

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Date: Monday, 27th January, 2020
Time: 1.30 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 at the foot of each report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making and Overview and Scrutiny meetings are audio recorded and the recordings will be uploaded to the Council's website

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

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes of Previous meeting** (Pages 3 - 6)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2019

3. **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.

4. **Whipping Declarations**

To provide an opportunity for Members to declare the existence of a party whip in relation to any item on the agenda

5. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

For requests for further information

Contact Helen Davies

Tel: 01270 685705

E-Mail: helen.davies@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies

A total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to make a statement(s) on any matter that falls within the remit of the Committee.

Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes, but the Chairman will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned, where there are a number of speakers.

Note: In order for officers to undertake any background research, it would be helpful if members of the public contacted the Scrutiny officer listed at the foot of the agenda, at least one working day before the meeting to provide brief details of the matter to be covered.

6. **SEND Written Statement of Action Update** (Pages 7 - 32)

To scrutinise progress against the SEND Written Statement of Action.

7. **Locality Working Progress Report** (Pages 33 - 68)

To review 'Together in Communities' – a new way of working in localities across services.

8. **Family Focus (Troubled Families) Recovery report** (Pages 69 - 76)

To consider the progress and improvements made in delivering the Family Focus programme.

9. **Innovative Approaches to Children in Need** (Pages 77 - 84)

To receive a report on the approaches to Children In Need.

10. **Outcome of Ofsted Inspection of Cheshire East Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)** (Pages 85 - 102)

To receive a report on the outcome of the Ofsted Standard Inspection.

11. **Forward Plan** (Pages 103 - 116)

To give consideration to the areas of the forward plan which fall within the remit of the Committee.

12. **Work Programme** (Pages 117 - 124)

To give consideration to the work programme

Membership: Councillors M Addison, J Barber, M Beanland, D Brown, J Buckley, C Bulman, P Butterill (Vice-Chairman), S Handley, M Houston, A Moran and J Saunders (Chairman)

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

held on Monday, 25th November, 2019 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)

Councillors M Addison, J Barber, M Beanland, D Brown, J Buckley, C Bulman,
M Houston and A Moran

Councillor J Rhodes attended to present Minute No. 34.

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS IN ATTENDANCE

(none)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Jacky Forster, Director of Education and 14-19 Skills
Gill Frame, Independent Chair, Cheshire East Safeguarding Children Board*
David Leadbetter
Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People
Alison Stathers-Tracey, Director of Early Help and Prevention
Alex Thompson, Director of Financial and Customer Services (Section 151
Officer)**

* Attended for Minute No. 30 only

** Attended for Minute No. 31 only

25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Butterill and S
Handley.

26 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**RESOLVED –**

That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record
and signed by the Chairman.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

28 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

No whipping declarations were received.

29 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

The committee welcomed Mr Plant and the school choir of St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Crewe who, as part of November Children's Rights Month were invited to perform two songs to the committee.

The children performed their song 'Every Child Has Rights' which was written for the school's children's rights awards programmed and had been published by UNICEF as a learning resource.

RESOLVED –

The committee thanked the children and teachers of St Mary's Catholic Primary School for attending the meeting and performing their songs.

30 LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Consideration was given to the 2018/19 annual report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board ...

Members asked questions and put comments in relation to;

- why the council's assessment timescales had been lower than its statistical neighbours;
- the reason for the 51% increase in reported incidences of child sexual exploitation; and
- receiving clarity on Appendix 2 to the annual report and why there had been lower representation from primary school heads at Board meetings.

Gill Frame, Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, responded to members' questions and gave reassurance that the increased reports of child sexual exploitation had arisen from there being greater awareness of the issue and that authorities had changed the way in which it is reported.

RESOLVED –

- 1 That the report be received and noted.
- 2 That any additional written responses to members' questions be circulated to the committee via email.

31 PRE-BUDGET 2020/21 CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to the Pre-Budget 2020/21 Consultation proposals that fell within the committee's remit.

Members asked questions and put comments in relation to;

- the proposed reduction in funding for community transport services for SEND and other children and families services, and that these planned savings seemed unrealistic;
- concern as to how the funding reduction to community transport services would impact on how children were dropped off and picked up, particularly those that are more sensitive to changed environments and situations;
- the proposal to reduce funding for early help services and the wider impacts that this would have on service connectivity as well as the overall effectiveness of other key service areas.

RESOLVED –

That the comments and feedback raised by the committee be collated alongside those of the other overview and scrutiny committees, to be presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 January 2020.

32 CHESHIRE EAST ALL-AGE AUTISM STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the new All Age Autism Strategy – coproduced by the council, local NHS bodies and the partners – that helped the council to meet its statutory requirement to produce such a strategy, as outlined in the Autism Act 2009.

Members asked questions and put comments in relation to;

- whether the 82 survey responses were from individuals, or whether some were received from larger groups or agencies that reflected the views of a greater number of people;
- whether the views of parents and carers were captured during the undertaking of the survey;
- that the council would benefit from using different survey methods to improve response rates from different groups;
- whether the reference in the report to a new team would create additional costs or resources to the council; and
- that more examples of how the council compared to benchmarks or statistically neighbouring authorities, would have helped to contextualise the council's current position and its ambition for this strategy.

RESOLVED –

That the All Age Autism Strategy be endorsed.

33 PERFORMANCE SCORECARD - QUARTER 2 (2019/20)

Consideration was given to the performance data relating to services within the committee's remit, from quarter two of the 2019/20 municipal year.

RESOLVED –

That the update on performance be noted.

34 SEND LOCAL OFFER FOR 16 TO 25 YEAR OLDS

Consideration was given to the final report of the SEND Task and Finish Group on the local offer of SEND services for 16 to 25 year olds in Cheshire East.

RESOLVED –

The committee supported and endorsed the report, and noted that it would be presented to Cabinet on 3 December 2019 for consideration of the findings and recommendations of group.

35 FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the council's forward plan of key decisions.

RESOLVED –

That the forward plan be noted.

36 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee reviewed its work programme.

RESOLVED –

That the work programme be agreed.

The meeting commenced at 1.30 pm and concluded at 3.37 pm

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)



Working for a brighter future together

Version
Number: 2.0

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 27 January 2020

Report Title: SEND Written Statement of Action Progress Update

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People and Director of Children's Services

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. Following the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Local Area Inspection in March 2018, Cheshire East was asked to produce a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) which described the actions the area would take to improve identified weaknesses relating to Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans and Autism pathways. The local authority and both of the area's clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) were jointly responsible for submitting the WSOA to Ofsted, and our WSOA was deemed fit for purpose by Ofsted in October 2018. This report contains information about the upcoming Ofsted and CQC SEND re-visit, and the accompanying progress report provides an update on the improvement actions carried out by the 0-25 SEND Partnership in line with the WSOA and the impact to date.

2. Recommendation/s

- 2.1. Members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:
 - a. Note the progress to date against the SEND Written Statement of Action as described in the accompanying SEND Progress Overview Report.
 - b. Recognise ongoing areas for development in relation to SEND and next steps (as highlighted in the accompanying progress report).
 - c. Note and endorse the planned preparations for the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) re-visit.

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3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 3.1. This report (and its recommendations) ensures that the members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee are updated on SEND improvement work and have the opportunity to provide relevant support and challenge to the 0-25 SEND Partnership in relation to SEND, in line with the SEND Written Statement of Action.
- 3.2. The report also ensures that members are informed about the requirements of the upcoming Ofsted and CQC SEND-revisit.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. Not applicable – delivery of our SEND Written Statement of Action was a requirement of the local area following the previous Ofsted and CQC SEND Local Area Inspection in March 2018.

5. Background

5.1. Introduction and background

- 5.1.1. In March 2018, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out a joint local area inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Cheshire East. This inspection looked at how effectively partners in Cheshire East work together to identify, assess and meet the needs of children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND to improve their outcomes.
- 5.1.2. The inspection highlighted strengths and areas for development in the local area's arrangements in relation to children and young people with SEND in Cheshire East.
- 5.1.3. Highlighted strengths included well-established and strong relationships between leaders that facilitate joint working, and a shared vision to improve outcomes for children and young people in Cheshire East. The Cheshire East Toolkit for SEND and a number of local services, such as the Early Years Complex Care Team, the Children with Disabilities Team and the Cheshire East Autism Team, were also identified as strengths.
- 5.1.4. However, the inspection outcome letter stated that while there are significant strengths in Cheshire East, there were also two areas of weakness. As a result, the area of Cheshire East was required to produce and submit a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to Ofsted that explains

what the local area is doing to address the following areas of significant weakness:

- Area 1 - the timeliness, process and quality of education, health and care (EHC) plans
- Area 2 - the lack of an effective autism spectrum disorder (ASD) pathway and unreasonable waiting times.

5.1.5. The Written Statement of Action was considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board in July 2018 and was subsequently deemed fit for purpose by Ofsted in October 2018. Members of the 0-25 SEND Partnership have since focused on delivery of the WSOA Action Plan through a number of focused workstreams.

5.1.6. Progress against the Written Statement of Action has been monitored by the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/I) on a quarterly basis since September 2018.

5.1.7. Updates on SEND developments arising from the 0-25 SEND Partnership are regularly provided through our 'SENDing you the news' webpage www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/sendingyouthenews

5.2. Update on progress

5.2.1. The Progress Report which accompanies this paper describes the actions that have been taken to address each area of weakness, in line with the action plan from our Written Statement of Action, and the resulting impact on these areas.

5.2.2. The Progress Report also describes actions that have been taken in other SEND areas that were not included within the WSOA.

5.3. Preparation for Ofsted/CQC re-visit

5.3.1. Ofsted and the CQC will carry out a re-visit to each local area where a Written Statement of Action was deemed to be required following a SEND Inspection. The sole purpose of the re-visit is to determine whether the local area has made sufficient progress in addressing the areas of weakness detailed by the WSOA (including an evaluation of the impact of the actions taken). The focus of each re-visit will be the areas identified in the WSOA. However, if any other serious weaknesses are identified during the re-visit, these will be referenced in the re-visit letter.

- 5.3.2. Once the need for a WSOA has been determined, advisers from the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/I) carry out a minimum of four support and challenge visits to the local area. Following an initial SEND inspection follow-up meeting with DfE and NHSE/I in May 2018, the Cheshire East local area has had five further monitoring visits in September 2018, December 2018, March 2019, June 2019 and October 2019. One further monitoring visit is currently scheduled to take place on 21st January 2020. The attached document gives an overview of progress against the WSOA.
- 5.3.3. Ofsted and the CQC will usually re-visit a local area within 18 months of the WSOA being declared fit for purpose.
- 5.3.4. The re-visit inspection team will always be led by an Ofsted Inspector who will be accompanied by a CQC inspector. If possible, these will be the same inspectors who carried out the initial inspection.
- 5.3.5. The Inspectorate of Ofsted will notify the director of children's services, as the representative of the local area partners, 10 working days before the re-visit team arrives on site. The CQC will then notify leaders at the CCGs. The local area is responsible for informing all stakeholders of the dates of the re-visit.
- 5.3.6. Inspectors will ask to speak to a group of children and young people as part of the re-visit. Inspectors will also hold a meeting with parents on day 1 of the on-site activities of the re-visit, and will ask parents a number of questions through an online webinar prior to arriving on site.
- 5.3.7. The on-site activities will last two to four days depending on the extent of the serious weaknesses identified. The length of the re-visit will be communicated to the local area at the time of notification.
- 5.3.8. Following the re-visit, Ofsted and CQC will produce a letter that will include:
- the decision as to whether the local area has made sufficient progress in improving each of the serious weaknesses identified at the initial inspection
 - a clear and brief summary of the effectiveness of leaders' actions against each serious weakness identified in the WSOA
 - reference to any other serious concerns, with the underpinning evidence, identified during the re-visit, and clarification that these will be communicated to the DfE and NHSE/I and will be used to determine the timing of the next inspection (under any future LA SEND framework).

- 5.3.9. If a local area is considered to have made sufficient progress, the formal quarterly support and challenge visits from the DfE and NHSE/I will cease.
- 5.3.10. If a local area is making insufficient progress in any of the serious weaknesses identified, it is for the DfE and NHSE/I to determine the next steps. This may include the Secretary of State for Education using his powers of intervention. Ofsted and the CQC will not carry out any further re-visits unless directed to do so by the Secretary of State.
- 5.3.11. An action plan is being developed to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place for the re-visit, incorporating learning from other areas. It is proposed that existing governance arrangements will be used to monitor and scrutinise this action plan. This includes the SEND improvement group, which currently coordinates information for the monitoring meetings, and the Inspection Logistics Group, which includes senior managers from the LA and health. Arrangements will be overseen by the 0-25 SEND Partnership Executive Management Group and informed by the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board. It is essential that individual agencies establish oversight of their own readiness, and ensure the commitment of necessary resources to contribute to the multi-agency planning arrangements.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. Delivery of our SEND Written Statement of Action was a requirement of the local area following the previous Ofsted and CQC SEND Local Area Inspection in March 2018.
- 6.1.2. There are no further legal implications at this stage.

6.2. Finance Implications

- 6.2.1. Details of resources that have been previously been committed to support the delivery of actions within our WSoA for SEND are outlined within the accompanying progress report. If we have not made sufficient progress at the re-visit, there could be financial implications implementing any further action required.
- 6.2.2. Providing increased budget around the provision of sufficient school places for SEND and SEND transport are included in the Council budget proposals for change for the period 2020/21 to 2023/24.

6.3. Policy Implications

- 6.3.1. There are no policy implications at this stage.

6.4. Equality Implications

- 6.4.1. The actions outlined within our WSOA for SEND are focused on improving experiences and outcomes for Cheshire East children and young people with SEND, and their families.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

- 6.5.1. A full consultation was carried out in relation to the re-structure of the SEND service. As of January, the majority of posts within the new structure are filled.
- 6.5.2. The current Head of Service for SEND is leaving Cheshire East in January 2020. Two temporary Head of Service posts have been created for the next 12 months in order to ensure that we can move the improvement of the service forward with greater pace. A new Head of Service with responsibility for the SEND Locality teams has been appointed and is in post. The other temporary Head of Service post is currently being recruited to. Officers are also now in post for the three Locality Manager roles within the SEND service.
- 6.5.3. We will continue to advertise to recruit more Educational Psychologists in our continued drive to increase capacity within this service.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.6.1. Risks and issues arising from work within any workstream of the 0-25 SEND Partnership are highlighted to the SEND Partnership Board through highlight reports.
- 6.6.2. Risks and issues are also monitored through the SEND Improvement Group, and any major risks relating to SEND are added to the Council's corporate risk register where appropriate.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

- 6.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

6.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

- 6.8.1. The actions outlined within our WSOA for SEND are focused on improving experiences and outcomes for Cheshire East children and young people with SEND.

6.9. Public Health Implications

- 6.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

7. Ward Members Affected

- 7.1. The improvement actions described in our WSOA for SEND apply equally to all children and young people with SEND in Cheshire East, and their families, and therefore any impact is borough-wide.

8. Consultation & Engagement

- 8.1. Feedback from a wide range of professionals across education, health and care and members of the public (including parent carers) contributed to the development of the SEND Written Statement of Action and the Action Plan within it.
- 8.2. We are continuing to use both data and feedback as a measure of the impact of our improvement actions.
- 8.3. There are numerous consultation and engagement activities with parent carers, young people and professionals throughout the year in relation to SEND improvements, and the SEND Partnership's Communication and Engagement Working Group manages a calendar of all ongoing consultation and engagement events and activities.
- 8.4. A full consultation was carried out in relation to the re-structure of the SEND service.

9. Access to Information

- 9.1. One supporting document, which provides an overview of progress against the SEND WSOA and other SEND improvements, has been included alongside this report.
- 9.2. The Local Area Inspection Report from March 2018, along with the WSOA, is published on the Council's website at:

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/local-offer-for-children-with-sen-and-disabilities/send-developments/cheshire-east-local-area-send-inspection.aspx>

10. Contact Information

10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Jacky Forster
Job Title: Director of Education and Skills
Email: Jacky.Forster@cheshireeast.gov.uk



Cheshire East Overview of progress against our SEND WSOA

January 2020

1. Purpose of this document

As a result of the joint local area special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) inspection undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in March 2018, the area of Cheshire East was required to produce and submit a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to Ofsted that explains how the local area will tackle the following areas of significant weakness:

- the timeliness, process and quality of education, health and care (EHC) plans
- the lack of an effective autism spectrum disorder (ASD) pathway and unreasonable waiting times

The local authority and both of the area's clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) were jointly responsible for submitting the WSOA to Ofsted, and our WSOA was deemed fit for purpose by Ofsted in October 2018. This document provides an update on the progress made in each area of our WSOA and the impact that improvements have had on children and young people and their families, alongside an update on progress made in other SEND areas not included in our WSOA.

2. Summary of progress and performance within SEND

What's working well:

- Our 20 week timeliness for finalising EHC Plans has significantly improved over the last 12 months
- Engagement with SENCOs, including conferences
- Participation with young people through SEND Youth Forums
- A number of performance management trackers are well embedded and providing good management information
- Quality assurance framework coproduced by all partners launched in Jan 2020
- Non-negotiable Quality Criteria established for EHC Plans
- EHC needs assessment process reviews and developments – including notifications by professionals and placement consultations
- SEND Toolkit – working well in supporting settings
- All age Autism Strategy launched
- Autism timeliness is now within the NICE guidance requirements
- Increase in local SEN provision, including new free school for children with SEMH

Our key priorities:

- Complete the restructure and induction of permanent appointments to the SEND Service
- Implement our SEND Communication and Engagement Strategy to further improve relationships with schools and parents
- Ensure arrangements to sustain Autism timeliness and monitor impact in timeliness of other assessments
- Improve annual review timeliness and quality
- Transitions and Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)
- Further improve quality of EHC Plans
- Co-production – Working TOGETHER meetings
- Implement the new high needs funding model
- Implement the provision plan to increase capacity within Cheshire East
- Undertake improvement actions resulting from reviews of resourced provision

Areas we are working to improve:

- The quality of EHC Plans – with a focus on existing EHC Plans through annual reviews
- Satisfaction of parent carers through a refreshed Communication and Engagement Strategy
- The quality and effectiveness of annual reviews of EHC Plans
- Ensure planning for transitions and Preparing for Adulthood takes place earlier and is more effective
- Implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework
- Transport, including better communication and engagement with parent carers
- Better access to health services, including CAMHS
- Increase the number of children accessing their education within the borough

3. Progress against our Written Statement of Action**Area 1: The timeliness, process and quality of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans****3.1. Progress**

To improve the significant weaknesses around timeliness, process and quality, we have:

- Finalised, and consulted on, a new structure for the SEND team and the Educational Psychology (EP) Service. As part of the new structure, the Council has committed an additional £500,000 in 2019-20 to increase capacity across the SEND service. We have recently appointed individuals to a significant number of posts within the new structure and, as of January 2020, the majority of posts in the new structure are filled. As an interim measure whilst new staff join the service, we are also continuing to fund a high level of additional agency staff for EP assessments and EHCP writing in order to provide consistent levels of service. The current Head of Service for SEND is leaving Cheshire East in January 2020. Two temporary Head of Service posts have been created for the next 12 months in order to ensure that we can move the improvement of the service forward with greater pace. A new temporary Head of Service with responsibility for the SEND Locality teams has been appointed and is in post. The other temporary Head of Service post is currently being recruited to. Officers are also now in post for the three Locality Manager roles within the SEND service.
- Undertaken a review of the service offer and processes within the Cheshire East Autism Team and Educational Psychology service. A review of our Sensory Inclusion Service is currently in progress.
- Created weekly reports (using data from comprehensive live trackers) which provide detailed information on the number and timeliness of EP advice requests and ongoing EHC needs assessment requests.
- Established weekly operational meetings for SEND Team managers focused on timeliness of EHC needs assessments, which provide management oversight and challenge around timeliness of EP advice and EHC Plans using the EP and EHCP trackers described above.
- Developed a health scorecard so that there is now consistent information gathered by both CCGs from all provider trusts in order to track performance. Performance data within both health and the local authority continues to be refined, and the Local Authority and CCGs each have an identified Business Intelligence officer with a focus on SEND.
- Continued to work with partners on links between Care, Education and Treatment Reviews, the Dynamic Support Database and the EHC needs assessment process.

- Provided over 110 settings with access to share information from annual review meetings directly within the local authority's case management system.
- Developed a set of 'non-negotiables' for EHC Plans to drive up quality and consistency of plans and provided training on these for officers within the SEND team.
- Worked with services providing advice to agree quality standards and assurance processes, including establishing a Multi-agency Quality Assurance Panel to identify quality issues in EHC Plans.
- Contacted and worked with other local authorities for support and guidance around quality of EHC Plans and EP good practice, with one local authority acting as a critical friend to provide external quality oversight and contributions to staff development sessions.
- Put in place an interim dedicated team to focus on timeliness and quality of annual reviews.
- Rolled out SEND training with a focus on early identification for Health Visitors (HVs), which reached over 100 staff over a series of locality-based training sessions during this year.
- Put in place 2 seconded part-time Health Visitors (one for Eastern Cheshire and one for South Cheshire) to act as specialist HVs for SEND.
- Enabled health professionals in all provider trusts to access the local authority's case management system.
- Held a multi-agency workshop focusing on 'Defining Excellence across SEND' on 3rd October 2019 with a wide range of representatives from across education, health and care services, along with parent carers, to input into our refreshed Quality Assurance (QA) Framework for SEND by considering what 'good' looks like in Cheshire East.
- Established weekly support and training workshop sessions for SEND Keyworkers and other stakeholders, such as the EP service and Inclusion Quality Team, focused on improving the quality of EHC Plans.
- Established a multi-agency Quality Assurance Task and Finish Group that meets on a monthly basis to drive forward improvements relating to the quality of EHC needs assessments and EHC Plans.
- Re-enforced additional quality assurance steps during the EHC needs assessment process. SEND Keyworkers undertake peer-to-peer moderation and check drafted EHC Plans against the non-negotiables, with additional oversight by team managers.
- Prepared new processes relating to placement consultations, including a flowchart for decision making (in line with the ladder of support) and a consultation form to formally record steps that have been taken, such as communication with parents and settings.
- Delivered a number of termly conferences for Cheshire East SENCOs to provide local, regional and national updates, continuing professional development and networking opportunities for all professionals involved in SEND in schools and settings. The number of attendees has risen from 35 to 143.

3.2. Impact

- There has been a significant and sustained improvement (decrease) in the number of ongoing EHC needs assessments over 20 weeks, with a reduction from **180 assessments on 17/12/2018** to **46 assessments on 27/05/2019** to **2 assessments on 07/10/2019**.
- In addition to significantly reducing the number of ongoing assessments over 20 weeks, there has also been a continued increase in the number of new EHC Plans issued within 20 weeks each month. During the period January – September 2019, this rose steadily from **11% of EHC Plans in January 2019** to **96% of EHC Plans issued in September 2019**.

- Between January and August 2019, there was a substantial decrease in the number of EHC needs assessments awaiting advice for more than 6 weeks – with a reduction from the highest figure of **159 assessments on 21/01/2019** to **2 assessments on 05/08/2019**. This reflects the significant decrease in the number of EHC needs assessments awaiting advice from the Educational Psychology service for over 6 weeks within the same period - with a reduction from **135 assessments on 28/01/2019** to **1 assessment on 05/08/2019**.
- Recently we have seen an increase in the number of requests awaiting advice for over 6 weeks (including advice from Educational Psychologists) along with an increase in the number of ongoing EHC needs assessments over 20 weeks. As of 12/12/2019, 18% of ongoing EHC needs assessments (41 cases) were over 20 weeks. This has also resulted in a recent dip in the percentage of EHC Plans issued within 20 weeks in each month (75% in October 2019 and 54% in November 2019, excluding exceptions). The current decrease in performance is due to a number of factors, including:
 - A very significant increase in the number of EHC needs assessment requests received in July 2019 (105 requests). The average number of requests in each month in the period January – June 2019 was 47. We have completed a deep-dive analysis of all of the requests and have been working with educational settings and parent/carers to understand the factors leading to this increase and to take steps to improve this in the future.
 - Extended school holidays over the summer period, which has impacted upon the ability of Educational Psychologists (EPs) to meet with pupils and their educational setting. The majority of the assessments that were awaiting advice for more than 6 weeks from our EPs are subject to exceptions to the 20 week timescales, in line with The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014. However, we are monitoring all assessments and this situation carefully to minimise any impacts on overall timeliness. In addition, we have recruited an additional EP who will be starting imminently, and we will be going back out to advert in our continued drive to increase our capacity. We are also introducing triggers where we write to families to keep them informed where an assessment is late and to confirm when the EP assessment will happen.
 - There has been a lot of change within the SEND service due to moving to the new structure which has caused some delays. We previously identified this as a risk and had put in measures to allow agency and permanent posts to overlap, but some staff members have chosen to leave early as they had new assignments and this caused some gaps. As stated above, we have had a number of permanent staff starting recently, or with start dates early in the new year, with just a few vacancies still to fill.
 - As part of our drive around quality, we have reintroduced the 2 co-production meetings held during the EHC needs assessment process. This puts pressure on the timeline; however parents tell us they prefer EHC Plans to be 1 – 2 weeks late and have a co-production meeting and improved quality, over a drive to achieve timeliness.
- We are expecting that some additional EHC needs assessments will have slipped beyond 20 weeks in December 2019 but are confident that our timeliness will improve again in January 2020.
- There has also been a small, recent decrease in the percentage of health advice submitted on time. This has been due to annual leave of key health professionals over the summer period and further compounded by administration issues with one of the therapy teams. Communications have been sent to relevant providers by the Designated Clinical Officer and CCG Associate Director of Commissioning, to ensure that the performance is returned to previous levels and meeting the 95% target.

- The Designated Clinical Officer continues to provide close monitoring and oversight of the quality and timeliness of all EHC needs assessment health advice and any themes or specific causes for concern are fed back to the CCGs and Local Authority.

3.3. Areas for improvement

- Although quality assurance checks of both new and amended EHC Plans have shown some improvements in EHC Plan quality since the inspection, in line with our agreed standards, additional action is required to further improve EHC Plan quality, and this is a priority for the SEND Partnership.
- Timeliness of Annual Reviews has improved but there continue to be a number of annual reviews that are out of timescale and improvements to annual reviews have not progressed at the pace we had hoped.
- Although complaint numbers have decreased over the rolling 12 month periods, we acknowledge that further work is needed to meet our targets in relation to both complaints and the numbers of appeals registered with the First-Tier Tribunal. A large majority of complaints relate to timeliness, and we therefore anticipate that our improved timeliness performance will begin to have a positive impact on further reducing the number of complaints going forward. Complaints relating to SEND are a standing item on SEND management meetings and additional management meetings led by the Director of Education and 14-19 Skills to ensure that learning is taken forward and agreed actions implemented.

3.4. What needs to happen next?

- Focus on actions to further improve the quality of EHC Plans. There is an agreed recognition that the only way to ensure quality at the end of the EHC needs assessment process is to ensure that the contribution from each stage is of high quality. A SEND QA Consultant was brought in on an interim basis; this consultant undertook a review of the stages that lead to the writing of an EHC Plan in order to make recommendations for ensuring that each step is robust and delivers a quality outcome. We are continuing to act on the recommendations. This includes looking at how advice for the EHC assessment is written and quality assured and how plan writers use advice to compile the EHC Plan. Advice templates are also undergoing further review.
- Significant work is taking place to improve annual review processes and timeliness, and an interim annual review team has been put in place to drive this forward. This team will be in place until July 2020, when we will review the ongoing capacity needs of the service.
- Staff across agencies will work with families and educational settings to develop clear information and guidance on the Annual Review process, and develop robust tools for management oversight of Annual Review performance.
- Continue to improve parental satisfaction and co-production. We are working with parent carers to implement our Communication and Engagement Strategy in order to further strengthen ongoing communication with parent carers.
- From September 2019, we have re-established the two points of face to face co-production during the EHC needs assessment process, as a means to improve parental satisfaction and ensure the production of a better quality EHC plan that will be agreed by all attendees of the co-production meetings. To further embed our [‘TOGETHER’ approach](#), we are re-naming these as ‘Working TOGETHER’ meetings (as suggested by parent carer representatives within the SEND Partnership). We will also be working together with parents and other stakeholders to further develop and model what a good co-production meeting looks like and ensure these become an

embedded and important part of the EHC needs assessment process through development of further supporting materials (such as videos) and training for all new staff and families.

- Multi-agency discussions have started regarding a Cheshire East Dynamic Support Database for children and there is further work to do to ensure this is introduced in a clear and joined up way which links in with the EHC needs assessment process and developments around Autism. This is being progressed on a regional footprint in line with the Transforming Care programme.
- Further development and integration of the health scorecard will be carried out in order to include more data and link in more closely with the Local Authority SEND scorecard. This needs to be available for future SEND Partnership Board meetings to scrutinise.
- Whilst the Local Authority has commissioned additional Occupational Therapy (OT) support to develop skills within the school settings, a business case has been completed for CCGs to enhance the current Sensory OT resource.
- Further consideration to be given to the sufficiency of SALT provision
- Further review of caseloads has led to a temporary increase in capacity. A business case is being developed to request a further £500k growth in the service in order to further embed improvements and enable the service to sustain performance and meet legal/statutory requirements.

Area 2: The lack of an effective Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) pathway and unreasonable waiting times

3.5. Progress

Over the past 12 months, work has been undertaken across the area to improve services so that waiting times are reduced as well as working collectively with partners, young people and families to ensure a single equitable offer across Cheshire East. Some of those actions include:

- A revised All Age Autism Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) has been developed, which has informed the new All Age Autism Strategy for Cheshire East. This has been coproduced and a multi-agency Implementation Group is in place to ensure delivery and monitoring through an agreed delivery plan within the Strategy, which is updated annually.
- We are investing in our assessment services to bring waiting times in line with the three-month guideline recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. As a result, waiting times for diagnosis have fallen by 80% in one year despite a large rise in referrals.
- Recruitment completed for additional clinical staff to support the multi-disciplinary assessment of Autism. Speech and language therapists specialising in Autism are now in post. The Clinical Care Coordination function is being reviewed to ensure greater consistency across the Cheshire East area.
- In October 2018 there were 478 children and young people waiting for an Autism assessment across Cheshire East with the longest wait being 104 weeks (almost 2 years). By 6th December 2019 this had reduced to 29 children and young people waiting longer than 12 weeks and the longest waiting time being 17 weeks. The longest waiting time from referral to start of a specialist multi-disciplinary Autism assessment was less than 12 weeks by 31st December 2019.
- A multi-disciplinary team of healthcare and education experts has been commissioned on a recurring basis to assess the needs of 0 to 4 year olds in the Eastern Cheshire to ensure there is a consistent offer across Cheshire East.

- We are offering consistent early intervention support as part of both a family-centred and settings approach with specialist support being offered in all children's centres, including peer-led groups and workshops through our Early Start Team and seconded Health Visitors.
- We have worked with local charities to commission additional pre and post diagnosis support and training for children, young people and their families. These community-based programmes offer practical help and strategies on issues such as sleep management, sensory advice, anxiety management and positive behavioural support. The programme in Eastern Cheshire has already supported over 120 families and 346 training sessions had been delivered between 1st August and 31st October 2019. This links with NHS and local authority services such as the Cheshire East Autism Team as well as with the valuable support provided by schools and other education settings in Cheshire East. A similar support programme will commence across the rest of Cheshire East in early 2020.
- Communications are being maintained through regular engagement with parents, families and adults with Autism through attendance and presentations at the Parent Carer Forum. There is parent carer representation on the Autism Workstream, Implementation Working Group and Support & Training Working Group.
- A Cheshire East Clinical/Professional Best Practice Group has been established across Health, Education and Care which is meeting on 20th January 2020 to ensure continued improvements and consistency across all the pathways.
- Joining up services in this way will mean that children, young people and their families can access appropriate help and support according to their level of need based on 4 connected pathways, (which are based on the child and family centred 'Thrive Multi-agency Framework'¹):
 - **Getting advice** - first concerns/early identification
 - **Getting help** - local offer/specialist Autism assessment
 - **Getting more help** - post-diagnostic support
 - **Getting risk support** - prevention of crisis/specialist risk support.
- The four Cheshire CCGs will become the first CCGs in Cheshire and Merseyside to merge on 1st April 2020. The move, which has the support of Cheshire GPs and the public, will bring together the planning and buying of health services across the county and give Cheshire a more powerful voice in championing the needs of local people at regional and national level. We are already working to ensure the integrated Autism specification is being rolled out across the whole of Cheshire.

3.6. Development of an Effective Autism Pathway and Addressing Unreasonable Waiting Times

- We have developed a single Integrated Service Specification that has been written and agreed by all partners including feedback from young people and parents. The purpose of this specification is to provide a clear, single commissioning agreement and approach across four commissioning organisations and four statutory providers, to describe how health, education and care will work together to deliver a single, accessible, streamlined, consistent and cost effective Autism assessment pathway, alongside evidence-based and innovative interventions and support.
- The adoption and implementation of a single assessment model/pathway will ensure that the Autism assessment process is aligned and consistent across the whole of the Cheshire East area,

¹ <http://implementingthrive.org/about-us/the-thrive-framework/>

regardless of the providers used, to deliver equality of assessment and consistent delivery of service.

- The new pre-school Autism assessment pathway for children aged 0-4 years is a collaborative approach which enables children across Cheshire to be referred at an early age regardless of where they live and therefore supporting them with interventions and strategies regardless of whether they are referred onto the pathway or not.
- Additional Speech and Language Therapy resource have been recruited into the multi-disciplinary team to assess children's needs to ensure we are NICE Compliant, as well as an additional business case currently being considered to enhance Sensory OT support.
- There is now Autism specific provision in every Children's Centre, including access to sensory provision, peer support groups, training provided by the Autism Educational Trust, child-centred planning meetings, Play sessions and supported access to the Local Offer.
- There has also been a re-commission of an existing local pre and post diagnostic support programme for parents of school age children with Autism. The course is built around practical activities, interaction and group work to equip parents of children with Autism to develop their communication skills, meet others and learn practical strategies to engage and support children with Autism to maximise their potential.
- Additional Psychiatry time has been implemented in Cheshire East with a specific focus on speeding up formal diagnosis (following completion of multi-disciplinary assessment).
- The waiting list initiative for children and young people (CYP) age 4-19 years has been extended in Eastern Cheshire until 31st December 2019 (£80k new investment).
- The Autism Information Pack for parents is almost complete - final checks are taking place to ensure consistency across providers.
- There has been work to review the range of Autism training for staff (across Cheshire East) – a summary of schools that receive training from CEAT has been compiled and a register will be maintained. The recently published 'Right to be Heard' document – the government's response to the consultation on Autism and LD training for healthcare staffs, is being reviewed. It presents a tiered approach (linked to amount of contact staff have with people):
 - Tier 1 – general awareness
 - Tier 2 – staff routinely caring for people with LD or Autism
 - Tier 3 – those with high degree of autonomy providing care in complex situations

3.7. Impact

- We are able to demonstrate positive outcomes for children, young people and their parents/families through the completion and monitoring of satisfaction questionnaires following the assessment process and diagnostic feedback.
- We have also worked with local charities to bring in more specialist support and training for children, young people and their families. Two of the staff in the assessment team have been nominated by parents for the Autism Professionals Award 2020.
- Written feedback from parents and families who have attended the training programme is very positive (questionnaires are completed pre and post training).
- In terms of addressing the unreasonable waiting times, there has been significant work to redesign and increase capacity across the 4-19 age pathway, including a new clinical triage process and MDT Panels being implemented, with Educational Psychologists and Specialist Teachers from the Cheshire East Autism Team (CEAT) working alongside the Consultant Psychiatrist, Specialist Nurses and Speech and Language Therapists to assess children's needs. As

a result all children/young people waiting in March 2018 in Eastern Cheshire have now been seen. Across Eastern Cheshire for the 4-19 service as at 6th December 2019:

- The longest waiting time is 17 weeks
- 29 CYP are waiting over 3 months
- There are 51 children and young people waiting in total between 1-3 months

3.8. Areas for improvement

- A joint Health and Local Authority comprehensive communications plan is being agreed to ensure service improvements and waiting times are regularly shared with local stakeholders.
- Improvements in the time between completion of assessment and feedback of a diagnosis are currently being looked into and a plan will be agreed to ensure hidden waits do not develop.
- Further development and integration of a single performance dashboard.

3.9. What needs to happen next?

- Continue to monitor Performance of Waiting List Initiative.
- Multi-disciplinary ADOS training is taking place for 15 local professionals on 29th and 30th January to ensure there is a pool of professionals who are skilled in Autism diagnosis.
- Complete commissioner drop-in sessions for parents/families to ask questions and highlight any individual concerns.
- Finalise 'Prevention of Crisis' pathway and formally publish all 4 pathways.
- Monitor implementation of Integrated Service Specification (ongoing).
- Implement and monitor Cheshire East Communications Plan.
- Implementation of the new commission for Pre and Post Diagnostic Training and Support Programme across South Cheshire (January 2020).

4. Progress in other SEND areas not included in the WSOA

Since Cheshire East's SEND inspection in March 2018, the local area has been on a significant improvement journey. A specific evaluation of the two areas included in our Written Statement of Action (WSOA) is included above. The following content in this section provides details of other actions and improvements that have been made in Cheshire East in relation to SEND beyond the scope of the WSOA.

4.1. Multi-agency working and joint commissioning

There are clear governance arrangements in place to support the work of the local area around SEND. The 0-25 SEND Partnership is well established, with good multi-agency attendance, and is chaired by the Council's Director of Education and Skills to drive forward continuous improvement. An executive group of senior leaders from the Council and the local Health Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) chaired by the Executive Director of People (also holds the role of the Director of Children's Services) is accountable for ensuring that the WSOA is effective in addressing the areas of weakness.

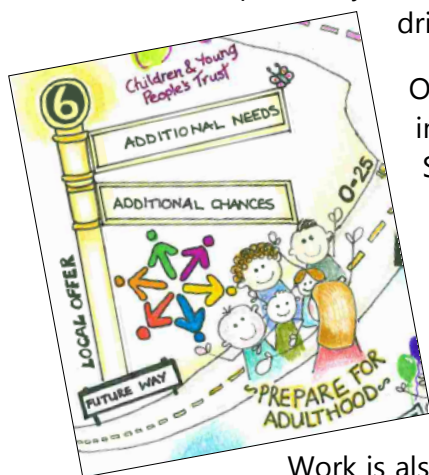


The SEND workstreams have been revised and refocused on the priorities arising from the SEND inspection. Members of the Parent Carer Forum are members at every level of governance arrangements and attend the quarterly monitoring meetings with Department for Education and NHS England representatives in relation to the WSOA.

The SEND Partnership reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board, who oversees progress against the WSOA. These reports are also scrutinised by leadership teams within the Council and Health, as well as by our elected members through our Portfolio holder and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These arrangements ensure that there is effective strategic and political leadership around SEND and robust scrutiny and challenge of multi-agency working and joint commissioning arrangements.

Following a previous inquiry on SEND Reforms, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee established another task and finish group review on the SEND Local Offer for 16-25 Year Olds. The work of this group was endorsed in November 2019.

A new all age Mental Health Partnership Board has been established from December 2019; this new Board is specifically focused on overseeing the delivery of the all age Mental Health Strategy and on driving improvements in mental health support.



Our Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) includes a number of assessments in relation to children with SEND. Cheshire East's Joint Commissioning Strategy is aligned with the outcomes of our new Children and Young People's Plan 2019-21, which includes an outcome around children with additional needs (Outcome 6). Areas of joint commissioning around SEND include Autism pathways and pre / post diagnosis support, care at home dynamic purchasing system (DPS), complex care DPS starting from age 16+, the Emotionally Healthy Child Programme, speech and language and Occupational Therapy.

Work is also being undertaken to re-commission the Cheshire East 0-19 service, which includes services such as health visiting. There has been extensive engagement with a wide range of professionals, parents and young people as part of this commissioning work and this is expected to go live in October 2020.

4.2. SEN Support

In Cheshire East, the majority of children and young people's special educational needs are met within First Concerns and SEN Support in mainstream provision, with a small proportion requiring specialist level services.

Cheshire East has followed national, regional and statistical neighbour trends in the number of pupils accessing SEN Support over recent years, with the exception of the last year when we have seen a fall in the rate of SEN Support pupils at a time when all our comparator groups saw a rise. This coincided with the introduction of our SEND Toolkit in November 2017. The toolkit aims to ensure that there is a consistent approach to children and young people's needs being met and is designed to provide cohesive provision from 0 to 25 years. This has been well received by schools and settings in supporting them earlier in the process, and has been documented in a national publication and recognised at national SEND events. 4,552 children and young people are currently receiving SEN Support in Cheshire East schools.

We have worked with schools and other settings to improve our data on the number of pupils receiving SEN Support to ensure that we are consistently and accurately capturing the number of children and young people we support. As a result, it is anticipated that the recorded SEN support numbers will steadily increase in Cheshire East.

We know that the educational outcomes for children and young people on SEN Support are not as strong as for those with EHC Plans but there are positive signs that improvements are being made. The 2018-19 performance data shows the following positive headlines for SEN Support:

- At Early Years, there has been an increase in the number of SEN pupils achieving a Good Level of Development by 1ppt from the previous year (21.9% to 23.2%).
- At phonics, there has been an increase in the number of SEN pupils achieving the Year 1 expected standard by 2 ppts (48% - 50%). This is also 2ppts above the national rate.
- Whilst there is still some progress needed to achieve outcomes which are in line with national performance in several indicators at Key Stage 2, there are some positive improvement trends over the last three years. These include (all at expected level):
 - a. Reading, Writing and maths combined: 6 ppts increase.
 - b. Maths: 9 ppt increase.
 - c. Writing: 10 ppt.
 - d. Reading: 7 ppt.

The Council's Inclusion Quality Team is comprised of a number of local seconded SENCOs and provides support to educational settings around inclusion and supporting children and young people with SEND at all levels of need. During the last academic year, the team visited local educational settings to carry out Inclusion Quality reviews and to ensure settings are following and implementing the SEND Toolkit effectively.

4.3. Quality and impact of Education, Health and Care assessments and plans

As of November 2019, 2457 Cheshire East children and young people have an EHC Plan. The number of EHC Plans continues to rise; there was a 27.6% increase in the number of young people with statements or EHC plans between 2015 and 2019 and the number issued with each calendar year has risen dramatically from 295 EHC Plans issued in 2018 to more than 500 issued to date (17/12/2019) in 2019. We have had more requests for assessments and refused fewer requests. There continues to be a significant number of new cases for children aged under 5, meaning we are identifying and meeting children's needs at an earlier age.

Just to let you know the team had a compliment this week from a [parent] regarding her son [x]. She wanted to thank everyone for the support he has received as she said that he could not have got where he is today without it. He is now hopefully going on to study nursing.

Parent carer

Despite the increase in plans, we have significantly improved on the timeliness of our EHC plans this year (detail included in WSOA section above).

Although timeliness has improved, we know that we need to make significant improvements in the quality of our EHC plans and this is a current focus area for our partnership. We need to improve the systems across agencies to focus on improving the quality of practice and our understanding through audits, more multi-agency performance information, surveys for parents and carers and better information on outcomes. We aim to improve parent/carers satisfaction of the EHC process.

We have a good range of support services for children with SEND including our Autism Team, Sensory Inclusion Service, short breaks and therapy services. A SALT and OT started in January 2019 to provide additional speech and language therapy (SALT) support for children with autism and also to children and families at the early years stage. The second element of the pilot is the employment of an occupational therapist (OT) to focus on sensory processing. The OT is initially working with primary aged children with a diagnosis of autism, or on the diagnostic pathway. They are working closely with schools across Cheshire East to provide a series of training packages, focused around sensory processing difficulties.'

"I just wanted to thank you for inviting me to the SEND Defining... Excellence event last week. I thought it was a really well organised and useful event with so much expertise in the room. The people on my table had some really good ideas and all actively contributed. The exercises were useful and easy to follow...I just wanted to say that it made me feel valued as a member of staff that you invested in this day for us."

Children who have EHCPs experience good outcomes; these children experience education outcomes above national average. At almost all indicators in Early Years, Key Stage 1 and 2, performance for learners with EHC plans continued to be exceptional. Every key indicator at Key stage 1 and 2 is above national as well as for phonics. To illustrate this very positive performance, SEN learners in reading, writing and maths combined achieved 5 ppts above national at expected level. This profile for SEN learners with EHC plans highlights the strong commitment and skilled workforce within schools to best meet the needs of our more complex SEN learners.

We have low levels of SEND not in education, employment and training (NEET) for 16/17 year olds compared to national figures (as of June 2019, 5.9% of Cheshire East year 12 and 13 young people with SEND were NEET, compared to 7.2% across England and 9.7% across the North West). We have a wide range of employment initiatives and support for young adults leading to a good proportion of those with learning difficulties in paid employment compared to statistical neighbours and national data. Our Emotionally Healthy Child Programme initiative is making good progress in meeting the needs of young people with mental health issues and our youth justice service is effective in meeting the needs of young people with SEND by preventing them going into custody.



"I feel compelled to write to you [to] thank you so much for the tremendous service we as a family have received from Cheshire East Council."

Parent



4.4. Inclusion

Increasing SEND provision within Cheshire East has been a priority for the SEND Partnership over the last few years. We know that there is currently not sufficient SEND provision in Cheshire East to meet need. Approximately 6% of SEND pupils (143) attend an independent special school or non-maintained school. 85% of these pupils (121) are attending a setting outside of Cheshire East. 95 of these pupils (79%) are at secondary age, which reflects our increased need for specialist places at secondary level. This can lead to young people integrated in communities outside of Cheshire East when education finishes and can lead to additional disruption during transition to Adult services.

Following the completion of a SEN Sufficiency Statement and a Three Year SEN Provision Plan, a range of capital projects to deliver additional local SEN places continue to progress well; this includes creating 168 additional places at a variety of existing local settings including a new 48 place provision for 4-16 year olds with social, emotional and mental health needs due to open in September 2020.

We are currently refreshing our SEN Sufficiency Statement to ensure that we are consistently using current, reliable data to inform planning decisions in relation to SEN provision.

I would also just like to say how supportive and valuable your seconded SENCOs are. Other than at the networking meetings, I have only had contact with [IQ Officer] but she has been extremely helpful to not only me as a covering SENCO but to our school, staff and parents. The support from someone who works in a SENCO role, is always available to give advice, visit and even attend meetings is very much appreciated

Local school

We want our children and young people to be educated in their local school, where possible. The proportion of children and young people educated in Special Schools or Special Post-16 institutions has fallen in recent years from 41.7% in 2017 down to 38.9% in 2018, with the current proportion (as of December 2019) at 34.0%.

Our Inclusion Quality team works to improve inclusion through support to educational settings, SENCOs, parents and Council colleagues in many ways including help with reviews, support for children, and EHC needs assessment applications, and resolution/support with parents and tutors. Attendance at our SENCO networks has increased from 35 to 143 at recent sessions.

We need to ensure that schools have sufficient funding and skills in place to support children with SEND. An extensive period of consultation has recently been undertaken in relation to a proposed new set of principles and model for the allocation of high needs top-up funding associated with EHC Plans. The consultation included a series of events for school staff, parent carers and partners, as well as online opportunities. A pilot is now underway to test a number of variables of the proposed new model before future steps towards implementation are agreed.

Cheshire East Council is leading the collaborative commissioning of a new North West Purchasing System for SEN school places at independent/non-maintained special schools and Independent Specialist Provision and has led an LA engagement workshop for the 23 North West authorities that could potentially join, market engagement workshop, surveys, engagement with young people with SEND and extensive consultation with parent / carer groups across the North West. The planned go

live date for the purchasing system is April 2020 and 21 of the 23 authorities have expressed their interest in joining the new system.

4.5. The Local Offer

Cheshire East's Local Offer for SEND was co-produced with parent/carers and professionals from a wide variety of agencies across Cheshire East. This is a comprehensive, fully integrated and interactive 0-25 local offer within an online resource covering children's, adults', communities and public health service areas. This means that families can find information in one place.

New information has been added to the local offer following our inspection to ensure that it meets the needs of families in relation to SEND. However, we aim to continue to improve the offer and to increase parental and practitioner knowledge of our Local Offer for SEND, and a review of the look and feel of the wider online resource is currently underway.



4.6. Personal budgets

Historically Cheshire East has had very low numbers of personal budgets associated with EHC Plans and whilst this has increased significantly over the past three years, there were only 28 arrangements in place in 2019 and the majority of these are in relation to children and young people with social care needs.

Personal Health Budgets are being used for Continuing Care and Continuing Healthcare. We are currently exploring options to implement Personal Health Budgets outside of these areas.

A Task and Finish Group is being established to drive improvements around personal budgets. We aim to further develop awareness and uptake of personal budgets and to increase the number of children and young people and their families accessing personal budgets. To achieve this, we plan to develop and publicise further information resources on personal budgets for young people and families, collect case studies where personal budgets have been used successfully for young people with EHC Plans and implement multi-agency training on personal budgets.

4.7. Preparing for adulthood

A number of developments have been made in relation to Preparing for Adulthood (PfA), including:

- holding a SEND options event entitled 'Planning your future' in July 2019. This event was jointly organised, funded and run by parent carers and the local authority and over 30 providers were present ranging from housing, colleges, benefits advice, health providers and social care. The event was really well attended and parents and young people gave excellent feedback; as a result, we are now planning our next event for 2020.
- the creation of a Transition Pack for young people from year 9. The pack can be tailored for each individual young person.

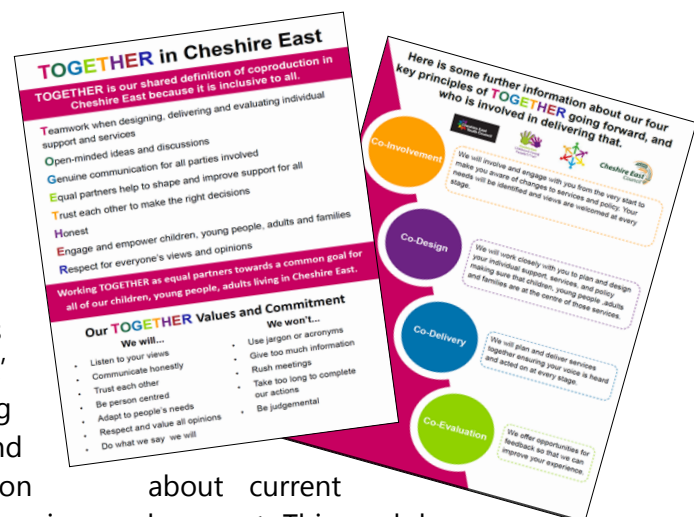
- the introduction of a SEND Ignition programme. This scheme, which is getting national recognition and has received excellent feedback (including from an attending DfE representative), is initially being used with pupils at Park Lane and Springfield Special Schools. We hope to roll out this model where it is appropriate and have recently carried out a Train the Trainer session to facilitate this.
- a significant increase in the number of Supported Internships across a range of local settings. The offer has grown from 2/3 opportunities in 2017 to 36 placed interns as of December 2019. Recently we interviewed students for the new 'Springboard Project'; this is the supported internship that Springfield School launched in September 2019. Every student interviewed was dressed smartly, was punctual and possessed excellent manners. Every young person interviewed stated that they 'want to work', 'they want a job', and 'they want to feel important'. We also have supported internships being delivered from Macclesfield College, Cheshire College, Total People and Pettypool.
- Provider led Supported Accommodation Panels are tailored to meet the housing needs for vulnerable young adults and are helping to shape the market to need.

A parent carer at the first Ignition meeting for transition planning said "It's been very beneficial today, because it's made me think about the future...what Freddy wants...it's been helpful to really put down on paper your thinking and make a plan".

Areas we would like to improve includes the number of young people accessing supported internships and more bespoke housing packages for the most complex young people through closer working between Adult and Children's Services, Housing and CCGs. The current Preparing for Adulthood Strategy needs to be strengthened, in particular in its multi-agency approach. A multi-agency workshop was held on 2nd December 2019 in order to refresh the strategy based on pledges from each agency that will in turn set priority actions to deliver effective preparing for adulthood.

4.8. Participation/co-production

In Cheshire East we have carried out a significant amount of work to further involve and capture the voice of young people with SEND, led by our SEND Participation Officer. We have continued to work with young people, parent carers and professionals to co-produce a shared definition of co-production in Cheshire East called 'TOGETHER'. A suite of materials have been produced to explain our 'TOGETHER' concept, including a definition leaflet, a video of young people outlining what co-production means to them and webpages where people can find out more information opportunities to work 'TOGETHER' to further develop services and support. This work has been endorsed by, and is being adopted by, key partnerships and agencies across children and adult services in Cheshire East in addition to the SEND Partnership.



about current

Our SEND Youth Forum is a group that any child or young person with additional needs can attend from the age of 11. Children and young people have the opportunity to have their say and make positive changes about services that affect their lives. They are also able to make new friends, take

part in fun activities and work closely with professionals.

Specific groups run in Macclesfield and Crewe twice a month and children and young people in these groups have been very involved in helping us to develop our plans.

I really enjoyed the co-production meeting as I felt listened to and for once my views and my own experience were valued and I wasn't put down...I like having a role in the way things work because ultimately it is focused on the child, young person or adult not the professionals or parents. We know best and for once I really felt connected and that the council do want to make a difference and do want myself and others like me to get *our voices heard and learn from us*

Recent examples of doing things TOGETHER include:

- 3 young people from our SEND Youth Forum made their voice heard at a national level by attending a national 'Making Participation Work' Conference. Local young people with SEND also attended the regional 'Youthforia Residential' and worked with other Youth Councils to develop regional campaigns, have their say and influence decision makers. One Cheshire East young person with SEND was shortlisted for the 'Outstanding Achievement' award against candidates from 23 other LA Youth Councils.
- Young people worked with local authority officers and parent carers to plan the 'Preparing for your future' event for young people and parent carers in July 2019.
- A calendar of engagement events and feedback surveys on different topics has been created to ensure that young people and their parent carers have regular opportunities to contribute their feedback and ideas on different areas. Young people have worked with Participation Officers to develop the content and format of surveys.
- The CCGs recently met with a group of young people with Autism from a local High School to have a discussion about their experiences of services and how they feel supported by school and other professionals. Overall it was a very positive discussion and as a result one of the young people is now becoming involved in the SEND Youth Forum.



"I meant to say the other day. It was impressive to watch [X] sharing the good SEND work at our regional event last week. Other LAs were really taking notice of the good participation work in Cheshire East. It was great to see how its grown."

In addition to continued improvements to co-production at a strategic level, we have re-introduced consistent co-production meetings from 1st September 2019 within all new EHC needs assessments and renamed them as 'Working TOGETHER' meetings (as described above in section 2.4).

We have also established a refreshed multi-agency SEND Communication and Engagement group, and prepared a SEND Communication and Engagement strategy in order to co-ordinate, oversee

and drive improvements in the quality of engagement between all stakeholders. This group is currently looking into a number of innovative ideas around multi-agency engagement (particularly with parent carers) including online engagement platforms and multi-agency 'surgery' sessions.

4.9. Workforce development

A significant restructure of our SEND Service is currently underway (as described in the WSOA section above). This will result in a more place based locality model of working. A detailed induction/refresher schedule is being planned for all members of the service.

Current development opportunities include an allocated half day each week for development time for all key workers and staff. Through this, we address a number of themes around the quality of practice. We are currently looking at rolling out motivational interviewing training across all staff within the Council's education services.

Since our local area SEND inspection, a number of key staff have attended training run by the Council for Disabled Children to improve the quality of Education, Health and Care Plans. In-house training has also taken place around our 10 non-negotiables which all EHC plans have to be checked against. These include a description of social needs, a photo where appropriate and a golden thread to run through the plans of strengths, areas for development and aspirations. This will enable key workers to quality assure their own EHC plans, and peer-review one another's drafted EHC Plans.

This year our Inclusion Quality team have been supporting SENCOs on the Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) NASENCO programme. The programme aims to develop the knowledge and skills of SENCOs to become leaders for special educational needs and disability (SEND) in school and gain the confidence to increase the participation and achievement for children and young people with SEND.

Our ambition is to have a multi-agency workforce development plan across all sectors.

[x] has been to their unit in Nantwich for a couple of visits and so far so good 😊 Thank you very much for sorting this out - I can't tell you what a relief it is to find a school that understands [x]'s difficulties and is so supportive. I'm feeling very optimistic that this will be the start of many positive changes for [x]. Thanks again

Parent carer





Working for a brighter future together

Key Decision N

Date First
Published: N/A

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 27 January 2020

Report Title: Locality Working Progress Report

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People

1 Report Summary

- 1.1 To update the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress to date to create a new way of working called “**Together in Communities**” across agencies working with Children and Families in Cheshire East.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Committee members are recommended to:
- 2.1.1 Endorse and promote a refreshed locality working model for Children and Family Services that young people have chosen to brand “**Together in Communities**”

3 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Locality working will promote greater integration of service delivery to best meet the needs and improve outcomes for children young people and their families. It is expected that it will also bring about greater efficiency of service provision for complex families, children and young people.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Children and Families services could stay as they are and operate across Cheshire East, but this does not maximise the benefits that working

together locally around the needs of children and families can bring to improving their outcomes.

5. Background

- 5.1 Ofsted report that the most successful areas who achieve better outcomes have adopted a locality working model for services delivered to Children and Families. Building upon the NHS Place based commissioning hubs for integrated care in Adult services, our ambition is to mirror this structure for Children and Families services to ensure a much improved synergy and integrated operational model that can maximise potential for joint assessment, planning and team around the family working.
- 5.2 Due to the different configuration of services and levels of need for children and families in different places, there would not be capacity to split in to the 9 existing care communities, but instead we have grouped these areas in to three areas to reflect North, Middle and South “Communities” across the Cheshire East geography. These boundaries align with our connected communities centres and local neighbourhood partnerships.
- 5.3 We have based our consideration of the model to date on building virtual teams across agencies and services rather than at this stage considering wholesale reorganisation and management arrangements. There reasons for adopting this approach they are:
 - a- **OFSTED** ILACs Inspection of Children’s services – this was imminent and so we did not want to undertake a wholesale reorganisation and destabilise the workforce ahead of Inspection. The outcome has also informed the next steps of locality working.
 - b- **Reorganisation of CCGs** and associated Commissioning structures could be complicated by a significant redesign of children and family services in advance of an agreed structure being established
 - c – **Recommissioning of 0-19 Contract** with the new contract due to start in October 2020.
- 5.4 Progress to date has seen a refresh of the Early Help Strategy and action plan to focus on a locality delivery model. We have refreshed the early Help Together Board to set the multi-agency direction of whole family working in place. It is proposed that progress from the Early Help Strategy is reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB).
- 5.5 We have run 8 workshops with managers, operational staff and young people to help ensure that we have co-produced a model that works operationally, adds value and, importantly, responds to what families and children and young people tell us is needed. They want to tell their story once to a single lead person/ professional and for agencies to share their information so that they get the best coordinated help as early as possible. These sessions have been hugely positive. We undertook a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis to understand

the barriers and opportunities that we have captured in the Early Help Strategy and action plan.

- 5.6 We also held three further workshops in November 2019 with multi-disciplinary staff to bring together partners in North, Middle and South delivery areas to help to build officer relationships, their shared understanding of what each professional does, build a personal directory of contacts and promote the firmer establishment of calling multi-agency supervision sessions locally for those tricky cases that get “stuck” between organisations and require some shared problem solving and responsibility to manage risk across the partnership. Further workshops are planned in February 2020. These workshops are in direct response to what staff told us they need.
- 5.7 The feedback from the original workshops is attached as visual minutes as Appendix 1 to this report for reference
- 5.8 The map at Appendix 2 reflects the groupings agreed through several workshops informed by managers, staff and children and young people.
- 5.10 The Early Help Together Strategy and action plan is also attached at Appendix 3 for reference and detail. This document also reflects the full list of intended improvement and impact as a result of moving to a more integrated delivery model based on a community configuration for Children’s Services.
- 5.11 We are also working with schools more closely on this model, including having coordination meetings across the three areas of north, middle and south. In addition, the SEND Partnership is working towards a new delivery structure based upon the same geographical boundaries to ensure we can build better delivery relationships locally to get the best response services to Children and their parents.
- 5.12 The future is likely to see more services within Children and Families services redesigned and configured on a Together in Communities footprint on a phased basis, learning from what works in other places and understanding what is working for Cheshire East’s communities.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1 Legal Implications

- 6.1.1 There are a no direct legal implications at this stage.

6.2 Finance Implications

6.2.1 There are no direct financial implications related to this report.

6.3 Policy Implications

6.3.1 These proposals are consistent with Cheshire East's Children and Young People's Plan. There are no direct policy implications at this stage.

6.4 Equality Implications

6.4.1 The proposals within this report are intended to improve equality for all children and young people.

6.5 Human Resources Implications

6.5.1 The current proposals are largely established on a 'virtual team' basis, so there are no direct human resource implications at this stage, other than to improve the way in which staff work together.

6.6 Risk Management Implications

6.6.1 There are no risks to the 'virtual team' approach proposed by this paper.

6.7 Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1 Rural communities are considered as part of the local areas and working more locally will enhance work in these areas.

6.8 Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

6.8.1 Together in Communities is intended to improve the way that we work on a 'place based' model to improve the experiences and outcomes for children and young people.

6.9 Public Health Implications

6.9.1 There are no direct implications for public health.

6.10 Climate Change Implications

6.10.1 It is expected that locality working will have a positive impact on climate change as staff from all agencies work more locally and travel less.

7 Ward Members Affected

7.1 All wards are affected.

8 Consultation & Engagement

- 8.1 There has been significant consultation and engagement in developing Together in Communities with staff and other stakeholders detailed in this report. Consultation and engagement with a range of stakeholders will be ongoing, including through the planned locality workshops.

9 Access to Information

- 9.1 The Early Help Strategy is attached at Appendix 3.

10 Access to Information

- 10.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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Cheshire East Early Help Strategy 2019-22



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Background and Introduction

We are pleased to present the Cheshire East Early Help Strategy for 2019- 22. Cheshire East Partners have given their commitment to completely refresh and re-energise our approach to maximising the potential of this multi-agency strategy.



Our 2019-21 Children and Young People's Plan sets out a joint commitment that **TOGETHER** we will make Cheshire East a **great place to be young**. **TOGETHER** is our shared definition of co-production as it is inclusive to all.

We have strong communities, excellent schools and good opportunities for work and training. We want every child and their family to get the help and support they need to succeed as early as possible. Early help can make the biggest difference when it is given before things go wrong and when people get the help they need from families, communities and the right professional support.

The purpose of this strategy is to set out how partners who work with children, their families and carers will deliver services in a way which enables children to maximise their potential, are kept safe and where appropriate, prevents escalation of needs that require targeted or intensive interventions from statutory agencies.

The strategy sets out the ambition of all the partners in Cheshire East to 'get it right' for children, their families and carers by providing support and early help that enables children to thrive within their family environment and improve their long term outcome and goals. We want to achieve a **Brighter Future Together**.

Our principles as a partnership clearly sets out our commitment to work together when considering the needs of a family as a unit and to ensure that families receive a coordinated approach to their

support, with a lead Person who will make sure that the needs, views and wishes of the children are fully understood and central to the support they receive.

The strategy builds on the existing work already being undertaken in Cheshire East. At the LSCB in December 2018 it was agreed that we would refocus on working at a locality level to tight, shared geographical boundaries. This will be the key direction of the future shaping of our services moving forward for the People Directorate, including commissioned services specifically our 0-19 Health Service and schools clustering model. Building upon the NHS Place based

commissioning hubs for integrated care, we would like to mirror this structure for children and families services to ensure we have a much improved synergy and integrated operational model that can maximise available delivery space and potential for joint assessment, planning and team around the family working. This refreshed refocus of our resources will enable us to mainstream our whole family working approach and offer us a sustainable delivery model as developed through the Family Focus Service Transformation Grant bringing services closer to those families who present the greatest challenge to the public sectors and VCS partners.



1. Early Help in Cheshire East

In Cheshire East we are committed to making a difference to the lives of children and young people. We want Cheshire East to be **a great place to be young**, where all children and young people thrive, and feel safe from harm.

Early Help is:

Intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families, or with a population most at risk of developing problems. Effective intervention is a process and may occur at any point in a child or young person's life.

Services offering early help are not just aimed at preventing abuse or neglect but at improving the life chances of children and young people as a whole this support can be around a wide range of issues, social and emotional skills, communication, the ability to manage your own behaviour and mental health mean a stronger foundation for learning at school, an easier transition into adulthood, better job prospects, healthier relationships and improved mental and physical health.

Why we need an Early Help Strategy

Having a strong early help offer is extremely important in ensuring we **provide families with the support they need as soon as they need it**, and we prevent problems from escalating. Serious problems can cause

serious harm to children and young people in the long term, are detrimental to everyone in the family, and are more difficult to address.

A range of agencies are involved in identifying where families need additional support, and in providing early help. This strategy will support us to have a consistent and coordinated approach across the partnership, so all families can expect the same support and good quality service no matter what their needs are and where they live.

This strategy evaluates the needs of children, young people and families in Cheshire East, ensuring that our resources are targeted where they are most needed and will have the most impact.



2. Families' Needs in Cheshire East

Demographics

With an estimated population of 375,000, Cheshire East is the third biggest unitary authority in the North West.

From 2014 to 2024, the number of children (aged 0-14) is estimated to increase by 2,000 (a 3% increase), the number of working age (15-65) is estimated to decrease by 5,000 (2% decrease) and the number of residents over the age of 65 is expected to increase by 17,000 (22% increase), which is similar to England (20% increase).

Residents of Cheshire East are predominantly White British (93.6%); however this proportion has been decreasing over the last decade (2011 Census). The Black and Minority Ethnic population (3.3%) is lower than in the North West (9.8%) and England (14%). Another significant proportion of our residents (2.3%) are from European countries, with 3,868 of these being from Poland (1%). Cheshire East has a significant travelling community.

15% of our pupils are from ethnic groups other than White British (Cheshire East School Census, January 2016), which is a two-fold increase from 7% in 2007. 5.6% of pupils' first language spoken at home was not English, which has increased from 2.1% in 2007.

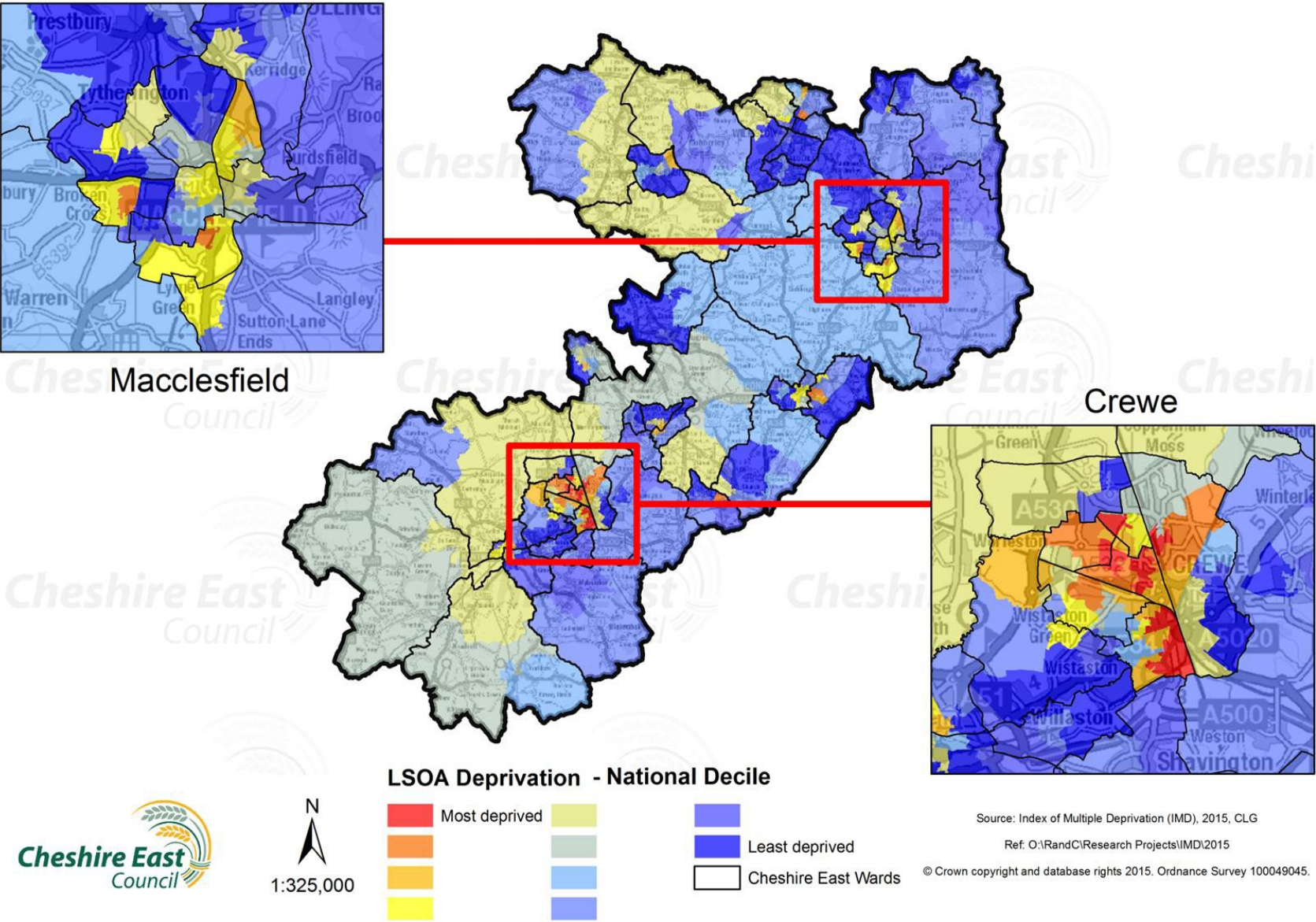
Cheshire East is a relatively affluent area and we know that most of our children and families experience good outcomes. However, there are pockets where child poverty and associated deprivation is endemic and intergenerational.

Cheshire East has 18 areas which are within the top 20% of the most deprived areas in England, affecting 31,600 people or 8.5% of Cheshire East's population. These areas are shown in the map below. 13 of these areas are in Crewe, with two in Macclesfield, one in Wilmslow, one in Alsager, and one in Congleton. Overall, relative deprivation has increased since 2010, as only 16 areas were previously within the top 20% of most deprived areas.

We know that there are over 8,000 children living in poverty in Cheshire East (2014 Cheshire East Business Intelligence). There are still more families living on the edge of poverty, but we don't know how many. We know that living in poverty can put additional strain on families. For some families, living in rural areas can make living in poverty even more challenging, due to more limited access to services, isolation, and a lack of community support.



Heat map showing deprivation in Cheshire East



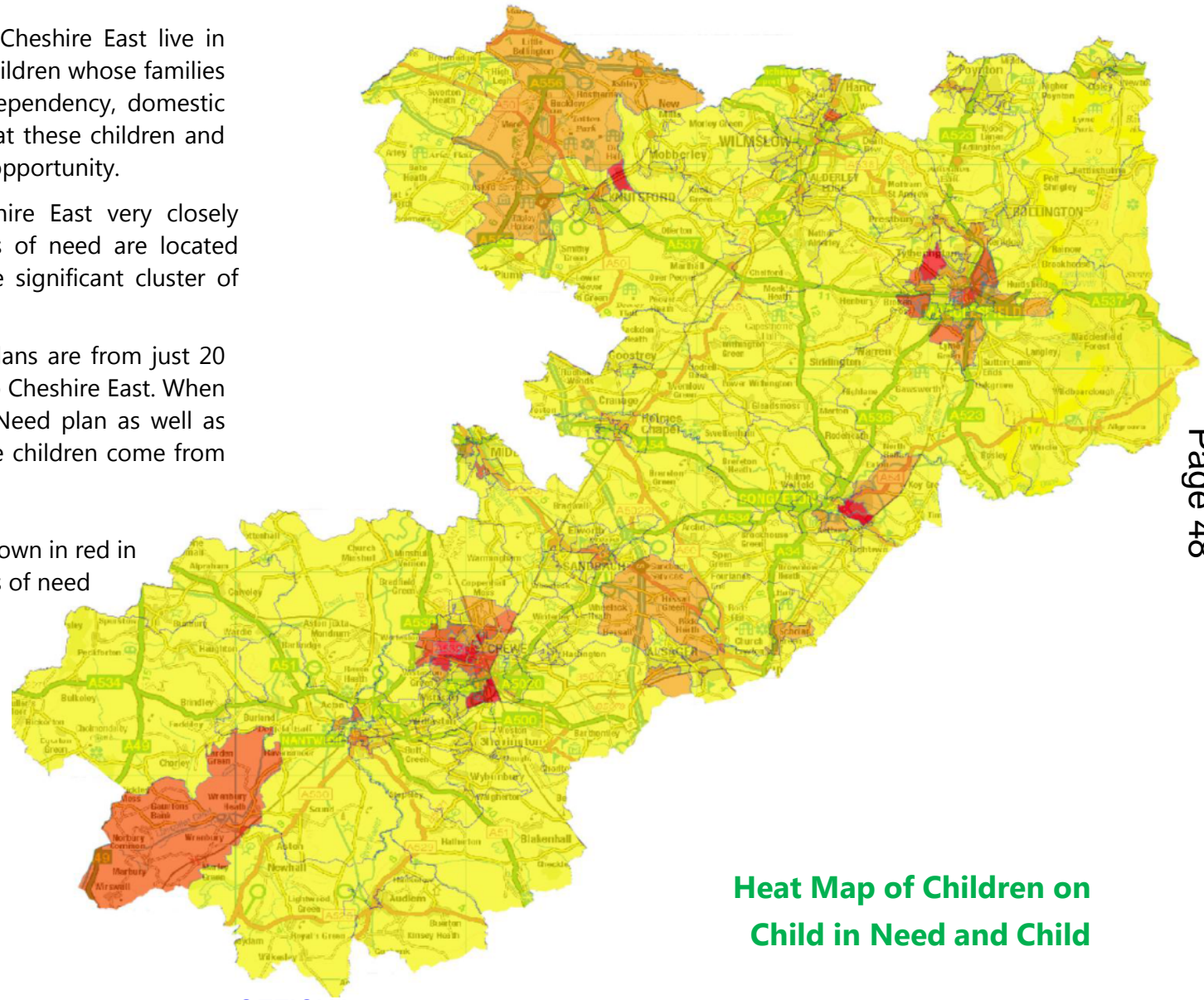
Need in Cheshire East

A number of children and young people in Cheshire East live in difficult family circumstances. These include children whose families are affected by parental drug and alcohol dependency, domestic abuse and poor mental health. It is crucial that these children and their families benefit from help at the earliest opportunity.

Our geographical pattern of need in Cheshire East very closely mirrors our areas of deprivation. High levels of need are located within a small number of areas, with a more significant cluster of need in the town of Crewe.

Half of all our children on Child Protection plans are from just 20 areas (8.5%) out of the 234 areas that make up Cheshire East. When we consider children who are on a Child in Need plan as well as those on a Child Protection plan, half of these children come from just 33 areas (14% areas).

High levels of children on support plans are shown in red in the map on the left. This shows that high levels of need are concentrated in a few very distinct communities.



Heat Map of Children on
Child in Need and Child

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Levels of Need

We have four levels of need in Cheshire East. Early help covers services provided across the first three levels; universal, targeted and complex.



A quick reference guide is available on our thresholds to support practitioners to identify the holistic needs of children and young people.

Thresholds cannot entirely account for all the complexities of children's lives. Therefore, those involved, practitioners and families, **must always consider the lived experience of the child**, and whether the outcomes that child is experiencing are good enough, so we can take action as soon as possible to ensure their needs are met within their timescale.

Level 1: Children with No Unmet Needs

Children are achieving their expected outcomes. There are no unmet needs, or their need level is low, and can be met by universal services or with some limited additional guidance and support. Children, young people, parents and carers can access support directly.

Level 2: Children with Additional Needs

Children and young people are in need of coordinated help and support. The need cannot be met from universal services alone, but can be met from a single service or some limited additional support.

Level 3: Children with Multiple and Complex Needs

Children at this level have complex needs, and a targeted multi-agency approach is required, eg, through a group of services using the Early Help assessment process, supported by a coordinated and regularly reviewed multi-agency support plan.

Level 4: Children with Acute/Specialist Needs

These children are at risk of or may have suffered significant harm and in need of statutory services. Additionally, they may be children with very significant disabilities which contribute to a level of complexity necessitating a specialist social work Assessment.

3. Our Early Help Offer

Our Services

The majority of level 3 Early Help interventions in Cheshire East take place within three broad workforces: the Council’s Early Help Services, Health providers and educational establishments. Alongside these workforces there are a range of voluntary, community and faith organisations that play an extensive role in providing early help to families in Cheshire East.

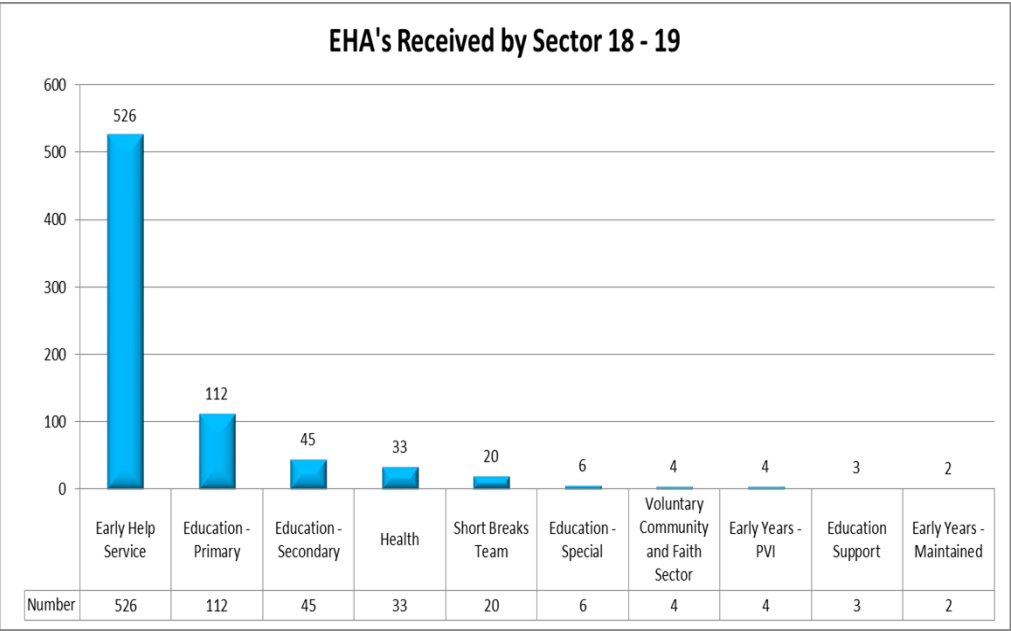
Central to our approach to early help is our Early Help Brokerage service. This is a team within the Cheshire East Consultation Service (CHECS) which acts as the front door to Children and Families’ services. Referrals to CHECS are initially triaged to ensure any safeguarding issues are identified quickly and referred to support from Children’s Social Care. Families that do not require safeguarding-level services are then referred to Early Help Brokerage, which is a dedicated service for matching the needs of families with the right early help support.

Early Help Brokerage also offers support to agencies using the Early Help Assessment framework which is based on our Signs of Safety practice model, in order to ensure that assessments are robust and result in clear and focussed multi-agency action plans that support children and families to achieve their best outcomes.

Early Help Brokerage also supports cases that are stepping down from support within Children’s Social Care, identifying the right early help support for them to ensure that families remain supported to maintain the improvements they have achieved. Effective delivery of early help relies on robust multi-agency arrangements.

Examples of current services offered

Examples of the services offered are, Children Centre group, speech & Language intervention, access to 2 year old child care places, Early years special education needs support, targeted Youth support, Youth worker support, family support case work, parenting support, support to children & families with disabilities, supporting young people with risky behaviour, Health Visitor support, within schools there are pastoral systems that are part of the Early Help offer and a range of voluntary organisations some of which are commissioned by partners organisations who are also key players in the delivery of Early Help.





We expect everyone to...

Support Good Relationships

Work hard to build good relationships with families and colleagues. Help families to find and strengthen their networks.



Honour Families and Colleagues

Work hard to understand and recognise everything that is working well.



Be Brave!

Be creative and try something different.



Work together WITH

Involve people, offer choices, be curious.



Share Experiences

Share what you have learned, and learn from what others have tried and are doing well.



Learn and Reflect Together

Practice using Signs of Safety in Group Supervision, and reflect on practice with your colleagues.



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How do we monitor quality?

A sample of Early Help Assessments, Early Start Assessments at level 2 on the continuum of need and plans are audited regularly by managers from preventative services and partner agencies. The intention of this is to ensure that the key partners have a common understanding of what good Early Help intervention look like and to allow partners to feed back to their work forces where there is scope for improvement in practice.

Some of the key issues identified are there quality assessments and the linkage between assessment and actions, secondly the maintenance of momentum in Early Help Plans.



Part 1. Development of unborn baby, infant, child or young person

● Scoring for Development of unborn baby, infant, child or young person (Part 1)

0 being no issues | 10 being serious issues

Child Indicators

Date	Mental Health	Substance Misuse	Other Health Needs	Offending Concerns	ASB Concerns	Alternative Education	Not In Education	Attendance Concerns	NEET / Risk Of
	Child with mental health problems	Child with drug or alcohol concern	Child or young person with other health needs	A child/YP who has committed an offence	An Young Person who has received an ASB intervention	In alternative educational provision	Not registered with school, nor receiving home education	A young person who is having school attendance concerns	Young Person about to leave school, with few qualifications or who has already left school and is NEET.

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4. Our Principles as a Partnership

Our principles for working together to deliver effective early help as a partnership are:

- We are committed to intervening as early as possible and providing families with the support they need when they need it. Everyone understands their role in safeguarding children and young people and acts in their best interests.
- Our work is centered on the day to day lived experience of the child. This is what we want to improve, and is how we continually evaluate where our work is making a difference.
- We work together building upon the assets within a family – seeking and listening to their views and supporting them to develop their own solutions working through our Signs of Safety Practice model.
- We work together as one team considering the needs of the whole family – we share risk and make joint decisions, and we provide challenge and support to all our colleagues. We focus on working as a multi-agency team around the child/family in localities.
- We all use the Signs of Safety Early Help Assessment model to guide our multi-agency early help work in localities.

Managers at all levels also have additional responsibilities, which are that:

- We ensure our workforce has the support, skills and training they need to deliver good quality support to families

- We understand our early help offer and our agency's contribution: the volume and quality of the work we undertake. This is shared with the partnership at multi-agency partnership meetings such as the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) and Children and Young People's Trust, and any potential barriers to effective early help are shared and addressed.

Children, young people, parents and carers have told us they want:

- To be listened to and tell their story to fewer agencies
- To be included in their plans, and understand what the concerns are and why they need a plan
- For professionals to be clear with them about what is going to, or could happen

Partnership Culture Checks

We know we have a strong partnership early help offer when:

Families can approach anyone working with them to ask for support, and that person will respond quickly to assess their needs, and start conversations with the right people to identify how they will be supported. A multi-agency plan will be in place and regularly reviewed.

Everyone is happy to act as the lead practitioner/person and champion the interests of children and young people.

We respect and build on the relationships and trust families have in us. We stay involved with families and we champion their interests. We act as a link between services: we don't just refer on to another service.

5. Our Priorities for 2019-22

Priority 1: The Partnership has the right infrastructure to support the development of early help services

Strengthening early help is a key priority of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership and our Health and Well-Being Board. Our ambition is to further align our practice model with Signs of Safety. We have delivered significant improvements through the delivery of our previous Early Help Strategy but we still need to ensure that our joint vision and commitment is effective and to have the right Leadership in place and is accountable to drive improvements across agencies.



Priority 2: Children and families get the right service at the right time: all partners understand levels of need and referral pathways

In order to ensure all children and families get the right service at the right time, we need to have clear thresholds and referral pathways which are understood by all partners. To achieve this we will:

- Refresh and review the effectiveness of our thresholds document which defines partners' responsibilities at each level of the continuum, and the referral pathways
- Review early help services and the referral pathways as they operate strengthening relationships at locality level
- Review step up and step down procedures to improve consistency and smooth transfer of families as their support needs change.

Priority 3: Understand the training need required, to ensure that our practitioners are enabled to co-produce high quality assessments and plans

We want to ensure that we achieve improved outcomes for our children and young people which are sustainable in the long term. To do this, we need strong assessments which clearly understand and evaluate the strengths, issues, and risks within the family, and lead on the development of good quality, clear and focused plans which are produced with families using their solutions. We need a joined up approach across the partnership so that the quality of our work is consistent, and wherever families receive a service it is good quality,

inclusive and supportive. To achieve this we will:

- Review the impact of our new Early Help assessments tools that we launched across the partnership, considering best practice nationally and the Signs of Safety approach.
- Refresh our locality focus for calling multi-agency meetings to develop SMART outcome focussed plans, which are regularly reviewed involving group supervision.



Signs of Safety is widely recognised internationally as the leading approach to child protection casework. We introduced our new Early Help Assessment and practice model in January 2019 across our partnership. This reflects the successful adoption of the practice model across agencies and enables us to use a common language across our partnership not only to address immediate safeguarding needs but to intervene early to make a difference.

Priority 4: We understand the quality of our services and act on this to improve outcomes for children

In order to respond quickly to any areas for improvement within our services we need to have a comprehensive overview of our partnership offer, which we regularly review. In order to do this we will:

- Develop and re-launch multi-agency Early Help Audits
- Refine and improve our multi-agency early help performance scorecard
- Report the audit findings and early help performance to multi-agency groups such as the LSCB on a regular basis

Priority 5: We understand the needs of children and families in Cheshire East, and we have the right range of services to meet these that can be accessed locally

In order to make the best use of our resources, and tailor our services to the groups and locations where they are most needed and will have the most impact, we need to have a clear picture of the needs of our families. To do this we will:

- Ensure the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is informed by the early help strategy.
- Review the range of programmes and interventions available in Cheshire East by levels of need and locality based on locality needs analysis, and identify any duplication or gaps in our service
- Develop a joint partnership commissioning plan for early help

In order to achieve good, sustainable outcomes for children, we need to ensure we have a strong workforce that is supported with the right tools, guidance, best practice, management support and direction, and training. To do this we will:

- Review the Early Help Assessment training offer and promote the revised offer in local multi-agency training session
- Develop and provide training in the role of the Lead Person / Lead Professional
- Develop a communication strategy to communicate new tools, guidance and best practice
- Explore technical solutions to facilitate Live Well information via smart phones and other mobile devices



7. Making our Priorities Happen

Action Plan

The action plan at Appendix 1 sets out the key actions we will carry out to achieve our priorities. This will be reviewed and updated quarterly by the Early Help Together Group to ensure the delivery of this strategy.

Governance

The Health & Well-being Board will oversee progress against this strategy, the Early Help Together Group will also report regularly to the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership. Performance reporting and impact will be assessed by the EHTG and will be published in the LSCP Annual Report, which is also scrutinised by the Health and Wellbeing Board and Cheshire East Council's Children and Families' Overview and Scrutiny Committee.



8. How will we know if we are successful?

Measuring Success

Ultimately we will evaluate our success against the difference we make to the lives of our children and young people. We will use the following sources to inform us on how well we are performing, what's working well, and where we need to take action to achieve change. Our key indicators for success will be measured via a dedicated scorecard.

Qualitative Measures

Multi-agency Early Help and care plan audits will be developed to evaluate the quality of our work to support families across the partnership. Findings from these audits will be reported to the LSCP.

Feedback from Families

A feedback survey will be developed to gain feedback on the quality of our services and their experiences from children, young people, parents and carers. Feedback from families will also be sought through the audit process. This feedback will inform further service developments.

Feedback from Practitioners

A feedback survey will be developed for practitioners. Feedback from practitioners will also be sought through Partner agency frontline visits, training questionnaires, and audit.



Appendix 1:

Cheshire East Early Help Action Plan

Ref	Task	Lead	Complete by	Impact
Priority 1: The Partnership has the right infrastructure to support the development of early help services				
1a	Establish the 3 Early Help Practitioners to align early help practice with the Signs of Safety model	HoS Early Help	Summer 2019	Better quality and volume of Early Help Assessments and Planned around the
1b	Make sure that Strong leadership is in place and that all organisations are accountable to drive improvements across local communities	Director EH&P	Summer 2019	Leaders can demonstrate and evidence improvements in service delivery
1c	Establish new Locality partnership through local community networks	HoS Early Help	September 2019	All partners working together to deliver more effective outcomes
1d	Measure the impact of improved Joined-up working across all services including children' social care and adults	Director EH&P	April 2020	Joined-up working is evident across all services including children' social care and adults
1e	Ensure the Early Help Together Group membership is maintained and partners are challenged to engage effectively	Director EH&P	September 2019	Agencies performance and delivery is evident in improving outcomes for children and their families
1f	Establish regular multi-agency meetings on a thematic basis to reflect on and develop services	HoS Early Help	Quarterly starting Summer 2019	Joined up agency briefing and service promotion facilitates improved referrals and information sharing
1g	Develop school clusters to facilitate information sharing at transition	HoS School Improvement	Autumn Term 2019	Schools feel better supported to undertake EHA's and Plans

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Ref	Task	Lead	Complete by	Impact
1h	Re-establish regular network meetings with the voluntary and faith sector	Director EH&P	March 2020	Improved joint working and relationships with the VCF sector
1i	Optimise financial resources – use of grants/bids across the area or with partners	HoS Communities	September 2019- ongoing	Early Intervention Grants distributed and aligned with community priorities for families
Priority 2: Children and families get the right service at the right time: all partners understand levels of need and referral pathways				
2a	Refresh and promote thresholds document and processes	HoS Early Help	Summer 2019	At six monthly reviews, audits reflect a greater agency understanding of when children young people and families require early help services
2b	Refresh agency knowledge about early help services that are available in local communities and referral pathways	HoS Early Help	September 2019 and ongoing	Families report that they have been offered a range of local support services that meet their needs
2c	Review refresh and retrain agencies on the step up and step down procedures across the levels of need	Director Childrens Social Care/ Director EH&P	September 2019 and ongoing	Improved consistency and smooth transfer of families as their support needs change
2d	Empower and enable agencies to feel the confidence to intervene/get involved early	All Managers across agencies	March 2020	Agencies report that they feel supported and empowered to engage with children and families earlier through partnership support
2e	Develop improved working links between the Integrated Front Door and the Virtual School Hub	HoS Early Help	September 2019 and ongoing	Improved communication and information sharing is evident and is making a difference
2f	Improve links between Early Help and Adults Services to	Director EH&P	March 2020	Whole family working model is more

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Ref	Task	Lead	Complete by	Impact
	help reduce the impact of parental conflict including the roll out of DWP Training across sectors			evident with parents reporting that they are better able to support their children
2g	Strengthen our Early Help offer to vulnerable groups of children and young people, such as care leavers who are parents and children who are home educated or on part-time timetables	HoS Early Help /Virtual Head	September 2019 and ongoing	Children and vulnerable young people report that they feel better supported and know where to go to for help from their Lead person/worker
Priority 3: Understand the training need required, to ensure that our practitioners are enabled to co-produce high quality assessments and plans				
3a	Review the impact of the new Early Help assessments and planning process, considering best practice nationally and the Signs of Safety approach	Director Childrens Social Care/ Director EH&P	March 2020	Quality of Assessments and plans are improved and families report that they feel more empowered to take control of their lives
3b	Introduce good planning and recording training skills across agencies with a locality focus.	HoS Early Help	March 2020	Feedback from practitioners and agencies report that they are more confident in recording confidently. Audits evidence recording improvements
3c	Support local delivery teams to reflect on and deepen their Signs of Safety practice through observation and support within multi-agency group supervision	Director Childrens Social Care/ Director EH&P/All	March 2020 and ongoing	Practitioners can evidence a maturity in their understanding of SoS and strengths within families and local communities
3d	Strengthen the offer of support for partners leading Early Help work including refreshing skills of staff to hold multi-agency meetings with families	HoS Early Help	September 2019 and ongoing	More partners undertaking Early Help Assessments and planning with families across the Area

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Ref	Task	Lead	Complete by	Impact
3e	Share training, evidence base and good practice to support all practitioners	Director Childrens Social Care/ Director EH&P/All	March 2020 and ongoing	Training and development is regularly reviewed and areas for improvement implemented based on feedback
3f	Review the effectiveness and impact of the Early Help Locality Practice Lead role pilot and expand/mainstream what works in to core service design	HoS Early Help	January 2020	Learning from the initial pilot roles is embedded as a mainstream way of working
Priority 4: We understand the quality of our services and act on this to improve outcomes for children				
4a	Develop and re-launch multi-agency Early Help Audits with the new audit tool	HoS Early Help	December 2019	Shared understanding from the new Audit findings and learning embedded in training and future commissioned services
4b	Refine and improve our multi-agency early help performance scorecard	Director EH&P/Director of Commissioning	Summer 2019	New Performance scorecard accurately reflects the impact of EH Service delivery across the whole system in Cheshire East
4c	Report the audit findings and early help performance to multi- agency groups such as the LSCP on a regular basis	Director EH&P	March 2020 and ongoing	Shared understanding from the new Audit findings and learning embedded in training and future commissioned services
4d	Develop a feedback survey to gain feedback on the quality of our services and the experiences from children, young people and their families	HoS Early Help	December 2019	Feedback from the survey feeds directly in to service reviews and practice improvement across agencies
4e	Seek views of practitioners through audits, frontline visits and surveys	Director Childrens Social Care/ Director EH&P/All	Quarterly	The EHT Board receive regular updates from the front line

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Ref	Task	Lead	Complete by	Impact
Priority 5: We understand the needs of children and families in Cheshire East, and we have the right range of services to meet these that can be accessed locally				
5a	Ensure the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is informed by the early help strategy and local needs.	Director EH&P/Director Public Health	March 2020 and ongoing	The Early Help needs of Children and Families are reflected in the JSNA on a place basis to inform joint commissioning plans
5b	Review the range of programmes and interventions available in Cheshire East by levels of need and locality based on locality needs analysis, and identify any duplication or gaps in our service	Director Childrens Social Care/ Director EH&P/All	March 2020 and ongoing	All agencies understand that presenting needs and challenges for children, young people and families in place and are able to respond swiftly
5c	Develop a joint partnership commissioning plan for Early Help	Director EH&P/Director Commissioning/Cheshire East ICP	September 2020	Shared investment is in place to maximise available pan-agency investment in the right place
5d	Develop easily accessible and effective ways of communicating with our children and families e.g. pen portraits, use of social media	Director EH&P/Participation service/Agency Comms leads	March 2020 and ongoing	Children and Families report that they understand what help is available for them and they are able to access support where and how they need it
5e	Develop links with our rural communities to better understand their needs	HoS Communities	March 2020 and ongoing	Children and Families report that they understand what help is available for them and they are able to access support where and how they need it
5f	Challenge and improve how we involve children and young people in the development of services	Director EH&P	Summer 2019	Children report that they can influence service design and can feel the improvements that they contribute

Ref	Task	Lead	Complete by	Impact
Priority 6: Our workforce is equipped with the knowledge and skills to achieve improved outcomes for children				
6a	Review the Early Help Assessment training offer and promote the revised offer in local multi-agency training sessions	HoS Early Help	September 2019	The EHT Board receive regular updates from the front line and supports changes to training commitments accordingly
6b	Develop and provide training in the role of the Lead Person / Lead Professional for whole family working	HoS Early Help	September 2019 and ongoing	Practitioners across organisations report that they feel more confident to intervene early when families need help
6c	Develop a communication strategy to communicate new tools, guidance and best practice	Director EH&P	December 2019	Practitioners across organisations report that they feel more confident to intervene early when families need help
6d	Explore technical solutions to facilitate Live Well information via smart phones and other mobile devices	CE Youth Participation Service and ICT and Public Health	December 2019	Children and Families report that they understand what help is available for them and they are able to access support where and how they need it
6e	Continue to support teams and partners with using Signs of Safety practice, and request bespoke training and workshops as required	Director Childrens Social Care/ Director EH&P/All	Ongoing	Signs of Safety becomes fully embedded as an effective practice model creating stronger caring communities
6f	Develop and communicate information and online resources to families to equip them with the skills they need to support each other	Director EH&P/Participation service/Agency Comms leads		Practitioners can evidence a maturity in their understanding of SoS and strengths within families and local communities

Appendix 2:

Key Success Indicators

Outcomes	How will this be achieved?	Key Outcome Indicators
Children, young people and families feel happier, healthier, safer, more valued, more accepted, more responsible for their actions, more positively engaged in their community and successful in achieving their goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective direct work with the child/young person and family: effective assessment, planning and review of the needs of children, parents and families The child's voice is heard throughout and their experience and understood within the context of the family Creative solution-focused and whole family approach Increased capacity of parents to provide consistent, safe, caring and effective parenting to meet the needs of their children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of children that improved overall across outcomes % of parents that improved overall across outcomes % of children that feel happy at closure % of children that feel healthy at closure % of children that feel safe at closure Effectiveness of Early Help audit (qualitative)
Families experience a positive family life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child's voice is heard throughout and their experience and understood within the context of the family Creative solution-focused and whole family approach o <p>The needs of parents are identified and met, resolving issues that were impacting on parenting capacity, and increasing the capacity of parents to provide consistent, safe, caring and effective parenting to meet the needs of their children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of families with improvement overall across all key indicators of positive family life % of families with improvement overall in their: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – healthy lifestyles – relationships – learning and development – community engagement – safeguarding

<p>children and young people's needs are met early, preventing them from escalating to need specialist services (appropriate escalation and de-escalation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing front line practitioners' skills and confidence in working with children, young people and families early and in the identification and management of risk • Thresholds understood by professionals and applied consistently • Social work support • Children, young people and families have swift, appropriate access to the right help the right time • Develop an integrated locality support service to provide targeted early help to children and families • Build the capacity of parents, carers and communities to provide support and early help to their friends, neighbours and their community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of children with a closed Early Help plan that within 3 months of closure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – have had a referral to the Initial Contact Team – have not had a referral to the Initial Contact Team – have had no further Early Help support – have had further Early Help support • Number and % of children open to Early Help that have a referral to the Initial Contact Team (and the outcome of that referral) • Number of children referred to the Initial Contact Team that had a referral with an outcome of an assessment under Section 17 that had not had an Early Help intervention within the 12 months previous to the referral • % of children that have closed to social care that have de-escalated to Early Help • Number of children with a re-referral to social care that had a previous referral with an outcome of NFA - Early Help • "Stepping in" audit, "step down" audit and "step up" audit results (qualitative) • Practitioner confidence (annual practitioner feedback questionnaire)
<p>Children, young people and families have swift, appropriate access to the right help at the right time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single point of coordination • Timely, appropriate response to all requests for support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of referrals to CHECS with an outcome of no further action • % of appropriate referrals to CAMHS

<p>Identifying early help at the first signs of problem and in early years providing accessible services to parents and children at the right time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple, clear pathways • Resources targeted at those most in need and effective • signposting • Child/young person's journey through services is smooth and well-coordinated • Early Help systems and processes have minimum bureaucracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of response to unassessed need – from identification of unassessed need to allocation to service • Timeliness of response to Early Help Targeted Referrals – from referral to allocation • Timeliness of response to requests for consultation • "Stepping in" audit, "step down" audit and "step up" audit results (qualitative) • Service user feedback • Practitioner feedback on accessibility, usability
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Your thoughts matter

If you have any views on this Strategy or how we can improve our services, please contact us at childrenstrust@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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Working for a brighter future together

Key Decision N

Date First
Published: N/A

Children & Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 27 January 2020

Report Title: Family Focus (Troubled Families) Recovery report

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report describes the continued improvement journey for the Council and its partners in delivering the National Troubled Families Programme. The Troubled Families programme is a UK Government scheme that was launched in 2011 under the Department for Communities and Local Government. The aim is to help troubled families turn their lives around. Troubled families are defined as those that have problems and cause problems to the community around them, putting high costs on the public sector. In Cheshire East the programme is called Family Focus.
- 1.2. This report describes our improvement position to deliver positive impact on the lives of children and their families.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To note and scrutinise the improvement journey and progress of the programme to date.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is well placed to scrutinise the Family Focus programme delivered by Cheshire East Council.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. It is important that the Family Focus programme within Cheshire East is scrutinised.

5. Background

- 5.1. Cheshire East Council joined the expanded National Troubled Families Programme in April 2015. The name was changed in Cheshire East from Troubled Families to Family Focus, as it was felt this would cause less stigma to the families and reduce barriers to effective working.
- 5.2. The programme remains focused on trying to change the lives of families who face multiple difficulties and will continue to include families affected by:
- poor school attendance
 - youth crime and anti-social behaviour
 - unemployment
- 5.3. The programme now also includes families with a broader range of problems, including those affected by domestic violence and abuse, younger children who need help, where crime and anti social problems may become inter-generational and with a range of physical and mental health problems.
- 5.4. The programme continues to operate on a Payment by Results (PbR) basis to the Local Authority, and each Local Authority has been given a number of families for which results may be able to be claimed; in Cheshire East this is 1900 over the 5 years.
- 5.5. We are now beginning the fifth year of phase 2 of the programme, which first launched in 2015. The key focus from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has been transformation of local services to secure sustainable, high quality services for families after the programme ends in March 2020.
- 5.6. There are six Headline Phase 2 Criteria with 39 eligibility indicators within them:
- Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour;
 - Children who have not been attending school regularly;
 - Children who need help: children of all ages who need help are identified as in need or subject to a Child Protection Plan;
 - Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion, or young people at risk of worklessness;
 - Families affected by domestic violence and abuse; and

- Parents and children with a range of health problems.
- 5.7. Additionally, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have specified that the following also needs to be evidenced in all cases in order for a successful claim to be submitted:
- There must be an assessment that takes into account the needs of the whole family
 - An action plan that takes account of all (relevant) family members;
 - A lead worker for the family
 - The objectives in the family action plan must be aligned to those in the local Family Focus outcomes plan.
- 5.8. The programme funding primarily comes from three streams and funding for 2019-20 was allocated as follows:
- Attachment Fees : £95,000
 - Payment by Results: £483,200
 - Service Transformation Grant : £200,000
- 5.9. These three funding streams are currently funding a range of interventions to directly support the families and upskill the workforce. One such example includes the training and delivery of Triple P parenting. Funding is also being used to employ a wide range of staff to deliver, manage and evaluate the programme. Roles include a dedicated manager, Family Service Workers, Locality Support Officers to offer guidance to all partners supporting families, roles within our front door, Early Help Brokerage, Employment Advisors from Department for Work and Pensions, Information officers and Business Support Assistants from the Business Intelligence Service.
- 5.10 In Phase 2, we need to work with 1900 families and therefore need to work with/attach approximately twice as many families to the programme as we did in Phase 1. Each will need to be provided with an appropriate intervention, an assessment and an action plan, with evidence of measurable outcomes.
- 5.11 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) asked all Boroughs to conduct a self-assessment around their Troubled Families Service Transformation. Transformation of local services is a key objective of the Troubled Families Agenda. This will secure sustainable, high quality services for families after the programme ends. Workshops were held with all partners to identify where services needed to develop further to be considered 'mature' against the six strands for Service Transformation. As a result, the Early Help Strategy and the Service Transformation Action Plan

have been updated to reflect the self-assessment outcome, which describes Cheshire East as a 'maturing' service at this time.

Impact

- 5.12 The latest intelligence that tracks the cohort of families being targeted indicates that up to September 2019, there have been 3700 families that have received an intervention that meets the criteria of the programme across the two phases.

Payment by Results

- 5.13 Local Authorities and partners have been asked to measure success in two ways:

1. Given the family's complex needs, they have managed to achieve "significant and sustained progress". This is measured from the point of closure for 6 months.
2. An adult in the family has moved off benefits and into continuous employment.

- 5.14 As of September 2019, there have been 1540 claims for our work with families under Phase 2 of the project. 46 of these claims were for continuous employment and the remaining 1494 for significant and sustained progress. This equates to 81% of claims being submitted to date and we are on track to hit target for the full cohort.

- 5.15 What our families said:

"I feel that this time round my family support worker is listening to me and helping me work towards a happy home".

"Gives us all our own chance to give different perspectives on the same situation".

"The worker has been working with myself and my daughter. She has made a big improvement to our lives helping me to go on courses to better understand my daughter's behaviour and how to manage it; she has also helped my daughter with her confidence and self-worth. The worker has been conscientious, thoughtful, always listened to my concerns and my extended family's worries about my daughter. Just like to say thank you for everything, I'm seeing a massive improvement and our family is stronger than ever".

Case Studies

- 5.16 The Early Help Plan (EHP) has supported mum for over a year. The support offered has helped mum to move house closer to her support network which includes gran, mum's cousin and the local school. This network has helped to support mum in times of need such as getting the children to school, supporting when she ran out of money, helping with debt collectors and emergencies, including the time mum flooded her flat. This support is able to help mum in the future if she has any emotional or physical issues, which in turn ensures that her children's needs are met, such as attending school, having play opportunities, being fed and clothed appropriately.
- 5.17 Family Support Workers have helped mum with language and communication difficulties, referrals to relevant agencies such as Troubled Families Employment Advisers who sorted out benefits problems, job seeking support, debt management support and applications to 3C's which is an organisation for people with learning disabilities, autism and/or mental health challenges. All of the support managed through the Early Help Plan has ensured that mum is financially better off so can meet the girls immediate needs, ensured that she is engaged within the local community Mum is also aware of how to manage the break up with the children's father, and ensure that the girls needs are met moving forward. Most importantly, mum has got a robust support network around her to offer her good, sound advice. This will reduce her reliance of services moving forwards.
- 5.18 For the next year of the programme, we further aim to embed the principles of Service Transformation through the revised and updated Early Help Strategy that builds on the existing work already being delivered in Cheshire East.
- 5.19 At the Local Safeguarding Children's Board in December 2018, it was agreed to refocus our work at a locality level to tight, shared geographical boundaries. This will be the key direction of the future shaping of our services moving forward for the People Directorate, including commissioned services specifically our 0-19 Health Service and schools clustering model.
- 5.19 Building upon the NHS Place based commissioning hubs for integrated care, we would like to align this structure for children and families services to ensure we have a much-improved synergy and integrated operational model that can maximise available delivery space and potential for joint assessment, planning and team around the family working.
- 5.20 This refreshed refocus of our resources will enable us to mainstream our whole family working approach and offer us a sustainable delivery model as

developed through the Family Focus Service Transformation Grant, bringing services closer to those families who present the greatest challenge to the public sectors and Voluntary Community Sector partners.

- 5.21 Appropriate scrutiny and challenge of the performance of Family Focus at Cheshire East will further improve our reputation for improved performance with MHCLG for the next year of the programme. The funding has now been announced and the Programme will therefore continue for a further year.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1 Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. No legal implications. All claims will continue to be audited.

6.2. Finance Implications

- 6.2.1. The funding received for the Troubled Families Programme is held in an earmarked reserve. This is used to meet costs of the programme in the current year and allow for the programme to continue when the Government funding ceases. The balance on the reserve as of 1st April 2019 is £985,000.

6.3. Policy Implications

- 6.3.1. There are no direct policy implications at this stage.

6.4. Equality Implications

- 6.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

- 6.5.1. There is a risk to the programme not continuing as key roles that support our most vulnerable families including roles within our front door Early Help Brokerage team, are funded by the programme.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.6.1. All current risks associated with the programme are mitigated and signed off via the MHCLG spot check in September 2019.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

- 6.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities as referrals come from every area of the Cheshire East Council area.

6.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

6.8.1. Children and families across the borough will have been positively impacted by the intervention provided which will be evidenced by the outcome indicators in the corporate plan relating to children.

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. Children and families across the borough will have been positively impacted by the intervention provided which will be evidenced by the public health indicators that relate to children and families.

6.10. Climate Change Implications

6.10.1. This proposal has a positive impact on climate change by delivering services more locally for families and by reducing duplication of multiple agencies trying to work with them.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. This is a borough-wide programme, so all wards impacted.

8. Access to Information

8.1 All data and information collected on families as a requirement for the programme is done on the basis of gaining consent from parents and carers. All published data is anonymised in line with GDPR regulation.

9. Contact Information

9.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Ali Stathers-Tracey

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Working for a brighter future together

Key Decision N

Date First
Published: N/A

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 27 January 2020

Report Title: Innovative approaches for Children in Need

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 Children's Social Care seeks to improve support for children in need through investment in specialist services for vulnerable adolescents on the edge of care and at risk of exploitation. This reflects the changing needs of the children in need population within Cheshire East and is an opportunity to invest funding previously used to commission Fact 22 following successful impact of the service.
- 1.2 FACT 22 is a commissioned service, providing intensive support to our children in need and their families. It was established in 2015 with innovation funding from the Department for Education (DfE).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To endorse the proposed developments around our approach to improve our work with children in need, particularly our cohort of vulnerable adolescents.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 This report provides an update on plans to develop specialist services for vulnerable adolescents on the edge of care and at risk of exploitation in response to the changing needs of the child in need population. It will also set out how we will continue to support and improve outcomes for our wider children in need population.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 There was an option to make no changes, but this would not address the needs of our vulnerable adolescents. This would mean that they were potentially at an increased level of risk and more likely to become cared for children. This would not be in line with the approach and ethos of children's social care that every child should be able to live with their birth family, where it is safe to do so.

5. Background

- 5.1 FACT 22 was originally commissioned and launched in 2015 as part of a national innovations programme to work intensively with children in need and their families in Crewe. The focus of the intervention was to reduce the number of escalations to child protection and to reduce the rate of re-referrals to the service. For children and families this meant that they would receive the right help at the right time and children would be healthier, happier, safer and make good progress educationally as an outcome. The innovation part of the project was the team structure, where unqualified workers were the lead family practitioner. Statutory responsibilities such as reviewing the child in need plans were held by a social work consultant, who managed up to 4 family practitioners.
- 5.2 At this time there were widespread vacancies within the Crewe Child in Need/ Child Protection Service and significant numbers of agency social workers and team managers. Case loads were too high and morale was low. Children in need were not prioritised as a result and the impact was evidenced through the lack of timely assessments and planning, leading to a high re-referral rate and increased numbers of children subject to child protection planning.
- 5.3 Over the last 4 years the model has evolved. In its current form there is one hub located in Crewe and a second hub in Macclesfield. These hubs cover the entire Cheshire East footprint and work with a maximum of 96 children. The impact of Fact 22 is positive, alongside a number of other successful measures to improve the quality of social work practice, such as the introduction of the Signs of Safety practice model. The recruitment and retention of social workers has improved considerably with a successful approach of "grow your own". In 2019 this meant that for the first time in a number of years Crewe Child in Need/Child Protection Service was able to establish a fifth social work team.

6. Briefing Information

- 6.1 A review has taken place of our current child in need population, whose needs have changed over the last three years. Children on the edge of care and at risk of exploitation are an increasing demand on the service. Our understanding of Contextual Safeguarding continues to grow as well as increased knowledge about the importance of intensive support and relationship building with some of our most vulnerable adolescents.
- 6.2 Our Contextual Safeguarding Strategy was launched in December 2019. In order to respond proactively to the emerging demands, we are planning to divert £150,000 of funding for Fact 22 to improve our response and support for these specific groups of vulnerable adolescents. The remainder of the funding (£150,000) was from the mainstream Child in Need/ Child Protection Service budget and will be used to fund social work positions now that vacancies have been filled.
- 6.3 This review has been informed by consultation with our children and young people. This includes My Voice, our children in care council, children on the edge of care and at risk of exploitation. Consultation has also taken place with front line practitioners and managers within Children's Social Care.
- 6.4 Children in Need casework will be managed within the standard Child in Need/ Child Protection Service establishment and the current commissioned service Fact 22 will end in March 2020. A plan has been put in place for all children currently open to the service so there is a smooth transition from April 2020. For some children and their families this means that their involvement with children's social care will have naturally ended following successful help and support. For a small number of children they will step across to a social worker within Child in Need/ Child Protection or step down to early help services.
- 6.5 The population of adolescents on the edge of care and custody is increasing in numbers and complexity. We have established a 'Bespoke' project board, which is chaired by the Director of Children's Social Care. The role of the board is to:
- develop our wrap around services for children in residential care to transition where possible into a family environment, whether within their own family or foster care.
 - support young people on the edge of care and prevent entering the care system.

- offer wrap around support and collaboration with multi agency services to prevent placement breakdown and to support transitions in to supported accommodation and adulthood.
- 6.6 Up to 15 young people will be supported in our Cheshire East children's homes once they are fully mobilised over the next few months. Bespoke will also provide intensive support to children who are on the edge of care to help them to remain living within their immediate or extended family network. This will build on the support currently offered by our excellent edge of care team, @ct.
- 6.7 Contextual Safeguarding is a developing area of practice in all Local Authorities and in Cheshire East we are developing a strategic and operational framework in which to support children who are risk of exploitation. The funding which had previously been used to commission FACT 22 will support us to increase the number of support workers who can creatively and intensively work with this vulnerable group of young people.
- 6.8 The number of children at risk of exploitation has increased significantly over the last 12 months and we envisage, as awareness increases by all partner agencies and parents, that this number will increase again in the coming 12 months. Currently, there are 77 children and their families being supported across the authority due to Contextual Safeguarding, as well as a significant number who are proactively supported within Early Help and by our partner agencies to prevent escalation to Social Care.
- 6.9 We have developed a successful operational model that is effective in engaging children quickly and supporting them to understand their vulnerability, empower them to make safe choices, build relationships to increase their safety and increase awareness to their parents. This model is to be further strengthened through the development of a multi-agency team dedicated to supporting and working alongside children and families at risk of exploitation as well as supporting the professionals around the child to reduce the risk.
- 6.10 In summary the Fact 22 commission will end and resources will be diverted into the additional fifth social work team in Crewe Child in Need/Child Protection Service and the development of specialist provision for vulnerable adolescents on the edge of care and at risk of exploitation through the delivery of Bespoke and the implementation of our Contextual Safeguarding operational model. Fact 22 cases will be transferred back to the social work teams.

7. Implications of the Recommendations

- 7.1 The development of specialist services for some of Cheshire East's most vulnerable adolescents will mean that they are safeguarded more effectively from the risk of exploitation and more young people are able to remain safely living within their birth family.
- 7.2 FACT 22 is a successful service that has had a positive impact for vulnerable children and their families over the last 4 years. A strengthened children's social care is now in a strong position to continue this work within the Child in Need/ Child Protection service.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1.1 The contract with FACT 22 is due to end in March 2020. Notice has been given to Catch 22 who are commissioned to deliver the service.

9. Finance Implications

- 9.1 Financial resources from Crewe Child in Need/Child Protection that were previously used to fund Fact 22 will be reallocated to staffing the fifth social work team. £150000 of the £300000 additional funding agreed in 2019-20 will be invested in intensive support services for vulnerable adolescents on the edge of care and at risk of exploitation.

10. Policy Implications

- 10.1 Cheshire East is ambitious and committed to ensuring it is a great place to be young and every child has the best start in life. This is demonstrated through the Council's core priorities that people live well for longer and have the life skills and education they need to thrive. These priorities are supported and driven through the Children and Young People's Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

11. Equality Implications

- 11.1 There are no equality implications for this proposal. Children and young people and their families who need our services will continue to be supported.

12. Human Resources Implications

- 12.1 The recruitment of social workers is driven by our recruitment and retention strategy. The practitioners within Fact 22 are employed by Catch 22 as this was a commissioned service. They delivery of services by Fact 22 was different to mainstream social work teams as the practitioners were unqualified workers. Therefore, there are no Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employees) (TUPE) implications as the service is not being

replicated within the Child in Need/ Child Protection Service as frontline practitioners are qualified social workers.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 These proposals are intended to reduce the risks associated with the vulnerable group of children and young people at risk of exploitation including sexual abuse, crime, neglect, disrupted education, family breakdown and challenges around transitioning from adolescents into adulthood.

14. Rural Communities Implications

- 14.1 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

15. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

- 15.1 These proposals are intended to strengthen the support for some of Cheshire East's most vulnerable children.

16. Public Health Implications

- 16.1 There are no direct implications for public health.

17. Climate Change Implications

- 17.1 The development of a multi-agency team to respond to the needs of children at risk of exploitation will ensure that our children remain safely at home in their own families and reduce the number of children being placed within our care potentially at a distance from their own homes. This will result in fewer miles being travelled by staff, children and their families. The majority of travel undertaken by officers in the Council is undertaken in cars, therefore there will be reduction in reliance on fossil fuels and a reduced carbon footprint.

18. Ward Members Affected

- 18.1 Although the number of Cheshire East children at risk of exploitation is relatively small, they are a vulnerable cohort, who live across Cheshire East and in other local authority areas.

19. Consultation & Engagement

- 19.1 Consultation and engagement with children and young people has taken place as part of the development of specialist services with My Voice and young people who have had experience of being exploited.

20. Access to Information

20.1 Information on contextual safeguarding can be found on the following link:

<http://www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk/professionals/contextual-safeguarding.aspx>

20.2 The Children and Young People's Plan 2019-21 can be found on the following link:

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/livewell/childrens-trust/children-and-young-peoples-plan-2019-21.pdf>

21.1 Contact Information

21.1 Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Jacquie Sims

Job Title: Director of Children's Social Care

Email: jacquie.sims@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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Working for a brighter future together

Key Decision N
Date First Published: N/A

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 27 January 2020

Report Title: Outcome of Cheshire East Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 This report updates the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of the Ofsted Standard Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS), undertaken between the 11th to the 29th November 2019, with the report being published by Ofsted on 9th January 2020. It also sets out the proposed actions to address the areas for development identified in the report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
- a) note the contents of the Ofsted report at Appendix 1, including areas of strength and areas for development;
 - b) endorse the action plan at Appendix 2 to improve areas of practice identified by Ofsted as requiring improvement; and
 - c) include in the work plan an opportunity to scrutinise the impact of the proposed action plan and to achieve the ambition to develop a consistently good service for children and families in all areas of practice.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Council, working with partner organisations and agencies, have specific duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Cheshire East. It is important that Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is appraised of the strengths and areas for improvement within Children's Services and is assured that arrangements are in place to both develop, implement and scrutinise plans that deliver improvements in meet the areas for improvement.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5. Background

- 5.1 All Children's Services are subject to regular inspection by Ofsted. Cheshire East Council's last major inspection was under the single inspection framework (SIF) in July 2015, which found us to be 'requires improvement' following an inadequate judgement in 2013.

- 5.2 Ofsted published the 'new' ILACS framework in November 2017 and implemented it from January 2018. It replaced the single inspection framework (SIF) for all inspections of Local Authorities providing services for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers. This again 'raised the bar' of what Ofsted expects to see as consistently good practice across all services.

- 5.3 Inspections under the ILACS framework evaluate the effectiveness of Local Authority services and arrangements, including:

- the help and protection of children.
- the experiences and progress of children in care wherever they live, including those children who return home.
- the arrangements for permanence for children who are looked after, including adoption.
- the experiences and progress of care leavers.

- 5.4. ILACS inspections also evaluate:

- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.
- the impact they have on the lives of children and young people.
- the quality of professional practice.

- 5.5 Under the SIF, Ofsted delivered a standard four-week inspection to all Local Authority services. The current ILACS framework is a more complex system of inspection. The aim is to create a proportionate inspection

process based on intelligence gathered throughout the year. There are three different types of inspections under the framework:

- **Standard inspection** – this covers all the services above across the levels of need and takes place over three weeks, with one week's notice and inspectors onsite for two weeks. At end of the inspection: a report is completed which gives a judgement on the quality of our services, either outstanding, good, requires improvement to be good, or inadequate.
- **Focussed Visit** - these inspections focus on one area in particular. We had a focussed visit on cared for children and care leavers in October 2018. These inspections take place over two weeks and inspectors are onsite for two days. At end of the inspection: a letter is written which outlines strengths and areas for improvement; no overall judgement is given.
- **Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI)** - these inspections are multi-agency inspections that are carried out by inspectors from multi-agency inspectorates (including Ofsted, CQC, HMICFRS and HMI Probation). These inspections look at a particular topic, which changes on a regular basis. These inspections take place over three weeks and inspectors are onsite for one week. At end of the inspection: a letter is written which outlines strengths and areas for improvement, no overall judgement is given.

5.6 Cheshire East received a **Standard inspection** in November 2019. The Inspectors involved were:

- Shabana Abasi – Lead Inspector
- Alison Smale – Inspector
- John Roughton - Inspector
- Matt Reed - Inspector
- Stephen Bentham – Inspector for Education
- Mandy Williams – Social Care Regulatory Inspector
- Nick McMullen – Senior Inspector (Quality Assurance)
- Kathryn Grindrod- Inspector (designate) shadowing this inspection

5.7 The methodology adopted by the inspection team was detailed, thorough, and probing. It focussed on practice within the last 6 months and included:

- Sampling a large number of children's case records.
- Discussing individual cases in detail with practitioners.
- Meeting or phone calls with children, young people, care leavers, parents and carers, foster carers and adopters, schools and the Head of the Virtual School.
- Analysis of key documents and data (Annex A); over 600 documents were uploaded to Ofsted's SharePoint site.

5.8 The standard inspection made judgements as set out below:

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Requires improvement to be good
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement to be good

5.9 Areas of strength

- 5.9.1 Inspectors found that Cheshire East had made significant progress in a number of areas since the last inspection in 2015 and since the focussed visit in 2018. This included a strengthened front door and improvements in the scale and effectiveness of the early help offer. Our 'edge of care' team, @ct, works intensively and effectively with families to ensure children only come into care when they need to and children a risk of exploitation receive a robust service. Permanency planning is identified at an early stage and children are supported to live safely within their birth family. The voice of the child is a strength and evident across all services.
- 5.9.2 Areas of good practice included the wealth of support offered to children and families at risk from domestic abuse. Support for children with disabilities or a plan of adoption were also identified as strengths. We have also improved our response to children who go missing or are at risk of exploitation.
- 5.9.3 There are well embedded systems for assessing, tracking and safeguarding children missing from education and electively home educated. The Virtual School provides strong leadership, which is leading to improving outcomes for most cared for children.
- 5.9.4 Most cared for children live in homes that meet their needs and help them to make progress. Social workers and carers are attuned to their physical and emotional health.
- 5.9.5 Care Leavers know their Personal Advisors well, they are supported to learn and practice their independence skills. Their mental health and emotional wellbeing needs are effectively supported.
- 5.9.5 Social Workers know their children well and engage in creative direct work that informs their assessments and plans.

- 5.9.6 There is a strong training and development package and specific funding for additional staff. This has reduced reliance on temporary staff. Children are benefitting from consistent and committed social workers, who know them well.
- 5.9.7 Strategic partnerships are mature and responsive to changing needs in operational conditions demonstrated through areas of strong and collaborative partnership working in the front door, early help and contextual safeguarding.
- 5.9.8 There is a whole council commitment to driving improvement for children and families. The Corporate Parenting Committee, Safeguarding Children Partnership and scrutiny function provide appropriate challenge to operational services where deficiencies are highlighted. This means senior leaders are accountable for the performance of services and experiences of children.

Areas for improvement

- 5.10 The areas for improvement noted by the inspectors are highlighted below alongside planned actions to ensure timely improvements are made.

The quality, consistency and analysis of assessments and the child focus of plans

- 5.10.1 Over the last 18 months Cheshire East has been introducing a new evidence based social work model, "Signs of safety". In the short term this has led to some inconsistency in the quality of assessments and plans as early help workers, social workers and managers begin to use the new approach. Significant progress has been made in embedding the model, particularly in building trusting relationships and the quality of direct work with children and families. Implementing Signs of Safety is a journey of 4-5 years to fully implement, however this will provide the foundations of a good social work service for vulnerable children.
- 5.10.2 Further work is required to improve the consistency and quality of social work assessments and plans. This will be led by the Signs of Safety Board. Further work to improve quality will take place across Children's Social Care and Early Help Services. The purpose of further work is to improve consistency across the whole service. Over the last six months there has been a focus on improving practice. We have invested in training additional practice leads to support individual teams. We have also delivered additional training and support to front line practitioners.
- 5.10.3 In 2019 we launched our quality assurance framework but this is not yet fully embedded. We are aware that our audits can be overly

optimistic. We have refreshed our audit process, redesigning the audit tool and strengthening moderation. We plan to increase the frequency of reporting to the Senior Leadership team to ensure that audits are completed and the moderation process leading to increasing accuracy in audit judgements. To support this process, we have provided additional training to our front line team managers around completing audits. We will also be providing individual coaching sessions with each team manager on ensuring consistent and high quality practice in their teams during February and March 2020.

- 5.10.4 Over the next 6 months we expect to see improvements in the consistency and quality of our assessments and plans for children, driven by a strengthened quality assurance process.

Management oversight of cases in pre-proceedings, to avoid drift and delay for children

- 5.10.5 A small number of children suffering chronic neglect experienced delay in ensuring they were protected from the cumulative impact of neglect. They are time limited with a clear plan of assessment, support and actions required by parents/ cares to reduce risk for children. During the inspection a review of each child took place and senior managers have agreed actions to ensure timely progress is achieved. Tracking for the individual children identified as being at risk of not achieving a timely permanency plan that ensures they are safeguarded from neglect will be led by Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection. A joint evaluation with legal services will take place by February 2020 to determine what further work is required. This evaluation will include understanding good practice in other Local Authority areas and seeking feedback from the Courts, Family Justice Board and Cafcass to inform our plans.

The response to children in private fostering arrangements, children who are homeless aged 16 and 17 years old and care leavers who need emergency accommodation

- 5.10.6 All children and young people within this small but significant cohort have been reviewed by senior managers and we are confident that appropriate plans are in place. The quality assurance process for 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless will be strengthened through revision of the audit tool by February 2020. The accommodation offer for care leavers will be recommissioned, with the new services in place from July 2020. The specification has been amended to reflect the findings from the recent inspection.

The quality and consistency of support and engagement with foster carers

5.10.7 An independent review regarding the recruitment, retention, development and support of foster carers will be completed by the end of January 2020. The recommendations from this review will then be overseen and progressed by the recently established Fostering Review Board. The review and development work will be co-produced with foster carers and progress reported to the Corporate Parenting Committee. Work has already commenced to improve our engagement and communications with our current foster carers. This includes the first newsletter being sent in December 2019 and a foster carers forum, attended by senior managers on the 13th January 2020, where views were sought from carers to inform the review.

Consistent management oversight and supervision in the organisation to ensure that consistent, good quality social work practice is in place

5.10.8 A review of how performance management information is scrutinised and understood has taken place. An evaluation of supervision arrangements, following the introduction of Signs of Safety has also been completed and recommendations will be progressed through the Signs of Safety Board. There is a plan in place to fully embed our revised quality assurance framework. This includes additional training and support for managers at all levels. The review of pre-proceedings will also include a specific focus on the role of team managers and service managers in timely progress for children, whilst ensuring all help and support has been offered to families to care safely for their children.

5.11 A detailed action plan to address the areas set out above is attached at Appendix 2.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1 Legal Implications

6.1.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to keep children within its area safe. Equally, there is a duty to promote a child being raised within the family where it is safe and appropriate to do so. Legal Services will work in collaboration with Children's Social Care to identify any areas for reconfiguration of and costing of current legal resources. In the event additional resources are required, in particular in relation to meet the future needs of children's social care to ensure timely planning for children who

are subject to the Public Law process, or the discharge of Care Orders, it is envisaged appropriate additional resources will be made available to factor into the general review of legal services across the Council.

6.2 Finance Implications

- 6.2.1 The ambition to ensure that children's services deliver services which are good and outstanding requires an ongoing financial commitment from the Council. Fostering allowance rates for Cheshire East foster carers are currently being considered as part of the wider fostering review. Nationally there are budget pressures around cared for children placements. This is due to the rising costs of children's homes and insufficient foster placements to meet the rising numbers of children in care.
- 6.2.2 In Cheshire East we are facing similar challenges, however the rising costs will be mitigated through the work planned to increase the number of Cheshire East foster carers, driving individual permanency plans for children and mobilisation of our commissioned Children's Homes.

6.3 Policy Implications

- 6.3.1 Cheshire East is ambitious and committed to ensuring it is a great place to be young and every child has the best start in life. This is demonstrated through the Council's core priorities that people live well for longer and have the life skills and education they need to thrive. These priorities are supported and driven through the Children and Young People's plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategic plan.

6.4 Equality Implications

- 6.4.1 The proposals within this report are intended to improve equality for children and families.

6.5 Human Resources Implications

- 6.5.1 Ensuring the ongoing recruitment and retention of high quality Social Workers and managers will continue to be a priority for the local authority and will require the support from HR colleagues to deliver the strategy in relation to this. Further work is planned to review the support package for our newly qualified

social workers to ensure we are strongly placed to attract the very best student social workers.

6.6 Risk Management Implications

- 6.6.1 There are reputational and financial risks of not providing good children's services. These risks are currently also included as risks for the Safeguarding Children Partnership. The Council, as the lead agency, must continue to ensure that these risks are minimised by ensuring effective plans are in place to improve where areas for development are identified.

6.7 Rural Communities Implications

- 6.7.1 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

6.8 Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

- 6.8.1 Our plans intend to improve the experiences and outcomes for children and young people across the borough, in particular, those who are the most vulnerable.

6.9 Public Health Implications

- 6.9.1 Health inequalities are linked directly to the wider determinates which will have implications for public health. The work on the indices of deprivation will support the improvement of outcomes for children and young people.

6.10 Climate Change Implications

- 6.10.1 There is a commitment to ensure that Cheshire East cared for children live as close to their home community as possible, wherever this is safe to do so. This will ensure that children can continue to feel connected to their families and local community. It also reduces the geographical footprint of children, families and staff as travel is reduced.

7. Ward Members Affected

- 7.1 The recommendations will affect children and young people across all areas of Cheshire East, mostly our most vulnerable.

8. Consultation & Engagement

- 8.1 We will continue to consult and engage with all our key stakeholders as we develop and implement our plans for improvement.

9. Access to Information

9.1 The published report can be found on the following Ofsted page:

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80447>

10. Access to Information

10.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: Mark Palethorpe

Designation: Acting Executive Director of People

Tel No: 01270 371105

Email: Mark.palethorpe@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Insert Appendix 1 – Final Report

Insert Appendix 2 – Action Plan

ILACS Standard Inspection – Action Plan – 2020-21

Governance arrangements will be put in place to ensure there is robust leadership, drive, oversight and monitoring of these key areas for improvement to ensure that we achieve consistently good quality services for children, young people and families swiftly. Subgroups will be established to focus on each area. Children, young people, families, practitioners and team managers will be involved in identifying and delivering the actions within this plan.

Ref	Action	Lead	Complete by	Success Measure/ Impact
Recommendation 1: The quality, consistency and analysis of assessments and the child focus of plans				
1a	Continue to embed and strengthen the quality of our Signs of Safety Practice through the implementation of our Signs of Safety Strategy 2020-23. A review of the impact of Signs of Safety to take place in December 2020 to inform the next stage of implementation in years 3 and 4.	Director of Children's Social Care	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audits show that assessments and plans are child focused and result in effective support to and improved outcomes for children and young people. Assessments contain clear analysis, and plans are specific and time bound. • Practitioners are confident in applying Signs of Safety practice. • Families tell us that assessments and plans are created together with them and are effectively helping them.
1b	Hold a Practice Week to celebrate good social work practice. This will include training and development opportunities, and showcasing good practice, to continue to develop the quality of practice across the service. Senior managers, including the DCS, will also complete a forensic dive into practice.	Principal Social Worker	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioners and managers at all levels understand the quality of practice and what makes good quality practice. • Practice leads will receive additional support to deliver their role after practice week • Practitioners and managers are inspired to deliver good quality practice and feel valued and recognised by the organisation.

Ref	Action	Lead	Complete by	Success Measure/ Impact
1c	Deliver workshops for practitioners and managers on analysis within assessments and planning within Practice Week in March, and over 2020.	Lead Practitioners for Signs of Safety and Signs of Safety Practice Leads	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops are delivered as planned, are well attended and well received by practitioners. • Audits show that assessments and plans are child focused and result in effective support to and improved outcomes for children and young people. Assessments contain clear analysis, and plans are specific and time bound. • Practitioners are confident in applying Signs of Safety practice.
1d	Run management development sessions which support reflection on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what makes a good quality assessment and plan, • the key role team managers have in quality assuring assessments and plans, • supporting practitioners to learn and develop their practice. 	Director of Children's Social Care	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management development sessions are delivered as planned, are well attended and well received by team managers. • Audits show that team managers are effectively quality assuring assessments and plans, giving constructive feedback to practitioners to support practice development, resulting in good quality assessments and plans for children and young people.
1e	One to one supervision at all levels within Children's Social Care will include discussion and reflection on the quality of social work practice, particularly the quality of assessments and plans.	All managers	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision audits demonstrate that all supervisions within Children's Social Care include discussion and reflection on the quality of social work practice, which is driving improvements to the quality of work within teams and services.
Recommendation 2: Management oversight of cases in pre-proceedings, to avoid drift and delay for children				
2a	Tackling neglect, including early identification and prevention, will be a key	Chairs of the Safeguarding Children	February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglect is effectively identified and responded to at the earliest point, preventing harm to

Ref	Action	Lead	Complete by	Success Measure/ Impact
	priority for the Safeguarding Children Partnership and Together in Communities Board.	Partnership and Together in Communities Board		children and young people
2b	All children at risk of not achieving a timely permanence plan will be closely tracked to ensure a permanence plan is achieved within timescales.	Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanence plans are achieved for children within their timescales.
2c	Joint evaluation to be carried out with legal services to ensure sufficient legal capacity and the right level of support to Children's Social Care	Director of Legal Services Director of Children's Social Care	April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation is carried out to inform service development.
2d	Review performance reporting on cases in pre-proceedings to ensure any delays can be identified at the earliest point	Head of Service Child in Need and Child Protection	February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reports enable effective senior management oversight and allow delays to be identified and dealt with early
2e	Review of PLO processes and procedures to ensure they are supporting effective and timely care proceedings.	Head of Service Child in Need and Child Protection Legal Team Manager Children and Families	April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children subject to the PLO process achieve permanency in a timescale that meets their needs.
Recommendation 3: The response to children in private fostering arrangements, children who are homeless aged 16 and 17 years old and care leavers who need emergency accommodation				
3a	Review all children and young people within this cohort to ensure the right support is in place	Heads of Service	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review has been undertaken of all children in this cohort and we are confident that the right plans are in place for these children.

Ref	Action	Lead	Complete by	Success Measure/ Impact
3b	Revise the quality assurance process for 16-17 year olds presenting as homeless	Service Manager Front Door Cared for service	February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is effective oversight of support to 16-17 year olds presenting as homeless •
3c	Develop written material to give to young people to explicitly outline their rights and entitlements	Sam Ankers Team Manager Care Leavers	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence within social care recording of young people understanding their options explicitly
3d	Recommission the accommodation offer for care leavers, in partnership with our cared for children and care leavers	Head of Service Children's Commissioning	July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All care leavers are provided with appropriate accommodation where they feel safe and secure when life changes for them in planned and unplanned ways
3e	Ensure children living in private fostering arrangements and 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless know that they can access an advocate.	Head of Service Safeguarding	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children in this vulnerable cohort will be aware of their right to have an advocate • Increase in advocacy referrals for this group of young people – automatic referrals
Recommendation 4: The quality and consistency of support and engagement with foster carers				
4a	Undertake a review of how foster carers are recruited, retained, developed and supported	Head of Service, Fostering and Children with Disabilities	February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review is co-produced with foster carers • Independent Reviewer appointed • Review complete • Action plan to improve in place, endorsed by the Foster Carer Forum
4b	Update policies and procedures	Fostering Service Manager	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures to be up to date and easily accessible by carers
4c	Carry out a range of actions to improve communication and engagement with foster carers	Fostering Service Manager	June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster carers state that they feel valued and part of the team around the child • Regular newsletter in place

Ref	Action	Lead	Complete by	Success Measure/ Impact
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster carer forums set up for the year • SharePoint site in place with up to date information for foster carers • Evidence of co-production with foster carers in service improvements
4d	Improve recruitment and retention of foster carers	Head of Service, Fostering and Children with Disabilities	December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of fostering allowances complete • Recruitment strategy in place • Regular performance monitoring and scrutiny in place
Recommendation 5: Consistent management oversight and supervision in the organisation to ensure that consistent, good quality social work practice is in place				
5a	Develop a new governance structure to drive progress against the recommendations to ensure we achieve consistently good outcomes for children swiftly.	Director of Children's Social Care	February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective governance arrangements are in place to ensure swift progress is made to achieve consistently good outcomes for children. • Children, young people, families, practitioners and managers at all levels are involved in developing our services.
5b	Revise and increase the moderation of audits by senior managers, ensuring audits are carried out alongside team managers to support a consistent understanding of good quality practice across services. Revise the way audits are reported to enable issues to be identified and responded to quickly.	Head of Service for Safeguarding Children	February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audits are moderated regularly by senior managers with team managers, supporting a consistent understanding of the quality of practice within teams, and what developments are needed to increase the quality of practice. • Audit findings and compliance is regularly reported enabling issues to be identified and responded to quickly. • Practitioners at all levels understand the quality of practice and what makes good quality practice.

Ref	Action	Lead	Complete by	Success Measure/ Impact
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderation confirms that audits accurately assess quality of practice.
5c	Run regular development sessions for team managers on ensuring consistent and high quality practice within their teams.	Director of Children's Social Care	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management development sessions are delivered as planned, are well attended and well received by team managers. • Audits show that team managers are effectively quality assuring work, giving constructive feedback, and supporting practitioners to develop.
5d	Revise and relaunch the supervision policy and supervision audit process.	Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection	February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision policy is launched, and the expectations on supervision are understood by all staff • Supervision audits are completed which drive improvements to the quality of supervision, resulting in better understanding of and support to the quality of practice
5e	Implement regular audits by senior leaders on vulnerable cohorts, mirroring the approach inspectors used during the inspection to identify any areas for development	Director of Children's Social Care	March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular audits of vulnerable cohorts are undertaken which identify any areas where further development is needed



FORWARD PLAN FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 30TH APRIL 2020

This Plan sets out the key decisions which the Executive expects to take over the period indicated above. The Plan is rolled forward every month. A key decision is defined in the Council's Constitution as:

"an executive decision which is likely –

- (a) to result in the local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.

For the purpose of the above, savings or expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £1M."

Reports relevant to key decisions, and any listed background documents, may be viewed at any of the Council's Offices/Information Centres 5 days before the decision is to be made. Copies of, or extracts from, these documents may be obtained on the payment of a reasonable fee from the following address:

Democratic Services Team
Cheshire East Council
c/o Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach Cheshire CW11 1HZ
Telephone: 01270 686472

However, it is not possible to make available for viewing or to supply copies of reports or documents the publication of which is restricted due to confidentiality of the information contained.

A record of each key decision is published within 6 days of it having been made. This is open for public inspection on the Council's Website, at Council Information Centres and at Council Offices.

This Forward Plan also provides notice that the Cabinet, or a Portfolio Holder, may decide to take a decision in private, that is, with the public and press excluded from the meeting. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, 28 clear days' notice must be given of any decision to be taken in private by the Cabinet or a Portfolio Holder, with provision for the public to make representations as to why the decision should be taken in public. In such cases, Members of the Council and the public may make representations in writing to the

Democratic Services Team Manager using the contact details below. A further notice of intention to hold the meeting in private must then be published 5 clear days before the meeting, setting out any representations received about why the meeting should be held in public, together with a response from the Leader and the Cabinet.

The list of decisions in this Forward Plan indicates whether a decision is to be taken in private, with the reason category for the decision being taken in private being drawn from the list overleaf:

1. Information relating to an individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including to authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under the authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal and professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If you would like to make representations about any decision to be conducted in private at a meeting, please email:

Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer
paul.mountford@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Such representations must be received at least 10 clear working days before the date of the Cabinet or Portfolio Holder meeting concerned.

Where it has not been possible to meet the 28 clear day rule for publication of notice of a key decision or intention to meet in private, the relevant notices will be published as soon as possible in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution.

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made. Any decision made in this way will be published in the same way.

Forward Plan

Key Decision and Private Non-Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 18/19-65 SMDA Infrastructure Procurement Strategy	<p>In accordance with the authority delegated by Cabinet to the Executive Director of Place on 8th May 2018:</p> <p>To procure the infrastructure, utilities and ground stabilisation works at South Macclesfield Development Area; to enter into any contracts or agreements required under the SCAPE Civil Engineering and Infrastructure Framework; and to utilise an NEC ECC Type C construction contract with Early Contractor Involvement.</p>	Executive Director Place	Not before 12th Jun 2019			N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 18/19-69 Acquisition of the Willows, Macclesfield	<p>In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 6, Paragraph 52 of the constitution of Cheshire East Borough Council dated 12th February 2019:</p> <p>To approve the acquisition of the property known as The Willows, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 8LF and to instruct the Council's Legal Officers to proceed to legal completion of the purchase and any related legal documentation on terms and conditions to be determined by the Assets Manager and the Director of Governance and Compliance.</p>	Executive Director Place	Not before 19th Jun 2019			Fully exempt under para 3
CE 19/20-6 Care4CE	In connection with a strategic review of Care4CE, to seek approval to establish a wholly-owned community interest company (CiC), and to introduce new terms and conditions for new staff in the Single Legal Entity (SLE).	Cabinet	3 Dec 2019			Fully exempt - para 3

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 19/20-26 Best4Business Update	To approve the revised Best4Business programme plan and associated budget impact.	Cabinet	3 Dec 2019			Part exempt - para 3
CE 19/20-27 Selective Licensing	To authorise officers to progress a two-staged approach to the implementation of a Selective Licensing scheme.	Cabinet	3 Dec 2019		Karen Carsberg, Strategic Housing and Intelligence Manager	N/A
CE 19/20-18 Review of Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21	To approve the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21.	Council	19 Dec 2019		Liz Rimmer	N/A
CE 19/20-19 Supplementary Planning Document - Brooks Lane (Middlewich) Development Framework (Masterplan)	To consider representations received to the draft Brooks Lane (Middlewich) Development Framework (Masterplan) public consultation held in January and February 2019; subject to that, to approve the publication of the document as a Supplementary Planning Document.	Portfolio Holder for Planning	January 2020		Jeremy Owens	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 19/20-29 Revenues and Benefits Printing and Postal Service	To authorise offices to take all necessary actions to implement a contractual arrangement to facilitate the procurement and award of a contract for a printing and postal service to support the Revenues and Benefits billing functions.	Cabinet	14 Jan 2020		Paul Manning	N/A
CE 19/20-33 Control of Bovine TB on Council Land	To consider the actions required to manage Bovine TB on Council land.	Cabinet	14 Jan 2020		Andy Kehoe, Head of Assets and Regeneration	N/A
CE 18/19-60 The Minerals and Waste Development Plan	To seek approval to consult on the first draft of the Minerals and Waste Development Plan.	Portfolio Holder for Planning	January 2020		David Malcolm	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 19/20-17 Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure	To seek authority for the Executive Director Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste, to approve amendments to the Council's Highway Inspection Code of Practice and Adverse Weather Plan to ensure that they accord with the document ' Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure'.	Cabinet	4 Feb 2020		Paul Traynor	N/A
CE 19/20-28 Congleton Household Waste Recycling Centre	To consider proposals for household waste recycling provision.	Cabinet	4 Feb 2020		Ralph Kemp, Corporate Manager for Commissioning	Fully exempt - para 3
CE 19/20-30 A500 Dualling - Acquisition of Land	To authorise compulsory purchase powers for the acquisition of land and rights required for the construction of the scheme.	Cabinet	4 Feb 2020		Chris Hindle	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 19/20-37 ASDV Programme Review and 2020 Business Plan Endorsement	To consider a report of the ASDV Shareholder Committee on its strategic review of the 2020 business plans for Orbitas Bereavement Services Ltd., Transport Service Solutions Ltd. and ANSA Environmental Services Ltd.	Deputy Leader of the Council	Not before 4th Feb 2020		Vicki Godfrey	Fully exempt - para 3
CE 19/20-39 Staff Pay, Terms and Conditions	To consider a report on staff pay, terms and conditions.	Cabinet	4 Feb 2020		Sara Barker, Head of HR	Fully exempt - para 4
CE 19/20-40 Data Centre Local Area Network (LAN) and Hosting	To procure, via further competitions under the Crown Commercial Frameworks, call-off contracts with an appropriate accredited vendor for the purchase of new, replacement and support and maintenance Local and Wide Area Network equipment and Data Hosting services.	Cabinet	4 Feb 2020		Gareth Pawlett, ICT Manager	N/A
CE 19/20-42 Congleton Leisure Centre Redevelopment Project	To seek authority to enter into the construction contract with Rock Merchanting (T/A Pulse Fitness) for the redevelopment of Congleton Leisure Centre.	Portfolio Holder for Communities	Not before 10th Feb 2020		Paul Bayley	Fully exempt - para 3

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 18/19-68 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-24	To approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2020-24, incorporating the Council's priorities, budget, policy proposals and capital programme. The report will also include the capital, treasury management, investment and reserves strategies.	Council	20 Feb 2020		Alex Thompson, Director of Financial and Customer Services	N/A
CE 19/20-21 Site Allocations and Development Policies Document	To seek approval to submit the Publication Draft Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, along with its supporting evidence, for public examination.	Council	20 Feb 2020		Jeremy Owens	N/A
CE 18/19-54 Crewe Station Hub Area Action Plan - Publication Draft Plan	To seek approval for a further six week consultation period on the Crewe Station Hub Area Action Plan.	Cabinet	10 Mar 2020		David Malcolm	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 19/20-23 Crewe Hub Station Update	To approve the outputs of the Crewe Hub Station solutions stage project development work, approve the strategic outline business case for the enhanced Crewe Hub Station and its supporting evidence base and funding and financing strategy, progress the Hub station design to detailed design, and seek necessary Government commitments on funding.	Cabinet	10 Mar 2020		Hayley Kirkham	N/A
CE 19/20-24 Municipal Waste Management Strategy 5 Year Review	To consider the updated waste strategy and authorise officers to undertake consultation and, subject to the outcome of that consultation, any necessary actions to implement the strategy.	Cabinet	10 Mar 2020		Paul Bayley	N/A
CE 19/20-34 North West Crewe Package Infrastructure Agreement	To seek authority to enter into an infrastructure delivery agreement and other necessary legal arrangements.	Cabinet	10 Mar 2020		Chris Hindle	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 19/20-35 North West Crewe Package - Land Assembly	To seek authority to implement compulsory purchase order powers following further detail to allow the Council to make a fully informed decision and give proper consideration to the use of CPO powers.	Cabinet	10 Mar 2020		Chris Hindle	N/A
CE 19/20-38 Alliance Environmental Services Ltd. - Final Phase (3)	To approve the expansion of Alliance Environmental Services to include the delivery of street cleansing and horticultural and associated services on behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and High Peak Borough Council.	Cabinet	10 Mar 2020			Part exempt - para 3
CE 19/20-41 Re-procurement of Low Value Construction Services Framework 2021-2025	To establish a replacement framework agreement for low value construction services and to delegate authority to the Executive Director Place to award the framework contracts to providers following a selection process.	Cabinet	10 Mar 2020		Andy Kehoe, Head of Assets and Regeneration	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 19/20-25 Cheshire East Carbon Action Plan	To receive the draft Carbon Strategy for the Council to achieve its carbon neutral aims by 2025 and to encourage all businesses, residents and organisations in Cheshire East to reduce their carbon footprint; and to authorise officers to undertake consultation and revise the strategy prior to its adoption and implementation.	Cabinet	7 Apr 2020		Ralph Kemp, Corporate Manager for Commissioning	N/A
CE 19/20-31 Proposed Expansion of Wilmslow High School	To seek approval for the proposed expansion of Wilmslow High School from 300 places year groups 7-11 to 360 places per year group for implementation from September 2022, having given due consideration to the response to the statutory proposal notice.	Cabinet	7 Apr 2020		Val Simons	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 19/20-32 Environment Strategy	To seek approval of the Environment Strategy following public consultation, and to delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration to make any further revisions to the Strategy.	Cabinet	7 Apr 2020		Paul Bayley	N/A
CE 19/20-36 Middlewich Eastern Bypass - CPO Powers to Acquire Revised Land for the Scheme	To authorise the use of compulsory purchase powers to acquire the land and rights required for the construction of the scheme, reflecting the revised land requirement that has now been established.	Cabinet	7 Apr 2020		Chris Hindle	N/A

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Working for a brighter future together

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 27 January 2020

Report Title: Work Programme

Senior Officer: Jane Burns, Executive Director of Corporate Services

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. To review items in the work programme listed in the schedule attached, together with any other items suggested by committee members.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. To approve the work programme, subject to the agreement to add new items or delete items that no longer require any scrutiny activity.

3. Reason for Recommendation

- 3.1. It is good practice to regularly review the work programme and update it as required.

4. Background

- 4.1. The committee has responsibility for updating and approving its own work programme. Scrutiny liaison meetings – held between the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the committee, alongside the portfolio holders and key senior officers – ensure that there is continued awareness and discussion of upcoming policies, strategies and decisions within the committee's remit area.

5. Determining Which Items Should be Added to the Work Programme

- 5.1. When selecting potential topics, members should have regard to the Council's three year plan and to the criteria listed below, which should be considered to determine whether scrutiny activity is appropriate.

5.2. The following questions should be considered by the committee when determining whether to add new work programme items, or delete existing items:

- Does the issue fall within a corporate priority?
- Is the issue of key interest to the public?
- Does the matter relate to a poor or declining performing service for which there is no obvious explanation?
- Is there a pattern of budgetary overspends or underspends?
- Is it a matter raised by external audit management letters and or audit reports?
- Is there a high level of dissatisfaction with the service?

5.3. The committee should not add any items to its work programme (and should delete any existing items) that fall under any one of the following:

- The topic is already being addressed elsewhere by another body (i.e. this committee would be duplicating work)
- The matter is sub-judice
- Scrutiny would not add value to the matter
- The committee is unlikely to be able to conclude an investigation within a specified or required timescale

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. There are no implications to legal or financial matters, equality, human resources, risk management, or for rural communities, children and young people or public health.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. All.

8. Access to Information

8.1. The background papers can be inspected by contacting the report author.

9. Contact Information

9.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Helen Davies

Job Title: Scrutiny Officer

Email: helen.davies@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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Date: 27.1.20 Time: 1.30pm Venue: Committee Suite, Westfields	Date: 24.2.20 Time: 9.30am Venue: Committee Suite, Westfields	Date: 23.3.20 Time: 1.30pm Venue: Committee Suite, Westfields	Date: TBD - April Time: TBD Venue: TBD
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The Committee considers a young persons story at the start of every meeting

<u>Item</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Portfolios</u>	<u>Suggested by</u>	<u>Scrutiny role</u>	<u>Corporate priorities</u>	<u>Date</u>
SEND Written Statement of Action	To scrutinise progress against the SEND Written Statement of Action.	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Liaison meeting	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation. People live well and for longer.	27.01.20 (moved from 23.03.20)
Locality Working	To review 'Together in Communities', a new way of working in localities across services, including SEND, Children's Social Care and Early Help Services. Members to attend workshops in October / November.	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Liaison meeting	Performance monitoring	A responsible effective and efficient organisation. People live well and for longer	27.01.20 (moved from 25.11.19)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Portfolios</u>	<u>Suggested by</u>	<u>Scrutiny role</u>	<u>Corporate priorities</u>	<u>Date</u>
Family Focus and Recovery Plan	To consider the progress and improvements made in delivering the Family Focus programme in Cheshire East (the national Troubled Families Programme).	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Liaison meeting	Scrutiny	People live well and for longer	27.01.20 (moved back from 25.11.19)
Innovative Approaches to Children in Need Practice	To receive an update, including the FACT 22 commission ending in March 2020.	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Monitoring	A responsible effective and efficient organisation. People live well and for longer	27.01.20
Outcome of Ofsted Inspection of Cheshire East Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)	To receive a presentation to consider the response from Cheshire East Council to the recent Ofsted Inspection report.	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Acting Executive Director of People	Monitoring	A responsible, effective and efficient organisation	27.01.20
Spotlight Review – Children's Mental Health Services	To undertake a spot light review involving all relevant partners	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Liaison meeting	Scrutiny	People live well and for longer	24.02.20
Domestic Abuse Commission	To receive an update on the impact of the new provision	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Pre-decision scrutiny	People live well and for longer	23.03.20

<u>Item</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Portfolios</u>	<u>Suggested by</u>	<u>Scrutiny role</u>	<u>Corporate priorities</u>	<u>Date</u>
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Annual Report	To consider the annual report of the LADO.	LADO	Children and Families	Acting Executive Director of People	Performance monitoring	A responsible effective and efficient organisation People live well and for longer	23.03.20 (moved back from 25.11.19)
Children's Home Commission	To review the changes in commission Planning officer to attend	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Pre decision scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation. People live well and for longer	23.03.20
Early Help Strategy	To update the committee on the strategy post Cabinet decision.	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Portfolio Holder	Pre decision scrutiny	People live well and for longer	23.03.20
Lifelong Learning	Overview of the impact of lifelong learning.	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Liaison meeting	Performance monitoring	People live well and for longer	April
Children Missing From Home	To scrutinise the reasons and work being undertaken in relation to children missing from home	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation.	April

<u>Item</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Portfolios</u>	<u>Suggested by</u>	<u>Scrutiny role</u>	<u>Corporate priorities</u>	<u>Date</u>
						People live well and for longer	
Annual Education Report	To give consideration to the annual education report	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Pre decision scrutiny	People live well and for longer	April
High Needs Funding	To update the committee on progress towards a new model for how high needs funding to schools is allocated.	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	Pre decision scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation	April
Children Not Accessing Full Time Education	To scrutinise the reasons for children not accessing full time education	Acting Executive Director of People	Children and Families	Committee	scrutiny	People live well and for longer	April (moved from 27.01.20)