrease in follow up strategy meetings and an increase in the proportion of cases progressing to a section 47 enquiry. The percentage of section 47s that led to an initial child protection conference has increased from 45% in Q2 to 60% in Q3. **Multi-agency involvement in Strategy Discussions has also significantly improved**; 55% of cases in September/October 2016 involved participants from at least one other agency apart from the Police, whereas in January 2016 this was true in only 12.5% of cases. This is following the considerable awareness raising work completed in response to the areas for improvement from the

IRO strategy discussion audit in January 2016. The quality of S47s and strategy discussions has improved with 63% of these being judged to be good quality

- **Performance on requests for initial health assessments within 48 hours of a child coming into care has significantly improved** from 65% in Q2 to 87% in Q3. This is from a low of 4% in Q3 last year, and is a result of significant improvement activity in this area.
- **Children receive the right service to meet their needs.** Step up and step down was appropriate for the vast majority of case (91%), and the need for a section 47 investigation was identified in all relevant cases.
- The average number of days for 2016/17 **between entering care and moving in with an adoptive family has reduced from 936 in Quarter 1 to 556 days to date** (March 2017) – a 41% reduction. The average number of days **between a placement order and match with an adoptive family has also decreased** to 66 days from 70 in Q2 and Q3. This is against a national target of 121 days so is very good performance.
- **All cases met the practice standard for the quality of case recording** in the Q3 audit, which is a significant achievement
- **Plans for cared for children are SMART (80%),** the Q3 audit demonstrated further improvement in this area.
- The percentage of **children on a plan for neglect with a completed graded care profile has increased significantly** from 43% in November 2016 to 60% in January 2017.
- **Submission of GP reports to Child Protection Conferences has significantly improved,** from 54% in Q2 to 83% for Q3 for initial conferences. This is from a low of 35% in Q4 2015/16. Reports to reviews have also improved up to 64% in Q3 from 51% in Q2, from a low of 7% in Q2 2015/16. The Named GP is driving improvements in this area with real passion and dedication which is resulting in significant improvements.
- **There were 6 good practice notifications raised to recognise good practice this quarter.**
- There has there has been a **significant improvement in senior management oversight of children at risk of drift and delay** leading to improvements in planning to ensure that children are safe and achieve permanency within timescales that meet their needs.

Other Achievements

- To date (March 2017) for 2016-17 **25 children have achieved permanence through adoption.**
- **Our Social Work workforce has stabilised and turnover has continued to reduce.** We have seen an increase in enquiries and applications as well as in the appointments of experienced workers, including the permanent appointment of two experienced Child Protection Managers to the Child in Need and Child Protection Team in Crewe. Crewe is now fully staffed with all permanent Team Managers.
- **Cheshire East's Social Worker Recruitment Strategy 'Where Social Work Works' received a high commendation in the Children & Young People Now Awards in November 2016.**

- Cheshire East has received **positive feedback from accommodation providers and education establishments on our care plans for unaccompanied asylum seeking children**. Prior to Christmas, Cheshire East accommodated two 17 year old girls under the Lord Dubs amendment. The girls have settled very well and are making good progress.

Key Areas for Improvement

- Although the quality of practice continues to improve, **the majority of practice still requires improvement** (51%), and is not yet at the quality and consistency we want for our children and young people
- **Too many children and young people experience drift and delay**. Some drift and delay was evident in the majority of cases (69%). Permanency needs to be a key consideration in planning from a much earlier stage, and professionals need to be clear when a lack of progress in neglect cases should result in escalation. Some children and young people experience delays around good quality assessments first time informing Legal Advice Meetings (LAM) and pre-proceedings.
- **We still have more to do to ensure our work is truly child-focused**, and the lived experience of children and young people is at the heart of all our work
- **The quality of assessments requires improvement** – assessments can be lacking in depth and analysis, and can be too descriptive, and do not always consider the parents' motivation and capacity to change. **Assessments and plans do not always evaluate or address all the known risks** within families, such as disguised compliance, which limits their ability to support sustainable change
- **Plans still need to be SMARTer, and all plans need to include clear contingencies. Child protection plans are not always categorised correctly**, which limits the effectiveness of the plan
- **The progress of plans is not always evaluated by the impact on the child**. In some cases professionals showed **over-optimism of parents' abilities** to create and sustain long-lasting change for their children
- There is further work to do to ensure that **all partners know what good looks like, take responsibility for outcomes for children**, and provide **effective and robust partnership challenge**
- **Use of the Graded Care Profile** to inform assessment and evaluation of progress in neglect cases remains an area for improvement for the partnership – although recent performance for January 2017 shows this has increased.
- **Multi-agency involvement in strategy discussions** has improved from previous performance but still requires further improvement
- The percentage of **initial health assessments (IHAs) completed by paediatricians** within 20 days has been at an unacceptable level for some time and continues to be so (Q3, 36%). A root cause analysis has been undertaken by both CCGs and will be reported to the LSCB Quality and Outcomes Sub Group for partnership scrutiny. There will be dedicated IHA clinics in South CCG from March 2017 (these already exist in the Eastern CCG.) A thorough analysis of all late compliance will be made by Designated Professionals in Q4. It is of note

that a number of requests were made out of area in Q3 which did affect compliance as did some delays related to arrangements for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC).

Improvements to Services

Training to support best practice

- **Masterclasses continue to be offered on a monthly basis**, these have been well attended so far. Masterclass workshops have been held on:
 - **Assessing Parental Capacity to Change**
 - **Exercising Professional Judgement**
 - **Parenting Assessments**
- **Social Workers' confidence and skills in chairing multi agency meetings are being developed** through the 'Masterclass' offer, with the latest sessions in February and March 2017 focusing on chairing multi-agency meetings effectively, which responds to findings from the audit of core group effectiveness. **Further sessions are planned on:**
 - **Engaging with birth fathers**
 - **Permanency Planning**
 - **Children with SEND**
- **A workshop on Reflective Practice for Managers will take place in March 2017** which includes reflective supervision and developing reflective teams.
- **We have adopted the Graded Care Profile 2**, a much improved version of the graded care profile which is used to assess and evaluate the extent and impact of neglect. Initial feedback on the tool has been very positive. Training is currently being rolled out across the partnership, targeted to specific groups of practitioners in areas where there are high referrals for neglect. Since adoption in November 2016 we have trained 180 practitioners.
- **The Cared for IROs held a development day in December 2016** which was focused on engagement and direct consultation with children and young people, including young children.
- **A leadership and management session was held with Children's Social Care Managers** in February 2017 to support the development of connected leadership delivering to the service and Council priorities.
- **Two joint training workshops with Children's and Adults' social workers** will be held in March 2017 as part of celebrating World Social Work Day. These workshops will establish shared values for both services, celebrate social work practice, and support the development of good working relationships and increased integration. One session is a dedicated workshop for ASYEs.

Tools to support practitioners

- **A revised care plan document** was introduced in February 2017. This new combined document supports social workers to improve the quality and timeliness of assessments, review reports and care plans as these are all now streamlined together in one form.

- A **new pathway plan** went live in January 2017 which was developed with Social Finance.
- The LSCB will launch **assessment tools for the toxic trio** in March 2017 which will support practitioners to reflect on the lived experience of children at risk from the toxic trio, including adult focused workers. This was identified as a gap in previous LSCB audits.
- The Children with Disabilities Team has developed **guidance for social workers on the completion of the social care element of Education, Health and Care Plans** and raised awareness of responsibilities within Practice and Performance workshops. This includes specific guidance for cared for children and this is now being used across the Children with Disabilities and other social work teams
- **Good practice examples** are being collated from Cheshire East practice, including examples of effective assessments that evidence good quality analysis. These will be available on Centranet to support practitioners from April 2017.
- A new policy and procedure has been developed on **'Preparing for Adulthood'** for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This policy and procedure outlines the statutory duties placed upon the Local Authority and informs staff across the People's Directorate of their specific responsibilities towards young people aged 14-25, including a detailed reference section for tasks required for children of certain ages, and is **designed to promote the earlier development of transition planning**. The following principles are central to the policy: planning early, involving the young person and having a person-centred strengths-based approach.

Supporting effective partnership working

- **'Time to Share' workshops** are established, theme-led, discussion forums facilitated by multi-agency practitioners, who work with Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Based on a solution-focused model, the forums provide multi-agency practitioners with an opportunity to share good practice and practice issues, and discuss solutions. Some of the previous themes considered by the group include: out of area placements; resilience; relationships; our services for disabled young people; diverting our young people from offending; the cost of not being cared for; and young people with no recourse to public funds.

This forum has brought together different agencies to share good practice, such as the Children's Society, the @ct team, residential workers, fostering, therapeutic team, social workers, family support workers, housing, disability and SEN workers. This has contributed to the use of common tools to reduce criminalisation and a multi-systemic view to working with Cared For children and Care Leavers.

The group has also identified gaps in our services; a theme focussed on unaccompanied asylum seeking young people and other cared for/care leavers with no recourse to public funds identified the need for a Corporate Parenting Strategy in meeting the needs of the above. It also brought together the housing sector alongside the other professionals in finding a solution to these issues.

ASYE's and newly qualified social workers have used this forum for personal development.

The Final quarter of 2017 will see peer evaluation utilised to measure the impact of Time to Share on outcomes for cared for children and care leavers.

- **Child Protection IROs have completed training with school nurses to develop their ability and confidence to challenge**, particularly in cases where the child does not have any significant health issues and school nurses have previously felt that they have not had an active role in the plan.
- **Single agency reports to review child protection conferences were introduced in February 2017** in response to an IRO audit that highlighted issues in quality and multi-agency contribution to combined reports. A new report template has been developed which will be used for both initial and review conferences. The template has been developed in consultation with operational managers from across the partnership and it also complements the Cheshire East Making Children Safer conference model and Signs of Safety. **The quality of police reports to conference has improved significantly following challenge.**
- A process to support **good practice notifications to partners** has been developed, allowing alerts to be issued from January 2017. This will support good practice development across the partnership.
- There is ongoing activity to improve the **inclusion of multi-agency practitioners within strategy discussions** and this is supported by a work stream of the Safeguarding Children Operational Group. A Task and Finish Group has been established where they have considered the current process and obstacles in achieving multi-agency meetings. An action plan has been developed to address this including a new process for referrals to partners when a strategy meeting is called.
- **In response to the findings from the IRO audit on Core Group Effectiveness**, the LSCB Safeguarding Children Operational Group has established a task and finish group to:
 - **agree the shared roles, responsibilities and expectations of Core Group members**
 - **develop a standard agenda for Core Group meetings to provide a clear structure**
 - **develop a standard minute template to enable effective sharing of the minute taking role**

This work is currently underway. A deep dive enquiry on core group effectiveness was undertaken by the LSCB Quality and Outcomes Sub Group in February 2017 to drive improvement in this area which revealed a skill gap for practitioners in relation to chairing children's meetings. Plans are in place to meet this need through inclusion of these aspects within the current LSCB multi-agency training on child protection. The roles and responsibilities for Core Group members will be incorporated within LSCB training to embed this.
- **The LSCB Quality and Outcomes Sub Group will be undertaking deep dive investigations into partnership practice to drive service improvements.** The first of these was on core group effectiveness. The next area of focus will be neglect in May 2017, which will include the use of the screening tool and the Graded Care Profile. Single agency reports for CP conferences were introduced in February 2017 and a summary report on progress of implementation will also be submitted at the next meeting of the group in May.
- The LSCB Partnership newsletters, **Changing Practice Together**, continue to focus on key areas of practice for the partnership to communicate shared expectations on good practice. A practitioner feedback survey was carried out in December 2016 - January 2017 which has informed changes to the newsletter. The newsletter focused on listening to children and young people in November, using the right tools – for example the graded care profile,

throughout December, assessment and analysis in January, and Domestic Abuse in February and March. The themes for this newsletter going forward have been agreed to align with the LSCB priority areas and focus of the multi-agency audits, and will be Neglect for Q1, Signs of Safety and a shared culture and language in Q2, and early help and robust step up and step down in Q3.

Child-centred processes

- **A review of our processes around Public Law Proceedings is underway** to support good quality court work that achieves positive outcomes for children, and ensures decisions are made within children's timescales. An action plan has been established and is being delivered by task and finish groups. Work is expected to be completed by May 2017. **We have already received an increase in compliments with regards to our court work from court, CAFCASS and legal services.**

"I do believe that the successful reunification of A was mainly due to the allocated social worker, who I believe worked tirelessly with the couple. The support plan prepared was highly detailed and provided for the family to have continued professional support in order to maintain the placement was in A's best interest"

Part of this work will involve the introduction of 'Lessons Learned' meetings between children's social care and legal services. These meetings will review key cases where the outcome we expected in court was not achieved, as well as identify learning and any areas for improvement.

In addition, the court tracker has been updated and now includes dashboard information that is able to track workload across the teams, timeliness and outcomes for children subject to the PLO process. Through close cooperation with the legal department, **timely notifications and sharing of court documents and orders has now much improved.**

- **Our offer to Care Leavers has been refreshed and is set out in the Care Leavers' Policy.**

Robust scrutiny and drive for improvement

- **Increased scrutiny has been put in place to drive improved outcomes for children who are at risk of drift and delay.** All children who have been on Child Protection Plans for over 12 months, are subject to repeat CP planning, or have been involved in the pre-proceedings process for over 6 months are reviewed by a Service Manager or Head of Service on a monthly basis. The expectation is that the number of children within these categories will reduce significantly over the next three months as a result of this increased focus. More robust systems for identifying children and young people at risk of drift and delay will be developed to support early identification and action.

As a result of this increased management oversight, **a number of children who were not achieving positive outcomes in a timely way now have clear plans in place with appropriate timescales.** This has caused an increase in applications to Court and, although

this is anticipated to continue for the next three months, numbers should then reduce to expected levels.

- **All children with two or more placements are now tracked and monitored at the Permanence Tracking Panel** to ensure we achieve permanency and placement stability for these children. A placement stability working group has also been established with Head of Service oversight to review the issue and identify solutions.
- **Children Causing Concern** is a relatively new panel whose purpose is to track children and young people who have 3 or more placement moves, low school attendance or are young offenders. The aim being that by identifying some of the children who may not have complex or high costs but are meeting some of the indicators that we know are likely to lead to poor outcomes – such as low educational attainment and becoming NEET – that we can better understand some of the contributors to these issues and find ways to address them.
- A **draft new Children’s Social Care Audit Tool** has been approved by Heads of Service across Children’s Social Care in anticipation of the introduction of the Signs of Safety model. The audit tool is intended to be used for all audit streams, in particular those undertaken by Team Managers and for Social Care Practice Audits. It will continue the emphasis of change away from quantifying compliance to judging the quality of our interventions and our impact on children and young people. It is currently being piloted and will be refined following feedback.
- **Independent Auditors are continuing to work with Team Managers to support a coaching approach and ensure Team Management audits are fully embedded.**
- The **LSCB Multi-agency Audit Process** has also been reviewed. There will be three LSCB multi-agency audits each year based on agreed themes, with a 12 month follow up to evaluate progress. The next themed audit is to be on Neglect in preparation for the possible JTAI and to support the launch of the Neglect Strategy 2017-19. Subsequent LSCB multi-agency audits will be:
 - June 2017 – Child Protection Conferences
 - October 2017 – Effectiveness of the Integrated Front Door, including Early Help
 - February 2018 – Neglect
- **The CAF partnership audit process has been redesigned** using Norfolk’s Signs of Safety audit process. This was considered by the LSCB Early Help Group in February 2017 and audits will take place in March/April 2017. As this becomes embedded the audit streams will be brought together to provide evidence of the quality of practice irrespective of where in the system the child receives a service.
- A **deep dive investigation on children seen within 10 days of the assessment** has been completed to understand and address areas for improvement. It showed that the timeliness of children seen was 77-79%. A more accurate performance report has now been developed and this information will be included in Performance Challenge so this figure can be further improved.
- **Performance Challenge Sessions have been reviewed** and there are plans for the Child in Need and Child Protection Teams and the Safeguarding Unit to have joint sessions that will enable a focus on the progress of individual children and families.

- A **Supervision Tracker** is now in place to monitor the frequency of social workers' supervisions, which can be challenged through the Performance Challenge Sessions. Supervision audits are being completed on a quarterly basis to monitor and inform improvements to the quality of supervision
- **Our offer to care leavers beyond 21 years is now supported on Liquid Logic.** The Business Intelligence Team are currently producing reports against this offer so we can monitor and evidence our provision.

Co-producing services with children and young people

- **Ignition** is an innovative project that has been established to support young people to have the best, most appropriate transition for when they leave care. It is available to young people aged over 15½ years who are thinking about where and how they would like to live when they leave care. Once a referral is made the details are passed to Voice for Children or Crewe YMCA who each have identified people who will meet with the young person to discuss their aspirations. A panel discussion will take place incorporating these views, which the young person is welcome to attend, and an action plan is developed, that will help the young person to achieve their future living goals.
- **New in 2017, there is a pre-arranged Children's Society 'drop in' at Cledford House to speak to staff about cared for children's views raised within the Children in Care Council.** The Team Manager for the Care Leavers' Service has now attended the Care Leavers Forum twice in the past six months to obtain their views on services. Over 2017 a survey will be undertaken to obtain feedback from all care leavers we are working with.
- A **shadow Young People's Committee** for the Corporate Parenting Committee has been established to increase the participation of cared for children and care leavers in developing services and the operation of the Committee. Both the Corporate Parenting Committee Chair and Vice Chair attended the first shadow committee meeting in January 2017.
- **Work has been completed with young people to better understand neglect from their perspective,** and their views have shaped the development of the neglect communication campaign.
- **Standardised tools that will support IRO scrutiny of the quality of consultation with children, young people, parents and carers** when managing risk plans at trigger Level 1 and Level 2 missing from home and care meetings have been developed and are currently under consultation with a group of young people.

Strategic developments

- **Our regional foster carer recruitment campaign called 'You Can Foster' launched in September 2016.** The theme of the campaign was 'Ambition' focussing on the important role foster carers play in supporting children and young people and helping them to realise their dreams. The campaign has featured on regional TV and radio as well as online via social media channels such as Facebook. Cheshire East also launched a new 'Net Natives' campaign in October 2016, which generated new enquires. Work is being undertaken to

improve the progression of enquiries, the Fostering Team are working closely with the other regional teams.

- Discussions have commenced with regional partners (Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington and Halton) to identify **opportunities for fostering services to work together** on key areas. The aim is to increase our ability to compete with private sector providers whilst also seeking efficiencies in how services are provided. The proposals being considered focus on the following key areas in the first phase:
 - Fostering recruitment - shared referral / front door services
 - Marketing - shared strategies and media work
 - Training of foster carers - access to pooled training programmes
- **Work-streams have been created around the Care Leavers Strategy** to focus on improving outcomes in the key areas of Education, Health, Independence, Financial Stability and Housing. Champion Personal Advisor roles are being created to take the lead in these areas and they will work closely with the Team Manager to co-ordinate the work streams, develop resources, produce a quarterly report and work closely with care leavers so focus of the work is shaped by their needs and their feedback.

Care Leavers are also being allocated with a Personal Advisor at an earlier time compared to last year as more resources are available to meet the growing demands of the service. Work has been undertaken to raise the profile of work with Care Leavers; staff have delivered a number of presentations about the service at the Practice and Performance Workshops, Fostering Forum and to the 'Skills for Fostering' training programme. These events were all well received.

- **The CCGs have commissioned research into children's emotional and mental health needs at the point of placement** with the aim of ensuring that children placed for adoption in Cheshire East receive appropriate services in relation to their emotional and mental health. The report which has recently been published will be reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board and actions required are being developed in conjunction with the Cheshire East Adoption Team.
- **The Child Protection Information Sharing Project (CP-IS) has gone live in Cheshire East.** This is a nationwide system that enables child protection information to be shared securely between local authorities and NHS trusts across England. This project will improve our information sharing with partners. Sharing information effectively across health and care settings is vital in protecting vulnerable children and young people to prevent further harm. CP-IS connects Liquid Logic with systems used by NHS unscheduled care settings, such as Accident and Emergency, walk-in centres and maternity units. It helps ensure that health and care professionals are notified when a child or unborn baby with a child protection plan or cared for child is treated.
- **Work to support Signs of Safety implementation is well underway:**
 - **Governance arrangements** to support implementation have been agreed, and the Signs of Safety Project Board was established in January 2017. This board is meeting monthly initially to ensure arrangements are in place for implementation. Members of the Practice Champions Group have been identified to support the work streams and ensure service development is driven and owned by those closest to the practice.
 - **Engagement with key stakeholders** has taken place, including but not limited to the key children's partnership boards, Practice Champions, children's social care staff within

Practice and Performance Workshops, Children's Social Care Management meetings and early help team development sessions. A newsletter on the bid and Signs of Safety FAQ was released to all Children and Families staff in January 2017. Continued communication and engagement activity has been planned by the Project Board.

- The **LSCB are committed to adopting the approach as a whole partnership culture** and way of working with families. The LSCB will be included within the development of the strategic plan and within the initial leadership briefings. A report on culture and leadership will go to the Board in May 2017.
- **Research and engagement with other LAs** that have adopted Signs of Safety has been undertaken. A visit to North Yorkshire who have fully embedded Signs of Safety across their services, and are a member of the DfE's Partners in Practice scheme, will be completed in April to observe their services and understand what support they can offer us under this scheme.
- **The membership of the Practice Champions Group has been fully refreshed** to ensure that it consists of those people who are keen to lead, develop and drive service development with enthusiasm. Skills and interests in the different work streams for this group were canvassed in January 2017.
- **'Project Macc'** will be launched in April 2017 which will mirror our successful Project Crewe service, working intensively with low level children in need cases to achieve sustainable change for families. Project Macc and Project Crewe will be co-located within the Child in Need and Child Protection Teams to promote effective working relationships.

Recruitment and Retention

- **Turnover has continued to reduce and the workforce has stabilised.** This has allowed us to cease our programme of rolling recruitment and move to a more targeted approach as individual vacancies in the service arise.
- There has been **an increase in enquiries and applications as well as in the appointments of experienced workers.** In 2016 we recruited 18 permanent full-time social workers, 11 of these had practised elsewhere, and of these, 7 joined our Child Protection Teams.
- In addition, **we have appointed four Supervising Social Workers to the Fostering Service and two Social Workers to the Emergency Duty Team.**
- **The permanent appointment of two experienced Child Protection Managers to the Child in Need and Child Protection Team in Crewe has also had a significant impact on stability and morale.** All permanent Team Manager posts in Crewe are now filled.
- Feedback about our recruitment activity continues to be positive and we received wider recognition in a **high commendation at the Children & Young People Now Annual Awards** in the category of Recruitment and Professional Development.
- On-going activity includes a continued focus on advertising through social media to support our recruitment programme, keeping the recruitment microsite up-to-date, **participation in two Government schemes to attract and assist people into careers in social work**, and the establishment of an Advanced Practitioner role.

- We have joined the **North-West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership**, which is coordinated through Keele University, and we anticipate this will assist our recruitment programme as well as offer opportunities to better support existing employees with their continuing professional development.
- **Securing the whole IRO team in permanent posts**, which has been one of the team's strategic targets, directly linked to children benefitting from stable, reliable, trusting relationships with their IROs, is becoming a reality now.

Quality of Services

What our performance tells us

- **Performance on requests for initial health assessments within 48 hours of a child coming into care has significantly improved** from 65% in Q2 to 87% in Q3. This is from a low of 4% in Q3 last year, and is a result of significant improvement activity in this area.
- The percentage of **children on a plan for neglect with a completed graded care profile has increased significantly** from 43% in November 2016 to 60% in January 2017.
- **Submission of GP reports to Child Protection Conferences has significantly improved**, from 54% in Q2 to 83% for Q3 for initial conferences. This is from a low of 35% in Q4 2015/16. Reports to reviews have also improved up to 64% in Q3 from 51% in Q2, from a low of 7% in Q2 2015/16. The Named GP is driving improvements in this area with real passion and dedication which is resulting in significant improvements. GPs have also recently received training from the IRO's in January 2017 to increase awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities and develop good working relationships.
- **Children and young people's views continue to be heard at conference (99%)** – performance on this measure continues to be strong
- **Parents and carers are attending conferences** (100% of initial conferences and 93% of reviews)
- **The average caseload for social workers has reduced from 23 in Q2 to 19 in Q3**
- **Initial and Review Conferences and Cared for reviews are completed within timescale**

However:

- **Too many children have been on a Child Protection plan for an extended period** – 31 have been on a plan for more than 15 months. This is due to some large families (65% of these young people are from just 6 families out of a total of 17 families) - however this is still too high. Support for these children is closely scrutinised to ensure the appropriate action is being taken and increased senior management scrutiny has been put in place which expected to achieve a significant reduction in the number of children on plans for an extended time.
- The percentage of **initial health assessments (IHAs) completed by paediatricians** within 20 days has been at an unacceptable level for some time and continues to be so (Q3, 36%). A root cause analysis has been undertaken by both CCGs and will be reported to the LSCB Quality and Outcomes Sub Group for partnership scrutiny. There will be dedicated IHA

clinics in South CCG from March 2017 (these already exist in the Eastern CCG.) A thorough analysis of all late compliance will be made by Designated Professionals in Q4. It is of note that a number of requests were made out of area in Q3 which did affect compliance as did some delays related to arrangements for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC).

- There has been a **decrease in the number of assessments completed within 15, 35 and 45 days** during January 2017. Despite an increase in the percentage of assessments completed within 15 days from 26% in September 2016 to 37% in December 2016, suggesting we are making more timely and focused decisions and putting in an appropriate support package as soon as possible, this has decreased in January 2017 to 19%. The overall year to date position for assessments completed within 35 days has nevertheless increased to 70% and the completion rate within 45 days remains high; 84% in January 2017 and 85% in the year to date.

Please see our Improvement Plan Performance Scorecard for all the performance and audit measures for our progress.

What audit and quality assurance reports tell us

- Children and young people are experiencing **improved outcomes** as a result of intervention (90%)
- There has been an **increase in good quality practice** taking place with families. Overall judgements show **an increase in the percentage of cases considered to be good and outstanding** (42% cases) along with a 17% decrease in those cases judged to be inadequate or requiring improvement. This continues to build on the increase in good practice achieved in Q2 and shows a positive trajectory in improvements to practice.
- **Identification, challenge and timely response to concerns were evident. Social workers are effectively identifying and challenging safeguarding concerns** (92%), and taking **the right action at the right time to protect children** (88%).
- **Children and young people's views and wishes are sought**, and reflected in multi-agency meetings, assessments and plans
- **Families are involved in planning**, and understand why they have a plan. Views of absent parents are sought
- **Children and young people receive the right service for their needs.** Step up and step down was appropriate for the vast majority of case (91%), and the need for a section 47 investigation was identified in all relevant cases
- **There is good quality work at the front door.** 50% work was good quality. Decision making is sound (100%), informed by information from partners (70%) and family history (100%), and result in the right outcome for children (90%).
- **Managers are scrutinising work** and driving improved outcomes for children. Management decision making met the Practice Standard for all cases within ChECS and Permanence and Throughcare, and 67% CIN/CP cases.
- **All cases met the practice standard for recording** – which is a significant achievement

- **Plans for cared for children are SMART (80%)** – audit has demonstrated further improvement in this area.
- **Work around strategy discussions has significantly improved. Decisions to proceed to a Strategy Discussion are more considered.** There has been a decrease in follow up strategy meetings and an increase in the proportion of cases progressing to a S47 enquiry. The percentage of section 47s that led to an initial child protection conference has increased from 45% in Q2 to 60% in Q3. **Multi-agency involvement in Strategy Discussions has also significantly improved;** 55% of cases in September/October 2016 involved participants from at least one other agency apart from the Police, whereas in January 2016 this was true in only 12.5% of cases. This is following the considerable awareness raising work completed in response to the areas for improvement from the IRO strategy discussion audit in January 2016. The quality of S47s and strategy discussions has improved with 63% of these being judged to be good quality
- An evaluation of our Child Protection Conference model, 'Making Children Safer', was completed in August 2016. **The model has received positive feedback from both parents and professionals; conferences are more risk focussed, with an emphasis on planning** rather than information sharing, the quality of parent and child participation has increased, plans are becoming SMARTer, the child's lived experience and the impact of the child protection plan is more easily identifiable, and decisions within conference are therefore more evidence based. Initial evidence indicates that use of this model may be reducing repeat plans.

However:

- Although the quality of practice continues to improve, **the majority of practice still requires improvement** (51%), and is not yet at the quality and consistency we want for our children and young people
- **Too many children and young people experience drift and delay.** Some drift and delay was evident in the majority of cases (69%). Permanency needs to be a key consideration in planning from a much earlier stage, and professionals need to be clear when a lack of progress in neglect cases should result in escalation. Some children and young people experience delays around Legal Advice Meetings (LAM) and pre-proceedings.
- **We still have more to do to ensure our work is truly child-focused,** and the lived experience of children and young people is at the heart of all our work
- **The quality of assessments requires improvement** – assessments can be lacking in depth and analysis, and can be too descriptive, and do not always consider the parents' motivation and capacity to change. **Assessments and plans do not always evaluate or address all the known risks** within families, such as disguised compliance, which limits their ability to support sustainable change
- **Plans still need to be SMARTer, and all plans need to include clear contingencies. Child protection plans are not always categorised correctly,** which limits the effectiveness of the plan
- **The progress of plans is not always evaluated by the impact on the child.** In some cases professionals showed **over-optimism of parents' abilities** to create and sustain long-lasting change for their children

- There is further work to do to ensure that **all partners know what good looks like, take responsibility for outcomes for children**, and provide **effective and robust partnership challenge**
- **Use of the Graded Care Profile** to inform assessment and evaluation of progress in neglect cases remains an area for improvement for the partnership – although recent performance for January 2017 shows this has increased.
- There is still work to do with regards to the **timeliness of initial child protection conferences**, although there is an improving picture. In October 2016, 54% of initial conferences were held within the 15 working days and this had increased to 94% in November and 100% in December, but has dropped back to 83% in January 2017.
- **Multi-agency involvement in strategy discussions** has improved from previous performance but still requires further improvement

For more detail please see the supporting audit summary report.

What children, young people, parents and carers tell us

- Children, young people and parents' views are sought through our audits. **Children, young people and parents are positive about their relationships with their workers.** They value the openness and honesty of workers, and identified good examples of when their workers were open and honest with them. They reported that they were aware of the reasons for social care involvement and were kept informed for what actions were being taken. Social workers visited often, and families were able to attend and contribute to meetings and plans. Plans were clear about what was expected of them and the professionals involved, and were regularly reviewed to help to keep everyone on track.
- **Families feel supported and listened to by their social workers.** There were 26 Child in Need Feedback Surveys completed and returned this quarter, which contained positive feedback about family's experiences and the support they received (figures represent those who agreed or strongly agreed):
 - **100% said their Social Worker was easy to talk to and understood their situation**
 - **92% said that their Social Worker listened to their views**, with 93% feeling they were given opportunity to share their views when attending meetings
 - **96% felt their Social Worker was reliable and did what they said they would do**
 - **77% felt the CiN Plan had helped them and their family**

"Getting people to understand how hard days can be is hard. I understand why you were called but fear no-one is listening to us"

"I was always listened to and got to explain problems/ issues etc."

• **Parents were very positive about the Making Children Safer**

"This was great and less intimidating"

Conference model. 93% rated the conferences as good or outstanding. 98% said the conference had increased their understanding of the concerns.

- **Adoption Panels are working well.** Feedback from Adopters and Prospective Adopters attending Adoption Panels was that staff were welcoming, as was the venue, that their views were taken into account, and that panel members were engaged and interested in what they had to say. **In the last 6 months, all the feedback survey responses have been wholly positive.**
- **29 complaints were received this quarter** which is consistent with previous performance. Complaints from parents are carers covered the following areas which are consistent with previous quarters:
 - Factual errors and inaccuracies in assessments
 - Phone calls not returned, and a lack of communication
 - Reduction in Special Guardianship Allowance
 - The content of assessments
 - Issues with contact arrangements and lack of contact with their children
- **9 compliments were received** from parents, grandparents, foster carers, a teacher, a child's guardian and a thank you card from two children to their social worker.

"The professionalism I have been shown was exemplary"
Parent

"Thank you for all your help and getting us happy again"
Two children to their social worker

What our staff and partners tell us

- **Children's Social Care practitioners were asked for their views on our services** and adopting Signs of Safety in Practice and Performance Workshops in September 2016 under the Signs of Safety three houses model, which is summarised overleaf. This confirms what we know through audit and other quality assurance information, that practice is increasingly good, multi-agency challenge has increased, that staff value the support from their managers, and teams are increasing stable. It also reflects that practitioners share the same aspirations for children and young people and our service.
- **Feedback from 563 partners on the Making Children Safer model has been overwhelming positive** – all of them rated them good (47%) or outstanding (53%)

"Well organised, clear, thorough and very collaborative. Also allowed for warmth/ humanity to enable engagement with young people – not often done. Great!"

"This is by far the best CP conference I have attended"

- **Adoption Panels are working well.** Attending Social Workers from Cheshire East and external Adoption Agencies reported that panel members had clearly read paperwork and asked relevant questions, that the panel itself ran smoothly and that all were made to feel welcome and that their contribution was valued.
- Practitioners' views on the Changing Practice Together newsletter were sought through a feedback survey which was carried in December 2016-January 2017. A total of 109

responses were received. The majority of the comments were positive, most people reported that they found the newsletter informative and useful to their practice:

- **56% respondents said they had reflected on their practice** as a result of the newsletter, and **just under a quarter of respondents, 23%, reported having changed their practice as a result of the newsletter**
- 78% of respondents stated that the Newsletter is "relevant" or "very relevant" to their organisation
- Examples practitioners gave of how they had changed their practice included:
 - "involving the 'absent parent' more, particularly fathers"
 - "making sure my plans are SMART"
 - "go back over the voice of the child before completing assessments. Review with child more frequently"
 - "offering rationale in my record keeping for decisions made"

"Really helpful in keeping the focus on children"

"Very effective tool to update and reach out across all agencies and frontline workers, please continue with it"

Feedback from Practitioners in Children's Social Care

What we want to improve	What's working well	Our dream service
<p>More time to build quality relationships with families</p> <p>We want to make sure we have the tools and support to make Signs of Safety a Success. ICT infrastructure needs to support our practice</p> <p>Want to make sure partners buy into Signs of Safety and get a common understanding and approach across all professionals</p> <p>Workload – worried about additional demands due to changes to services</p> <p>Paperwork needs to be more child-friendly. We need to reduce duplication in recording</p> <p>Recruitment and retention</p> <p>Partners need to have shared responsibility</p> <p>Step down – need clear guidance and thresholds for professionals. Partner agencies want us to hold cases for longer instead of stepping them down</p> <p>Some people won't embrace the possibility that there are other ways of practising</p>	<p>We are achieving better outcomes for children and we are keeping children safe. Children are being adopted/achieving permanence quicker</p> <p>Children's voices are heard – good engagement with children, young people, parents and carers, good direct work with children.</p> <p>Children give positive feedback about their social workers - fewer complaints and more compliments. CP conferences are working better – feedback from parents is positive</p> <p>Quality of practice is improving. Pride in what we've already achieved on our improvement journey – we identify what's working well. More clear, concise and succinct CP Plans</p> <p>Our culture is child focused - people work hard and go the extra mile for children and young people. People aren't set in their ways – flexible and innovative workforce. Culture of improvement</p> <p>Management support and visibility. Open door policy. Can offload worries safely with managers and colleagues. Senior management is visible.</p> <p>Pod approach – Family support worker and social worker roles. Better collaborative working between teams. Multi-agency working has improved – willingness to challenge and change</p> <p>Simplification of assessments – now there is less repetition. Electronic record working to improve processes and quality.</p> <p>Services: Children's Disability Team, @ct team, Project Crewe, Foster to adopt, dedicated PA for NEET, DAFSU, range of additional support services for families, good EDT, Front door – fast response, Operation encompass</p> <p>Good training and learning opportunities</p> <p>Signs of Safety - glad to be investing in this as a whole service approach</p> <p>Workloads - Caseloads reducing. Recruitment and retention of permanent staff and managers - increased team stability. Staff turnover is decreasing – people want to come and work for Cheshire East Council. Massive improvement in Crewe CIN/CP – feels calm and a positive place to work</p>	<p>Outstanding and sustainable outcomes achieved for children and young people and families. Children are safe at home with their families. Less children in care, at child protection, children in need and in the criminal justice system</p> <p>Families understand why there is intervention and what we want to achieve. Individuals feel valued, listened to, and involved in their plans. Families take ownership of their own plan. Involve families as much as possible in identifying what works</p> <p>Improved life choices for children with disabilities on a long term basis and moving into adulthood</p> <p>Our Workforce and culture is driven by the needs of children and young people (not staff). Confident workforce. Positivity on all levels – embracing opportunity.</p> <p>Consistency for children and families - building more trusting relationships. Experienced and stable workforce. Happy workforce - no stress. Spending more time with families.</p> <p>Cheshire East leads other authorities in terms of best practice</p> <p>Wholesale responsibility and ownership from all agencies. Consistency across services. Collective decisions Focused and structured work. Efficient service. Locality working</p> <p>Good early help</p> <p>Good quality supervision and management</p> <p>Good quality training for everyone across teams</p>

Planned Future Improvements

- The **LSCB Neglect Sub Group is working on a new Neglect Strategy 2017-19** and this will be launched in April 2017 alongside a communication campaign which has been developed with young people. The 'Act on Neglect' Campaign will launch across the partnership and in universal settings to increase the identification and response to neglect, particularly where it is less recognised, for example in adolescents.
- A **Neglect Operational Group will be piloted** whereby practitioners can share concerns and advice on neglect cases.
- An **analysis of Child in Need cases** is currently underway through an audit of assessments that had an outcome of no further action and re-referrals. This is due to be completed by the end of March 2017 and will inform our demand management strategy.
- **Private Fostering policies and procedures are currently being reviewed** and are on track to be completed by June 2017. Work is currently underway to streamline the processes within the children's record system, which is expected to be completed by March 2017.
- **The Early Help Strategy and needs analysis** are being developed and the drafts were considered by the LSCB Early Help Sub Group in February 2017. CAF Audits are due to be relaunched in March 2017.
- Plans are progressing as expected for Cheshire East to move into the **Regional Adoption Agency**, which should be operational from April 2017. 'Adoption Counts' has been agreed as the name for the Regional Adoption Agency and branding is currently being prepared. Strong family finding processes have been mapped to ensure good, effective care planning from the earliest point is realised.
- A **new team structure for the Integrated Front-Door has been designed and new processes agreed** in line with the Business Improvement Review completed in December 2016. Staff consultation on the changes is due to take place during March 2017 with full implementation by May 2017.
- **Bespoke management training for Team Managers** is being developed to ensure they have the skills and knowledge they need to support, inspire and challenge their teams to always put children and young people first and this is to be rolled out in two sessions to be held in April and June 2017.
- **We will be adopting Signs of Safety** to ensure all our practice and our organisation is child-focused, solution orientated, and respectful and inclusive of families.
- Workshops are planned during 2016/2017 to support our workforce to achieve **high quality referral requests and clear and concise Individual Placement Agreements** for our children and young people. The IPA is the only legally binding document the local authority has with the provider that specifies agreed outcomes and financial detail such as pocket money and savings. Being clear at the start of the placement about what is expected to be achieved ensures everyone knows what they are working towards.
- Cheshire East has joined an innovation bid with Stoke to run **the 'House Project'**; this involves setting up a company with children in care and care leavers to recycle derelict houses and is intended to develop young people's ownership and participation skills.

- A project is being undertaken during 2016-17 in relation to the **emotional and mental health needs of Cared for Children**. This project will involve the participation of Cared for Children in activities related to positive mental health and in a multi-agency conference in spring 2017. This project is important in giving children a voice and raising the awareness of multi-agency managers, practitioners, councillors and carers regarding the emotional and mental health needs of Cared for Children.
- **Placement stability is an area of focus** as there appears to be a growing number of children who are experiencing three or more placements in the course of a year. A cross service working group has been established to identify themes for learning and development. The issue is also being addressed through the Permanence Tracking Panel and has added to the forward plan for our Social Care Leadership Team.

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Quarterly Improvement Plan Performance Scorecard - Q3 2016-17

*Audit measures are indicated in blue

No	Measure	Thresholds			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Exception Commentary
		RI	Good	Outs.	15/16	15/16	15/16	15/16	16/17	16/17	16/17	
We always put children and young people first												
1	Activity has improved outcomes for the child or young person	60-69	70-79	80-100				86%	76%	83%	90%	
2	Standard for management decision making and recording met at ChECS	60-69	70-79	80-100	100%		93%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
3	Standard for management decision making and recording met -CIN/CP	60-69	70-79	80-100	79%	78%	81%	59%	61%	89%	67%	Crewe CIN/CP now has all permanent team managers. As these posts embed we expect this measure to improve. A management development session was held in February to support managers to become leaders for their service areas. A workshop on reflective practice for managers will take place in March 2017.
4	Standard for management decision making and recording met - Cared for	60-69	70-79	80-100	75%	45%	67%	80%	80%	80%	100%	
We understand what impact the situation is having on the child or young person												
5	Social Worker identified and challenged safeguarding concerns	60-69	70-79	80-100				95%	89%	98%	92%	
6	Sufficient information gathered at ChECS	60-69	70-79	80-100	73%		93%	80%	100%	80%	70%	As this measure is from audit we would expect a degree of variation in performance due to the smaller cohorts involved. The total cohort was 10 cases. ChECS experienced a high workload during December 2016 which may have impacted on performance in this area.
7	History considered at ChECS	60-69	70-79	80-100	100%		87%	100%	70%	100%	100%	
8	Incorporating and recording the views and wishes of children and young people at CIN/CP	60-69	70-79	80-100	77%	79%	86%	70%	42%	79%	83%	
9	Incorporating and recording the views and wishes of children and young people - Cared for	60-69	70-79	80-100	82%	90%	92%	89%	78%	75%	100%	

10	Neglect cases using the graded care profile	60-69	70-79	80-100				50%	29%	17%	0%	There were only 2 neglect cases audited this quarter, and neither included the use of the Graded Care Profile. Performance monitoring reports show that the graded care profile was completed for 60% neglect cases in December 2016. The LSCB Neglect Sub Group is working on a new Neglect Strategy 2017-19 and this will be launched in April 2017 alongside a communication campaign which has been developed with young people. The 'Act on Neglect' Campaign will launch across the partnership and in universal settings to increase the identification and response to neglect, particularly where it is less recognised, for example in adolescents. Training on the grade care profile 2 is currently being rolled out across the partnership, targeted to specific groups of practitioners in areas where there are high referrals for neglect. The LSCB Partnership newsletters Changing Practice Together in December 2016 raised awareness that completion of the graded care profile is the responsibility of all partners and shared the IRO neglect audit findings.
11	Up to date assessment (within 12 months) - Cared for	60-69	70-79	80-100	67%	50%	27%	65%	50%	13%	0%	A total of 5 cases were audited from the P&TC teams this quarter, none of them had an up-to-date assessment. As this is the second quarter with a drop in performance in relation to timely assessments in P&TC the Auditors dip sampled an additional 46 cases. Within this random sample there were 21 cases (46%) without an up-to-date assessment and 25 that did have one (54%). A revised care plan document was introduced in February 2017. This new combined document will support social workers to improve the quality and timeliness of assessments, review reports and care plans.
12	Quality of case recording - CIN/CP	60-69	70-79	80-100				78%	83%	83%	100%	
13	Quality of case recording - Cared for	60-69	70-79	80-100				83%	90%	100%	100%	
14	Strategy discussions with multi-agency contribution	60-69	70-79	80-100			22%	50%	18%	62%	50%	There were 4 cases audited where there were strategy discussions. There is ongoing activity to improve the inclusion of multi-agency practitioners within strategy discussions and this is supported by a work stream of the Safeguarding Children Operational Group. A Task and Finish Group has been established where they have considered the current process and obstacles in achieving multi-agency meetings. An action plan has been developed to address this including a new process for referrals to partners when a strategy meeting is called.
15	Completion of CSE screening tools	60-69	70-79	80-100				N/A	N/A	100%	N/A	There were no CSE cases in the audit this quarter.
16	Updated CSE screening tool on step down	60-69	70-79	80-100				N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
17	Return home interviews informing the plan	60-69	70-79	80-100				80%	25%	67%	N/A	

18	Updated risk assessment following MFH&C	60-69	70-79	80-100				25%	0%	67%	N/A	There were no Missing from Home or Care cases in the audit this quarter.
19	Quality of return home interviews	60-69	70-79	80-100				60%	25%	67%	N/A	

We take action to make positive change a reality

20	No drift/delay in actions being completed	60-69	70-79	80-100				58%	36%	60%	31%	All children who have been on Child Protection Plans for over 12 months, are subject to repeat CP planning, or have been involved in the pre-proceedings process for over 6 months will be reviewed by a Service Manager or Head of Service on a monthly basis. The expectation is that the number of children within these categories will reduce significantly as a result of this increased focus. More robust systems for identifying children and young people at risk of drift and delay will be developed to support early identification and action.
21	Number of children and young people on a CP plan for more than 15 months	21-25	11-20	0-10	21	16	15	16	19	23	31	Q3 equates to 17 families, however 20 individuals (65%) come from only 6 families. It is therefore important to view this in the context that 2 large families can make a considerable impact on this indicator.
22	Plans are SMART - CIN/CP	60-69	70-79	80-100				67%	44%	61%	44%	A total of 9 cases were audited from the CIN/CP teams this quarter. SMART planning continues to be an area of focus across the partnership, and improvements in this area will be supported by the adoption of Signs of Safety.
23	Plans are SMART - Cared for	60-69	70-79	80-100					60%	70%	80%	A total of 5 cases were audited from the P&TC teams this quarter
24	Plans have clear contingencies - CIN/CP	60-69	70-79	80-100				48%	33%	72%	56%	This performance reflects that this is an area we need to continue to improve alongside SMART planning.
25	Plans have clear contingencies - Cared for	60-69	70-79	80-100					40%	40%	20%	A total of 5 cases were audited from the P&TC teams this quarter. Within the new Care Plan document is a clearer expectation to outline contingency plans. This document was introduced in February 2017.
26	Percentage of decisions at Early Help Brokerage made within 3 working days	70-80	81-90	91-100						95%	83%	Although there has been a drop in performance it still remains good. This decline is due to process changes, identified as part of the front door review and designed for implementation following the outcome of the consultation, which were implemented in mid November 2016. These changes result in more of the triage function taking place in EHB rather than in ChECS. This was designed for a period when additional staff would be in post, but is currently being managed without additional staffing capacity. The monthly figures for Q3 break down as follows October – 92% in timescale November – 82% in timescale December – 76% in timescale
27	Percentage of children and young people seen within 10 days of the combined assessment start date	75-84	85-94	95-100	62%	75%	81%	75%	78%	77%	78%	This indicator has been reworked to ensure data reporting is producing a reliable picture. The data has been retrospectively reworked from Q1 15/16.

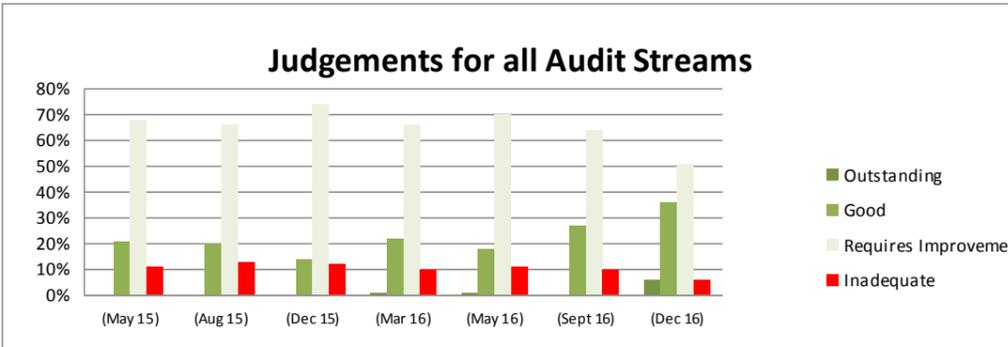
28	Children seen within 24 hours of S47	60-69	70-79	80-100	42%	62%	67%	40%	44%	45%	75%	There were 3 CIN/CP cases audited this quarter where this was relevant and one cared for case. The cared for child was not seen within 24 hours. The SM has reviewed the PTC case and it is clear the child was seen within 24 hours of the (historic) allegation and regularly thereafter. The strategy meeting was delayed but this did not impact on the quality of the work carried out by the SW in a timely way with the child.
29	CIN plans completed within 35 days	60-69	70-79	80-100	42%	59%	67%	44%	64%	69%	50%	This cohort consisted of 6 CiN cases.
30	Regularity of visits to CIN	60-69	70-79	80-100	79%	78%	67%	81%	83%	72%	78%	
31	Regularity of visits to cared for children	60-69	70-79	80-100	82%	90%	92%	80%	70%	50%	60%	Performance challenge sessions support the view that statutory visits are undertaken within the timescales relevant for the child but that recording can sometimes be delayed.
32	Percentage of initial health assessments requested within 48 hours of coming into care	70-80	81-90	91-100	16%	4%	4%	20%	73%	65%	87%	
33	Percentage of initial health assessments completed by paediatricians within 20 days	70-80	81-90	91-100	41%	32%	29%	12%	38%	33%	36%	The overall position for the 9 months to date is 36% - this is still way short of an acceptable performance. A root cause analysis has been undertaken by both CCG's. There will be dedicated IHA clinics in South CCG from March 2017 (these already exist in Eastern CCG.) A thorough analysis of all late compliance will be made by Designated Professionals in Q4. It is of note that a number of requests were made out of area in Q3 which did affect compliance as did some delays related to arrangements for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC).
34	Percentage of Private Fostering cases visited in timescales	80-89	90-94	95-100	100%	67%	83%	93%	96%	88%	100%	
We work <i>with</i> families to achieve long lasting change. Children and young people get the right service at the <i>right time</i>												
35	Social Worker took the right action at right time to protect child and siblings	60-69	70-79	80-100				94%	98%	92%	88%	
36	Thresholds applied appropriately by ChECS	80-84	85-94	95-100				97%	90%	80%	90%	From the 10 cases there was 1 case where the auditor did not agree with the outcome. The auditor considered that checks should have been made with the Health Visitor as a minimum, given the circumstances and the age of the baby.
37	Appropriate step up/down	60-69	70-79	80-100				67%	83%	84%	91%	
38	CIN cases where S47 was appropriately identified	60-69	70-79	80-100	100%	97%	100%	96%	100%	94%	100%	
39	Percentage of children and young people subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time (cumulative)	15-20	10-14	5-9	23%	21%	21%	19%	23%	24%	18%	
40	Percentage of repeat referrals (cumulative over a 12 Month Period)	25-30	20-24	Below 20	25%	22%	22%	22%	25%	25%	24%	

41	FGC held prior to escalation to ICPC	60-69	70-79	80-100				0%				This service has been reviewed and the decision has been taken that this provision will be brought in house. This work is currently underway
42	FGC held prior to child returning home	60-69	70-79	80-100				0%				

Audit Judgements

All Audit Streams

	Q1 (May 15)	Q2 (Aug 15)	Q3 (Dec 15)	Q4 (Mar 16)	Q1 (May 16)	Q2 (Sept 16)	Q3 (Dec 16)	Trend
Outstanding	0%	0%	0%	1%	0.8%	0%	6%	↑
Good	21%	20%	14%	22%	18%	27%	36%	↑
Requires Improvement	68%	66%	74%	66%	70%	64%	51%	↓
Inadequate	11%	13%	12%	10%	11%	10%	6%	↓



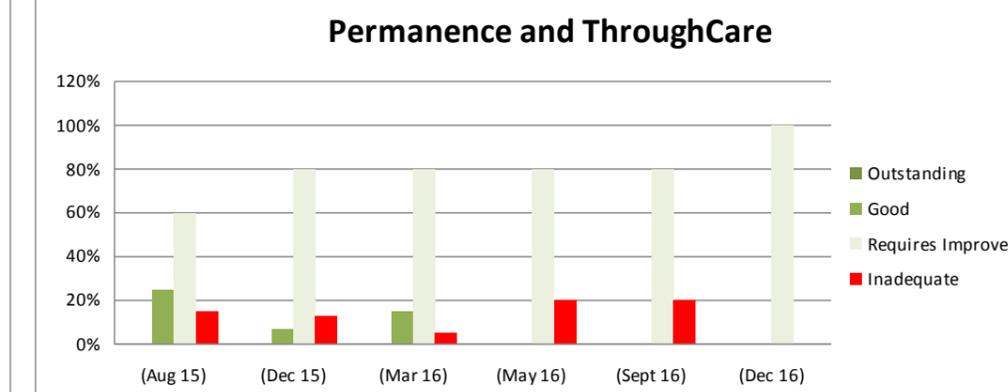
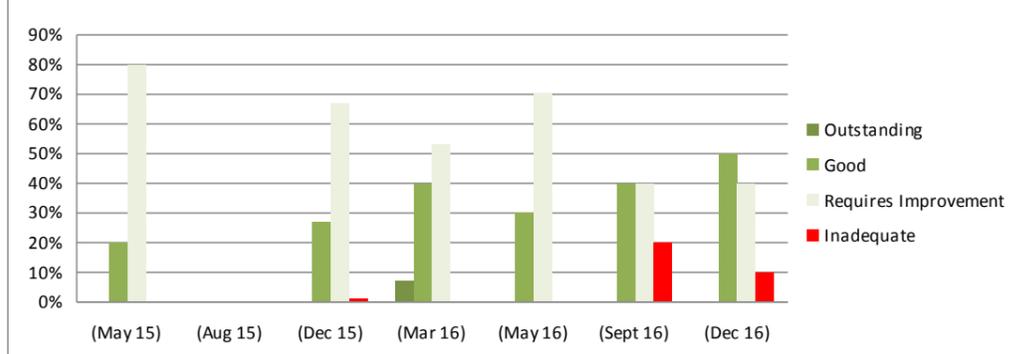
ChECS

	Q1 (May 15)	Q2 (Aug 15)	Q3 (Dec 15)	Q4 (Mar 16)	Q1 (May 16)	Q2 (Sept 16)	Q3 (Dec 16)	Trend
Outstanding	0%	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	=
Good	20%	0%	27%	40%	30%	40%	50%	↑
Requires Improvement	80%	0%	67%	53%	70%	40%	40%	=
Inadequate	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	20%	10%	↓

Permanence and ThroughCare

	Q1 (May 15)	Q2 (Aug 15)	Q3 (Dec 15)	Q4 (Mar 16)	Q1 (May 16)	Q2 (Sept 16)	Q3 (Dec 16)	Trend
Outstanding	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	=
Good	17%	25%	7%	15%	0%	0%	0%	=
Requires Improvement	50%	60%	80%	80%	80%	80%	100%	↑
Inadequate	33%	15%	13%	5%	20%	20%	0%	↓

ChECS



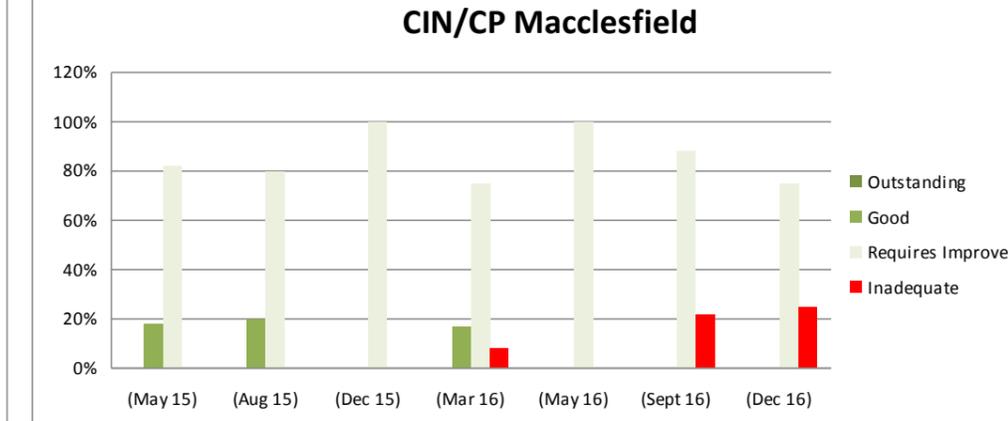
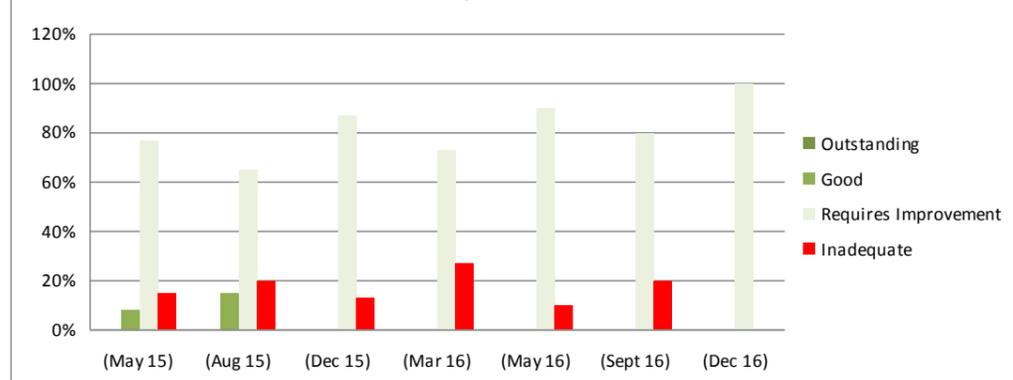
CIN/CP Crewe

	Q1 (May 15)	Q2 (Aug 15)	Q3 (Dec 15)	Q4 (Mar 16)	Q1 (May 16)	Q2 (Sept 16)	Q3 (Dec 16)	Trend
Outstanding	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	=
Good	8%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	=
Requires Improvement	77%	65%	87%	73%	90%	80%	100%	↑
Inadequate	15%	20%	13%	27%	10%	20%	0%	↓

CIN/CP Macc

	Q1 (May 15)	Q2 (Aug 15)	Q3 (Dec 15)	Q4 (Mar 16)	Q1 (May 16)	Q2 (Sept 16)	Q3 (Dec 16)	Trend
Outstanding	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	=
Good	18%	20%	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	=
Requires Improvement	82%	80%	100%	75%	100%	88%	75%	↓
Inadequate	0%	0%	0%	8%	0%	22%	25%	↑

CIN/CP Crewe



Quality of Work - Judgements from Team Managers' Audits and Practice Audits

Referral

	Q4 (Mar 16)	Q1 (May 16)	Q2 (Sept 16)	Q3 (Dec 16)	Trend
Outstanding	8% (2)	4%(2)	0%	4% (1)	↑
Good	58% (14)	51%(27)	57% (27)	58% (15)	↑
Requires Improvement	29% (7)	42%(22)	40% (19)	35% (9)	↓
Inadequate	4% (1)	4%(2)	2% (1)	4% (1)	=

Visits to Cared for Children

	Q4 (Mar 16)	Q1 (May 16)	Q2 (Sept 16)	Q3 (Dec 16)	Trend
Outstanding	0%	0%	0%	0%	=
Good	57%(17)	50%(12)	50% (13)	52% (11)	=
Requires Improvement	37%(11)	33%(8)	38% (10)	43% (9)	=
Inadequate	7%(2)	17%(4)	12% (3)	5% (1)	↓

Combined Assessment

	Q4 (Mar 16)	Q1 (May 16)	Q2 (Sept 16)	Q3 (Dec 16)	Trend
Outstanding	0%	0%	0%	0%	=
Good	37% (11)	44%(21)	31% (11)	32% (7)	=
Requires Improvement	46% (14)	56% (27)	60% (21)	55% (12)	↓
Inadequate	16%(5)	0%	9% (3)	14% (3)	↑

Cared for Assessments

	Q4 (Mar 16)	Q1 (May 16)	Q2 (Sept 16)	Q3 (Dec 16)	Trend
Outstanding	0%	0%	0%	0%	=
Good	40%(10)	33% (8)	42% (11)	50% (10)	↑
Requires Improvement	52%(13)	46%(11)	46% (12)	20% (4)	↓
Inadequate	8%(2)	21%(5)	12% (3)	30% (6)	↑

Child in Need Plans

	Q4 (Mar 16)	Q1 (May 16)	Q2 (Sept 16)	Q3 (Dec 16)	Trend
Outstanding	0%	0%	0%	0%	=
Good	30% (7)	24%(5)	50% (12)	17% (3)	↓
Requires Improvement	57%(13)	66%(14)	33% (8)	78% (14)	↑
Inadequate	13%(3)	10%(2)	17% (4)	6% (1)	↓

Cared for Children's Plans

	Q4 (Mar 16)	Q1 (May 16)	Q2 (Sept 16)	Q3 (Dec 16)	Trend
Outstanding	0%	0%	0%	0%	=
Good	46%(12)	38%(8)	41% (11)	30% (6)	↓
Requires Improvement	50%(13)	57%(12)	48% (13)	55% (11)	↑
Inadequate	4%(1)	5%(1)	11% (3)	15% (3)	↑

Child Protection Plans

	Q4 (Mar 16)	Q1 (May 16)	Q2 (Sept 16)	Q3 (Dec 16)	Trend
Outstanding	0%	0%	0%	0%	=
Good	64%(7)	38%(5)	64% (9)	33% (3)	↓
Requires Improvement	27%(3)	62%(8)	29% (4)	67% (6)	↑
Inadequate	9%(1)	0%	7% (1)	0%	↓

Strategy Meetings and Sec 47

	Q4 (Mar 16)	Q1 (May 16)	Q2 (Sept 16)	Q3 (Dec 16)	Trend
Outstanding	0%	0%	0%	0%	=
Good	50%(6)	33%(6)	38% (6)	63% (5)	↑
Requires Improvement	50%(6)	48%(10)	63% (10)	38% (3)	↓
Inadequate	0%	11%(2)	0%	0%	=



Cheshire East
Council

**Corporate Parenting
Committee**

Annual Report

2016-17

Foreword

It has been a pleasure working alongside both member and officer colleagues to coordinate Corporate Parenting arrangements in Cheshire East for the 2016-17 year; the first year of the Corporate Parenting Committee.

The first year of the committee has seen enhanced member involvement in their roles as corporate parents through the committee where we have covered a number of key elements which impact on the daily lives of our Cared for Children and Care Leavers.

Throughout the course of the year, the committee has covered;

- An overview of Corporate Parenting in Cheshire East
- An overview of the Cheshire East Corporate Parenting Strategy
- The role, purpose and outcomes of the Virtual School
- The Health and Wellbeing of Children in Care
- The Fostering Panel Annual Report
- The Adoption Panel Annual Report
- Five Priority Areas from Children and Young People
- The provision and outcomes for Care Leavers
- The wider Children and Families Improvement Plan

Most importantly, amongst all of the above key themes and topics, the voice of the child and outcomes for children has been at the centre of the committee's discussions and I hope that this is something which continues in years to come.

Working with our partners is key to our success to ensure a holistically improved service and outcomes for our Cared for Children and Care Leavers. I am grateful too for the contributions which they have made during the course of the last 12 months and look forward to continuing to share accountability and performance together.

I am resolute, that although improvements continue to be identified, we are never to be complacent in our work in this important area and will always commit to striving for the best possible outcomes for our Cared for Children and Care Leavers.

I hope that this report suitably outlines the ever-improving work which Cheshire East Council continues to deliver for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. It has been heartening to see the genuine care and concern for our children from officers and members alike and I truly believe that with this ethos, we are well-positioned to continue improving our performance and in turn our OFSTED outcomes in this critical area.



Cllr George Hayes

Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee

Context

Corporate Parenting is commonly used to describe the collective responsibility of the council, its members and partner organisations to provide the best possible care for children and young people who are “looked after” – those who are in the care of the local authority. In Cheshire East, children and young people have requested that their preference is to be known as “Cared for” or “Care Leavers” as opposed to “Looked After Children” – therefore this terminology will be used consistently throughout this report.

The most effective examples of Corporate Parenting take an authority-wide approach whereby all Council members and employees have an active commitment to ensuring the best possible outcomes for Cared for Children and Care Leavers.

Statutory responsibilities relating to Local Authorities duties in relation to Corporate Parenting were first outlined in the Children Act 1989. This outlines that Councillors should have a lead role in ensuring that their Council acts as an effective corporate parent for every child in care, actively supporting standards of care and seeking high quality outcomes that every good parent would want for their child. This extends to ensuring that children are not just cared for in terms of their essential needs, but cared about and nurtured as individuals to grow into successful and independent adulthood.

The ongoing commitment of being an excellent parent extends to all partner agencies providing services used by Cared for Children and Care Leavers.

Corporate Parenting in Cheshire East

Since May 2016, Corporate Parenting has been coordinated by the Corporate Parenting Committee, which works as an advisory committee to the Cabinet of Cheshire East Council. The committee is made up of cross-party representation. The purpose of the committee is to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent for all children and young people in care and care leavers from age 0-25 years old, as well as holding partners to account for the discharge of their responsibilities in this area.

The Corporate Parenting Committee undertakes its duties within the realm of the following Terms of Reference;

1. Act as advocates for cared for children and care leavers, ensuring that their needs are addressed through key plans, policies and strategies throughout the Council and its commissioned services.
2. Ensure key strategic plans and reports relating to children in care and care leavers including the Children’s Improvement Plan, Corporate Parenting Strategy and Sufficiency Statement.

3. Oversee the implementation of Cheshire East's Corporate Parenting Strategy and action plan and monitor the quality and effectiveness of services to ensure they fulfil the council's responsibilities.
4. Monitor the quality of care delivered by Cheshire East's residential children's homes via the provision of regular reposts including summary reports of Regulation 44 visits and Ofsted inspections.
5. Review the performance of the Council in relation to outcomes for children and young people in care via the scrutiny of both quarterly performance reports and the annual reports of the Cared for Children Service, the Independent Reviewing Service and the Virtual School.
6. Establish an environment whereby Elected Members and young people work together to address the needs and aspirations of Cheshire East's children and young people in care and empower children and young people to participate in decision making with adults.
7. Oversee, with the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the implementation of best practice principles in all aspects of service delivery, with the aim of producing positive outcomes for children and young people in care.
8. Support the work of foster carers and adopters in making a difference to the care and support they provide to children and young people in care and those adopted.
9. Make sure that staff and partners follow Cheshire East's pledge for cared for children and young people and the care leaver's charter.
10. Receive and scrutinise the Independent Review Officers' Annual Report

In addition to the Corporate Parenting Committee, the Council also has a Corporate Parenting Operational Group (CPOG). This group is officer led with membership drawn from across agencies. CPOG provides an officer led mechanism for identifying key issues for the corporate parenting committee whilst also ensuring that actions highlighted by the committee are effectively followed up.

Governance

The role of the Corporate Parenting Committee is to oversee the corporate parenting function of Cheshire East Council and its partners. It works to ensure that the Director of Children's Services and Cabinet Member for Children and Families meet their statutory responsibilities for providing professional and political leadership respectively to all children within the Borough, particularly those from identified vulnerable groups. The work undertaken by the Committee is also scrutinised in part by the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board, which is the accountable body for the Cheshire East Improvement Plan in Children's Services.

Frequency of Meetings and Attendance

The Corporate Parenting Committee meets six times throughout the municipal year. During the 16/17 Municipal Year, these meetings have been in June, September, November, January, March and May. Meetings have been held at 5.00pm in order to try and accommodate including the input from Children and Young People who are in care or are care leavers.

Attendance Log: Corporate Parenting Committee 2016/17		Meeting Dates					%
		07/06/2016	06/09/2016	01/11/2016	24/10/2017	07/03/2017	
Cllr George Hayes	Chair of Corporate Parenting Committee	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	80%
Cllr Gill Merry	Deputy Chair of Corporate Parenting Committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
Cllr Penny Butterill	Committee Member	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	80%
Cllr Beverley Dooley	Committee Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
Cllr Steven Edgar	Committee Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
Cllr Dorothy Flude	Committee Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
Cllr Mo Grant	Committee Member	✓	A	✓	A	✓	60%
Cllr Sarah Pochin	Committee Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	N	80%
Cllr Jos Saunders	Committee Member	A	A	✓	A	✓	40%
Cllr Margaret Simon	Committee Member	A	A	N	N	N	N/A
Cllr Lesley Smetham	Committee Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
Cllr Mick Warren	Committee Member	A	✓	A	A	✓	40%
Cllr Gail Wait	Committee Member	N	N	A	A	N	N/A
Average attendance							80%

*NB: There was another meeting of the committee on 02/05/2017, but this couldn't be included before this report went to press.

✓ = Attended
 A = Apologies
 R = Designated Rep
 N = Not Expected or Resigned Membership

It is clear that on the whole, attendance at meetings has been strong with many of the elected members serving on the committee also holding roles in other areas of the Children and Families Directorate including Children and Families Scrutiny Committee, The Fostering Panel, The Adoption Panel and responsibilities as school governors in a variety of schools across the Borough.

Cheshire East Profile¹

The following is key data relating to cared for children and care leavers:

- At the end of March 2017 there were 422 children and young people being cared for by the local authority. This is an increase of 36 (9%) from March 2016. This equates

¹ Note that some figures may not correspond with published national data due to reporting arrangements, eg, rounding up and down.

to 56 children for every 10,000 in the general population of Cheshire East, which is substantially lower than the England and North West averages, and in line with last year's statistical neighbour group average. Over the last 3 years Cheshire East has sat in the mid range of its statistical neighbour group in terms of the rate of cared for children.

- 145 individuals left care in 2016-17, compared to 141 in 2015-16.
- Cheshire East supported 11 unaccompanied asylum seekers children (UASC) with placements in 2016-17, including those supported through the national strategy.
- The gender profile of children and young people in care is split 51% male and 49% female. 41% of the children and young people in care are between the ages of 11 and 15. More females than males are aged 16+ are in care, whereas more males than females are aged 11-15.
- The average age of children and young people entering care has been age 8 for the past 3 years.
- A total of 181 children and young people have entered care in 2016-17, which is up from 166 in 2015-16.
- As at the end of March 2017, 84% of all children and young people in care live in a family situation. Every effort is made to support children and young people within Cheshire East provision and currently 82% of Cheshire East fostering provision (excluding respite) is occupied.
- There has been a very small increase in the number of children and young people in residential care - up from 36 last year to 38 at year end.
- As at 31st March 2017 the ethnic profile of cared for children is predominantly white British (88%), with the biggest other ethnicities of white other and other mixed background. This is a very similar picture to last year when 87% of the cohort were white British.
- 26 children and young people were adopted over 2016-17, which is a 44% increase from the 18 children and young people adopted in 2015-16.

Progress within the 2016/17 Municipal Year

Given that the committee was only constituted in May 2016 as an advisory committee to the Council's Cabinet, this report will outline initially how progress has been made towards each of the terms of reference. Thereafter, the report will become thematic, looking at the key areas which have been scrutinised by the committee this year and how we seek to continue our work in the next municipal year.

Act as advocates for cared for children and care leavers, ensuring that their needs are addressed through key plans, policies and strategies throughout the Council and its commissioned services.

The committee has;

- Revisited a number of key strategic and plans which directly impact on our Cared for Children and Care Leavers, ensuring that they are fit for purpose and being delivered well

The committee's continued work will focus on;

- Holding commissioned partners (The Children's Society & Voice for Children) to account for the outcomes of their commissioned work in relation to advocacy and engagement in initiatives such as the Cared for Children's Council
- Ensuring that the Voice of the Child plays a more active role in the committee's work, so that we can quality assure how policies, plans and strategies are being implemented and the impact this has to the everyday lives of our Cared for Children and Young People

Ensure key strategic plans and reports relating to children in care and care leavers including the Children's Improvement Plan, Corporate Parenting Strategy and Sufficiency Statement.

The committee has;

- Been consulted on the revised Children's Improvement Plan.
- Received updates on the Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Received the Annual Sufficiency Statement

The committee's continued work will focus on;

- Ensuring that the newly revised Children's Improvement Plan is delivered both effectively and efficiently, meeting key targets and deadlines to improve practice and performance
- Being part of the process of updating our Corporate Parenting Strategy which is due to be refreshed in the forthcoming Municipal Year
- Ensuring that there continues to be sufficient and suitable accommodation for our Cared for Children and Care Leaver population

Oversee the implementation of Cheshire East's Corporate Parenting Strategy and action plan and monitor the quality and effectiveness of services to ensure they fulfil the council's responsibilities.

The committee has;

- Considered the current Corporate Parenting Strategy in detail
- Considered the Quarterly Performance Reports to ensure that the strategy is being successfully implemented

The committee's continued work will focus on;

- Updating the Corporate Parenting Strategy which is due to be refreshed in the forthcoming Municipal Year
- Rigorously monitoring and quality assuring relevant elements of the Quarterly Performance Reports to ensure that the Council and it's partners are fulfilling their responsibilities effectively and efficiently

Monitor the quality of care delivered by Cheshire East's residential children's homes via the provision of regular reports including summary reports of Regulation 44 visits and Ofsted inspections.

The committee has;

- Received and scrutinised the OFSTED inspection report relating to Claremont, a children's home currently run by Cheshire East Council
- Received and scrutinised reports relating to Regulation 44 Visits

The committee's continued work will focus on;

- Ensuring that "Good" OFSTED outcomes are sustained across children's homes
- Overseeing the move from "in-house" provision to this moving to a commissioned arrangement
- Getting better consistency for member involvement in Regulation 44 Visits

Review the performance of the Council in relation to outcomes for children and young people in care via the scrutiny of both quarterly performance reports and the annual reports of the Cared for Children Service, the Independent Reviewing Service and the Virtual School.

The committee has;

- Rigorously reviewed the outcomes for children and young people in care by scrutinising quarterly performance reports, the Annual Report for Cared for Children, The Annual Report for the Independent Reviewing Service and the Virtual School

The committee's continued work will focus on;

- Holding the Council and associated partners to continued account where identified performance is not at a satisfactory standard
- Ensuring that the Annual Reports for both Cared for Children and the Independent Reviewing Service continue to reflect a true picture of service provision in Cheshire East
- Ensuring that the Virtual School continues to hold all schools across the Borough to account for the performance of Cared for Children and Care Leavers
- Ensuring that the Virtual School promotes the best possible outcomes and opportunities for Cared for Children and Care Leavers across the Borough

Establish an environment whereby Elected Members and young people work together to address the needs and aspirations of Cheshire East's children and young people in care and empower children and young people to participate in decision making with adults.

The committee has;

- Held meetings at times which are appropriate to enable young people to attend
- Promoted the attendance of children and young people in care at their meetings
- Some members have met children and young people in care at one of their meetings in their own surroundings and environment

- A group of young people have attended one meeting of the committee, made valuable contributions and asked insightful questions regarding elements of provision

The committee's continued work will focus on;

- Ensuring that the Voice of the Child continues to be at the heart of it's work and decision making processes
- Enabling young people to access more opportunities to engage with the committee both through formal meetings and other informal opportunities.
- Ensuring that commissioned partners provide suitable opportunities for children and young people to contribute to the work of the committee
- Ensuring that all members of the committee have the opportunity to meet and engage with children and young people to directly quality assure how provision is perceived by service users.

Oversee, with the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the implementation of best practice principles in all aspects of service delivery, with the aim of producing positive outcomes for children and young people in care.

The committee has;

- Provided a relentless focus on achieving the highest possible standards across the Council and it's partners
- Promoted the best possible outcomes for cared for children and care leavers throughout the various themes covered within the year

The committee's continued work will focus on;

- Ensuring a better interface with the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee to avoid any duplication in work and to share findings of work undertaken by each respective committee
- Continue to provide a relentless pursuit of excellence across all areas of work undertaken by the Council and it's partners

Support the work of foster carers and adopters in making a difference to the care and support they provide to children and young people in care and those adopted.

The committee has;

- Scrutinised the cared for children sufficiency strategy to ensure the effective recruitment of foster carers and adopters.
- Received and scrutinised the Annual Reports of the fostering and adoption Panels.
- Received and scrutinised the move in to regional adoption arrangements (Adoption Counts)

The committee's continued work will focus on;

- Ensuring there is oversight of the progress made by Adoption Counts following its launch in July 2017.
- Ensuring there is oversight of the development and growth of the Fostering Service.

Make sure that staff and partners follow Cheshire East's pledge for cared for children and young people and the care leaver's charter.

The committee has;

- Continued to deliver the commitments identified in the pledge for Cared for Children and Care Leavers and the Care Leavers Charter
- Dedicated deep-focus areas of it's meetings to ensure that key elements of the pledge are given specific time to be discussed, in order to quality assure and improve outcomes.

The committee's continued work will focus on;

- Ensuring that the Cared for Children and Care Leaver's Pledges and Charters remain up to date and relevant in the view of all stakeholders
- Ensuring that all staff and elected members have a clear oversight of the Pledge Commitments outlined in the Cared for Children and Care Leaver's Pledges

Receive and scrutinise the Independent Review Officers' Annual Report

The committee has;

- Received and scrutinised the Independent Review Officers' Annual Report

The committee's continued work will focus on;

- Ensuring that the work of the Independent Review Officers' service remains appropriate and receive the next annual report for this service

Thematic Focuses for the 2016/17 Municipal Year

As mentioned earlier, there have been a number of key themes and documents which the committee has scrutinised in particular depth. This section of the report outlines these areas; identifying key strengths and areas for development, which will also inform the committee's continued work programme in the forthcoming municipal year.

Education and the Virtual School

Health and Wellbeing of Children in Care

The Health of Cared for Children and Young People Annual Report 2015-16

The Fostering Panel Annual Report

The Adoption Panel Annual Report

Sufficiency Statement 2016/17

Claremont Residential Home Report

Regulation 44 Independent Inspections of Children's Homes Annual Report 2015 – 2016

Provision and Outcomes for Care Leavers

Children's Social Care Service Improvement Plan

Corporate Parenting Strategy Progress in 2016-17

Progress against the Corporate Parenting Strategy priorities for 2016-17 is set out at Appendix 1.

DRAFT

Corporate Parenting Strategy Priorities 2016-17 – Annual Progress

Involve Me

- Children and young people are at the heart of decision making in relation to all aspects of their lives and are supported to make their views and wishes heard.
- There are a range of opportunities for children and young people to influence and shape service planning and delivery.
- All staff have the knowledge and skills to engage with children and young people and encourage, promote and support their active participation.

The Children's Society currently delivers the Children's Rights and Participation Service on behalf of Cheshire East. This includes facilitating the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum. During 2016-17 these important forums for our cared for children and care leavers have been established on a more regular basis and work has taken place in increase membership and engagement.

Work has continued in 2016-17 to put children and young people at the heart of decision making. This includes the establishment of a 'Shadow Corporate Parenting Committee', made up from children and young people from the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee have met with the Shadow Committee to discuss issues relevant to them.

Staff from the Children's Society have worked closer with Cheshire East staff during this year to build better relationships. This includes working regularly from the Cheshire East office base, input to team meetings and links with social workers, Personal Assistants (PAs) and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs).

The Participation Network continues to operate on a bi-monthly basis to support 'champions' from within services to undertake training, share good practice and develop tools for promoting participation of children and young people.

For the third year running Cheshire East celebrated November Children's Right's Month (NCRM). NCRM is where everyone working with children and young people in Cheshire East can celebrate and raise awareness of children's rights in a variety of different ways. This year, young people came up with the idea of a takeaway takeover menu, where adults can chose from a range of options to see what it feels like to be a young person today. Some of the options relating to cared for children and care leavers included:

- The £21 challenge – to experience what it feels like for a care leaver to try and purchase a weekly shop for only £21.

- A day at a children's home – a commitment to spend a day with those in children's homes, and understand the difficulties they face daily.
- Setting up home - for care leavers, setting up home is a difficult job. The challenge was to try and set up your own home, but on the budget of a care leaver.

One of the main celebrations in November was the 'Star Awards'. This is a celebration event and awards ceremony for cared for children and young people and care leavers in Cheshire East. The event is co-organised by young people. This year's event took place on Saturday 20th November 2016.

In 2016-17 Cheshire East care leavers took part in a north west event around looking at issues that affect them. The group decided on the 10 key things that would improve the help and support they receive. Regionally care leavers said that they wanted:

- To feel listened to by everyone who is supporting us
- For our friendships to be valued
- To have accurate information about our rights
- Council tax exemption for care leavers up to 25
- Help to get into work
- To have our life choices respected
- Improved multi-agency working for care leavers
- To be able to remain in care homes until we're 21, if we ask to
- To be encouraged and supported to pursue our interests and form our own identities
- Better mental health provision for care leavers

Provide me with a good, safe home

- Improve the availability, quality and stability of local placements
- Ensure that children and young people are fully engaged in decisions relating to their placement choice
- Ensure that only those children who have no alternative placement will reside in care

Improving the availability, quality and stability of local placements is key to ensuring that children and young people feel safe and settled when they are in care. This revolves around

the ability to maximise the internal accommodation capacity via fostering and residential homes.

September 2016 saw the launch of the regional foster carer recruitment campaign called 'You Can Foster'. The theme of the campaign was 'Ambition' focussing on the important role foster carers play in supporting children and young people and helping them to realise their dreams. The campaign featured on regional TV and radio as well as online via social media channels such as Facebook.

The recruitment and retention of high quality Cheshire East Foster Carers continues to be a priority for the service. A survey in 2016-17 provided some key feedback on what is important to our Foster Carers. The service is working on an action plan to address these issues.

Cheshire East is currently undertaking work on a shared fostering service alongside Cheshire West, Warrington and Halton. The aim of this work is to share best practice in relation to marketing, recruiting and the training of foster carers and strengthen our market position thus ensuring more local foster carers can be recruited.

In 2016-17, the commissioning process for the redesign of the borough's residential homes for children in care was completed. A contract was awarded to BetterCare Keys, a national children home provider, to run from 1 April 2017. The aim is to provide a more flexible range of children homes and to increase the capacity to care for more of our children within the borough.

The 16+ accommodation and support at Watermill House, Macclesfield has been re-tendered and P3 were successful in maintaining their contract to operate this provision from April 2017. The opportunity was taken to improve the staffing model supporting the young people within the provision and increase the number of places commissioned from 5 to 6 (including the ability to access a placement on an emergency basis).

Crewe YMCA was successful in their tender submission for the Housing Related Support contract for the South of the borough (led by our Strategic Housing team). The provision in the South also includes accommodation and support at Hungerford Road which was previously operated by Plus Dane. Children's Commissioning have taken the opportunity to propose a different model of support for our 16 and 17 year olds that have accessed Crewe YMCA in the past and suggested consolidating all our placements in Hungerford Road as far as possible. This proposal will require a small increase in staffing support at Hungerford Road, but should reduce the risks inherent when utilising a large YMCA for our 16 and 17 year olds.

The ability to place our cared for children locally is sometimes hindered by the lack of Special School/Resource Provision capacity within the borough. A significant amount of work has been undertaken during 2016 to analyse and map the sufficiency position in

respect of Special Educational Needs capacity and work up options to improve our position. Cheshire East submitted an expression of interest to establish a Special Free School in the Crewe area to cater for pupils with a primary need of Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and on the 13th April 2017 received notification from the DFE that we were one of 20 Local Authority's to be successful.

The innovative approach of improving the local offer for 16+ accommodation and inclusion of the direct input of young people in the decisions about their next steps via a new Ignition Panel continues to work well.

Quality Assurance visits to residential homes continue to form an important part of ensuring a good and safe home. A programme of visits has been set again for 2017-18 and the enhancement to visits via the attendance of Voice for Children, applying their lived experience, will also continue as Voice for Children were successful in the re-commission of the Participation and User Engagement service from April 2017.

Cheshire East has joined an innovation bid with Stoke to run the 'House Project'. This involves setting up a company with children in care and care leavers to recycle derelict houses. This is intended to develop the ownership and participation skills of these children and young people.

By the end of 2016-17 final plans were completed for the launch of our Regional Adoption Agency, called Adoption Counts. This is a partnership with Stockport, Trafford, Salford and Manchester Councils, which will be one of the first new adoption agencies to open for business in July 2017. The aim of 'Adoption Counts' will be to maximise the economies of scale and expertise so that more children are matched with adopters much sooner and locally within the geographical boundary of the agency. There will be a particular focus on placing more children for adoption who; have complex needs, are part of a sibling group, and are from black and ethnic minority backgrounds. Adopters and children will also benefit from a regional approach to post adoption support.

Keep me healthy

- Ensure that all Cheshire East cared for children have an initial health assessment within 20 working days of entering care, and statutory review assessment and a robust health care plan agreed (6 monthly for under- fives, annually thereafter).
- Improve the emotional health and wellbeing of cared for children, young people and care leavers
- Promote healthy lifestyles amongst all cared for children.
- Ensure effective health transition planning

The timeliness of initial health assessments (IHAs) continues to be an area of focus as performance in this area is below expectations. In response to this poor performance, a root cause analysis has been under taken across four Cheshire CCGs and recommendations

made to improve the compliance with completion of IHAs within 20 working days. It has been agreed that dedicated admin support and dedicated IHA clinics will take place in Cheshire East and are becoming established. The pathways for IHA and escalation have been updated and a draft strengths and difficulties questionnaire pathway on entry into care has been developed. Further improvements around this will be ongoing in 2017-18.

Systems are in place for recording review health assessment data on the case management system. Any missing data has been tracked in preparation for end of year returns.

There is further work to be developed to improve the emotional health and wellbeing of cared for children, young people and care leavers. An initial meeting has taken place with the Adoption Team Manager to take this work forward.

Work to ensure the opportunity for self-completion of mental health screening using strengths and difficulties questionnaires for 16 & 17 year olds is underway and progressing via joint work between the Nurse Specialist 16+ and Transition with the care leavers team.

The cared for children's health team has recently transferred to the same provider as the 0-19 service which gives potential for improved working together.

To promote healthy lifestyles amongst all cared for children, the following activity has taken place in 2016-18:

- A session to promote teenagers health and transition has been delivered to foster carers.
- A session to promote the health of babies and toddlers has been delivered to foster carers.
- A joint session promoting the health and development of children in early years is planned for September 2017.
- The 16+ Nurse has been working with the Personal Advisors to develop their understanding of the health needs of care leavers. More formal training workshops will be arranged in 2017-18.
- Leisure passes continue to be available and will continue to be promoted.

Information has been updated to the 'Your Health' information. The leaflet is ready for reprint. Suggestions have been made regarding updating the electronic version which may be presented in a different manner.

This process of providing health information to young people as they leave care is developing but not yet embedded in practice.

A new PA Champion for Health was appointed on the 1st April to focus on a number of work areas including pregnant care leavers, work around parenting, health passports, sexual identity and sexual health work. This is a target priority area for 2017-18.

From October 2016 the care leavers service has been working closely with the 16+ nurse and the IRO service to develop an assessment tool around emotional well-being and this was piloted in January/February 2017. A work group is evaluating this and will finalise the tool based on feedback with the young people who took part. A dedicated PA is working closely with a task work group who meets fortnightly to develop resources, strengthen working relationships and offer increased support to care leavers in this area. The council has also commissioned Kooth to support emotional well-being.

18 young people have completed the health tool and this will aim to improve the support offer to them. Those care leavers who were NEET due to poor emotional well-being and health issues have decreased and are now engaging in positive activities or re-engaged with EET.

Help me to achieve

- Ensure that schools are challenged and supported to help all children progress and achieve to their full potential
- Improve the way that children move between schools so that this is timely, smooth and well supported
- Increase the number of children with excellent attendance and reduce the number of days lost through exclusions
- Increase the number of young people who sustain transition from school to training and employment

The summer network event for Designated Teachers focussed on making sure that teachers understood their responsibilities regarding cared for children and how the Virtual School can assist in these. There was a focus on the quality of target setting within personal education plans (PEPs) and the group produced a revised framework for assessing the level of support needed and the rating of the PEP quality. Schools have also been supported with bespoke training and this has taken place in more than ten schools or colleges with individual teachers or groups of staff who support particular children.

The main focus for training in 2016-17 has been to develop attachment awareness amongst primary schools so that they are better able to understand and respond to the needs of children who have experienced trauma or insecure attachment. Two conferences were held in Autumn 2016, attended by over 100 delegates in total which were very well received. Schools were then invited to take this further by carrying out action research projects and becoming attachment aware schools. Thirteen schools have asked to be involved and the initial findings should be known by the autumn term.

The PEP process was reviewed with the Designated Teachers and the expectations around completion and return have been increased. This raising of the threshold for a 'good or better' PEP has caused an inevitable decrease in the number rated in the higher category but with ongoing support there is now an improvement again.

Schools have been supported to help children reach their potential in tests and exams through an increased focus on the predicted outcomes and rate of progress. Additional funding for interventions and boosters has been made available and this has resulted in more children having 1:1 tuition.

The SDQ score has been included on the PEP form and social workers are asked to complete this so that schools are aware of any interventions or the need for them to provide additional mentoring/support.

The previous monitoring of PEPs was for those who had a PEP within the past 6 months. From 2016 this has changed to number with PEP within the term. As the terms are only three or four months long this has proved a considerable challenge but in the autumn term there was a return of over 90% within the term.

The Virtual School Council, which was due to expand the quality assurance process to include young people, has not met since September while the structure of the Children in Care Council was being revised. It is intended that this will start again from September 2017 but the 'My Voice' section of the PEP has been modified to allow the young person to give feedback to the Virtual School on how they are supported and what they feel needs to change about the way this support works. So far the feedback has been generally positive or no feedback given.

The Reference Group for headteachers met in the summer of 2016 and discussed the way the Virtual School works and how this can be improved. Issues raised, such as increase in Educational Psychology support, have been acted upon and there is currently a vacancy for this post advertised with the intention that the increased capacity will be available from September 2017.

There is improved working with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and PEPs are now aligned with SEN review meetings. The system for supporting children with SEN who are placed out of Cheshire East remains cumbersome at times and meetings are currently looking at how this can be made more efficient.

Foster carer training has been expanded to include a session on raising aspirations and an understanding of the new curriculum and assessment systems for primary and secondary children. These were very well received with excellent feedback and will be offered again next year.

52 children had a change of school during the academic year. The most common reasons were change of carer or to provide the additional support for SEN required. All except two were made with the agreement of the school – in these cases on appeal and one direction were used. Transfer between primary schools has proved to be easier with children moving very quickly. Transfers between secondary schools have taken longer, particularly if the child has behavioural difficulties although all children were allocated a place.

There were few cases of children moving between or into Cheshire East schools last year but experience during 2016/17 shows that this is still an area of concern in some cases which is being addressed by Senior Officers within the Education and Skills Service.

Integration into new schools has been a key focus this year and schools have been able to request funding to put into place a practical plan to ensure a successful start. This has been successful and a number of children with troubled educational histories have been able to move into their new schools.

The Virtual School Council was asked for thoughts on school moves and their ideas have been incorporated into practice. Ongoing work with SEN will ensure that moves involving children with EHCP are given a high priority and are made in good time.

A monitoring system is now in place and certificates issued for children who have full attendance for each term. When a child's attendance falls below the 90% minimum threshold the carer is contacted by phone or letter to identify any issues and offer advice. Schools are also involved in any plans put in place to improve attendance. The overall number of days lost through exclusion fell in 2015/16. Work is ongoing to reduce this further, particularly for those children who experience repeated exclusions. The increased educational psychology support will be used to further support schools to reduce exclusions through observations and advice.

Exclusions for children in special schools remain low and when these do take place we follow up with telephone calls and visits. Schools have been made aware of their responsibilities to find alternative provision if they feel there is no option but to exclude and to start this from day 1 to avoid pressure on the placement.

The post-16 advisor post has been expanded to include liaison with all Year 11 pupils during the summer term to ensure that there is a detailed post-16 plan in place. A new Key Stage 4 advisor has been appointed in July 2016 to support pupils in Year 10/11. As well as supporting through PEPs, this advisor arranged a series of engagement activities for young people at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) and also revision sessions for young people and carers to prepare for GCSEs.

A post-16 tutor has been employed via the Innovation fund to work predominately with young people who are NEET or at risk of leaving a post-16 course but who can also support Year 11, where needed.

The Virtual School has been given management over the Cygnet programme which is a commissioned service to provide bespoke traineeships with enhanced 1:1 support. Following a tender process, the contract was awarded to Total People from March 2017.

The reporting of NEET levels are monitored monthly and the system has been refined to consider cared for and care leavers separately which allows more targeted support. The levels of NEET in both groups has currently fallen.

Support me to move to adult life

- Increase the number of young people aged 18-21 who are education, employment or training
- Prepare young people for independent living, to ensure young people have suitable accommodation and are able to live independently with limited support, and experience greater stability
- Young people have the skills and knowledge they need and can protect themselves from risk

In October 2016 Cheshire East appointed an Education, Employment and Training (EET) champion to oversee work with our young people 18-21 who are NEET. The NEET figure has reduced from 52% (July 2015) to 31% (March 2017). This is largely through a targeted approach to each of our young people, and building links with providers.

The targeted approach to improving 16+ destinations for care leavers includes funding from the Innovation Fund Bid and employment of 2 full time staff members who will focus on NEET status of care leavers to support the work with 16-18 year olds and 18+. There is a sub-group called SPEED, which focuses on 16+ Education, Employment Destinations, which is a work group from across the services and focuses on tracking 16-18 year olds and also 18-21 year olds.

Improved data reporting and reliance on the case management system as a central point for data collection has been a central feature over this past year. There is a tracker and monthly challenge meetings now measure EET.

An EET PA Champion has liaised closely with all potential providers, agencies and resources within Cheshire East and providing more offers and choice of job, training or apprenticeship to care leavers. Three young people have progressed and completed apprenticeships in August 2016. During 2016-17 we updated our EET reports to improved tracking of these young people.

NEET figures for 18-21 year olds have been reduced through a targeted approach; there is an expectation on staff that all young people who are NEET have an updated CV and care leavers have been supported by their PA's to have CV's and work ready programmes such as

'Just drop in', Youth Support Team drop in, EET champion and improved funding to support this.

There are a number of developments across 'readiness for independence' and a new PA Champion for this has been appointed from 1st April 2017 to continue to drive forward the work in this area. In 2016-17 there were 4 workshops that took place with 18 young people taking part in these.

In addition to the focus on developing work around the strategy and work streams, there has been a drive to improve the quality of pathway plans and the tools used with care leavers. A task group worked on a new look pathway plan and this 'went live' on the children's system on the 10th January 2017. Service Manager's thematic audits and challenge meetings have explored a range of topics including; adoption breakdowns in adolescence (13 to date over 16+), university attendees (10), apprenticeships (7-9), Pregnant and Parents (24), foyer accommodation, 'staying put' arrangements (16), EEA nationals and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) support as part of a deeper dive into our work.

Independence packs (bronze, silver and gold) have been designed by the PA's to use as a tools to work with young people in thinking about the work needing done to support their independent skills. A number of social workers are using this tool to assess their young people's independence skills. In the past year, 18 young people have completed independence packs in total; some completing all three.

The tenancy readiness programme offers care leavers the opportunity to think about the merits of having their own property and the responsibilities that may come with this. Four programmes were set up over 2016 and 13 young people engaged in this work over a 4-6 week period, with 4-6 care leavers participating at any one time. 7 have successfully moved to independent living, 2 have moved into supported lodgings, 3 have taken part in a trial at a taster flat and one has a moving on plan for semi independence from residential care in the coming months. One care leaver fed back "The course reiterated to him that he is not yet ready for independent living and requires further support from his host."

We now have improved knowledge of our data, better oversight and understanding of our service and a 16/17 year old tracker to think about next steps accommodation options. There is also better data tracking on numbers in staying put arrangements, semi-independent provisions and forum housing. These are reviewed by the Team Manager in monthly challenge sessions.

Last year 25 young people were referred to the 'Ignition panel', which is an innovative project that has been established to support young people to have the best, most appropriate transition for when they leave care. Ignition is for young people aged 15½ plus who are thinking about where and how they would like to live when they leave care. Making

sure our young people start independence at the right time and in the right place provides the best chance for a positive journey to adulthood and will support the best possible life chances. The panel shares ideas, suggestions, good practice etc. to develop an action plan that will support each young person to achieve their future living goals. This may be accessing a taster house, supported lodging or being supported through a semi-independent setting with a phased transition to young people being in their own property. Three young people who attended panel availed themselves of the taster flat over a 6 month period. Others obtained advice, more options to consider while others moved on to semi-independent provisions.

There are better 16+ options with ring fenced properties and even closer working with commissioning services and input into the Sufficiency Statement. Having the training flat aids the work in supporting care leavers make up their minds on their next steps.

We are working hard to try and reduce the experiences of care leavers facing homelessness and debt issues; with work being developed by the Team Manager and housing providers to prevent debts accruing and threat of eviction so there's a warning bell ringing out to our service long before this is considered an option. Council Tax exemption to care leavers who are the liable payer is up to 25 years old.

Risks to care leavers are now being captured when in semi-independent provisions through risk assessment tools (this was an Ofsted recommendation). This is tracked and reviewed in the care leavers challenge meetings.

The child sexual exploitation (CSE) tool being used in the service and training opportunities for all new staff is mandatory.

A good number of our care leavers now have their own bank accounts. Those who are unable to because of poor credit history or debts have access to a Credit Union account and several of our care leavers have accessed this.

PEPs are set up for all young people over 16 and these include the long term goals and aspirations. When a young person does not wish to have PEP, the support plan is still recorded and it is made clear that this is accessible when the young person requires it. All Y10 and Y11 are registered on the apprentice website unless they have a firm offer and plans to going to FE.