



### **Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

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**Time and Date**

2.00 pm on Thursday, 10th December, 2015

**Place**

Committee Rooms 2 and 3 - Council House

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**Public Business****1. Apologies and Substitutions****2. Declarations of Interests****3. Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)

- a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2015
- b) Matters Arising

**4. Progress of Recommendations of the Task and Finish Group on Fostering** (Pages 7 - 26)

Briefing Note of the Executive Director for People

The Recommendations considered by the Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) are attached as an appendix. The Full Report is available on the Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 meeting page.

**5. Early Help and Partnership Working** (Pages 27 - 42)

Briefing Note of the Executive Director for People

**6. Children's Services Spend and Use of Agency Staff** (Pages 43 - 46)

Briefing Note of the Executive Director for People

**7. Improvement Board Progress Report from 18 November 15** (Pages 47 - 58)

Briefing Note of the Executive Director for People

**8. Work Programme** (Pages 59 - 66)

Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator

**9. Any Other Business**

Any other items of business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

10. **Meeting Evaluation**

To discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting.

**Private Business**

Nil

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Chris West, Executive Director, Resources, Council House Coventry

Wednesday, 2 December 2015

Notes: 1) The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Michelle Rose, Governance Services, Council House, Coventry, telephone 7683 3111, alternatively information about this meeting can be obtained from the following web link: <http://moderngov.coventry.gov.uk>

2) Council Members who are not able to attend the meeting should notify Michelle Rose as soon as possible and no later than 1.00 p.m. on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 giving their reasons for absence and the name of the Council Member (if any) who will be attending the meeting as their substitute.

3) Scrutiny Board Members who have an interest in any report to this meeting, but who are not Members of this Scrutiny Board, have been invited to notify the Chair by 12 noon on the day before the meeting that they wish to speak on a particular item. The Member must indicate to the Chair their reason for wishing to speak and the issue(s) they wish to raise.

Membership: Councillors N Akhtar, S Bains, L Bigham, S Hanson (Co-opted Member), K Jones (Co-opted Member), D Kershaw (By Invitation), J Lepoidevin, C Miks, M Mutton (Chair), H Noonan, J O'Boyle, R Potter (Co-opted Member), E Ruane (By Invitation), P Seaman and S Thomas (By Invitation)

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting OR if you would like this information in another format or language please contact us.

**Lara Knight/Michelle Rose**

**Telephone: (024) 7683 3237/3111**

**e-mail: [lara.knight@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:lara.knight@coventry.gov.uk) [michelle.rose@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.rose@coventry.gov.uk)**

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**  
**held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 5 November 2015**

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Chair)  
Councillor M Ali (substitute for Councillor Akhtar)  
Councillor L Bigham  
Councillor J Lepoidevin  
Councillor K Mulhall (substitute for Councillor Bains)  
Councillor H Noonan  
Councillor P Seaman

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson and Mr R Potter

Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member: Councillor D Kershaw  
Councillor S Thomas

Employees (by Directorate):

A Brennan, People Directorate  
Y Corden, People Directorate  
J Gregg, People Directorate  
G Holmes, Resources Directorate  
K Nelson, People Directorate  
M Rose, Resources Directorate  
M Stokes, People Directorate

P Thomas, President Kennedy School – Head Teacher  
C Jupp, President Kennedy School – Deputy Head Teacher

Apologies: Councillors N Akhtar, S Bains, C Miks, J O'Boyle and  
E Ruane  
K Jones

## **Public Business**

### **27. Declarations of Interests**

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

### **28. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 were approved.

The Scrutiny Board discussed a number of Matters Arising from the last meeting:

- Further to Minute 22/15 'Quality Assurance – Children's Placements' a letter had been sent to the Minister.
- Further to Minute 23/15 'Early Learning for Two Year Old Funding' Members noted that a briefing note with further detail would be circulated.

29. **Y6-Y7 Transition - President Kennedy Bridge Project**

Further to Minute 10/15 the Board received a presentation from President Kennedy School regarding their transition project 'The Bridge', which provided a holistic approach to learning during the move to Secondary School. The project put students first and aimed to remove barriers to learning and increase attainment. The approach included a college structure of learning, teaching mostly in one building and the timetable was themed with literacy also taught as part of topics.

The Board discussed the project with the Head Teacher and the Deputy Head Teacher at the school and had questions for the Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member on aspects of the presentation which included:

- preparations at Primary Schools
- support for pupils from non- feeder Primary Schools
- sharing successes with other schools in Coventry
- support in Year 8

The Board thanked the school for their presentation detailing their project and for their hospitality, as the whole meeting had been held at President Kennedy School.

The Board, the Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member for Education were all impressed with the impact the project had on the children's experiences of transition at school and the school results.

**RESOLVED that the Board recommend to the Cabinet Member for Education that officers work in partnership with Head Teachers in the City to identify protocols to disseminate the approach across the City.**

30. **Headlines on achievement of pupils at Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4, Key Stage 5 and Post 16 participation for the academic year 2014/15**

The Board received a briefing note and presentation from the Executive Director of Education regarding achievement of pupils in Coventry, which provided headline data from Early Years to Post 16 education.

The briefing note detailed:

- provisional assessment and attainment results and comparison data
- information about what good development and expected progress means
- closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers
- post 16 participation and the September Guarantee
- data for pupils Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
- Ofsted

The presentation detailed:

- successes and key priorities for each age group
- school improvement

- Ofsted inspection
- Corporate Leadership and strategic planning
- assessing the quality of support for school improvement

Officers noted the successful recent school improvements in Primary Schools in the City and the current process for ensuring Secondary Schools also improve standards.

The Board questioned the officers and the Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member on aspects of the presentation which included:

- the slower improvement rate in Foundation Stage
- the consideration of summer born babies
- figures for pupils Not engaged in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and reasons for pupil's activity being 'Not Known'
- Multi- agency working to support the pupils identified as NEET
- legal responsibility for 16-18 year old pupils participation in Education, Employment or Training
- Increasing 'outstanding' from Ofsted
- The effect on Key Stage 4 results now that pupils can only be entered for their exam once

Officers noted that Local Authorities were required to encourage, enable and assist with the raised participation of young people and could be held to account. Young people whose activity was not known could be due to not being able to contact them or refusal to disclose data. Building on pockets of excellence and sharing outstanding elements was important to improve performance in Coventry schools. The Board agreed with officers that the right destination for the pupils should be the priority.

**RESOLVED that the Board noted the report and requested officers return with more detail about the models of school improvement**

### 31. **Improvement Board Progress Report**

Further to Minute 17/15 the Scrutiny Board noted a joint briefing note which detailed progress on the Children's Services Improvement Plan, reported to the Children's Services Improvement Board on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2015 and based on data from August, 2015.

The progress report included an update on the six themes aligned to the Department for Education (DfE) notice and an update from the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

Officers updated the Board on progress including:

- current numbers of Common Assessment Frameworks (CAF's)
- the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) review
- increasing numbers of re-referrals
- strategy meeting discussions
- training
- adoption
- care proceedings

The Board questioned the Cabinet Member and officers on the following:

- Barnados interviews for young people missing from care
- Recruitment of newly qualified social workers and encouraging internal staff into training to reduce the use of Agency Workers

The Cabinet Member for Education reassured the Board that questions would continue to be asked about quality assurance at Improvement Board.

32. **Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Board noted the work programme.

**RESOLVED that a report about the use of agency staff to be considered at a future meeting.**

33. **Any Other Business**

**John Gregg/Yolanda Corden**

The Scrutiny Board welcomed John Gregg, the recently appointed Director of Children's Services and thanked Yolanda Corden, Interim Assistant Director for her support.

(Meeting closed at 4.00 pm)



## Public report

**Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

**10 December 2015**

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Children and Young People, Councillor Ed Ruane

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director People

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

1. Progress of recommendations of the Task and Finish Group on Fostering
2. Annual Fostering Report 2014/15

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

This reports sets out the

1. Progress made against the recommendations of the task and finish group which concluded in March 2015. The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board, reported these recommendations to the Cabinet Member Children and Young People in April 2015.
2. The annual report of the fostering service 2014/15 updated at Quarter 2 in 2015/16.

**1 Recommendations**

- 1.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board are recommended to:
  - 1) Note complete actions against recommendations made
  - 2) Support the work being made to complete recommendations still outstanding
  - 3) Identify any further recommendations to the Cabinet Member
  - 4) Identify any further reporting requirements

**2 Progress against the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group**

- 1) The proposed fee structure for a skills fee per child is implemented following consideration of feedback from foster carers.

**Progress: Completed.** Coventry introduced a skills fee per child and allowances in line with those recommended by the National Fostering Network. The Cabinet Member agreed to the proposed changes in March 2015 and these have been implemented from April 1 2015.
- 2) Additional research and monitoring is done on Staying Put
  - a. the affect that any potential drop in income has on the number of staying put places offered to young people

- b. the number of young people who would like to stay put and aren't able to as their carers don't offer,
- c. the statutory requirements and associated funding implications

**Progress: In progress.** The staying put policy has been revised to fully consider the recommendations of the task and finish group. The report and the policy will be presented to the Cabinet Member for Children on 8 December 2015

- 3) A council tax rebate for Foster Carers in Coventry was not considered, instead, the Council decided to implement the skills fee on a per child basis, as this was felt to be more equitable allowance.
- 4) The Council pursue becoming a Fostering Friendly Employer, ensuring that this is additional to any other family friendly policy the Council may have.

**Progress: Completed.** The policy was approved in July 2015 by Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources and launched across the Council in September 2015.

- 5) Crèche availability whilst training for Foster Carers should be investigated. Existing childcare provision should be the preferred option and 2 year old entitlement should also be considered.

**Progress: Completed.** Child care support for carers whilst on training has been agreed with Workforce Development. These arrangements remain under scrutiny by the service.

- 6) The Foster Care Support Offer focus on a "team around the child" approach. The main objective of this is to strengthen the team around the child ethos and ensure everybody understands the value and responsibilities of each other's roles.

**Progress: In Progress.** The team around the child approach has at its core the need to enable our staff recognise that our foster carers are most **valued and respected** people for children in care. Engaging foster carers effectively and respectfully as core members of the "team around the child" was launched at the Fostering Conference in March 2015. There have been a range of events since June 2015 to engage social workers across the service as well as Practice Lite Bites event delivered in partnership with Coventry Foster Care Association and the Family Placement service. In addition, further events have been scheduled in 2016 across all social work teams and the approach will be embedded in the workforce development in 2016/17.

- 7) Explore opportunities to influence national social work training programmes to support this culture shift.

**Progress: in Progress.** There has been limited progress on this recommendation and further consideration is underway with the Principle Social Worker.

- 8) The "team around the child" approach is used to appraise social workers.

**Progress: In progress.** The new Behaviours Framework enables staff development and performance to be considered under the "Working together" and "Delivering good customer service" behaviours. The requirement to demonstrate working effectively with foster carers has been included in the appraisal framework for social workers and their line managers.

- 9) The Education and Children's Service Scrutiny Board consider the policy statement on delegations before it goes to the Cabinet Member, at their first meeting of the Municipal Year 2015/16.

**Progress: Completed.** Delegation of Authority Policy for Looked After Children was approved on 30 June 2016 by Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. This has been launched and implemented across children's services with ongoing briefing workshops arranged into 2016.

### 3 Annual Fostering Report 2014/15

- 2.1 The annual fostering report was presented to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People on 27 July 2015 and was initially scheduled for consideration by this Scrutiny Board in September 2015. As the report was rescheduled to December 2015, this report updates the performance data as at Quarter 2.
- 2.2 The annual report summarises the activity of the service from April 2014 to March 2015. It highlights the challenge of sufficiently recruiting the number and type of carers who can meet children’s needs and the critical requirements of on-going support and supervision to foster carers who are our most respected and valued resource. The performance of Coventry Fostering Service is critical to delivery of high quality local placements that can meet the diverse needs of Coventry’s looked after children.
- 2.3 The service’s improvement plan is primarily focused on improving the quality of the service received by carers, increasing the number and occupancy of Coventry Foster Carers whilst decreasing reliance on more expensive Independent Fostering Agencies. This is monitored and has robust challenge from the Fostering Steering Group which meets bi-monthly.
- 2.4 At the end of March 2015 there were 147 approved households and by the end of October there were 151 approved households. The target for 2015/16 was to be at 175 households, (180 internal foster care places filled). Since April 2015 a further 10 additional fostering households have been approved. There are a further 14 fostering assessments underway with further recruitment activity planned in January 2016. A service review will be undertaken in December 2015 to consider what further actions can be taken to secure a net increase of 15 households by March 2016. This is still under the original target of 175 set out.
- 2.5 2015/16 budget setting included a savings target of £400,000, linked to the increase in internal foster carers and reduction in external foster carers. The assumptions built into this were that there would be 163 internal foster care places filled by the end of March 2015 rising to 180 by the end of March 2016. This is currently creating an overspend, included as part of the forecast position for 2015/16.
- 2.6 Since April 2015, 14 carers have exited the service and for 8 carers (65%) changes in their personal circumstances has been the main reason. 10 of the 14 carers have been on hold for considerable time and as a result have not had an impact on the number of placements available.

Permanence plan for child	1
Dissatisfied with service	1
Personal circumstances e.g. separation, bereavement, retirement and moved more than 30 miles outside the City.	8
Resigned prior to Safeguarding issues	2
Deregistration	1
Safeguarding (Termination)	0
Move to another agency (adopted 2 Coventry children and moved more than 30 miles out of the City )	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>

- 2.7 Increasing the occupancy of children placed internally is a crucial area of improvement. At Quarter 2 there were 613 children looked after. Of these 449 children were placed in foster carer.

Of the 449 children in foster care at the end of Quarter 2:

- 268 children (59.6%) were placed with the independent fostering agencies.

- 151 children were placed with internal foster carers, compared with 134 at the end of March 2015. At the end of October this reduced to 149, however at the end of November 2015 this increased to 153 children.
  - A further 30 children were placed with foster carers from the family or friendship network of the child.
- 2.8 Of the households providing mainstream foster care the number of placements available has increased at Quarter 2 was 258 placements compared with 236 placements at the end of March 2015 (i.e. 1.6 placements per household). This placements are reduced by the number of fostering households on hold and the number of beds blocked (64) with actual places vacant at 42. Further work is underway to reduce the vacancy level to increase occupancy rates and improve performance against the 180 target set out in paragraph 2.5.
- 2.9 The appointment of Director of Children’s Service has already provided further challenge and renewed focus to accelerate the recruitment and improve the retention of foster carers.
- 2.10 All recruitment activities in relation to prospective carers (including initial visits and assessments) were tracked on a weekly basis to ensure that carers were assessed rapidly and to prevent drift. Similar scrutiny was applied to the annual review process for Foster Carers and the management of any allegations against them.
- 2.11 The Recruitment and Development officer has sharply focused the recruitment campaigns. Coventry now has a strong marketing strategy and brand which includes both fostering and adoption. It utilises current research undertaken by Fostering Network and the Department of Education to incorporate value modes with in the key messages inherent to the campaigns - “Childhood Memories” and “Alfie’s journey”. There is on-going activity to strengthen relationships with business partners, faith and community groups. This includes
- Coventry Sports Foundation
  - Coventry Railway Station and Virgin Trains
  - The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Positive Images Festival
  - Free Radio and Hillz FM.
  - Imagination Café
  - Faith and Community groups
  - Warwick University
  - Coventry University
- 2.12 Coventry now has a strong social media presence established with interactions from media and existing carers. Recruitment activity has included extensive use of social media such Facebook and Twitter. Our online content on the website is regularly updated and feedback about the website has significantly improved. The launch of the ‘Alfie’s Journey’ film has further increased the reach and awareness in the City and has won an International Film Award.

Activity and impact can be measured by the following.

- 76K impressions on Twitter
- 44K circa views of ‘Alfie’s Journey’ over different online platforms
- 1822 Likes on our Facebook Page (from 1054 in April 2015)
- 257 Followers on Twitter
- 20 information sessions will be held by end of March 2016.

- 4 Interviews on Hillz FM
- 3 festivals attended (Godiva, Positive Images, Hillfields)
- 3 Interviews on BBC CWR (two with foster carers)
- 2 Free Radio Storycorners held
- 3 articles in Citivision
- 3 children's storytime event targeting BME communities by end March 2016
- One exhibition online and at Herbert Art Gallery in June 2015
- Warwick Arts Centre showing 'Alfie's journey' on big screens
- Christmas Light Switch showed 'Alfie's Journey'

2.13 The Recruitment and Development Officer supports developments in the Service with regard to an effective communication and retention strategy, providing strong challenge. This includes;

- Monthly Foster Carers Newsletter established providing up to date and relevant information.
- Dedicated page for the FCA included in the newsletter each month
- A closed group Facebook page set up Coventry Foster Carers' Association set up and now fully operational
- Facilitated capacity building with the Coventry Foster Carers Association
- Online Survey for the FCA foster carers needs from a foster carers organisation
- Led on the consultation for the fees and allowances
- Organised a tax and benefits session for carers and produced a guide for all carers
- Supporting foster carers to set up a weekly foster carers meet up (now running)
- Engaged foster carers in recruitment (advertorials on Free Radio, interviews, website and social media content and attendance at information events)
- Developing an evidenced based approach to advice and support for fostering families in regard to the impact of fostering on sons and daughters of foster carers

2.14 The Coventry Foster Care Association has reviewed its membership and officer roles .The Foster Carers' Association have re-elected a full management committee and have clear work plan focusing on:

- Representing foster carers' views
- Raise awareness and celebrate the role of foster carers
- Provide peer support and social opportunities for foster carers and children

2.15 In addition the FCA and the Service and have agreed to focus on the following areas for the next quarter. Progress is reviewed at monthly meeting held with between the FCA and managers from the Service. The FCA is also represented on the Fostering Steering Group.

- Timeliness of payments  
Process reviewed, evidence that this is improving. Monitored by the Service Manager
- Escalation process  
Process reviewed and agreed with social care managers and FCA in July 2015. This has been communicated via newsletter and FCA in August 2015. Monitored via monthly meetings
- Foster carers' Handbook and this is now updated
- Discretionary payments  
This is an ongoing work stream and work in progress

- Savings and ISAs (through the Share Foundation)  
Further guidance to be developed by end of January 2015.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1 – Report from the Task and Finish Group on Fostering

Appendix 2 – The Annual Fostering Report

**Other useful background papers:**

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

*No*

**Will this report go to Council?**

**No**

## Appendix 1

### Recommendations from the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Task and Finish Group on Fostering

#### Executive Summary:

Following a decision at their meeting on 22 October 2014, the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board agreed to establish a task and finish group to look in more detail at the "offer" made to foster carers to support the on-going recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers.

It was recognised by the Board that not only was the recruitment of more in-house foster carers important, there was a need to improve the financial and support "offer" in order to retain existing foster carers.

The task and finish group considered the following areas:

- Local Context and Background
- Feedback from Foster Carers
- Marketing and Recruitment Strategy
- Improving the "Offer" to Foster Carers – Skills Fee Per Child
- Council Tax rebate/reduction
- Non-financial support offer including professional development
- Foster Friendly Employer Policy

#### Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member Children and Young People is recommended to accept the following recommendations from the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board.

- 1) That the proposed fee structure for a skills fee per child is implemented following consideration of feedback from foster carers. *(This has already been agreed further to the Cabinet Member Children and Young People minute 27/14)*
- 2) Review the end of year statement and advice provided to foster carers for fostering income and tax implications, to ensure foster carers can easily extract the relevant information for their annual tax returns.
- 3) That additional research and monitoring is done on:
  - a. the affect that any potential drop in income has on the number of staying put places offered to young people over 18,
  - b. the number of young people who would like to stay put and aren't able to as their carers don't offer staying put places,
  - c. the statutory requirements and associated funding implications of staying put places.
- 4) That a council tax rebate for Foster Carers in Coventry is not considered at this time.
- 5) That the Council pursue becoming a Fostering Friendly Employer, ensuring that this is additional to any other family friendly policy the Council may have.
- 6) That crèche availability whilst training for Foster Carers should be investigated. Existing childcare provision should be the preferred option and 2 year old entitlement should also be considered.
- 7) To support the Foster Care Support Offer focused on a "team around the child" approach.
- 8) To strengthen the team around the child ethos and ensure everybody understands the value and responsibilities of each other's roles.

- 9) To explore opportunities to influence national social work training programmes to support this culture shift.
- 10) That the “team around the child” approach is used to appraise social workers.
- 11) That the Education and Children’s Service Scrutiny Board consider the policy statement on delegations before it goes to the Cabinet Member, at their first meeting of the Municipal Year 2015/16.



**Public report**  
Cabinet Member

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People  
Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

27 July 2015  
10 September 2015

**Name of Cabinet Member:**  
Councillor Ed Ruane

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**  
Executive Director of People

**Ward(s) affected: None**

**Title: Coventry Fostering Service Annual Report 2014 / 15**

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**Is this a key decision?** No

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**Executive Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet Member about the work undertaken by the Fostering Service between April 2014 and March 2015.

The performance of Coventry Fostering Service is critical to delivery of high quality local placements that can meet the diverse needs of Coventry's looked after children.

The report summarises the activity of the service over the past 12 months. It highlights the challenge of adequately recruiting the number and type of carers who can meet children's needs and the critical requirements of on-going support and supervision of these carers to. The report also considers the role of the senior management Fostering Steering Group and the members Task and Finish group in providing additional scrutiny and input.

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People is requested to:

1. Accept the Fostering Service Annual Report 2014/15.
2. Approve the updated Statement of Purpose

The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) is requested to note the content of the report and the updated Statement of Purpose and make any recommendations to Cabinet Member as appropriate.

**List of Appendices included:**  
Appendix 1 Statement of Purpose

**Other useful background papers:**  
None

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

Yes in September 2015

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## Report title: Coventry Fostering Service 2014/15

### 1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 This report considers the activity by the Coventry Fostering Service during the year April 2014 to March 2015. Located within the Family Placement Service, Coventry Fostering Service is responsible for the recruitment, assessment, approval, preparation, training, supervision and support of foster carers.
- 1.2 Coventry City Council is committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, children are supported to live and be brought up within their family and community network. Where this is not possible and children need to become looked after by the authority, this should be in a family setting or in a placement which prepares them for this. As far as is possible, this will be with Coventry City Council approved foster carers.
- 1.3 Foster Care is a highly regulated area of social work practice and there have been a range of regulations and statutory guidance issued by the Department of Education (DfE) The National Minimum Standards also provide the framework within which the service is required to operate. The standards also profile the central importance of the child's relationship with their Foster Carer and the need for Foster Carers to be recognised as core members of the team working with the child. There is a recognition that Foster Carers need to be empowered to take on the day to day tasks of parenting and provide care in the same way as any good parent would do.
- 1.4 The service has been working to an Improvement Plan over the last two years, primarily focused on improving the overall quality of the service, increasing the use of Coventry Foster Carers whilst decreasing reliance on more expensive Independent Fostering Agencies. The service has an additional 27 Foster Carers approved in the last year, but to ensure quality within the service, 17 Foster Carers have either chosen to resign or have been deregistered. The reasons for carers leaving the service are outline in I.15
- 1.5 An Action Plan was implemented along with weekly case tracking meetings which proactively reviewed all activity within the service. All recruitment activities in relation to prospective carers (including initial visits and assessments) were tracked on a weekly basis to ensure that carers were assessed rapidly and to prevent drift. Similar scrutiny was applied to the annual review process for Foster Carers and the management of any allegations against them.
- 1.6 One of the main areas of focus in the Improvement Plan was on the quality of support given by Foster Carers. A comprehensive training programme with a dedicated training officer was implemented. This ensured all carers undertook their Children's Workforce Development Programme qualification which is a regulatory requirement. In turn the standard of care has improved as Foster Carers knowledge, awareness and understanding has increased with improved training.
- 1.7 At the end of March 2015, there were 589 looked after children by the Council. Of these 413 children were placed in Foster Carer of which 134 children were placed with Coventry Foster Carers and 279 children were placed with Foster Carers approved by Independent Fostering Agencies. A further 23 children were placed with family and friends carers and 36 children were placed for adoption.
- 1.8 The Foster carers provide a range of local quality placements for looked after children. The proportion of children looked after by a foster carer approved by Coventry was 22.8% as at of March 31<sup>st</sup> 2015. This remains largely unchanged from previous 2 years.

- 1.9 Coventry Foster Carers could be from the family or friendship network of the child. There were 17 households where the carers were related historically on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2015. However in March 2015 the majority of carers' households are not related to the child and are expected to care for children from a wide variety of backgrounds and for different durations.
- 1.10 Of the household providing this type of care as of March 2015 these households offered 236 placements (i.e. 1.6 placements per household). These carers are known as mainstream carers.
- 1.11 Whilst the number of children in placement per household has remained constant at 1.6 the number of foster household approved has increased. Set out below is comparison from previous year which saw a net gain of 10 households

#### **Recruitment, Approval and Resignations of Mainstream Carers**

<b>Mainstream carers</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Foster carers at start of year (excluding family and friends)	131	137
New carers recruited	18	27
Carers lost	24	17
Foster carers at year end (excluding family and friends)	137	147 ( + 3 short break households)
Number of Placements	226	236
<b>Recruitment and Assessment of Mainstream Carers</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Number of Initial enquires	224	286
Number of Applications received	64 (5 in progress)	82 (16 in progress )
Number of households approved (excluding family and friends)	18	27
Conversion Rate - Enquiry to Application	26%	23%
Conversion rate Application to Approval	28%	33%

- 1.12 Overall the conversion rate was 10.59% for 2014/15. A 10% or better conversion rate would reflect a well-targeted recruitment campaign that is attracting households that have the capacity and the qualities to become foster carers. It is encouraging that changes to recruitment campaign have fielded an improved conversion rate from application to approval as well as significant increase in the number of households approve.
- 1.13 The Family Placement Service commenced tracking the timeliness of assessments. Although only 48% of assessment met with standards required the later part of the year saw some improvement in the compliance with timescales. This will be a priority for the Service in 2015/16. Timely returns of DBS checks is the key factor contributing to the timeliness of assessments.

**1.14 Occupancy Levels** – As part of the medium term financial strategy targets have been set and revised for internal fostering (excluding connected persons) over time to increase the number of children placed in-house and to deliver savings. Increasing occupancy levels in utilising foster carer beds remains a key priority. The number of children in placement throughout the 2014/15 financial year was on average 178 children with 145 internal fostering (start year position was 191 – 157 internal fostering). This decrease has meant the service has not met the target increase figures for 2014/15 which have been built into the medium term financial strategy. The table below shows the target and actuals for 2014/15. Numbers are for mainstream fostering placements and based on average bed nights. Forecasts for 2015/16 were based on achievement of the target of 163 by 31 March 2015. This will now have an impact on the 2015/16 position.

<b>Target</b>	<b>By 2014/15</b>
Target set for 2014/15 (set prior 14/15 Financial Year)	180
Revised Target November 2014	163
<b>Actuals</b> (forecast for 2014/15)	145
Shortfall (revised target)	18

1.15 Recruitment activity has led to an increase in foster carer households and places however this has not translated into more children being placed internally for two reasons. These are the matching considerations for older children and placing siblings together.

- The shortfall in house placements that can meet the needs of sibling placements and older children will need to be reflected in recruitment campaigns, the assessment of new carers and the development of support packages.
- Maximise the gains made in the net increase of Fostering Households by reducing the number of carers on hold. At the end of June there were 26 carers which have steadily reduced since March 2015, with a further 7 returning to fostering by the end of August 2015.
- Improvements in the decision making to remove a carer from the vacancy list are urgently required alongside management review.

1.16 Improving in-house occupancy is a critical priority and following recent meetings of the Children’s Operational Management Group and the Fostering Steering group, further work is underway to determine the most realistic increase in numbers for 2015/16 given the current shortfall.

1.17 Part of understanding the occupancy is understanding the type and duration of placements. Below is the outline of the type of placements number of children in each type of in house placement as of 30 March 2015. Encouragingly an additional 23 children are now placed long term with in house carers from 2013/14. However there has been a reduction of 41 children in short term placements.

1.18 An analysis of the children placed in external placements confirmed that this was required to ensure siblings groups stayed together or placements to meet the needs of older

children with complex and challenging behaviours. At the end of March 2015 the children looked after were in the following types of placements.

<b>Types of Placements</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Long term	49	72
Short Term	103	62
Emergency	3	0
Family/ Friends	33	23
Parent and Child	3	0
Short breaks only	8	6

- 1.19 Although there was significant increase in mainstream assessment and subsequent approvals this was affected by 17 resignations, retirements or terminations of approvals. Understanding the reasons for leaving the service, with a managerial review of all decisions is crucial. Below is the analysis in the past 2 years for the reasons.

<b>Reason</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Permanence plan for child	5	1
Connected Persons temporary approval only	0	2
Move to another agency	0	0
Retirement, change of circumstances, health, space	10	9
Safeguarding (Termination)	2	2
Resigned prior to Safeguarding issues	1	1
Other – including death	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>

- 1.20 Feedback from both current foster carers and from exit interviews undertaken by the Team Managers has highlighted importance of high quality and consistent support from the both children's social worker and supervising social worker. This is fundamental to improving the retention, as well as maintaining the good will and flexibility of Foster Carers.
- 1.21 In March 2015 at the Annual Fostering Conference departmental managers acknowledged the significant short falls in the current approach to engaging and involving Foster Carers in the core tasks of care planning by the supervising social worker and children's social worker. The conference noted that this had led to foster carers feeling isolated, not valued and with their expertise with and knowledge of the child not being recognised or used. A follow up consultation exercise undertaken to inform what will be a refreshed fostering support strategy for 2015 – 2017 has now been completed.

- 1.22 As a result of these shortfalls a Team around the Child approach has been adopted by the Service. This requires foster carers to be involved in all stages of the care plan development and delivery. With the launch of Delegated Authority in June 2015 foster carers are now able to take more day to day responsibility for the care of the child and subsequently this will mean a great sense of security for the child i.e the person looking after them is also the same person who can make many key decisions.
- 1.23 The KEEP programme intervention has continued to be offered to both foster carers and Guardians. It has now become part of the mandatory training for carers who are approved to take children within the age of 4 to 11. In 2014/15 9 carers completed the course. Results continue to show that carers value the 16 week programme and report improved behaviours for specific children.
- 1.24 The completion of Foundation training in Theraplay by 7 staff in the Family Placement Service has meant the delivery of monthly workshops to Foster carers on effectively using these principles whilst working with children. Feedback from the monthly workshops which involve the child has been that this relationship based intervention is meeting the needs of carers who are working with children who have a number of attachment related behaviours.
- 1.25 **Oversight and Challenge** – In light of the challenge of recruitment and retention of foster carers, a Members’ led Task and Finish group was established in 2014 to provide further scrutiny of the Service plans and the relationship with the foster carers and the Association. A senior manager Steering Group continued to meet to provide problem solving forum to ensure the accelerated improvements required are delivered on time. Both interventions have provided the critical oversight the agency has required and the input to address what had been long standing problems in data management and sustaining a customer service focus.
- 1.26 **Fostering Panel** – Improvements have been made to the Fostering Panel to make sure it worked in an efficient and effective way. Monitoring sheets are completed for each case presented at panel and the panel provides feedback to the Agency Decision Maker. The Panel makes recommendations to the Fostering Service and these recommendations are referred to the Agency Decision Maker for a decision as to whether a Foster Carer should be approved. The Fostering Panel meets on a monthly basis and it feeds back any issues or concerns to the Registered Manager.
- 1.27 Sarah Borthwick continues to act as the independent chair of the Fostering Panel. The Panel met a total of 13 occasions and was quorate on each occasion. The Panel has continued to provide the service detailed feedback on the quality of the work discussed and has noted continued improvements in the assessments and foster carer reviews. Panel has however been concerned with the quality of social work practice as reported from foster carers and asked the Service Manager to consider prioritising improving relations with the children’s social workers. Panel training in allegation management is scheduled for July 2015 and the completion of appraisals for both the Chair and members will be prioritised in 2015.
- 1.28 The appointment of Recruitment and Development officer in November 2014 has sharply focused the recruitment campaigns over the last six months. Coventry now has a strong marketing strategy and brand which includes both fostering and adoption. It utilises current research undertaken by Fostering Network and the Department of Education to incorporate value modes with in the key messages inherent to the campaigns - “Childhood Memories” and “Alfie’s journey”.

1.29 There is on-going activity to strengthen relationships with business partners, faith and community groups. This includes

- Coventry Sports Foundation (securing free use of venue for recruitment, training and events with foster carers.)
- Coventry Railway Station and Virgin Trains (monthly activity on first Friday of each month)
- Herbert Art Gallery (exhibition and event space provided free of charge and desk for enquiries)
- Chamber of Commerce (presentations and networking opportunities)
- Positive Images Festival
- Free Radio and Hillz FM.
- Imagination Café
- Faith and Community groups

1.24 Coventry now has a strong social media presence established with interactions from media and existing carers. Recruitment activity has included extensive use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Our online content on the website is regularly updated and feedback about the website has significantly improved. The launch of the 'Alfie's Journey' film has further increased the reach and awareness in the City. The impact of the campaigns and the various activities used to deliver it is currently being fully evaluated with a report due to the Lead Cabinet member by 2nd September 2015. Meanwhile activity and impact may be partly measured by the following.

- 76K impressions on Twitter
- 23K views of 'Alfie's Journey' over different online platforms
- 15K Leaflets delivered (based on Mosaic analysis )
- 1321 Likes on our Facebook Page
- 149 Followers on Twitter
- 14 information sessions held (approx. 50 attendees)
- 4 Interviews on Hillz FM
- 3 festivals attended (Godiva, Positive Images, Hillfields)
- 3 Interviews on BBC CWR (two with foster carers)
- 2 Free Radio Storycorners held
- 2 articles in Citivision
- 1 children's storytime event targeting BME communities
- 1 Exhibition online and at Herbert Art Gallery in June 2015

1.25 The Recruitment and Development officer supports developments in the Service with regard to an effective communication and retention strategy, providing strong challenge. This has resulted in a refreshed FCA committee and clear plan to support engagement with a wider group of carers. This includes;

- Monthly Foster Carers Newsletter established providing up to date and relevant information.
- Facilitated capacity building with the Coventry Foster Carers Association
- Online Survey for the FCA foster carers needs from a foster carers organisation
- Led on the consultation for the fees and allowances (online, facilitated events and phone surgeries) completed and implemented
- Support to foster carers looking to set up localised support groups and activities
- Engaged foster carers in recruitment (advertorials on Free Radio, interviews, website and social media content and attendance at information events)
- Media Liaison Officer recruited from FCA – soon to run a media session for interested carers and staff

1.26 The priorities for recruitment going forward are to secure foster carers for sibling groups and older children including teenagers with a distinct campaign being launched from September 2015. This is going to be driven by engaging:

- Face to face engagement with faith groups
- Family friendly events engaging communities
- Continue to have a strong presence on digital and audio media
- Engaging business partners with Fostering Champion

## **2 Options considered and recommended proposal**

That the Fostering Report is noted and the updated Statement of Purpose accepted.

## **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

3.1 Not applicable

## **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

4.1 Not applicable

## **5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources**

5.1 Financial implications

### **5.1.1 In-House Fostering fees – Outturn 2014/15**

The actual spend for mainstream and connected persons for 2014/15 was £3,308k against a budget of £3,801k, giving an overall underspend of £493k. As highlighted in section 1.12 above, the actual placement numbers for in-house fostering of 145 (based on average bed nights) were much lower than the original target of 180, which was used for budget setting.

It should be noted that the reduced numbers contributed to the overall placements overspend of £1.9m where as a direct consequence more expensive external fostering numbers were much higher than target.

Numbers have continued to fall in 2015/16 and the Head of Service has been tasked with providing a realistic target for this year onwards.

5.1.2 The KEEP programme gross expenditure for 2014/15 was £44k, largely supported by grant. Although the grant was withdrawn at the end of 2014/15, this service will continue to be funded through core budget.

## **5.2 Legal implications**

No legal implications.

## **6. Other implications**

*Any other specific implications*

**6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

The Family Placement Service contributes to the wellbeing of children through arranging for a fostering, adoption and other permanent placement for a child whose own family is unable to provide care. It supports a key element of Corporate Parenting – that of securing appropriate family placements for 'Looked After Children' (LAC), as an effective means of giving them the best life chances possible.

**6.2 How is risk being managed?**

This risk is being managed through the Fostering Steering Group and Children's Operational Management Group and both groups provide robust challenge to the delivery against the targets set for the service, in examining the increase in foster carer households and occupancy of approved beds.

**6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

Increasing the numbers of internal foster carers and children placed internally will reduce the need for more costly external placements..

**6.4 Equalities / EIA**

An Equality Impact Needs Assessment was undertaken as part of the Fundamental Service Review in 2012.

**6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

*None*

**6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

*None*

**Report author(s):**

**Name and job title**

Liz Gosling  
Interim Service Manager

**Directorate: People**

**Tel and email contact:** 024 7683 1873 and [liz.gosling@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:liz.gosling@coventry.gov.uk)

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

<b>Contributor/approver name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Directorate or organisation</b>	<b>Date doc sent out</b>	<b>Date response received or approved</b>
<b>Contributors:</b>				
Jivan Sembi	Interim Service Manager Family Placements	People	10.07.15	16.07.15
Rachel Sugars	Finance	Resources	10.07.15	16.07.15
Usha Patel	Governance Services Officer	Resources	16.07.2015	16.07.2015
<b>Names of approvers: (officers and members)</b>				
Brian Walsh	Executive Director	People		
Yolanda Corden	Assistant Director	People	10.07.15	16.07.15
Rachael Sugars	Finance Manager	Resources	15.07.16	16.07.15
Julie Newman	Legal Services	Resources	15.07.16	16.07.15
Neelesh Sutaria	Human Resources	Resources	15.07.16	16.07.15
Councillor Ruane	Cabinet Member		13.07.16	

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Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

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**To: Education and Children's Service Scrutiny Board (2)**

**Date: 10 December 2015**

**Subject: Early Help and Partnership Working**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To bring the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board up to date with progress on Early Help and Prevention.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board are recommended to:
- 1) Receive further progress reports
  - 2) Note the change to the Troubled Families Programme which will now be called Strengthening Families programme and will be accountable to the Early Help Board
  - 3) Note the progress achieved to date on the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Strengthening Families programme within Coventry and acknowledge the challenges faced for phase 2 as outlined in Appendix 2 of this report
  - 4) Identify any further recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member.

### **3 Our Coventry context**

- 3.1 Coventry is a city of around 329,800 residents with 83,800 of whom are aged 0-19 years old (2012). The population is younger than the average for England, the average age of a Coventry resident being 34 compared to 40 overall in England. The city is ethnically diverse, with 33% of Coventry's inhabitants coming from ethnic minority communities compared to 20% for England as a whole. Deprivation is higher than the England average; 25.9% (16,400) children live in poverty.
- 3.2 The majority of Coventry children and young people are safe at home and in the community, do well at school and are healthy. However, we have high numbers of children who are known to social care and have a Children in Need Plan, Child Protection Plans or are Looked After and high numbers of troubled families (Strengthening Families programme) compared to our statistical neighbours. The 'toxic trio' of domestic violence, mental health issues and drug and alcohol abuse are significant issues for some Coventry parents, which impacts on their children. Some families have deeply entrenched multi-generational problems.
- 3.3 The high levels of demand for specialist services lead to significant financial costs against a backdrop of significant public sector financial pressures. This combination of high service demand and financial challenges underline the importance of delivering effective Early Help. Our aim is for a redirection of resources from high cost, high intervention services to prevention and early intervention support and services. This benefits families and is a better use of finite resources.

#### **4 Our vision for children and young people**

- 4.1 Coventry's vision is of a city that promotes economic growth and jobs and protects the most vulnerable. Children and young people are at the heart of this. They are important to our city now and into the future. Our vision for children and young people is for:

**Coventry children and young people to have supportive families, live safe from harm, fulfill their potential; live healthy, positive and fulfilling lives<sup>1</sup>.**

We want children and young people to enjoy their childhood and adolescent years and to grow up to be responsible citizens, contributing to our city.

#### **5 What is Early Help**

- 5.1 Early Help is an approach to maximise the chances of this vision becoming real for every Coventry child and young person aged 0-19 years old and up to 25 years old for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Early Help is a way of working that supports children in the early years of their lives, or early on in the emergence of a problem at any stage in their lives. Our definition of Early Help is one that can practically be applied by any professional in any context. Our definition of early help is to:

- **Reach children, young people and families when the need first emerges; and**
- **Intervene when you can have the most impact.**

#### **6 Why Early Help is important**

- 6.1 Early Help is a high priority nationally and in Coventry for two key reasons.
- 6.2 Firstly, effective early help has a positive impact on the lives of children and young people. This has been evidenced through several reviews<sup>2</sup> - led by Graham Allen MP, Rt Hon Frank Field, Dame Claire Tickell, Professor Eileen Munro, Sir Michael Marmot in addition to Working Together (2015) and work by the Centre for excellence in outcomes (C4E0).
- 6.3 Sir Michael Marmot underlined the significance of early help in the following way, "Giving every child the best start in life is crucial for securing health and reducing health inequalities across the life course. The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional – are laid in early childhood. What happens during these early years, starting in the womb, has life-long effects on many aspects of health and well-being".
- 6.4 Secondly, effective Early Help has a positive impact on public finances in a context of significant financial pressures. Effective early help reduces the demand for higher cost services. Conversely late help has a high human cost and a high financial cost. Indeed the Early Intervention Foundation report estimated a £17bn national cost of late intervention. Our aim is for a redirection of our finite resources from high cost, high intervention services to prevention and early intervention support and services. In this context, there is a strong motivation to get Early Help right in Coventry.

#### **7 The principles of how we will work together**

- 7.1 The way that we work together is important. The following guiding principles set out the way we strive to work with families, together as practitioners:

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<sup>1</sup> Coventry Children and Young People Plan 2010-2014

<sup>2</sup> Reviews include: Early Intervention: The Next Steps. An Independent Report to Her Majesty's Government (2011), Graham Allen MP; The Foundation Years: Preventing Poor Children from Becoming Poor Adults (2010), Frank Field; The Early Years: Foundations for Life, Health and Learning (2011), Dame Claire Tickell, The Monro Review of Child Protection (2011), Professor Eileen Munro; and The Marmot Review (2010)

- The experience, wellbeing and the voice of children and young people is central to everything we do so children are safe.
- Effective Early help is the responsibility of everyone in Coventry. This includes organisations working directly with children, young people and families such as schools, Children's Services Coventry City Council, Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust and community and voluntary organisations and groups.
- Parents have the primary responsibility for the care and development of their children and for their growing up in a loving environment where there are strong attachments. The family is the primary resource. We believe that most parents want the best for their children. We will build trusting relationships with parents in order to support them and to build on the strengths and skills they have to bring up their children.
- We will work with the whole family and recognise the uniqueness and diversity of each family and family member.
- We will work with families to enable the development of positive extended family, personal and community networks so that families access positive informal support.
- We will work with families to identify needs and root causes rather than with presenting issues at the earliest opportunity.
- We will deliver and target the right evidence-based support, at the right time and will flexibly endeavour to ensure the best outcomes for children, young people and their families. We will stick with families rather than just referring on.
- We will regularly evaluate the impact of our work with individual families and learn from this through measuring success outcomes of interventions delivered and seeking feedback from children and families on their perceptions of the effectiveness of work with them.
- We will involve families in shaping, designing and delivering support and services.
- We will use shared resources and assets more effectively and creatively together. This includes buildings, finances and most significantly people – the strengths of families and professionals

## **8 Strategic Objectives**

- To identify the needs of children, young people and their families across the continuum of need.
- To understand and respond quickly to the needs of children and young people and families across the continuum of need.
- To support the refocusing of resources from crisis intervention to prevention.
- To support families to achieve their full potential and thereby mitigate the impact of issues such as child poverty and health inequalities.
- To support an action learning approach that ensures that learning and evidence informs future service design and delivery. This includes listening to what children and families have to say about what best helps them to prevent problems from occurring or escalating.
- To provide the context for multi-agency partnerships to work together to improve outcomes for children, young people and families for generations to come.

## **9 How will we know Early Help is working?**

- 9.1 The overall aim is to develop a cohesive Early Help offer embedded within a Whole Family approach, that builds protective factors and family resilience, (enables families to help themselves) and reduces expenditure of costly reactive services. Our ambition is that families, particularly those with multiple and complex needs will have access to co-ordinated Early Help in accordance with need as soon as difficulties are identified.
- 9.2 The offer is personalised, multi-agency, and evidenced based. Children and young people in those families will live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives and develop into responsible adult citizens, thereby breaking the intergenerational cycles of risk and vulnerability. Families will become more resilient and develop capabilities to prevent and resolve problems. The aim is to reduce demand for higher cost specialist services and achieve greater use of community based universal preventive services.
- 9.3 Social capital and resilience within local communities will be identified and enhanced.

## **10 Early Help measures**

- 10.1 There are a wide range of important measures that are indicators of the effectiveness of early help. We have identified the following measures that we will particularly focus on to measure the effectiveness of our combined efforts:

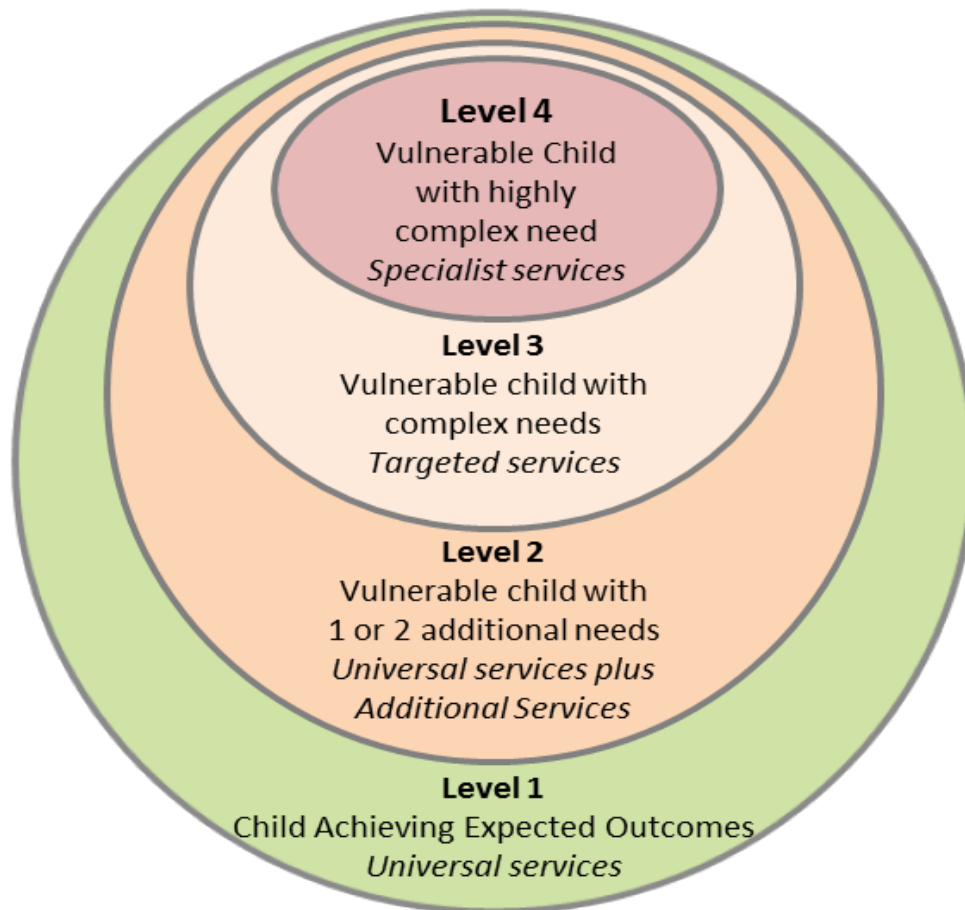
- Maximise school readiness
- Maximise School attendance
- Minimise the numbers of referrals to social care
- Maximise the numbers of assessments completed to support the family when a need emerges
- Minimise the number of parents and children involved in crime and Anti-Social Behaviour
- Minimise the number of Looked After Children
- Minimise the number Child Protection Plans

- 10.2 The following 'output' measure which constitutes a proxy indicator of an effective co-ordinated early help offer, will also be adopted:

- Increase in the number of 'open' Common Assessment Frameworks completed per agency.

## **11 Infrastructure**

- 11.1 We already have many examples of early help good practice in Coventry. These include: Acting Early, Strengthening Families (formerly Troubled Families) and the Common Assessment Framework. Our delivery model includes a continuum of Early Help provided by a range of organisations including voluntary and community groups addressing different levels of need. We have integrated processes including Team around the Child and the Early Help Assessment and integrated teams including Children's Centre staff and Health Visitors to ensure earlier identification of emerging need and to provide a faster response.
- 11.2 The graphic below shows our graduated approach to service delivery with different types of services involved in different levels of vulnerability.



**12 Our delivery will include:**

- a) Embed and roll out the Acting Early (0-5 year olds) initiative so that universal/universal plus professionals complete early targeted work with children and families, professionals hold risk and draw down specialist support rather than referring on.
- b) Implement Strengthening Families programme (formerly Troubled Families) phase 2 so that we meet the government targets of impacting 3,120 families over the next five years.
- c) Integrate early years' services including Children's Centres, Health visitors and the Family Nurse Partnership, building on the evidence and best practice identified in the Early Intervention Foundation publication 'Getting it Right for Families' (2014).
- d) Develop "hubs" that integrate children's services in community settings, for ease of access for children, young people and families.
- e) Deliver the Early Learning programme so that government participation targets for 2, 3 and 4 year olds are met. This includes developing and optimising the Coventry Private Voluntary and Independent childcare sector.
- f) Focus on the 'toxic trio' of domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse. This includes the development of the Family Drug and Alcohol Court work (targeting early intervention in repeat pregnancies and post care support after birth) and commissioning approaches.
- g) Building on the learning from 'Acting Early' develop our integrated Acting Early for school-age early help offer by developing strong partnership relationships between schools and early help services, parents and young people

- h) Strengthen our parenting offer so this builds on good practice and focus on group as well as individual work, bringing together parents and families to work effectively together.
- i) Develop a new model for mental health and emotional wellbeing support. Build capacity and expertise of universal professionals to spot signs and symptoms early, and put in place plans of early support after consultation from mental health professionals. Clear support and treatment pathways for young people who need stepping up to more specialist treatment.
- j) Deliver phase 2 of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities reforms – “Lifting the Cloud of limitation” with a focus on person-centred approaches and an effective journey to adulthood.
- k) Deliver the Ignite Programme in partnership with Coventry Law Centre and Grapevine and funded by the Early Action Neighbourhood Fund. This programme has a specific focus on working with families at the earliest point to build capacity to manage day to day problems as well as developing personal and community networks. It is intended to change the relationship between families and services and to accelerate Coventry's investment in Early Help.
- l) Deliver effective health promotion, to empower families to have an influence over their own health through positive lifestyle choices.
- m) Develop our collective workforce in strengths-based working, working with parents as well as children, developing personal and community networks – to provide support and challenge and to work to the guiding principles.
- n) Implement consistent processes for assessment across all organisations.
- o) Use our children's services buildings more effectively by considering different ways of operating them and maintaining an appropriate balance between home-based services and building based services.

### **13 Governance and Accountability**

- 13.1 The multi-agency Children's Early Help Board will oversee the progress of the strategy, with accountability to the Children's Joint Commissioning Board, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Local Children's Safeguarding Board.

### **14 Key challenges**

- 14.1 Coventry has a wealth of expertise and a strong foundation from which to build on and deliver the strategic objectives outlined above however a number of key challenges need to be addressed:

#### **14.2 Leadership**

- There is a need to build on the existing strong leadership in Coventry to create a shared focus and ambition for Early Help across all public sector and voluntary partners, supported by shared outcomes and joint work programmes which promote an ethos of cross directorate and organisational working.

#### **14.3 Workforce development**

- It is evident from the number of contacts made to Social Care Referral and Assessment that some practitioners are not sufficiently skilled or well supported to engage and support children and families who are 'just below' the level of need which requires social care intervention and do not feel confident to manage 'risk' effectively. Practitioners need to be better supported in developing the skills and confidence required.

- There does not appear to be a consistent understanding about the continuum of need across families and appropriate responses to different levels of need. This leads to conflicting expectations across services about the responses families need. There needs to be a better shared understanding in order to improve relationships between practitioners from different services and professional backgrounds. The important role of Early Help practitioners in supporting families with complex needs needs to be recognised. Likewise, the expertise of social care practitioners needs to be valued and used appropriately by other services. The interface (pathway) between early help and specialist services (step up and step down) needs to be more explicit.
- There is a not a consistent understanding of, or approach to working in a Whole Family context. In many cases there are a range of different services and practitioners supporting individual within families. This is an ineffective use of resources. It 'overloads' and confuses families and it means that no single practitioner is taking overall responsibility for co-ordinating Early Help support. There is a need to build on a Whole Family approach across all strategic partners and services including the Voluntary Sector and Faith Sector.
- Not all services and practitioners, that should be, are utilising the Common Assessment Framework to assess and plan services for children and families with additional needs.
- Services and practitioners need to better understand the importance of the CAF as an early help assessment tool. This could be achieved by more robust multiagency CAF training and an enhanced support model for practitioners undertaking the lead role. (More robust training and an enhanced support model should assist in addressing the first three bullet points under workforce development.)
- In addition to the current arrangements that quality assures CAFs and provides feedback to practitioners, all strategic partners and services should be provided with regular reports on the number of CAFs produced (proxy indicator of early help) to enable them to review and benchmark performance.

#### **14.4 Commissioning & Investment**

- Overall there is a need for greater investment to secure sufficient targeted Early Help for families with children within this age range in order to reduce the demand for high cost statutory intervention. Within the current financial climate this will inevitably mean disinvesting in some services in order to reinvest in others.
- There is a need to develop a broader (corporate) commissioning framework across partner agencies. This framework will direct the commissioning intentions for Early Help and whole family approaches and maximise effectiveness, impact and value of available funding.
- As previously noted, Coventry faces significant financial challenges. Therefore there is a need to consider how to marshal resources beyond established institutional, professional or budgetary confines such as through the use of peer supporters and volunteers. There is potential to work with and build on Coventry's strong community of volunteers and extend and develop existing peer support programmes. This will not only create additional social capital but it may also create additional and sustainable capacity to deliver the Early Help offer.

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Appendix 1: Improvement Board – Performance Dashboard October 2015

Theme 1 Early Help & Partnership Working

1.1 Number of CAF's by agency (Performance Indicator owner - Fran Doyle)

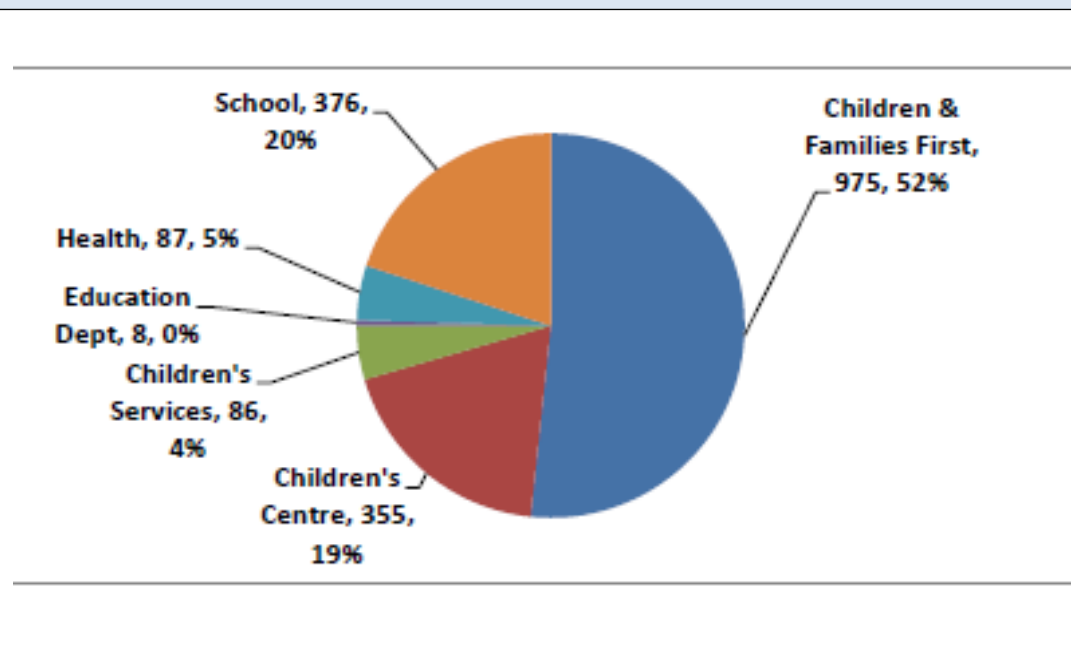
Current status:

Amber

Trend: up arrow is good



CAFs open by Lead Agency (Aug-15) [1.3]:



Lead Agency	Count	%
Children & Families First	975	51.7%
Children's Centre	355	18.8%
Children's Services	86	4.6%
Education	8	0.4%
Health	87	4.7%
School	376	19.9 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>1887</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Number &amp; % non-LA</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>24.9%</b>

CAFs Refusals:

YTD, 261 CAF Episodes have not started due to a parental or child/ young person refusal. (207 to end August 2015)

Statistical Commentary

As the above figures indicate, we see that Health now hold a greater proportion of CAFs, but a slight reduction on last month at which point they were holding 6%. However, the overall proportion of CAFs held by the LA remains at around 74%, as it has done for some time.

Operational commentary:

A review of the CAF Co ordinator role and function is underway. It is important that external partners receive the right level of support to complete quality assessments. This piece of work will be finalised by the end of December 15, with the emphasis in redesign having the Co ordinators attached to schools to support school staff to hold appropriate risk – and ensure that contacts into social care do not increase unnecessarily before school holidays in particular.

**Actions to improve:**

1. Continue the work with health colleagues in other agencies to increase the proportion of CAF's held by agencies outside the LA.
2. Developing impact tool options for measuring outcomes and impact of CAF interventions

## Theme 1 Early Help & Partnership Working

**1.2 Number of new CAF's and outcomes of closed CAFs** (Performance Indicator owner - Fran Doyle)

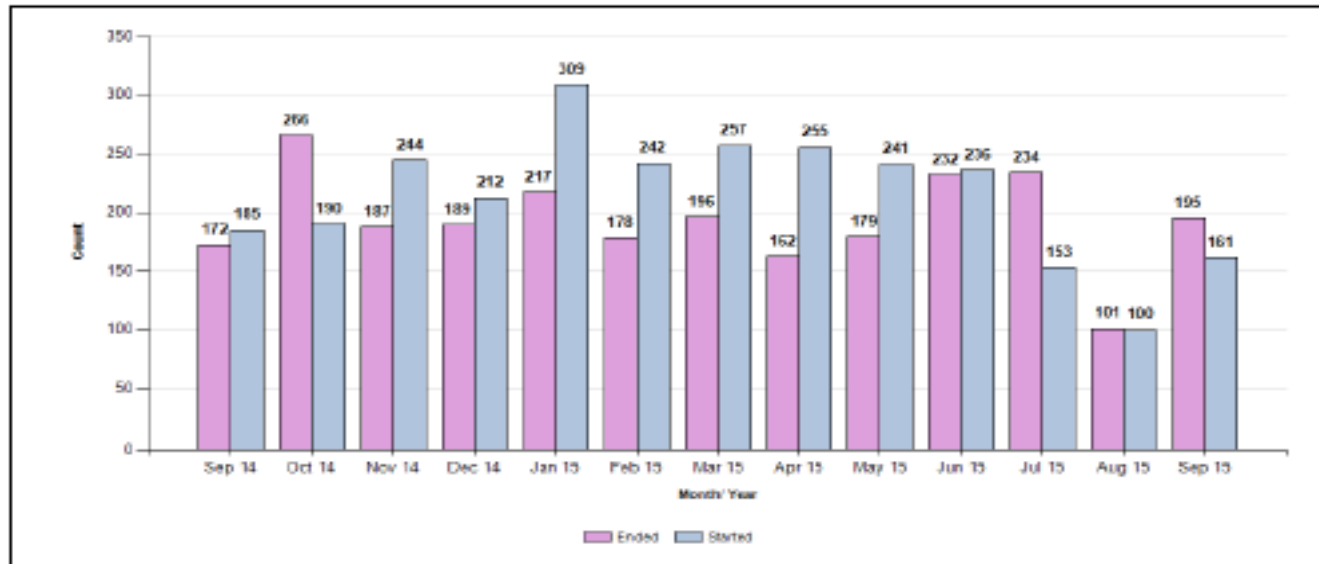
**Current status:** Amber

**Trend:** up arrow is good



**CAFs Opened & Closed per month (rolling 13 months):**

**Benchmarking data:**



Benchmark	CAFs Ended
Coventry 14/15	2046
Coventry 15/16	1094
	<b>% Action Plan completed NFA</b>
Coventry 14/15	61.0%
Coventry 15/16	66.5%
	<b>% Referral to Social Care</b>
Coventry 14/15	26.3%
Coventry 15/16	19.2%

CAF outcomes (rolling 13 months) [YTD from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015]

CAF Outcomes	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15	May-15	Jun-15	Jul-15	Aug-15	Sep-15	Total (YTD)	% (YTD)
Action Plan completed NFA	102	158	114	122	129	101	110	94	123	139	159	66	147	730	66.5%
Child moved to another LA	3	14	2	5	4	9	2	12	11	8	10	7	3	51	4.7%
Non-engagement	5	22	24	19	15	13	8	19	13	19	5	8	7	71	6.5%
Referral to Social Care	57	57	42	38	58	42	67	30	25	59	51	10	35	210	19.2%
Referral to outside Agency	5	9	3	2	9	13	5	5	1	2	5	3	3	19	1.7%
Service requested unavailable	0	2	2	1	0	0	3	0	4	2	4	5	0	15	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>1094</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
% Action Plan complete NFA	59.3%	60.3%	61.0%	65.2%	60.0%	56.7%	56.4%	58.8%	69.5%	60.7%	67.9%	66.7%	75.4%	66.5%	
% Referral to Social Care	33.1%	21.8%	22.5%	20.3%	27.0%	23.6%	34.4%	18.8%	14.1%	25.8%	21.8%	10.1%	17.9%	19.2%	

<b>Statistical Commentary:</b>	<p>YTD, there has been a proportional increase in the number of CAF closed where the action plan has been completed. The figure is currently around 66.5%, which is an increase on last year's figure and edging closer to the set target of 70%.</p> <p>Likewise, the YTD proportion of CAF 's which resulted in a referral to Social Care is lower than the figure recorded for the previous year. This should indicate that work is appropriately held in the Early Help and Prevention arena.</p>
<b>Operational commentary:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work is underway to understand the capability of the ECAF Early Help module which links into Social Care Protocol system, to ensure that robust reporting is available for CAF levels 2 and 3, and the Troubled Families programme.</li> <li>2. A children's centre improvement board has been established and has its first meeting in November 15, with the aim of appropriately challenging and supporting the Children's Centre Management in getting to good in Ofsted, ensuring quality of provision and targeting resources to the most vulnerable families.</li> </ol>
<b>Actions to improve:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop early years and CAF reporting to improve management information in this area</li> <li>2. Continue to implement the recommendations of the report INDIGO in relation to Quality of service of Children Centres and deliver actions required to improve. It has been agreed by Cabinet Member that we have 12 months in order to get prioritised children's centre clusters to good – September 2016</li> </ol>

## Appendix 2

### The Strengthening Families programme update – phase 2

#### Background

In June 2013, the Government announced plans to expand the Troubled Families Programme for a further five years to reach an additional 400,000 families across England (Coventry – 3,130 families). £200m has already been committed by Whitehall to fund the first year (2015-2016) of this five year programme. Due to the significantly greater scope and scale of the programme, the Government expects the expanded programme to stimulate the transformation of local public services in order to deliver the programme and reduce the costs in the long term.

The expanded programme retains the current programme's focus on families with multiple high cost problems and continues to include families affected by poor school attendance, youth crime, anti-social behaviour, and unemployment. However, the programme will also reach out to families with a broader range of problems, including those affected by domestic violence and abuse, with younger children who need help, where crime and anti-social behaviour problems may become intergenerational and with a range of physical and mental health problems. Under Phase 2 the Government has committed to pay £1,800 per family (45% of phase one funding). To be eligible for the expanded programme, each family must have at least two of the following six issues:

1. Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
2. Children who have not been attending school regularly
3. Children who need help: children of all ages, who need help, are identified as in need or are subject to a Child Protection Plan
4. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusions or young people at risk of worklessness
5. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
6. Parents and children with a range of Physical and mental health problems.

The Expanded Strengthening Families Programme in Coventry needs to be viewed very differently from Phase one. The national Troubled Families programme is about 400,000 families with complex needs and with problems that we all want to address to improve their lives and thereby reduce demand on local services. However the Government are clear that the expanded Programme has an additional expectation; to mainstream the Troubled Families (Family Intervention) approach throughout local authorities and the public sector. This includes all other Public Sector services changing the way they work (Whole family approach) not just the Local Authority; every agency needs to be responsible and accountable for the work that they do with families. We need to be clear about why we and other local services are spending money on a family and what we/they are seeking to achieve with that family in understanding which services are effective and which less so in achieving our agreed outcomes. All of this supports the transformation of our services and begins to join up departments internal and external to the Council.

## Challenges facing the Programme:

The main challenges facing the Expanded Troubled Families programme and the ability to claim payment by result (PBR) are:

- a) The recruitment and retention of staff for the programme has been particularly difficult given the specialist skill sets needed and the temporary nature of the keyworker posts. This will be even more pronounced in the expanded programme given that 3,130 families will need to be identified and worked with over the next 5 years.
- b) The likely number of families to be turned around is highly challenging and the resources available from Central Government to support delivery are less per family than available during phase one.
- c) Once the final details of the expanded programme are fully available from government, there is a clear need for the City Council and its partners to develop an adequate delivery and financial model to support the programme
- d) Collecting baseline data from partners in a timely manner to support PBR process
- e) The Strengthening Families programme continues to build upon the good sign up of partners, and drive the service transformation expected through phase 2. This needs to be fully supported through the Early Help Board, which is where the programme reports to.

## Timetable

- Department of Communities and Local Government announced plans for the Expanded Troubled Families Programme in June 2013. The programme was in place and rolled out nationally in April 2015, with delivery expected to start as soon as possible thereafter (with the exception of early starters). For Coventry, this started on 1st January 2015, four months ahead of the national roll out. In reality this meant that from January to May 2015 we were running both phase 1 and phase 2 parallel to each other with the remaining 30% (274) of families from phase 1 and 5% (156 families) of our families from phase 2 (as requested by The Department of Communities and Local Government). Additionally we will have to work with a further 532 families to bring us up to our target of 688 families claimed for by March 2016.
- Coventry's structure for Early Help is robust and viewed by the Department of Communities and Local Government as a good model with many strengths, because of this we are now in a very strong position starting phase 2 of the programme given that we currently have 490 families open to Children and Families First teams at level 3 CAF who meet the phase 2 criteria, we also have a cushion of 318 closed cases from January 2015 which also fit the criteria. This places us in a really strong position to work with our partners at level 2 e.g. Acting Early- children's Centres, Health, Education, Youth Offending Service and others to capture these families for phase 2 of the programme.
- To support Phase 2 of the programme Coventry is currently finalising the Early Help Strategy which identifies the Troubled Families Outcomes Plan as key to aligning and supporting how services need to work in the future in order to achieve the greatest impact for families across the city. The Troubled Families Board has been involved in developing the draft-outcomes plan. The timetable for the Outcomes Plan is to submit a first draft to the Department of Communities and Local Government by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015 and after feedback from the Department of Communities and local Government a final draft will be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015 . There will be opportunities for partners and internal Audit to contribute to the various sections of the plan prior to final submission. The Outcomes plan will not be written in stone-the Department of Communities and Local Government expect outcomes to evolve as our programme develops and local circumstances and priorities change.

## Financial implications

- The Department of Communities and Local Government grant has been made available for the purposes of achieving the Expanded Troubled Families programme outcomes. The offer of future grant will be subject to agreement between the Troubled Families team and the Chief Executive of each local authority on an annual basis. It is expected that the local authority takes full advantage of all other initiatives, working closely with partners to ensure that the remainder of families are supported.
- The Payment by Results will be based on self-declarations of results by Coventry City Council verified by the Councils Internal Audit Team against the Local Outcomes Plan. The following table includes the forecast income and expenditure for the Troubled Families Programme Phase 2 – this is based on information provided by the Department of Communities and Local Government, and an assumed Payment by Result rate of 70%. This has been updated from the last report provided on 10<sup>th</sup> February to include the final carry forward figure from phase 1 plus an increase in the Service Transformation grant.

It is expected that Coventry works with 3,130 families during phase 2. The target number of families for 2015/16 has been defined by Department of Communities and Local Government and the remaining balance profiled over time in line with expectations.

Additional posts in relation to data management, programme support and social worker support are required to support the delivery of phase 2. This will need to be reviewed throughout the delivery of the programme in light of levels of Payment by Result delivery, any changes to the national programme and levels of funding, and any changes in expenditure levels.

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Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

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**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

**10<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

**Subject: Children's Services Spend and Use of Agency Staff**

### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) of the spend and use of agency staff in Children's Services.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Scrutiny Board 2:

- 1) Note progress on reducing spend and use of agency staff

### **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 The Council is required through the Master Vendor contract, Pertemps to supply all suitable agency workers on behalf of the Council. The information supplied by the Master Vendor on the agency spends give detailed information on agency usage and spends.
- 3.2 The Ofsted Inspection of Coventry's Children's Services and the review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), published in March 2014, judged services and the LSCB to be inadequate. The Ofsted report identified a number of priority actions and areas for improvement. As a result an additional £5.6 million for 2014/15 was allocated to Children's Services to improve, recruit and retain an effective workforce.
- 3.3 Following the appointment of the Director of Children's Services the Children's Workforce Strategy will be revised. The strategy is specific to Coventry and seeks to fulfil the requirements of the Improvement Plan "To recruit and retain an effective workforce". The strategy will include the use of agency and a model for the future. The revised strategy will be completed in December 2015 and will be presented to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) at the meeting on 25 February 2016.
- 3.4 Work is continuing regionally between 14 local authorities in the West Midlands to cap the agency worker hourly rates for Children's Social Workers (this varies depending on the level appointed to). The Chief Executives and Director of Children's Services have raised concerns in the region about escalating hourly rates for Children's Social Workers. A meeting was held in 2014 to agree on capped rates for several levels of social works an agreed protocol was signed by all 14 contributing local authorities. The capped rates were introduced at the beginning of January 2015. Social workers engaged with the authority before this date remains on the agreed rates until such time as they move authorities and then the new rates apply.

- 3.5 Work is also in progress to create a centralised bank of references held on behalf of participating authorities. This will enable more effective monitoring of agency workers between Authorities. This should result in hourly rates for agency social workers remaining static and ultimately reducing. Managers are required, as is our Master Vendor Pertemps, to ensure that no hourly rate is awarded above the agreed capped rate and exceptions will be reported to the Director. This will continue to be monitored by the Resources Directorate.
- 3.6 This report provides an update on the current position relating to spend and the use of agency staff in Children's Services.

#### 4 Current position (Agency Staffing)

- 4.1 There are currently **220.7** permanently employed social workers in funded posts across Children's Services made up as follows:
- 10 Service Managers
  - 34 Team Managers
  - 28 Senior Practitioners
  - 65.9 Social workers
  - 65.6 Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) and Early Professional Development(/EPD Programme)
  - 17.2 Independent Review Officer/Local Authority Designated Officer/Quality Assurance Manager

There are 70 Agency staff covering vacancies for the above posts. The table below highlights by service area the establishment funded posts, actual posts filled and vacancies and agency levels for each area as at 16 November 2015.

Service	Establishment Funded posts	Actual Filled Posts	Vacancies	Agency staff employed
Referral and Assessment Service	56.6	40	16.6	7
Neighbourhoods	104.4	74.4	30	48
Fostering and Adoption	48.9	39.4	9.5	6
MASH/CSE	15.4	13.4	2	2
CDT	15.6	15.6	0	2
LAC/Route 21	25.3	21.7	3.6	1
Children's Safeguarding	20.2	16.2	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>286.4</b>	<b>220.7</b>	<b>65.7</b>	<b>70</b>

- 4.2 Agency staff currently represents 25% of the workforce, permanently employed experienced social workers and senior practitioners represent 33% and Newlyqualified Social Workers(NQSWs) and Early Professional Development (EPD)staff represent 23%.With Managers and IRO's accounting for the remaining 19%.The Neighbourhoods Teams represent the highest level of the total agency staff with 68%.  
 .3 In October 2014, Children's Services employed 84 agency staff compared with 70 in November 2015.
- 4.3 Further work to understand why staff stay and leave social worker posts and the impact of agency staff in the future is being undertaken. The revised workforce strategy will include a revised offer for retention and alternative methods for recruiting social workers in the future, training and development and clear career pathways for staff.

## 5 Agency Spend

- 5.1 Agency spend to date is £3.8 million. The forecast for 2015/16 on agency staff is £5.8 million. The table below provides a comparison with 2014/15 and highlights that agency spend is reducing, however 2014-15 includes a £2M one off spend on Skylakes.

Children Services Agency Spend in	2014/15	2015/16 to date
Forecast	-	£5.8 m
Actual	£8.3 m	£3.8 m
Average monthly costs	£0.69 m	£0.48 m

## 6 Key Areas of Progress to date:

- 6.1 **Social Worker Recruitment Campaign** - The 'Do it for Daniel' recruitment campaign has now closed. The campaign generated a huge amount of interest for a range of vacant roles and the national profile of the campaign generated significant interest at job fairs both in Birmingham and Manchester.
- 6.2 The campaign resulted in a total of 47 appointments being made for a range of roles including experienced social workers, IRO's, team managers, senior practitioners and newly qualified social workers. However from those 47 appointments there were 13 candidates who withdrew after accepting the roles.
- 6.3 Work is now underway on a new recruitment campaign and this will be informed by the lessons learnt from the first campaign, targeted recruitment activity, utilising social media and ensuring higher ranking on search engines such as Google. This campaign will have a new narrative informed by the overall vision and direction of travel as set out by the new Director of Children's Services.
- 6.4 **Social Worker Retention** - The Council currently have a scheme in place to pay newly Recruited experienced social workers £2,000 and then further retention payment of £1,000 per year for every year they stay with us (to be reviewed at the two year point) and a payment to existing experienced social workers of £1,000 per annum. As part of our new campaign we will have to review our overall rewards package and ensure it is fit for purpose and competitive within the region.

## 7 Next Steps

- 7.1 Children's Services will establish a stable workforce, invest in social workers development and reduce reliance on agency workers by delivering on the following:
- Launch of new recruitment campaign ( Director's Priority)
  - Refresh and review the workforce strategy
  - Workforce Development board to be jointly chaired by the Assistant Director of Human Resources and Workforce Services and Director of Children's Services
  - Evaluate training activity
  - Set the targets for reducing agency social work

Authors:

Sonia Watson, Children's Improvement Plan Project Manager,  
John Gregg, Director of Children's Services

Contact details: [john.gregg@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:john.gregg@coventry.gov.uk)  
[sonia.watson@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:sonia.watson@coventry.gov.uk)

Tel: (024) 7683 3402  
Tel: (024) 7683 1890

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## Briefing note

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**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

**Subject: Progress on Children's Services Improvement Plan in response to Ofsted Single Inspection and the Review of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) of the progress with the Children's Services Improvement Plan reported to the Children's Services Improvement Board on 18 November 2015. The report is based on data from October 2015, unless stated otherwise. The next Improvement Board will be held on 6 January 2016.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Scrutiny Board 2:
  - 1) Note the progress made to date.
  - 2) Receive regular updates from the Children's Services Improvement Board that will include further progress relating to the children's services improvement plan.
  - 3) Note the recommendations from the LGA Peer Review

### **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 The Ofsted Inspection of Coventry's Children's Services and the review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), published in March 2014, judged services and the LSCB to be inadequate. The Ofsted report identified a number of priority actions and areas for improvement. In response to the Ofsted report, a Children's Services Improvement Board was established and an Improvement Plan published on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2014. A revised and updated Improvement Plan was published on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015.
- 3.2 The Children's Services Improvement Board is chaired by Mark Rogers, Chief Executive at Birmingham City Council. The Board includes elected Members, Council representatives and representatives from partner agencies in the City as well as a representative from the Department for Education. Progress is reported to the Improvement Board every six weeks.

The Department for Education issued an Improvement Notice on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The Improvement notice is reviewed every six months by the Department for Education. A six month review took place on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and the twelve month review took place on 30<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015. The Independent Chairs of both the Improvement Board and the Local Safeguarding Children Board also submit a written report to the Minister on a regular basis. The

LGA completed a Safeguarding Practice Diagnostic in October, the results of the peer review are summarised in Theme 3.

- 3.3 An Executive Board was established in January 2015 in order to focus on maintaining momentum and evaluating progress against the Improvement Plan. This Board meets every six weeks prior to the Improvement Board
- 3.4 The Council, alongside partner organisations will retain a relentless focus on securing improvements in services for children, young people and families to ensure they are safeguarded and achieve positive outcomes.

#### **4 Improvement Plan Themes**

4.1 The revised Children's Services Improvement Plan, completed on 10 March 2015 includes six key themes, which have been aligned to the DfE improvement notice. The plan provides a stronger focus on quality of practice and workforce development, and the continuation of improvements to the LSCB. A summary of the plan is shown in **Appendix 1**. The six themes are as follows:

- Early Help & Partnership Working
- Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Quality and Effectiveness of Practice
- Quality of Assurance and Audit
- Leadership and Governance
- Services for LAC, Care Leavers and Permanency

#### **5 Children's Services Improvement Plan Progress to date**

5.1 The following progress was reported at the Children's Services Improvement Board on 18 November 2015.

##### **Theme 1 – Early Help and Partnership**

The operational delivery of the draft Early Help Strategy continues.

The Citywide roll-out for Acting Early is now complete. The Project was designed to improve the capacity and capability of parents and carers, enabling them to support the health and development of their children. It centres on developing and embedding a new model of delivery. The monitoring of impact and improvements continues. The project has achieved the following positive results:

- Creation of integrated teams
- Facilitating earlier intervention
- Regular integrated team meetings, for sharing information and facilitating multi-agency working
- Improved handover between midwives and health visitors
- Improved engagement with other professionals, and improved understanding of one another's roles
- Redesigned information sharing
- Joint training opportunities
- Maximised early child development, nutrition and readiness for school

As at 31 October 2015, Health hold 4.3% of CAF's, work continues to increase the proportion of CAF's undertaken by all agencies. A review of the CAF Co-ordinator role and function is underway, and will be finalised by the end of December 2015, with the emphasis in redesign having CAF Co-ordinators attached to Schools to support school staff to hold appropriate risk

and ensure that contacts into social care do not increase unnecessarily, particularly before school holidays.

Coventry established a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in September 2014. The functioning of the MASH has been assisted by the appointment of a Service Manager who is also responsible for the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) team.

The recommendations of the Independent Review of the Coventry MASH have been considered by the MASH board. The key recommendations have been accepted and are in the process of being implemented. The report has been shared with the West Midlands Police and there are further discussions about implementing recommendations that relate specifically to the Police.

The LSCB Chair Janet Mokades presented her findings on the arrangements for strategy discussions. The Chair confirmed that there was no evidence to state that strategy discussions are not compliant. Further work on single agency and multi-agency processes to make them better, smoother and more effective has been suggested.

Monthly monitoring of re-referral rates is in place to ensure that diversion and step down to Early Help are appropriate and effective. The average rate of re-referrals in the last 12 months has remained below those of our statistical neighbours, although, the monthly average has seen a steady rise since April 2015. The year to date of 29.7% is a significant increase on the 21.5% recorded in 2014/15. Further work including dip sampling is being undertaken to explore this further.

The CSE delivery plan is in place and continued progress is being made across the city with all partners with co-ordination being led through the CSE sub groups. CSE and missing processes have been separated to allow a focus on both risk areas. This will allow a greater preventative and early help approach to risk factors at the earliest point.

The Police have commissioned work on missing and will be undertaking a lot of work through the sub groups to ensure this work is co-ordinated and that issues are raised effectively.

## **Theme 2 - Local Safeguarding Children Board**

The LSCB provides a regular progress update to the Improvement Board to highlight progress against the three requirements set out in the improvement Notice. These are:

- the LSCB to be strengthened so it can ensure that partners work together effectively
- multi-agency practice and individual partner audits are robust
- all partners are committed to a shared set of priorities for safeguarding, child protection and early intervention.

The following progress was reported to the Improvement Board on 18 November 2015:

Figures for children missing from home, care and education are now available. There is now a single named point of reference for this information. The Board's overall merged policy and procedures for all missing children and young people have been circulated for pre-approval and comment.

Subgroup Meetings continue to run smoothly and to schedule. Subgroups are on track with their planned work. Attendance is good and members continue to take action as agreed and to timetable. Partners are working together effectively in all these groups.

The policy and procedures subgroup has produced and circulated three important documents. One is a revised missing policy, brought together from the missing from home and care and the missing education policy. The forced marriage policy has been reviewed by legal services to

reflect the need to consider the issues of siblings when forced marriage is a risk. In response to an SCR recommendation, a new policy has been written for working with hard to engage families.

Work continues to improve multi-agency practice and single agency audit. There is some good work being undertaken and some aspects of multi-agency practice that need further work.

The Board's Quality and Effectiveness subgroup has recently carried out a multi-agency audit of some CSE cases. The results have been analysed and will be presented to the next LSCB board. The detailed analysis of the Board's wider safeguarding workforce survey has not yet been undertaken but it is clear from the preliminary work that there will be significant issues to be followed up.

Following the Board's July event on strategy discussions, a recall meeting was held in October to evaluate how well the new processes are working. There has been some progress but there is still more work to be done.

The production of the Board's annual report 2014-15 has been completed. The report evaluates current outcomes for Coventry children and the work that has been undertaken by services to tackle safeguarding issues in the city over the last twelve months. It indicates where more needs to be undertaken and outlines a possible direction for the Board over the next year.

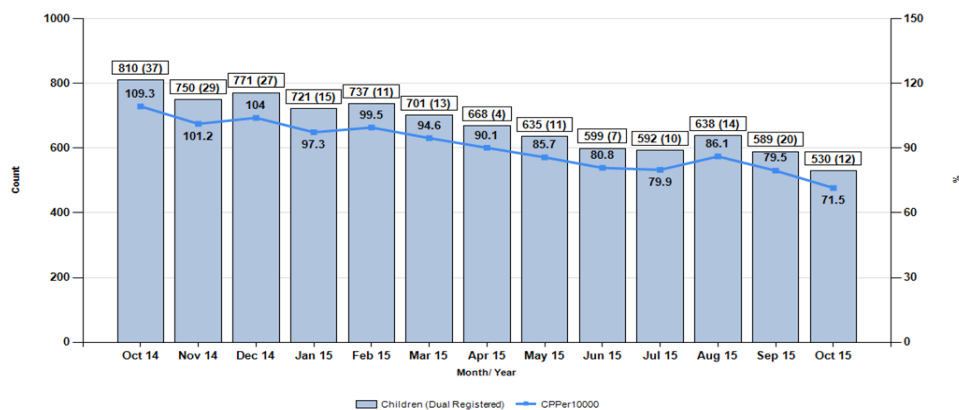
### **Theme 3 - Quality and Effectiveness of Practice**

Work is underway to revise the current Workforce Strategy. Shokat Lal, Assistant Director, Human Resources and Workforce Services, provided an update to the Improvement Board on 18 November 2015, highlighting work that is currently taking place that will inform the strategy.

Further work to understand why staff stay and leave social worker posts and the impact of agency staff in the future is being undertaken. The revised workforce strategy will include a revised offer for retention and alternative methods for recruiting social workers in the future, training and development and clear career pathways for staff.

"Back to Basics" training, which forms an important part of the Learning and Development programme, has been running throughout the summer and will continue alongside the very full range of training courses which have been commissioned or are being delivered in-house. The outcome will be a set of shared and agreed practice standards and expectations which will form the foundation of work with children and families.

The number of children with a Child Protection Plan continues to decrease but at a slower pace, 530 at the end of October 2015, see table below. 82.8% of children who had been on a Child Protection Plan for over 6 weeks had received a Statutory Child Protection Visit in the 6 weeks preceding the end of October. Dashboards are being developed to help monitor statutory visits.



Timeliness of Children and Families assessments undertaken has continued to be above 90% since May 2015.

The Local Government Association completed a Safeguarding Practice Diagnostic Peer Review in October 2015. The diagnostic forms part of the sector support offer to assist councils in taking timely and appropriate action to address areas of concern.

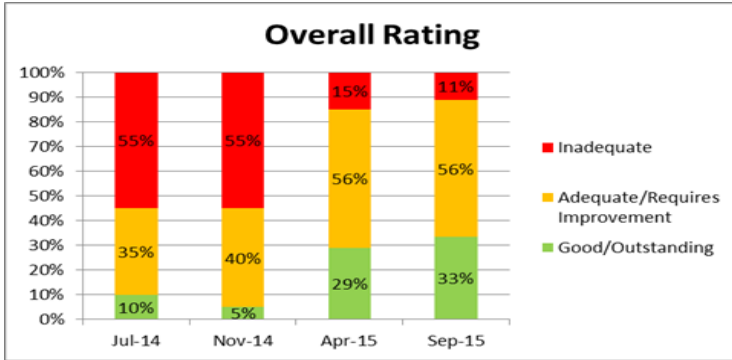
The following **Key Lines of Enquiry** were agreed:

- Are child protection plans robust and do they identify what professionals and families need to do to make children safe?
- Is the identification of needs and the development of plans translated into effective action that impacts positively on the child?
- How is drift identified and managed?
- What is the quality of the social work relationship with children and how is this evidenced in case files?
- How is the work of health professionals impacting on case planning?
- What evidence is there of improvement in the Quality of Social worker support and supervision
- Are thresholds for services appropriately applied in accordance with Working Together 2015?

The review concluded that Children's Services has progressed on its improvement journey and it was evident that considerable work has been undertaken to improve case work. The front door, referral and assessment service and independence conference chair service has moved from a period of crisis to one of stability. The main themes highlighted in the review included consistency and quality of practice; workforce capacity and stabilising the workforce. Although progress is being made in the right direction, the biggest challenge is consistency of practice. The improvements identified in the Peer review will be embedded within the existing Improvement Plan.

#### **Theme 4 - Quality Assurance and Audit**

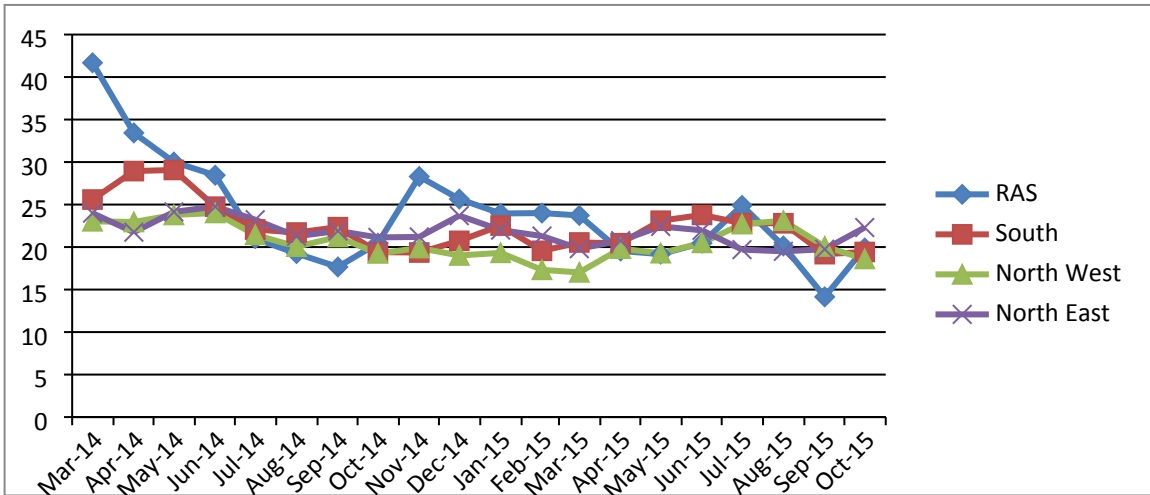
The current Quality Assurance framework for both the LSCB and Council was presented to Board on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015. The Council have a regular system of audit in place and in the graph below show improvements in practice on judgements that auditors are making.



The current QA framework is not broad enough and needs to be revised. A revised Quality Assurance Framework will be presented to the Improvement Board in January along with the LSCB programme of multi-agency audits for the next 12-18 months.

**Theme 5 - Leadership and Governance**

Caseloads in the Referral and Assessment service (RAS) averaged 20 at the end of October 2015 and remain within target (20-25). Caseloads in the Neighbourhood teams averaged 18 to 22 at the end of the October 2015.



Caseloads for Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO'S) have significantly reduced and have stabilised at 76 over the last few months compared with 129 in October 2014.

Social Workers are receiving regular supervision, 71% (254) staff received supervision in September 2015. The 29% (103) who did not have supervision within the 4 week period was due to factors such as annual leave, sickness absence, maternity leave and emergencies such as attendance at Court. There is also a number of staff who have supervision bi-monthly as monthly supervision is not a requirement and do not hold caseloads. Their inclusion in this indicator distorts the figure and this is being reviewed to reflect a more accurate position based on the number of staff available for supervision.

A second Supervision Survey was launched in mid-September 2015. This is very similar to the survey undertaken by the same external organisation a year ago. This will feed in to the Member Task and Finish Group, which will be completing its work in November.

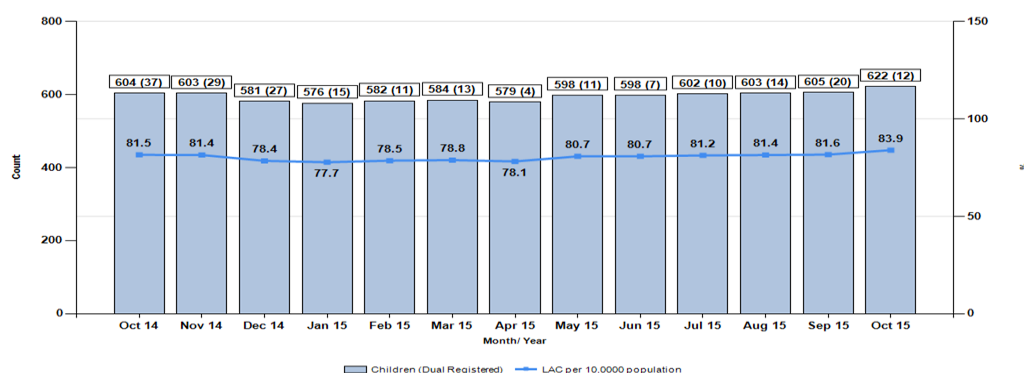
The chart below shows the activity volumes over the last few years across the service up to 30 September 2015:

**Social Care and Early Help activity levels:**

	Contacts	Referrals	Child Protection	Looked After Children	Children In Need	CAFs open
Mar-12	1533	405	423	578	1219	94
Mar-13	1846	389	519	619	1632	1160
Mar-14	1885	677	765	630	3208	1668
Sep-14	1641	752	918	613	3112	1695
Dec-14	1933	680	810	626	3476	1786
Mar-15	2351	648	734	628	2932	2033
Apr-15	2028	539	699	604	2695	2135
May-15	2250	619	649	616	2678	2161
June -15	2720	861	617	600	2892	2135
Sept -15	1820	538	578	613	2308	1964

**Theme 6 - Services for LAC, Care Leavers and Permanency**

The number of Looked After Children continues to be relatively stable, at 622 at the end of October 2015. The table below highlights the direction of travel over the last twelve months.



25 children were adopted between 1 April 2015 and 30 October 2015. A further 41 children were placed for adoption. The projection for the number of adoptions this year is 60 – higher than was originally predicted and this does not reflect the national trend, which is a downturn in the number of Adoption Orders made.

The table below highlights the direction of travel over the last few years.

Number of children Adopted	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Number of children adopted	28	40	52	70	25 up to 30 October 2015

Recruitment of in-house foster carers remains a very high priority in that more children are placed with Independent Fostering Agencies than with in-house carers. Recruitment is being targeted at those who can foster children within the age ranges that are needed. A range of initiatives are in place to improve recruitment.

The tables below shows the position at Quarter 2 July- September 2015 for foster carers:

**Fostering Scorecard  
Households & Capacity:**

Quarter	Approved Households	Places	Places Filled (%)	Places On Hold or Blocked (%)	Places Vacant (%)
Q1	147	236	136 (57.6%)	53 (22.7%)	45 (19.2%)
Q2	151	258	152(58.9%)	64 (24.8%)	42 (16.3%)

*Please Note: Due to naturally occurring delays in recording information and the complexities in compiling this data, figures provided in the above table should read as an 'as at' figure, based on what was audited when the report was run. Unlike other tables in this scorecard, previous quarters' data will NOT be re-adjusted in subsequent scorecards prior to being fully audited again at year-end. The number of places can fluctuate, as additional places can be temporarily approved for existing households (i.e. additional siblings). These should not be confused with the below, which pertain to official places approved at the time of registration /de-registration.*

Quarter	New Foster Carer Households Approved	Places Gained	Foster Carer Households Deregistered	Places Lost	Net Households	Net Places
Q1	2	2	5	11	-3	-9
Q2	6	8	2	5	+1	+3
YTD	8	10	7	16	+1	-6

*Please Note: Due to the timeliness of recording, figures for previous quarters may change in subsequent scorecards.*

Elected Members are committed to assisting with raising awareness of fostering and attracting new applicants. The Fostering Steering Group continues to focus on increasing the number of approved foster carers and children placed. At 29<sup>th</sup> October 2015 the upward projection has continued with 156 children in in house foster care. This means we currently have 25% of the LAC population placed with LA foster care which is an improvement from Q1 which recorded 136 in placement.

The progress of cases of children subject to Care Proceedings is tracked by the Case Progression Officer. The introduction of this post has helped to reduce timescales for Proceedings and has moved "legacy" cases on. In June 2014 the average length of Proceedings was 42.1 weeks. This had decreased to 36 weeks by June 2015. The Ministry of Justice have recently published the actual figures (as at end of September 2015) the average case duration has reduced further and is currently 25.3 weeks.

The first case heard in the Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) was held on 20 October 2015.

**6 Communication**

6.1 The Council's website and Beacon/Intranet is updated to include current progress. New and emerging priorities for the directorate and the organisation means a new approach to communications is needed to demonstrate the directorates' work as part of the wider organisation; apriority now to share messages across the Council to emphasise the importance of working corporately and not in silos.

6.2 A new e-newsletter was launched at the beginning of November 2015 focusing on Children's Services ahead of Ofsted re-inspection. This is issued to all staff in Children's Services, all partners, senior managers, Members to ensure everyone is aware of the progress made so far, what's still to be achieved and the role all employees can play in supporting the service in achieving a better Ofsted result

6.3 **Authors:**

Sonia Watson, Children's Improvement Plan Project Manager,  
John Gregg, Director of Children's Services

**Contact details:** [john.gregg@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:john.gregg@coventry.gov.uk) Tel: (024) 7683 3402  
[sonia.watson@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:sonia.watson@coventry.gov.uk) Tel: (024) 7683 1890

## Appendix 1

### A One Page Summary of the Children's Services Improvement Plan March 2015

Note: Themes 1-5 theme are aligned to the DfE notice, the additional theme highlights services for LAC, Care Leavers and Permanency



**Key Challenges**

**Sustainability** - managing future work volumes, resourcing and sustainability of improvements

**Evidencing Impact** - evidencing improvements and the impact on achieving good outcomes for children, young people and families





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## Education and Children's Services (2)

Scrutiny Work Programme 2015/16

<b>18 June 2015</b>
Serious Case Review – Child T
Serious Case Review – Child D
<b>2 July 2015</b>
Support to School Governors
Improvement Board Progress Report from 3 June 15
Policy Statement on Delegation Authority for Foster Carers
Progress on ceasing of the school catering service – briefing note update
<b>10 September 2015</b>
Progress on implementing Special Educational Need and Disabilities Reforms
Adoption Annual Report
Improvement Board Progress Report from 26 August 15 – DfE review report
<b>8 October 2015</b>
Pupil Premium Uptake – briefing note update
Free early year education or childcare funding for 2 year olds – briefing note update
Quality Assurance – Children's Placements
<b>5 November 2015 – to take place at President Kennedy School</b>
Y6-Y7 Transition – President Kennedy Bridge Project
Education progress and school improvement
Improvement Board Progress Report from 2 October 15
<b>25 November</b>
CAMHS re-modelling – joint with Health and Social Care Board (5)
<b>10 December 2015</b>
Fostering Task and Finish Group Recommendations – progress report
Early Help and the Children and Families First Service (Early Intervention)
Improvement Board Progress Report from 18 November 15
Spend on agency staff
<b>16 December 2015</b>
Serious Case Review – Child S
LSCB Annual Report
<b>7 January 2016</b>
Evaluation of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub including a visit
Education progress focussing on underachieving groups
School Place Planning
Appointment of Local Authority Governors
<b>25 February 2016</b>
Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy
School Improvement

Improvement Board Progress Report from 6 January 16
<b>17 March 2016</b>
Improvement Board Progress Report from 17 February 16
<b>14 April 2016</b>
Improvement Board Progress Report from 30 March 16
<b>Date to be decided</b>
Preparation for Leaving Care
Teen pregnancy and PSHE in schools
Barnardo's project – children missing from care
Voices of Care
Consultation on proposed changes to the school transport service.
Youth Offending Service
Appointment of Local Authority Governors
Changes to the Library Service
<b>Performance Monitoring</b>
Serious Case Reviews
Children's Centres Performance

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>18 June 2015</b>	Serious Case Review – Child T	To review the report of the LSCB to monitor progress on recommendations.	Janet Mokades Cllr Ruane		Recommendations to LSCB re: Housing Providers and functioning boilers.
	Serious Case Review – Child D	To review the report of the LSCB to monitor progress on recommendations.	Janet Mokades Cllr Ruane		
<b>2 July 2015</b>	Support to School Governors	To review the changes to the service provided to support school governors, particularly around training. Changes to be made in September.	Paul Weston Dave Willis Cllr Kershaw	Meeting 23 April 15	A review meeting with Cabinet Member and officers to look in more detail at the policy for appointing local authority governors
	Improvement Board Progress Report from 3 June 15	On-going monitoring of progress against the action plan. To include the numbers of children looked after and those discharged from care.	Yolanda Corden Cllr Ruane	Council 10/4/14	Enquire about holding a meeting at President Kennedy school to find out more about their work on transitions.
	Policy Statement on Delegation Authority for Foster Carers	A recommendation from the task and finish group on Fostering	Jivan Sembi Cllr Ruane	Meeting 26/3/15	
	Progress on ceasing of the school catering service – briefing note update	To consider the progress of the transfer of schools catering from the local authority to other providers as well as considering the option of a social enterprise	Pauline Reading/ Cllr Kershaw	Meeting 12 <sup>th</sup> Feb 15	Further update following a half term implementation of the new arrangements.
<b>10 September 2015</b>	Progress on implementing Special Educational Need and Disabilities Reforms	A further progress report on the affect that the changes have made.	Jeanette Essex Adrian Coles Cllr Kershaw	27th Nov 2014 SB2 meeting	Members to be involved in young people’s shadow board and pre-consultation events
	Adoption Annual	Progress on Adoption Services	Yolanda Corden		

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
	Report		Cllr Ruane		
	Improvement Board Progress Report from 26 August 15 – DfE review report	On-going monitoring of progress against the action plan. To include the numbers of children looked after and those discharged from care and the DfE review report.	Yolanda Corden Cllr Ruane	Council 10/4/14	
<b>8 October 2015</b>	Pupil Premium Uptake – briefing note update	To consider whether the improved communications with schools to encourage parents to apply for the Pupil Premium has been successful.	Ashley Simpson Cllr Kershaw	Meeting 12 <sup>th</sup> Feb 15	
	Free early year education or childcare funding for 2 year olds – briefing note update	Progress update on uptake of free early years education	Amanda Reynolds, Angela Harley Cllr Kershaw	Meeting 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2014	
	Quality Assurance – Children’s Placements	To review performance of Children’s Homes that Coventry children are placed in and procedures for what happens if a home is judged inadequate by Ofsted.	Pete Fahey/Sally Giles Cllr Ruane	Chair	
<b>5 November 2015 – to take place at President Kennedy School</b>	Y6-Y7 Transition – President Kennedy Bridge Project	To find out more about how transition from Primary to Secondary schools is supported at President Kennedy.		Meeting 2 July	
	Education progress and school improvement	To look at the attainment of children at Coventry schools from EY to post 16. Also to consider the refreshed improvement strategy and how academies are supported	Kirstin Nelson Anne Brennan Cllr Kershaw	Agenda conference 11/9/15	

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
	Improvement Board Progress Report from 2 October 15	On-going monitoring of progress against the action plan. To include the numbers of children looked after and those discharged from care.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane	Council 10/4/14	
<b>25 November</b>	CAMHS re-modelling – joint with Health and Social Care Board (5)	To look at the proposals for the new structure following the re-modelling exercise. A joint meeting with SB5 and to invite the Chair of Warwickshire health scrutiny board.	Jacqueline Barnes Harpal Sohal Cllr Ruane	Meeting 12 <sup>th</sup> Feb 15	
<b>10 December 2015</b>	Fostering Task and Finish Group Recommendations – progress report	Progress on the recommendations to Cabinet Member for improvement to Fostering Services – to include recruitment and retention information and the Annual Report on Fostering	Jivan Sembi Cllr Ruane	Meeting 26 March 15	
	Early Help and the Children and Families First Service (Early Intervention)	To look at what the local authority is doing to deliver services to those families with low level needs to prevent escalation. Report to include update on Troubled Families phase 2	Francean Doyle Louison Ricketts Cllr Ruane		
	Improvement Board Progress Report from 18 November 15	On-going monitoring of progress against the action plan. To include the numbers of children looked after and those discharged from care. To include contribution from Claire Burgess an advisor to the DfE	John Gregg Cllr Ruane	Council 10/4/14	
	Spend on agency staff	To investigate further the spend on agency staff within the children's social care work force	John Gregg Cllr Ruane	Chair	
<b>16 December 2015</b>	Serious Case Review – Child S	To review the report of the LSCB to monitor progress on recommendations.	Cat Parker Cllr Ruane		

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
	LSCB Annual Report	The Annual Report from the Coventry Safeguarding Children's Board, with progress following the Ofsted inspection. Members requested that the report comes in a timely manner. October/November.	Janet Mokades Cat Parker Cllr Ruane	Meeting 26 March 15	
<b>7 January 2016</b>	Evaluation of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub including a visit	Feedback on the findings of the evaluation of the implementation of the Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub – ensure links with Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and CSE.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane	May 2014 discussion with Service leads	
	Education progress focussing on underachieving groups	To look at the attainment of children at Coventry schools who are risk of underachievement including LAC and Roma children.	Kirston Nelson Cllr Kershaw		
	School Place Planning	To look at allocation of school places, and also how the Council plan for the sufficiency of school places.	Ashley Simpson Cllr Kershaw	Agenda conference 11/9/15	
	Appointment of Local Authority Governors	To consider recommendations for a policy on the appointment of elected members to governing bodies.	Cllr Kershaw	Meeting 2 July 2015	
<b>25 February 2016</b>	Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy	To consider the workforce strategy for the social care workforce and to review the impact the position of Principal Social Work has had on the social work workforce. A task and finish group to look at performance management for social care workforce.	Vicky White John Gregg Cllr Ruane	Informal meeting 18/6/15	
	School Improvement	Following their meeting on 5 Nov 15 Members requested a further update	Kirston Nelson Cllr Kershaw	Meeting 5/11/15	

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
		on School Improvement work.			
	Improvement Board Progress Report from 6 January 16	On-going monitoring of progress against the action plan. To include the numbers of children looked after and those discharged from care.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane	Council 10/4/14	
<b>17 March 2016</b>					
	Improvement Board Progress Report from 17 February 16	On-going monitoring of progress against the action plan. To include the numbers of children looked after and those discharged from care.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane	Council 10/4/14	
<b>14 April 2016</b>					
	Improvement Board Progress Report from 30 March 16	On-going monitoring of progress against the action plan. To include the numbers of children looked after and those discharged from care.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane	Council 10/4/14	
<b>Date to be decided</b>	Preparation for Leaving Care	The Voice of the Child Task and Finish Group raised the issue of independence training and the Chair suggested that it be looked at separately. To include input from foster carers and care leavers as well as Route 21	John Gregg Cllr Ruane	End of Year Review 3rd April 2014	
	Teen pregnancy and PSHE in schools	To consider what schools are doing to support the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and how the Council is supporting them	Kirston Nelson, Nadia Ingliss Judith Simmonds		
	Barnardo's project – children missing from care	To look in more detail at this commissioned project.	John Gregg Cllr Ruane	Meeting 12 <sup>th</sup> Feb 15	
	Voices of Care	To receive an update on activity by the Voice of Care council for Looked After	Sheila Bates Cllr Ruane		

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
		Children at an additional meeting for the VOC to identify.			
	Consultation on proposed changes to the school transport service.	Following the change in timescales to implementation of changes Members requested that the Board considers the new proposals as part of the new consultation process.	Isabel Merrifield Cllr Kershaw	Meeting 23 April 15	
	Youth Offending Service	An update on progress of the Youth Offending Service	Angie Parks Cllr Kershaw	Meeting 23 April 15	
	Appointment of Local Authority Governors	To consider recommendations for a policy on the appointment of elected members to governing bodies	Cllr Kershaw	Meeting 2 July 2015	
	Changes to the Library Service	With the proposed cuts to library provision, Members would like to know more about how these changes will be consulted on and implemented. Meeting to take place at the Central Library.	Kirston Nelson Peter Barnett Cllr Kershaw	Meeting 23 April 15	
<b>Performance Monitoring</b>					
	Serious Case Reviews	SB2 can request progress on action plans following serious case reviews.	Cllr Ruane		
	Children's Centres Performance				