

MEETING: CABINET MEMBER - CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
DATE: Tuesday 8 February 2011  
TIME: 9.30 am  
VENUE: Town Hall, Bootle (This meeting is also video conferenced at the Town Hall, Southport)

DECISION MAKER: Councillor Moncur  
SUBSTITUTE: Councillor P. Dowd

SPOKESPERSONS: Councillor Cuthbertson Councillor Preece

SUBSTITUTES: Councillor Doran Councillor Howe

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Lyndzay Roberts  
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The Cabinet is responsible for making what are known as Key Decisions, which will be notified on the Forward Plan. Items marked with an \* on the agenda involve Key Decisions

A key decision, as defined in the Council's Constitution, is: -

- any Executive decision that is not in the Annual Revenue Budget and Capital Programme approved by the Council and which requires a gross budget expenditure, saving or virement of more than £100,000 or more than 2% of a Departmental budget, whichever is the greater
- any Executive decision where the outcome will have a significant impact on a significant number of people living or working in two or more Wards

**If you have any special needs that may require arrangements to facilitate your attendance at this meeting, please contact the Committee Officer named above, who will endeavour to assist.**

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# A G E N D A

Items marked with an \* involve key decisions

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Subject/Author(s)</u>	<u>Wards Affected</u>
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> Members and Officers are requested to give notice of any personal or prejudicial interest and the nature of that interest, relating to any item on the agenda in accordance with the relevant Code of Conduct.	
3.	<b>Minutes</b>  Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2011.	(Pages 5 - 10)
4.	<b>Aiming High for Disabled Children: Additional Schemes</b>  Report of the Strategic Director - Children, Schools and Families	All Wards; (Pages 11 - 14)
5.	<b>New Human Resources Policy and Procedures for Schools</b>  Report of the Strategic Director - Children, Schools and Families	All Wards; (Pages 15 - 80)
6.	<b>Looked After Children Placement Strategy</b>  Report of the Strategic Director - Children, Schools and Families	All Wards; (Pages 81 - 140)
7.	<b>Sills Funding Agency (SFA)/European Social Fund (ESF) Provision ( Greater Merseyside Provision for NEET ESF 2011 - 2013 Youth Programme)</b>  Joint report of the Strategic Director - Children, Schools and Families and the Planning and Economic Development Director.	All Wards; (Pages 141 - 146)

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**THE "CALL IN" PERIOD FOR THIS SET OF MINUTES ENDS AT 12 NOON ON THURSDAY 27 JANUARY, 2011. MINUTE NO. 78 IS NOT SUBJECT TO "CALL-IN".**

## CABINET MEMBER - CHILDREN'S SERVICES

### MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE ON TUESDAY 18 JANUARY 2011

PRESENT: Councillor Moncur

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Moncur, Preece and Doran  
Mr. A.Bell, Archdiocesan Representative  
Mr.R.Gregson, Sefton Govenors' Forum

#### 73. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Cuthbertson.

#### 74. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were received:-

Member/Officer	Minute	Reason	Action
Peter Morgan – Strategic Director – Children, Schools and Families	76 - St Wilfrid's Catholic High School: Outcome of the Consultation on the Proposal to Close the School.	Personal – Spouse is an employee of a Catholic High School in the Borough.	Stayed in the room and took part in the consideration of the item
Mr Alan Bell – Archdiocesan Representative	76 - St Wilfrid's Catholic High School: Outcome of the Consultation on the Proposal to Close the School	Personal – Employee of an Archdiocesan School in the Borough.	Stayed in the room and took part in the consideration of the item.

#### 75. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 7 December 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

# Agenda Item 3

CABINET MEMBER - CHILDREN'S SERVICES- TUESDAY 18 JANUARY 2011

## **76. ST WILFRID'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL: OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE SCHOOL**

Further to Minute No. 65 of the meeting held on 7 December 2010, the Cabinet Member considered the report of the Strategic Director -Children, Schools and Families providing information on the outcome of the consultation on the proposal to close St Wilfrid's Catholic High School and seeking approval to publish a statutory notice for the proposal.

The Strategic Director - Children, Schools and Families outlined the report and gave information in relation to the outcome of the consultation process, and information on the proposals; including background; current demographics; surplus places; funding; standards and details of the options considered.

This was a key decision and was included on the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the responses to the consultation considered be noted and the proposal to close St Wilfrid's Catholic High School be approved subject to the modification of the closure date to 31 August 2012;
- (2) the process for the closure of St Wilfrid's Catholic High School, be progressed by the publication of the Statutory Notice.

## **77. PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOLS KEY STAGE 4 AND KEY STAGE 5**

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Strategic Director - Children, Schools and Families updating on the outcomes of the Performance of Schools Report on school standards at GCSE and A-Level.

RESOLVED:

That the Performance of Schools Report and the relative performance of Sefton against national, local and statistical neighbours be noted.

## **78. PRIMARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME: ADDITIONAL WORKS**

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Strategic Director - Children, Schools and Families seeking approval for Phase 2 additional works at Aintree Davenhill Primary School.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposed Phase 2 additional works at Aintree Davenhill School as detailed within the report be approved; and

- (2) Cabinet be requested to include the funding for the scheme in the Children, Schools and Families Capital Programme 2010/11.

## **79. CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2010 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT LETTER FROM OFSTED**

Further to Minute No. 56 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services), the Cabinet Member considered the report of the Strategic Director – Children, Schools and Families which detailed the Sefton Children's Services Annual Assessment Letter from Ofsted.

The Strategic Director explained that Ofsted publish their assessment of every local authority via a public annual assessment letter during December of each year, which awarded a grade and summarised overall performance.

It was reported that Sefton's grade remained as "an organisation that exceeds minimum standards" – Performs Well (3).

The Strategic Director highlighted that it was encouraging to note that Ofsted recognised that good progress had been made over the past twelve months, with the large majority of schools, services, settings and institutions inspected as good or better. Ofsted had also noted the good progress made across youth offending and adoption services. It was reported that Ofsted had however noted the following areas for development:-

- Improve arrangements for safeguarding in front-line practice;
- Sustain progress in educational outcomes for children at five;
- Improve achievements of 11 and 16 year olds from low-income backgrounds.

The Strategic Director made reference to the verbal feedback he had received from the inspector stating that Sefton had not been far from receiving a judgement of outstanding.

The Strategic Director further reported that the Annual Assessment of every Local Authority was being abolished.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the Ofsted letter be noted; and
- (2) Officers of Children's Services be congratulated for all their hard work in relation to the improvement.

# Agenda Item 3

CABINET MEMBER - CHILDREN'S SERVICES- TUESDAY 18 JANUARY 2011

## **80. RE-INSPECTION OF YOUTH OFFENDING WORK IN SEFTON (YOS)**

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Strategic Director- Children, Schools and Families advising on the significant improvements made by the Youth Offending Service in relation to the Core Care Re-inspection in September 2010.

The report indicated that the Youth Offending Services, following the outcome of the re-inspection, was now placed in the top quartile of performing youth offending services in the country.

The Youth Offending Service re-inspected Improvement Plan set out within the report would be monitored by the Ministry of Justice over the calendar year 2011.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the significant improvements made by the Youth Offending Service be noted and further improvements over the next twelve months be supported; and
- (2) the Head of the Youth Offending and his staff be thanked and congratulated on their continual effort and excellent work in relation the comments made.

## **81. APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES TO GOVERNING BODIES OF MAINTAINING SCHOOLS**

Further to Minute No.60 of the meeting held on 16 November 2010, the Cabinet Member considered the report of the Strategic Director - Children, Schools and Families on vacancies on the governing bodies of a number of Community and Voluntary Aided schools.

RESOLVED:

That the undermentioned persons be appointed to serve on the Governing Bodies of the schools indicated for a period of four years:-

School	Governor(s)
AINSDALE WARD Merefield, Southport	Mrs. L. Wright
BIRKDALE St. Teresa's Catholic Infants, Birkdale	Mrs. C. Owens
CHURCH WARD Waterloo Primary School, Crosby	Ms. S.Robinson
MOLYNEUX WARD	



# Agenda Item 3

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2011

Melling Primary, Melling Mrs.D.Scott

NETHERTON AND ORRELL WARD  
Savio Salesian College, Netherton Mr.P.Moran

NORWOOD WARD  
Norwood Primary, Southport Mr.S.Glinn

SUDELL WARD  
Deyes High, Maghull Ms.D.Johnson

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# Agenda Item 4

**REPORT TO:** CABINET MEMBER, CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
CABINET

**DATE:** 8 FEBRUARY 2011  
17 FEBRUARY 2011

**SUBJECT:** AIMING HIGH FOR DISABLED CHILDREN: ADDITIONAL  
SCHEMES

**WARDS  
AFFECTED:** ALL WARDS

**REPORT OF:** PETER MORGAN  
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - CHILDREN, SCHOOLS &  
FAMILIES

**CONTACT  
OFFICER:** CHRIS DALZIEL (0151 934 3337)

**EXEMPT/  
CONFIDENTIAL:** NO

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for proposed schemes to be funded from the Aiming High for Disabled Children Capital Allocation.

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:**

The Cabinet Member has delegated powers to approve the proposed schemes and to refer the funding to Cabinet for inclusion in the Children's Services Capital Programme 2010/11.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

The Cabinet Member is recommended to:-

- (i) approve the proposed schemes detailed in this report;
- (ii) refer the funding for the proposed schemes to Cabinet for inclusion in the Children, Schools & Families Capital Programme 2010/11.

**KEY DECISION:** No.

**FORWARD PLAN:** Not appropriate.

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Following the expiry of the "call-in" period for the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting.

# Agenda Item 4

## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

Not appropriate.

## IMPLICATIONS:

**Budget/Policy Framework:** None.

**Financial:** There are no financial implications for the Council's general capital resources as all funding is from specific resources i.e. the Aiming High for Disabled Children allocation.

<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2010/ 2011 £</b>	<b>2011/ 2012 £</b>	<b>2012/ 2013 £</b>	<b>2013/ 2014 £</b>
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b><u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

**Legal:** Not appropriate.

**Risk Assessment:** There are no financial risks associated with this report as all funding is from specific resources.

**Asset Management:** Not appropriate.

## CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

Consultation has taken place with young people with disabilities and their families.

FD 617 - The Head of Corporate Finance & ICT Strategy has been consulted and has no comments on this report.

## CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	✓		
2	Creating Safe Communities	✓		
3	Jobs and Prosperity		✓	
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	✓		
5	Environmental Sustainability		✓	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	✓		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	✓		
8	Children and Young People	✓		

## LINKS TO ENSURING INTEGRATION:

The Aiming High for Disabled Children Capital Grant will contribute towards the following CYPP priorities.

- ❖ Reduce health inequalities.
- ❖ Create highly effective, inclusive learning environments for all age groups where learners can enjoy and achieve.
- ❖ Create a culture and an environment where people can make a positive contribution to their community.

## IMPACT UPON CHILDREN'S SERVICES TARGETS AND PRIORITIES:

The following priorities of the LAA will be supported positively by the proposals:-

- ❖ Improved health and reduced inequalities.
- ❖ Improving the quality of life of older people and vulnerable groups.
- ❖ Educational achievement and training.
- ❖ The health of children and young people.
- ❖ Changing perceptions.

## LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Report to Cabinet Member/Cabinet – 15 September 2009/ 1 October 2009: Aiming High for Disabled Children: Proposed Scheme.

Report to Cabinet Member/Cabinet – 04/20 May 2010: Aiming High for Disabled Children: Additional Schemes.

# Agenda Item 4

## **AIMING HIGH FOR DISABLED CHILDREN: ADDITIONAL SCHEMES**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Members will recall that Sefton has been allocated a capital grant of £391,100 in 2009/10 to support the Government's Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) programme. The aim is to provide support for families with disabled children to enable them to live ordinary family lives as a matter of course.
- 1.2 Taking into account existing approved schemes there remains £75,589 available to support new schemes. The funding is ringfenced and has to be expended by 31 March 2011.

### **2. Proposals**

- 2.1 It is proposed to allocate a further £10,000 towards the Short Breaks lounge at Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre which will allow the flexibility required to provide short breaks for families with disabled children.
- 2.2 The balance of £65,589 will be spent on additional playground equipment for disabled children that is currently unavailable in any of Sefton's parks. Examples of such equipment are wheel chair accessible roundabouts and wheel chair swings. Other examples include outdoor sensory play equipment suitable for disabled children, which can be located in either playground spaces or the pinewoods etc. Again this type of equipment would include pieces that are not currently available in Sefton such as outdoor drum sets, talking flowers, convex and concave mirror panels and Talking Bob (A very simple idea that is completely child powered - no batteries or main power required. Children giggle and laugh as Bob repeats what they say to him in a funny voice. Bob is of all metal construction and virtually indestructible).

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member is recommended to:-
  - (i) approve the proposed schemes detailed in this report;
  - (ii) refer the funding for the proposed schemes to Cabinet for inclusion in the Children, Schools & Families Capital Programme 2010/11.

**REPORT TO:** CABINET MEMBER CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**DATE:** 8 FEBRUARY 2011

**SUBJECT:** NEW HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR SCHOOLS

**WARDS AFFECTED:** ALL

**REPORT OF:** PETER MORGAN  
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

**CONTACT OFFICER:** ANGELA RICE  
0151 934 3287

**EXEMPT/  
CONFIDENTIAL:** NO

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:**

TO ASK THE CABINET MEMBER TO APPROVE NEW POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR MAINTAINED SCHOOLS:

Adoption Leave (Teachers)  
Retirement (Age Regulations)  
Maternity Support (Paternity ) Leave  
Drugs Alcohol and Other Substance Misuse  
Probationary Policy  
Confidential Reporting (Whistle Blowing in the Public Interest

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:**

TO ENSURE THAT SCHOOLS ARE COMPLIANT WITH EMPLOYMENT LAW

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

THE CABINET MEMBER IS RECOMMENDED TO APPROVE THE NEW POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**KEY DECISION:** NO

**FORWARD PLAN:** Not Appropriate

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Following the expiry of the "call-in" period for the Minutes of the meeting.

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## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

## IMPLICATIONS:

**Budget/Policy Framework:** None

**Financial: N/A**

<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2007/ 2008 £</b>	<b>2008/ 2009 £</b>	<b>2009/ 2010 £</b>	<b>2010/ 2011 £</b>
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b><u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

**Legal:** None

**Risk Assessment:** N/A

**Asset Management:** N/A

**CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS  
FULL CONSULTATION WITH JTC AND NON-TEACHING UNIONS**

**CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:**



<b>Corporate Objective</b>		<b>Positive Impact</b>	<b>Neutral Impact</b>	<b>Negative Impact</b>
1	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3	Jobs and Prosperity		√	
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Environmental Sustainability		√	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	√		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8	Children and Young People	√		

**LINKS TO ENSURING INTEGRATION:**

**IMPACT UPON CHILDREN’S SERVICES TARGETS AND PRIORITIES:**

Key target of Human Resources Service Plan  
 Policy and Procedure that is compliant with current employment law will lead to less opportunity for claims to Employment Tribunal.  
 Claims that do come before an Employment Tribunal will have less chance of success.  
 Ensures that controlled schools have policy and procedure that mirrors the Council’s policies.

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

# Agenda Item 5

## **BACKGROUND:**

1.0 Human Resource Policy and Procedure for schools is developed to mirror that of the council and ensure that staff in schools

1.1 The policies that have been drafted are based on the Council's and are designed to help schools manage a variety of issues and /or confer the same rights to teachers and support staff that Council employees enjoy. Currently there is no Adoption leave policy for teaching staff and neither is there a Probationary Policy for non teaching staff in schools or a Maternity Support Policy for either category of staff although these policies are in place for centrally employed staff

1.2 The policies will be commended to all schools for adoption by Governing Bodies although voluntary aided schools may adopt the policies recommended by the Archdiocese or the Diocese.

1.3 It is envisaged that training sessions for Headteachers and Governors will be provided to ensure that the policies are properly implanted.

## **PROPOSAL**

2.0 The Cabinet Member is recommended to approve the proposed policy and procedure and the commendation for adoption to schools.



**SEFTON COUNCIL**

# **Adoption Leave (Teachers)**

## **Policy and Procedure for Schools**

**Produced by Children’s Services, Human Resource Team (Schools).**

**January 2011**  
V1.1

<b>School:</b>	
<b>Date Adopted by the Governing Body:</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>Chair:</b>	
<b>Headteacher:</b>	

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## 1. Introduction.

Adoption leave and pay are granted on the same basis as maternity provisions and are available to :

One member of an adoptive couple (the couple must choose which partner takes adoption leave).

Or

Individuals who adopt

## 2. Scope.

This policy applies to all staff employed within school.

## 3. Scheme

**A: Employees with at least one year's continuous service at the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the week in which they are notified of being matched with a child for adoption.**

Will be entitled to leave/pay in accordance with Teachers' Contractual Maternity Provisions, i.e.:

(i) 26 weeks ordinary adoption leave (OAL)

(ii) Followed by a further 26 weeks additional adoption leave (AAL)

Paid as follows:

Weeks 1-4	Full pay (offset against payments made by way of Statutory Adoption P payments)*.
Weeks 5-6	90% of a week's pay (offset against payments made by way of Statutory Adoption Payments) Half pay plus Statutory Adoption Pay* (where applicable) without deduction except to the extent where the half pay plus Statutory Adoption Pay exceeds full pay.
Weeks 7-18	The half pay element is paid on the understanding that the employee will return to employment for at least 13 weeks.
Weeks 19-39	For the remaining 21 weeks qualifying employees will receive Statutory Adoption Pay.

Any remaining absence will be on nil pay.

*\* The Statutory Adoption pay rate at 5th April 2009 is the lower of £123.06 p.w. or 90% of average weekly earnings. Average weekly earnings will be calculated by reference to the 8 week period prior to the matching week.*

**B: Employees with continuous service of 26 weeks by the 15th week before the expected date of placement.**

- Will be entitled to leave/pay in accordance with Statutory Maternity provisions, i.e.:

(i) 26 weeks ordinary adoption leave (OAL).

(ii) Followed by a further 26 weeks additional adoption leave (AAL).

# Agenda Item 5

Weeks 1-6	90% of average weekly earnings (offset against payments made by way of Statutory Adoption Payments)
Weeks 7-39	39 weeks ordinary adoption leave (OAL) paid at the rate of Statutory Adoption Pay*.

## **C: Employees with continuous service of 26 weeks leading into the week in which they are notified of being matched with a child for adoption**

- Will be entitled to leave/pay in accordance with the Statutory Adoption leave/pay.
  - (i) 26 weeks ordinary adoption leave (OAL)
  - (ii) Followed by a further 26 weeks additional adoption leave (AAL).

Paid at the following rates:

- Weeks 1 - 39 are paid at the Statutory rate of Adoption Pay

## **PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS :**

Please contact Pensions Department for information

### 4. Conditions

1. An employee may satisfy the qualifying criteria in the various categories detailed above. In such cases leave/pay will only be paid relative to either:

- Teachers' contractual maternity provisions (A)
- **OR** Statutory contractual maternity provisions (B)
- **OR** Statutory Adoption provisions (C)

Employees will be paid on the basis of the Scheme which provides the most beneficial conditions.

2. Adoption leave/pay is available to full-time and part-time employees. Part-time employees will receive leave and pay on a pro rata basis.

3. An employee must be newly matched with a child for adoption by an approved agency.

4. The scheme is available to employees adopting children from overseas but is not available in circumstances where a child is not newly matched for adoption, e.g. when a Step-parent is adopting a partner's child.

5. Employees will be required to give their Headteacher 28 days notice of the date they wish adoption leave to start (unless this is not reasonably practicable). They need to provide information relative to:

- When the child is expected to be placed with them; and
- When they want their adoption leave to start.

6. Employees also have a duty to notify their Headteacher when they are matched with a child. The matching certificate must be copied to the Headteacher within one week of issue. However, in line with best practice, the adoptive parent should inform their Headteacher when they have been approved for adoption.

7. Employees can choose to start their leave from the date of the child's placement or from a fixed date which can be up to 14 days before the expected placement. Leave can start at any day of the week.

Placement is defined as when the child arrives to live permanently with the adopter. The exact timing of the adoption leave must be agreed with the Headteacher and the employee concerned.

8. If the child's placement ends during the adoption leave period, the employee will be able to continue adoption leave for up to 8 weeks after the end of the placement.

9. Employees will be required to complete the appropriate adoption forms (attached) and produce a "matching certificate" as documentary evidence which will serve as evidence for adoption leave and pay.

10. All teachers regardless of hours of work or length of service have the right to return to work. In some instances, e.g. because of redundancies or re-organisation, it may not be practical for a teacher to return to their original job. However, in such cases a suitable alternative post will be offered if available. Suitable alternative employment is employment on terms and conditions which are not substantially less favourable than those previously held. Should this situation arise, considerable discussion will take place with the teacher concerned, Headteachers and Human Resources Officers, to enable the return to work to progress as smoothly as possible.

11. Employees who intend to return to work at the end of their full adoption leave entitlement will not have to give any further notification to their Headteacher. However, employees who wish to return to work before the end of their adoption leave period must give at least 21 days notice of the date they intend to return.

12. Failure to comply with the above advance notification period relative to an early return will entitle the employer to postpone the return until sufficient notice has been given or until the maternity leave period has expired, whichever is earlier.

13. Should you fail to return to work having given an undertaking to do so, you will be regarded as having terminated your employment with effect from your due date of return, unless, prior to this date, you submit a medical certificate or details of other exceptional reasons acceptable to your School.

14. You must return to work for a period of at least three calendar months, in order to retain your entitlement to 12 weeks' half pay (OAP).

If you are unsure as to whether you will be returning to work you should suspend any entitlement to 12 weeks' half pay (OAP) until you return. This will then be payable in a lump sum.

If for any reason you fail to meet the requirement to return to work for three months but have, for example, returned for two months the refund to the Authority can be calculated on the basis of four weeks' half pay (rather than refunding the full 12 weeks' half pay allowance received).

15. A Headteacher is entitled to make reasonable contact with an employee during their adoption leave (and vice versa). Reasonable contact includes discussing plans for a return to work, workplace developments, etc. Information would also be provided for any relevant promotion opportunities, job vacancies and training opportunities that arise during the adoption leave.

**16. An employee may work for up to 10 days without bringing adoption leave to an end or losing SAP. These are referred to as 'keeping in touch' (KIT) days. Working for part of a day will count as one KIT day. Keeping in touch does not extend the period of adoption leave. Work is defined as any work done under the contract of employment and may include training or any activity undertaken for the purposes of keeping in touch with the workplace. The employee and Headteacher must agree on keeping in touch days being worked.**

17. For any KIT days worked, an employee will be paid their normal rate of pay for the hours worked on those days. The hourly rate is calculated by dividing your salary by 1265 (the number of hours directed time a full time teacher is required to be available to work). If an employee is in receipt of any OAP and/or SAP the KIT days will be offset against these if the total pay exceeds their normal rate of pay for the hours/days worked. An employee will pay pension contributions equivalent to a full calendar day based on their contract hours and allowances regardless of whether they have worked a full day. Sefton will also pay contributions based on a full calendar day.

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18. Adoption leave will not be extended if you have carried out some work during this period. To claim for any KIT days worked, a claim form must be completed and certified forms sent to the Payroll Department.

19. Where an employee satisfies the conditions of entitlement to Statutory Adoption Pay but leaves their employment for whatever reason (including dismissal) before the adoption pay period has begun, they will nevertheless be entitled to receive Statutory Adoption Pay.

20. Where an employee adopts a child that is born on or after 5 October 2008 he/she will be entitled to continue to receive non-cash contractual benefits during Ordinary Adoption Leave (OAL) and Additional Adoption Leave (AAL). This includes childcare vouchers. Further information can be found at [www.hmrc.gov.co.uk/childcare](http://www.hmrc.gov.co.uk/childcare).

Note: The partner of an individual who adopts, or the other member of a couple who are adopting jointly, may be entitled to Paternity/[Maternity Support Leave](#).



# Agenda Item 5

**SEFTON MBC**

**Form AD1**

**Application for Adoption Leave**

Please complete this form, at least 28 days prior to the date you wish the adoption leave to commence, attach written evidence of your adoption and forward to your Headteacher.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date continuous service began: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_

Date you were told by adoption agency that you have been matched with a child \_\_\_\_\_

Expected date of placement: \_\_\_\_\_

1. I wish to apply for adoption leave commencing on \_\_\_\_\_  
*(This date must not be earlier than 14 days before the expected date of placement.)*
2. I enclose/will forward a copy of the "matching certificate" giving details of the adoption. I will advise Finance Department of the **actual** date of placement/or advise if the child has not been placed.
3. Please delete whichever of the following statements is inappropriate:

**EITHER**

I do not intend to return to work and hereby resign my post.

**OR**

I intend to return to work after my period of adoption leave. I realise that I must return to work for a period of at least three months otherwise any half pay allowances will be forfeit.

Please pay my half pay allowances :

during my leave

or

on my return to duty

# Agenda Item 5

*[I note that I must give at least 21 days notice of my intended date of return if I wish to return prior to the expiry of the adoption leave period.]*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

## **For completion by Headteacher**

The above details are correct and approval is given for adoption leave in accordance with the conditions of the scheme.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Copy to: Employee's file and computerised records

Copy to: Finance Department for payment



**SEFTON COUNCIL**

# Retirement

(Age Regulations)

**Produced by Children's Services, Human Resource Team (Schools).**

**[www.sefton.gov.uk](http://www.sefton.gov.uk)**

January 2011  
V0.1

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Adopted by the Governing Body:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Policy sections adopted (A or B):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chair:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Headteacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **1. Introduction**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006 the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations came into force making it unlawful to discriminate against workers, employees and job seekers and trainees because of their age.

Under this legislation a national default retirement age of 65 was introduced, making compulsory retirement below 65 unlawful unless it can be objectionably justified. It also gave employees the right to request to work beyond the age of 65 and any other retirement age set by the organisation with the employer having a duty to consider such requests.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how school will respond to the age regulations for employees wishing to continue working past the default retirement age of 65.

This policy document is set out in two parts:

**Section A** of the policy removes the default retirement age.

**Section B** of the policy is to set out the processes that need to be followed in order to comply with the Age Regulations.

When adopting this policy, governors should indicate the sections of the policy they are adopting which would be either **Section A** or **Section B**.

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## SECTION A

### 2. Working beyond Retirement Age.

#### 2.1 Introduction.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations October 2006 (The Age Regulations) gave employees the statutory right to apply to extend their employment and required all employers to write to employees to notify them of this right at least 6 months before the date of their retirement.

School required employees to retire the day before their 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday or to apply to their Headteacher for permission to continue working. This Policy requirement has now been removed and replaced with no compulsory retirement age and the requirement for employees to give contractual notice of their retirement.

#### 2.1 Approaching retirement.

Employees reaching 65, and employees reaching a new retirement date, if they had already extended their employment prior to this policy are no longer required to make a written request to their Headteacher to work beyond 65 and Headteachers are no longer required to notify their employees of their right 6 months prior to reaching age 65.

It is envisaged that all employees within school will work beyond the age of 65, unless they opt to retire.

Employees are therefore required to state in writing to the Headteacher their intentions to retire providing the appropriate contractual notice.

## SECTION B

### 3. Working beyond Retirement Age.

#### 3.1 Introduction.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations October 2006 (The Age Regulations) gave employees the statutory right to apply to extend their employment and required all employers to write to employees to notify them of this right at least 6 months before the date of their retirement.

For the purposes of this policy the default retirement age is 65.

#### 3.2 Fair Retirement.

3.2.1 A fair retirement is one that takes place after the default retirement age and where an employer has given the employee written notice of the date of their intended retirement and provided them with their right to request to continue working.

#### 3.3 Notification of intended retirement date.

3.3.1 The Headteacher (or designated member of Senior Leadership Team (SLT)) will write to the employee informing them of their intended retirement date and the right to request to work beyond retirement age, between twelve and six months prior to their intended date of retirement and not any earlier.

#### 3.4 Employees requesting to continue working.

3.4.1 Employees wishing to continue working past the default retirement age or newly agreed retirement age should put in a written request to the headteacher, no later than three months before their intended retirement date.

3.4.2 Upon receipt of the written request the Headteacher (or designated member of SLT) will acknowledge receipt of request and arrange to meet with the employee to discuss their request within 20 working days of the receipt of the written request.

3.4.3 The employee has a right to be accompanied at the meeting by a Trade Union representative or a school employee of their choice.

3.4.3 Following the meeting the Headteacher (or designated member of SLT) will inform the employee of their decision in writing as soon as is reasonably practical but no later than 10 working days of the date of the meeting.

3.4.3 The employee will have the right to appeal the decision within 10 working days of the date of the letter.

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## **3.5 The Appeal**

- 3.5.1 Employees wishing to appeal the decision must put it in writing clearly stating their grounds of appeal within 10 working days of the date of the letter.
- 3.5.2 Appeals against the Headteachers decision will be heard by the Governors Appeals Committee. Appeals against decisions taken by a nominated member of the SLT decision may be heard by the Headteacher or Governors Appeals Committee.
- 3.5.3 The appeal will be heard as soon as possible but not later than 20 working days of the receipt of appeal notification.
- 3.5.4 It may not be possible to hold an appeal and therefore the appeal can be considered without a meeting.
- 3.5.5 The outcome of the appeal will be provided in writing to the employee within 5 working days of the appeal hearing.

## **3.6 Monitoring and updating of this policy.**

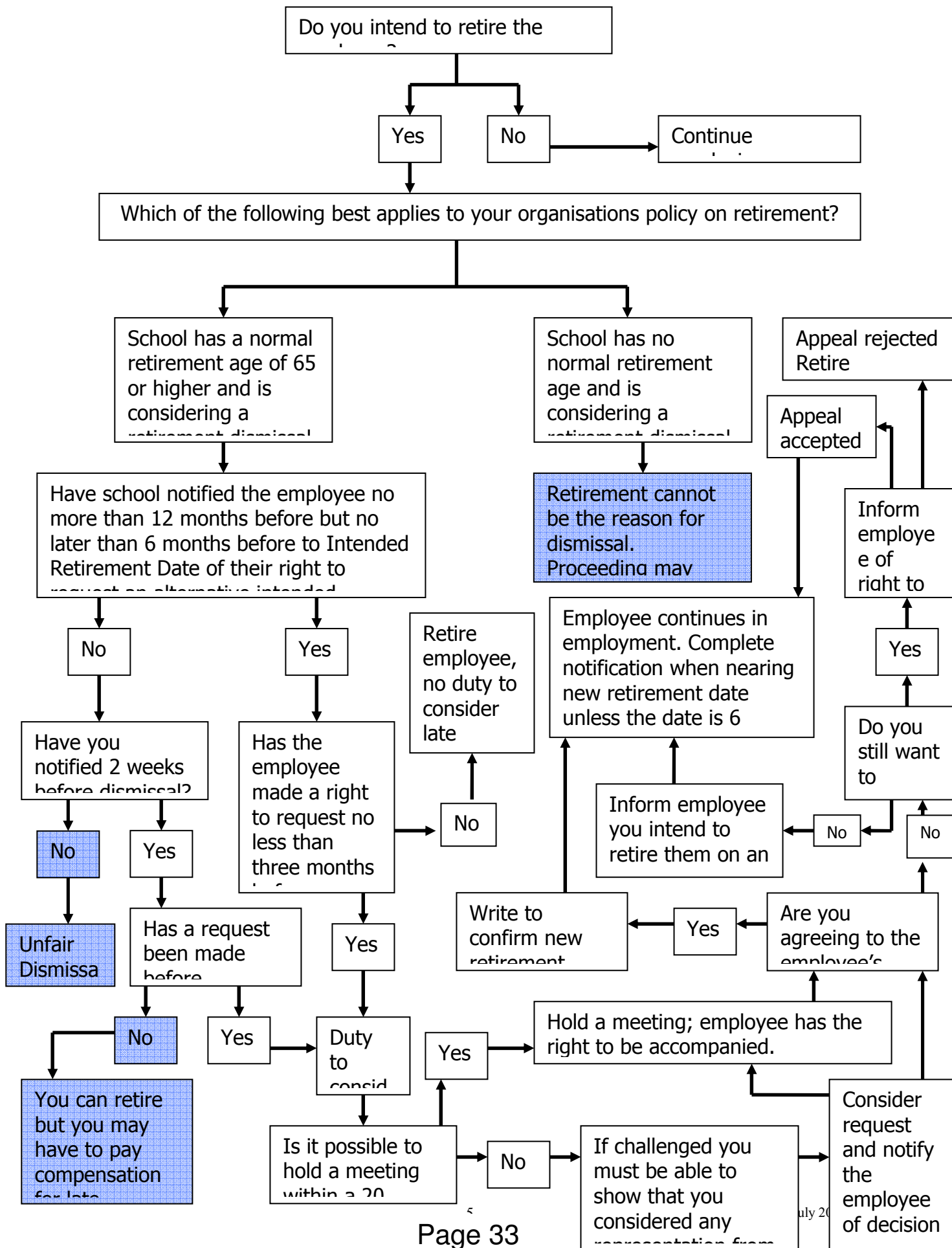
The operation of these guidelines will be monitored and reviewed periodically. Feedback is welcomed from users of these guidelines in order that they can be refined and/or supplemented to enhance their understanding.



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## Appendix a

### Fair Process Flow Chart.



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## Appendix b

### **Example of a letter informing employee of their retirement date**

Dear

I am writing to inform you that your retirement date will be *[insert date]* and that you have a right to request not to be retired. I will give careful consideration to any request you may make to work beyond this date and will inform you if I cannot let you. I am not required by law to give a reason.

Your request not to be retired must be returned to *[insert name]* no later than three months before the date stated above. Failure to do so will mean that you lose your statutory right to have your request considered and you will be retired on the retirement date above.

### **Example of a letter informing employee of a meeting to discuss a request not to retire**

I am writing to inform you that after receiving your request not to be retired that there will be a meeting to discuss your request. The meeting will be held on *[insert date]* at *[insert time]* at *[insert location]*.

You have a right to be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow worker or a trade union representative. Your companion may be someone that you have chosen, but they must work for *[insert name of school]*. Your companion can address the meeting but not answer questions on your behalf although you may confer with your companion during the meeting.

After the meeting if it is decided to continue your employment beyond the intended retirement date of *[insert date]* you will receive written notification reflecting these agreed changes to your contract. If no agreement is reached you will receive further notification confirming your intended retirement date and informing you of your right to appeal.

## **Guidance for the Meeting**

The meeting is an opportunity for the employee to put their case before the headteacher (or nominated member of SLT). At the end of the meeting the employer may decide that whilst they cannot accept the employee's stated request, there may be a compromise solution. It is perfectly acceptable for the employer to propose alternative working patterns and retirement dates, other than those proposed by the employee, if the employer is persuaded by the employee's case not to be retired.

As preparation for the meeting it is good practice for you to reflect on the positive reasons why you should grant an extension, in particular:

- a) savings to the school in recruitment and training costs
- b) retaining the valuable experience and knowledge of the employee.

Try to avoid making stereotypical assumptions about the capabilities of the employee. At the meeting the employee has a right to be accompanied by a colleague. There is the same right in relation to any subsequent appeal meeting.

The individual accompanying the employee must be:

- chosen by the employee
- a trade union representative
- a work colleague (employed at school)
- permitted to address the meeting but not answer questions on behalf of the employee; and
- permitted to confer with the employee during the meeting.

### **Example of a letter confirming retirement on the intended date**

Dear

I am writing to inform you that after our meeting held on *[insert date]* to discuss your request not to be retired, that *[insert school]* still intends to retire you on *[insert intended retirement date]*.

You have a right to appeal this decision. If you wish to appeal you must inform *[insert name]* within 10 working days from the date of this letter. Failure to do so may mean that you lose the right to an appeal meeting and *[insert school's name]* may consider your appeal without holding a meeting but they will consider any previous representations that you have made.

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## **Appendix f**

### **Format of appeal.**

1. The Chairperson of the Appeals Committee or the Headteacher will make introductions and explain the purpose of the meeting and the format that it will take.
2. The employee or representative will put forward the grounds for appeal
3. The Headteacher or nominated member of SLT may ask questions of the employee, and/or representative.
4. The Appeals Committee or Headteacher may ask questions of the employee and/or, representative.
5. The Headteacher or nominated member of SLT will present the case to support the decision they have reached.
6. The employee or representative may ask questions of the Headteacher or nominated member of SLT.
7. The Appeals Committee or Headteacher may ask questions of the Headteacher or nominated member of SLT.
8. The Headteacher or nominated member of SLT sums up.
9. The employee or representative sums up
10. Both parties withdraw whilst the Appeals Committee or Headteacher considers evidence.
11. Should the Appeals Committee or Headteacher require clarification, they shall do so in the presence of both parties.
12. The Appeals Committee or Headteacher usually invite both parties' back in to its decision but may elect to advise them in writing.

## **Appendix g**

### **Example of a letter to employee notifying the result of their appeal**

Dear:

I am writing to inform you that after our meeting held on *[insert date]* to discuss your appeal not to be retired, that *[insert organisation]* still intends to retire you on *[insert intended retirement date]*.

Name: Signature:

Date:

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## Appendix h

### **Example of a letter to employee confirming new retirement date**

Dear

I am writing to inform you that following our meeting to consider your request not to be retired/appeal meeting *[delete as appropriate] [insert school]* has agreed that your new intended retirement date shall be *[insert date]*.

As agreed at the meeting to discuss your request not to be retired/ appeal meeting *[delete as appropriate]* your new working pattern will be as follows. *[Delete this paragraph if no new working pattern is agreed]*.



### **General Information**

#### **Local Government Pension Scheme**

If the employee is a member of the LGPS and they continue in employment beyond age 65 pension benefits will not be released until they retire. The employee will be able to remain in the Scheme and continue paying contributions until 2 days before their 75<sup>th</sup> birthday when they will cease to be a member of the Scheme as pension benefits must be brought in payment no later than the day before a members 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. Whilst the employee continues to pay contributions, the employer also continues to pay contributions.

The exception to this is if an employee requests, and is granted, Flexible Retirement. The LGPS regulations provide for employees age 55 or over, to apply to their employer to reduce their hours or grade, and to draw their pension whilst remaining in employment. The LA has developed a Flexible Retirement Policy, which was approved by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007, and is effective from 20<sup>th</sup> February 2007.

Information on the Flexible Retirement Policy is available on the Councils Intranet or from your Schools HR Team.

#### **Teachers Pension Scheme**

Teachers should contact Teachers Pensions directly on the following link  
<http://teacherspensions.co.uk/>

#### **Statutory Sick Pay**

Employees beyond the age of 65 are entitled to receive Occupational Sick Pay. However if you are State pensionable age your occupational sick pay will be offset by the value of the State pension.

The Age Regulations 2006 extend the right to Statutory Sick Pay beyond the age of 65, however, on the expiry of SSP an employee would not be eligible for Invalidity Benefit as they will be receiving State Pension, which in itself is a benefit and government rules preclude the payment of invalidity Benefit to those in receipt of a pension.

#### **National Insurance**

Employees will not be required to make National Insurance contributions once they reach 65 (age 60 if you are a woman, depending upon the age at which you qualify for state pension). The Employer will continue to pay employer NI contributions.

#### **Redundancy**

In the event of a redundancy situation arising, employees of 65 and over will have a right to receive a redundancy payment subject to the qualifying period of 2 years service.



## **Maternity Support (Paternity) Leave Policy and Procedure for Schools**

**Produced by Children's Services, Human Resource Team (Schools).**

January 2011

V1.0

**School:**

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**Date Adopted by the Governing Body:**

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**Signed:**

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**Chair:**

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**Headteacher:**

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## 5. Introduction.

The intention of maternity support leave is to recognise that employees have family as well as work responsibilities and to enable new fathers/partners/nominated carers to provide practical and emotional support to the mother around the time of the birth.

With effect from April 2003 the Government announced the introduction of an entitlement to Statutory Paternity Leave and Pay.

It is recognised that situations may arise when the only person able to support the mother around the time of the birth is not the father/partner and in such situations support may be provided by a nominated carer, for example, a close relative or companion. Employees in this position, and nominated as a carer, are eligible for maternity support leave providing they are the mother's sole support and not nominated in addition to the father/partner. Advice on such circumstances can be obtained from the schools HR Team.

## 6. Scope

This policy applies to all staff employed within school.

## 7. Conditions

- Maternity support leave is available to all employees regardless of hours worked or length of service.
- All employees are entitled to 2 weeks Maternity Support Leave. The first week is paid at normal pay based on normal contractual hours. The second week is payable at the Statutory Paternity Pay rate which is £123.06p.w. at April 2009 and may be subject to annual changes. (or 90% of average weekly earnings\*, whichever is the lesser).

(\*For employees whose pay varies or for average pay a week's pay will be calculated as the average earnings in a period of 12 weeks prior to the expected week of childbirth based on normal contractual hours).

- Leave can only be taken in a single block of either one week or the two weeks leave taken together. Maternity Support leave cannot be taken as part weeks.
- Maternity support leave will normally be taken at or around the time of the birth (or placement in adoption cases) but will be granted up to 3 months after to provide greater flexibility. The exact timing will be discussed and agreed, as far as possible, with the Headteacher and the employee concerned.
- In some circumstances, maternity support leave may be granted before the birth of the child, e.g if the mother's medical condition requires early admittance to hospital and there are other children to care for.
- Maternity support leave will be granted regardless of marital status.
- Employees applying for maternity support leave will be required to produce a medical certificate showing the expected date of childbirth and name and address of the mother or other associated documentation, i.e.adoption documents at least 28 days in advance of the date they require the leave to begin.
- All employees applying for maternity support leave will also be required to complete an application for maternity support leave form MSL1.
- Leave taken will be recorded on the timesheets or on monthly absence returns and form MSL1 should be forwarded as soon as possible to ensure the Finance Department are aware maternity support leave has been taken in accordance with the scheme.
- Where an employee takes paternity leave for a child that is born on or after 5 October 2008 he/she will be entitled to receive non-cash contractual benefits during his maternity support leave. This includes childcare vouchers. Further information can be found at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/childcare](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/childcare).

In some cases employees will satisfy the criteria for both this maternity support scheme and the statutory paternity provisions. However, employees will not be entitled to receive both payments, instead they will be paid whichever is the greater.

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APPENDIX 1

## FORM MSL1

### APPLICATION FOR MATERNITY SUPPORT LEAVE

#### Section 1

**For completion by the applicant.**

**Please complete this form, attach a copy of the maternity certificate and send it to your Headteacher at least 28 days before your absence.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee no. \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Salary scale: \_\_\_\_\_

Hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected week of childbirth \_\_\_\_\_  
(week in which baby is due)

*In accordance with the maternity support leave procedure, I hereby give formal notification of my intention to take maternity support leave as the father/partner/"nominated carer" (delete as appropriate).*

If "nominated carer" please give brief details of the circumstances.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I attach, herewith, a copy of the medical certificate which states the week in which the baby is due (EWC).

**I will liaise with my Headteacher as to the exact timing of this leave.**

I formally apply for:

***Please tick as applicable***

1 week's Maternity Support Leave paid at normal pay;

plus

a second week's Maternity Support Leave paid at Statutory Paternity Pay rate (or

# Agenda Item 5

90% of average weekly earnings, whichever is the lesser).

I would like my Maternity Support leave to start on \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2

### **Statutory Payments Declaration**

*This declaration must be completed and will not affect your entitlement to Maternity Support payments but will clarify whether the Authority is eligible to recover from the Inland Revenue some of the payments made to you.*

	<b><u>Criteria Met</u></b> <b><i>(delete as appropriate)</i></b>
(i) I have been continuously employed with Sefton for at least 26 weeks by the 15 <sup>th</sup> week before the child is expected to be born or by the week in which an adoption match is made.	YES / NO
(ii) I am <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The baby’s biological father, or</li> <li>• In a civil partnership or married to the mother, or</li> <li>• living with the mother in an enduring family relationship, but am not an immediate relative</li> </ul>	YES / NO
(iii) I will have a responsibility for the child’s upbringing	YES / NO
(iv) I am taking the time off to support the mother, OR, to care for the child	YES / NO

Signed .....

Date .....

### **SECTION 3**

#### **For completion by Headteacher**

Approval is given for Maternity Support Leave as requested in accordance with the Conditions of the Scheme.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Copies to be forwarded to:

- Employee concerned
- Finance Department for payment

# Agenda Item 5

- Copy of MSL1 to be retained on personal file and details to be input onto computerised records



**APPENDIX 2**

**FORM MSL1A**

**APPLICATION FOR MATERNITY SUPPORT LEAVE**  
(in cases of adoption)

**Section 1**

**For completion by the applicant.**

**Please complete this form, attach a copy of the maternity certificate and send it to your Headteacher at least 28 days before your absence.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee no. \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Salary scale: \_\_\_\_\_

Hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected week of Placement \_\_\_\_\_

*In accordance with the maternity support leave procedure, I hereby give formal notification of my intention to take maternity support leave as the adopter/partner/"nominated carer" (delete as appropriate).*

If "nominated carer" please give brief details of the circumstances.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I attach, herewith, a copy of the matching certificate which states the week in which the child will be placed.

**I will liaise with my Headteacher as to the exact timing of this leave.**

I formally apply for:

***Please tick as applicable***

1 week's Maternity Support Leave paid at normal pay;

plus

# Agenda Item 5

a second week's Maternity Support Leave paid at Statutory Paternity Pay rate (or 90% of average weekly earnings, whichever is the lesser).

I would like my Maternity Support leave to start on \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2

### **Statutory Payments Declaration**

*This declaration must be completed and will not affect your entitlement to Maternity Support payments but will clarify whether the Authority is eligible to recover from the Inland Revenue some of the payments made to you.*

	<b><u>Criteria Met</u></b> <b><i>(delete as appropriate)</i></b>
(i) I have been continuously employed with Sefton for at least 26 weeks by the 15 <sup>th</sup> week before the child is expected to be born or by the week in which an adoption match is made.	YES / NO
(ii) I am <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• married to the person adopting the child, or</li><li>• living with the person adopting the child in an enduring family relationship, but am not an immediate relative, and</li></ul>	YES / NO
(iii) I will have a responsibility for the child's upbringing	YES / NO
(iv) I am taking the time off to support the person adopting the child, OR, to care for the child	YES / NO

Signed .....

Date .....

---

## **SECTION 3**

### **For completion by Headteacher**

Approval is given for Maternity Support Leave as requested in accordance with the Conditions of the Scheme.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Copies to be forwarded to:

- Employee concerned
- Finance Department for payment

# Agenda Item 5

- Copy of MSL1 to be retained on personal file and details to be input onto computerised records



SEFTON COUNCIL

## **DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND OTHER SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

### **Policy and Procedure for Schools**

**Produced by Children Schools and Families, Human Resource Team**

January 2011

V0.1

**School:**

---

**Date Adopted by the Governing Body:**

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**Signed:**

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**Chair:**

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**Headteacher:**

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## **1 Introduction.**

It is recognised that alcohol, drug and other substance misuse can impair performance, judgement, safety and interpersonal work relations.

The purpose of this policy is to help protect the children and employees from the dangers of alcohol, drug or other substance misuse and to encourage those with a problem to seek help. In addition this policy sets out a procedure to ensure that all alcohol and drug problems are dealt with sympathetically, fairly and consistently.

## **2 Policy Statement**

*"The School/College has a duty to:*

- *Commit to the safeguarding and welfare of its children and young people*
- *deliver high quality and value for money education to its children; fundamental to this are the School's/College's employees and their performance and attendance at work.*
- *ensure the health and safety of their staff.*

The School's/College's position in relation to the use and/or consumption of alcohol, drugs or another intoxicating substance is described below. In setting this policy statement the School/College: -

- Does not allow nor tolerate the consumption of alcohol, non prescribed drugs (except those bought over the counter for minor ailments) or any other intoxicating substance during the school working day (including break and lunch time) or whilst responsible for the schools children/young people outside of the school working day.
- Does not allow nor tolerate the consumption of alcohol, non prescribed drugs (except those bought over the counter for minor ailments) any other intoxicating substance at any time before the working day or before reporting for duty.
- Recognises that the use of non-prescribed drugs (except those bought over the counter for minor ailments), the excess consumption of alcohol and the misuse of other substances are primarily health problems, but also that the issues are not necessarily restricted to those severely dependent on drugs, alcohol or other intoxicating substance.
- Recognises that dealing with alcohol, drugs and other substance misuse related issues is a major problem for society at large. School/College will play its part in confronting these challenges.
- Supports the creation of a culture within School/College that seeks ways of reducing any alcohol, drugs or other substance misuse related problems, the effects of which can have disastrous consequences for the individual, their families and the School/College as a whole.
- Strongly urge individuals to recognise that they have a problem and accept treatment and assistance from the council's Occupational Health Physician. The School/College will protect, as far as it reasonably can, their employees jobs and career prospects
- Acknowledges that if, during treatment, employees are unable to attend work, they will be considered as absent due to sickness, with normal sickness conditions relating to sickness and ill-health applying.
- Confirms there is the potential for disciplinary action where the habitual taking of alcohol, drug (other than prescribed as medication or those bought over the counter for minor ailments) any other intoxicating substance prevents the satisfactory

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- performance of duties, affects attendance at work, results in unacceptable conduct, or endangers or potentially endangers the safety and security of employees and or children/young people at the School/College, or School/College property
- Confirms that there is the potential for disciplinary action where employees do not accept that they have a drugs and alcohol problem and fail to accept counselling / suitable treatment
  - Confirms all information and reports surrounding possible drug and/or alcohol; and/or other substance misuse will be handled securely and confidentially

This policy statement is not exhaustive nor exclusive.

### **3 Aims / Objectives**

The Policy aims to: -

- Help protect employees by raising awareness of the problems and possible harmful consequences of drug, alcohol or any other intoxicating substance misuse and to encourage those with a problem to seek help.
- Ensure that employees use of either drugs, alcohol or any other intoxicating substance does not impair the safe and efficient running of the school, or result in risks to the health & safety of themselves, other employees and the pupils.
- Help minimise the need to invoke disciplinary measures.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation in this area.

### **4 Scope**

- This policy applies to all teaching staff and support staff within the school/college, including the Headteacher.
- This policy covers the use and misuse of intoxicating substances, which include alcohol, solvents, legal and illegal drugs, prescription and over-the-counter medicines and other substances that could adversely affect work performance and/or health and safety.

The policy does not override the School's/College's Disciplinary Procedure, Health & Safety Policies or Health & Safety Codes of Practice Guidance.

## **5 The Legal Position- Drugs & The Law**

There are various pieces of legislation relating to the misuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances and the School/College must fulfil its obligations in respect of, for example, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Road Traffic Act 1988.

### **5.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**

The School/College has a general duty under this Act to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of its staff. It also has a duty under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 to assess the risks to the health and safety of staff. If the School/College knowingly allows an employee under the influence of alcohol, drugs and other substance to continue working and his or her behaviour places the employee or others at risk, the School/College could be prosecuted. ***Staff are also required to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others at work.***

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In the UK, illegal drugs are classified into three main categories, Class A, B or C.

Class A drugs attract the most serious punishments and fines.

## **5.2 Drugs are classified under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.**

### **5.2.1 Class A**

Drugs such as heroin, methadone, cocaine, crack and Ecstasy, LSD, methamphetamine (crystal meth) and amphetamines (speed) if prepared for injection fall into Class A.

Conviction for possession, in a Crown Court, can lead to a maximum seven year prison sentence and a fine. The maximum penalty for trafficking is life imprisonment plus a fine.

### **5.2.2 Class B**

Class B drugs include amphetamines (speed), and barbiturates and cannabis.

The maximum penalty for possession of a Class B drug, if the case reaches Crown Court, is five years, plus a fine. For trafficking, the sentence can be up to 14 years, plus a fine.

### **5.2.3 Class C**

Class C, the lowest class of drugs, includes mild amphetamines (such as slimming tablets), tranquillisers, and anabolic steroids.

## **5.3 The Road Traffic Act 1988**

This Act states that any person who, when driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle on a road or other public place, is unfit to drive through alcohol, drugs and other substance misuse shall be guilty of an offence. An offence is also committed if a person unfit through alcohol, drugs and other substance misuse is in charge of a motor vehicle in the same circumstances. If death or injury occurs as the result of an accident, other charges e.g. of manslaughter may arise.

## **6. Responsibilities**

### **6.1 The Headteacher/Line Manager is required to: -**

- Be aware of the signs of alcohol, drug and other substance misuse and the effects on performance, attendance and health of employees.
- Ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and others with whom they come into contact.
- Ensure that staff understand the policy and are aware of the rules and consequences regarding the use of alcohol, drugs and other intoxicating substances.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the support that is available to them should they have a problem.
- Monitor the performance, behaviour and attendance of employees as part of the normal supervisory relationship.
- Intervene at an early stage where changes in performance, behaviour, sickness levels, and attendance patterns are identified, to establish whether alcohol or drug misuse is an underlying cause.
- Provide support and assistance, where appropriate and for a reasonable period, to staff who are dependent upon intoxicating substances to help their recovery.
- Seek advice from their HR Team- Schools on the approach to be adopted, where they are aware, or suspect that an employee is misusing intoxicating substances. Such matters will be treated confidentially as far as is legitimately and legally



# Agenda Item 5

possible. For example, it may be necessary in order to provide effective support for information to be shared with others, for example Occupational Health.

- Instigate disciplinary measures where appropriate to do so.

## 6.2 Employees are required to: -

- Familiarise themselves with this policy and comply with its provisions.
- Present a professional, courteous and efficient image to those with whom they come into contact at all times and to adopt a responsible attitude towards drinking and taking prescribed and over-the-counter drugs.
- Report for work and remain throughout the working day, in a fit and safe condition to undertake their duties and not to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Not possess, store, trade or sell controlled drugs on School/College premises or bring the School/College into disrepute by engaging in such activities outside of work. The only exception would be where an employee has a prescription.
- Seek help if they have concerns regarding their alcohol or drug consumption. It is recommended that they approach their line manager so that the School/College can arrange for the provision of appropriate support to help speedy rehabilitation, for example referral to the Occupational Health Unit.
- Co-operate with any support and assistance provided by the School/College to address an alcohol or drug misuse problem.
- Not 'cover up' for, or collude with, a colleague with an alcohol or drug-related problem, even with the best of motives, but instead should encourage the individual to seek help. If the individual concerned does not wish to seek help, and the employee genuinely suspects that the individual may be misusing drugs, alcohol or another intoxicating substance, the employee has a responsibility to raise any concerns with the employee's line manager.

## **7 Observable signs that may suggest there is a Drugs, Alcohol or other substance misuse problems.**

Alcohol, drugs and other substance misuse impairs judgement, concentration and co-ordination (among other problems). The following indicators of possible alcohol, drug or other substance misuse.

Repeated patterns of depression, or fatigue from sleeplessness, which lasts two to three days	Erratic performance
Unusual irritability or aggression	Overconfidence
Inappropriate behaviour	Sudden mood changes from extreme happiness to severe depression
Reduced response times	A tendency to become confused
Reduced productivity	Absenteeism
Poor time-keeping	Lack of discipline
Deterioration in relationships with colleagues, customers or management	Dishonesty and theft

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Financial irregularities	
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*This list of examples is neither exhaustive nor inclusive.*

**N.B. It is important to note that these can also be caused by other factors, such as stress, physical illness, mental health problems or the effects of prescription drugs.**

## **8 Breaches of the Policy**

The School/College will, where appropriate to do so, adopt a constructive and supportive approach when dealing with employees who may be experiencing drug, alcohol or other intoxicating substance dependency/addiction.

This means that employees seeking assistance for a substance misuse problem will not have their employment terminated simply because of their dependence/addiction. However, if performance, attendance or behaviour is unacceptable, despite any support and assistance that can be offered, ultimately dismissal may be unavoidable.

Notwithstanding the above, there will be circumstances where breaches of the policy, whether dependency-related or not, will be treated as a disciplinary matter and may result in the summary dismissal of the employee.

Examples of issues that will be subject to disciplinary action, including the possibility of dismissal, are: -

- Deliberate disregard for personal safety and that of others associated with the use of intoxicating substances.
- Unacceptable behaviour in the workplace associated with the use of intoxicating substances.
- Being found incapable of performing normal duties satisfactorily and safely as a result of consuming alcohol or taking drugs.
- Consuming intoxicating substances during the working day including rest and lunch breaks or when rostered on call and liable to be called upon to work at short notice.
- Possession, consumption, dealing/trafficking, selling, storage of controlled drugs either at School/College or engaging in such activities outside of School.
- Making malicious or vexatious allegations that a colleague is misusing intoxicating substances.

This list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive. Disciplinary action will, in all cases, be proportionate to the circumstances of the breach of the policy.

Where evidence warrants, the School/College will inform the Police of illegal drug use or any activity or behaviour over which there are concerns as to its legality. For example, it would be necessary to report criminal behaviour associated with alcohol abuse such as having a drink-driving accident in a School/College vehicle.

## **9 Definitions**

<b><u>Intoxicating substance</u></b>	A substance that changes the way the user feels mentally or physically. It includes alcohol, illegal drugs, legal drugs, prescription medicines (for example tranquilisers, anti depressants, over-the-counter medicines), solvents, glue, lighter fuel.
<b><u>Controlled drugs</u></b>	Drugs covered by the misuse of Drugs Act 1971. They include both drugs with no current medical uses as well as medicinal drugs that are prone to misuse. All are considered likely to result in substantial harm to individuals and society.
<b><u>Dependency</u></b>	A compulsion to keep taking an intoxicating substance either to avoid effects of withdrawal (physical dependence) or to meet a need for stimulation or tranquillising effects on pleasure (psychological dependence).
<b><u>Addiction</u></b>	A state of periodic or chronic intoxication produced by the

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	repeated intake of an intoxicating substance. This means that a dependency has developed to such an extent that it has serious detrimental effects on the user and often their family as well, and the individual has great difficulty discontinuing their use. The substance has taken over their life.
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## **10 Monitoring the Policy**

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

## **11 Specific Sources Of Help & Advice**

**Drinkline** – a government-funded free service. Can provide advice to the alcohol drinker or anybody concerned about the drinker. Has a database of local support and treatment services that can help the drinker.

Helpline: 0800 917 8282 Website: [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

**Talk to FRANK** – a government-funded free service, previously named the National Drugs Helpline. Can provide advice to the drug user or anybody concerned about the drug user. Has a database of local support and treatment services that can help the drug user. The focus of the helpline is for young people and concerned parents, but will also assist adult drug users.

Helpline: 0800 77 66 00 Website: [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

The website provides detailed information on drugs that the non-specialist can understand.

**Alcoholics Anonymous** – the largest self-help group for people who acknowledge they cannot handle alcohol, and want a new way of life without it. Services are free.

Helpline: 0845 769 7555 Website: [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

The comprehensive website explains the philosophy of AA, what to expect, and local groups.

**Narcotics Anonymous** – the largest self-help group for people who want to stop using drugs. Services are free.

Helpline: 0845 373 3366 Website: [www.ukna.org](http://www.ukna.org) (includes details of local groups)

**Cocaine Anonymous** – national self-help group specifically for cocaine users.

Helpline: 0800 612 0225, open 10:00am to 10:00pm Website:

[www.cauk.org.uk/index.html](http://www.cauk.org.uk/index.html)

**Adfam National** – the largest non-statutory organisation that works with and on behalf of families affected by drug and alcohol problems. Helpful for the family of the alcohol or drug user.

Helpline: 020 7553 7640 Website: [www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)

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**SEFTON COUNCIL**

## **PROBATIONARY POLICY** **For non teaching school based staff**

Produced by Children, Schools and Families Human Resource Team (Schools).

[www.sefton.gov.uk](http://www.sefton.gov.uk)

# January 2011

**School:**

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**Date Adopted by the Governing Body:**

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**Signed:**

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**Chair:**

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**Headteacher:**

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## 1. Introduction

It is Sefton's Children's Schools and Families and < name of school > policy that new entrants to local government service are required to satisfactorily complete a probationary period of 6 months prior to being confirmed in their appointment. However, this rule of probation service does not apply to an appointee transferred from the service of another authority, or from any public authority to which the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government, etc.) (Modification) Order 1999 applies.

The Statement of Particulars for new entrants to the service reflects this requirement as follows:- "Confirmation of your appointment will be subject to satisfactory completion of a probationary period of six months in accordance with the Schemes of Conditions of Service referred to above. During your probationary period you will be expected to establish your suitability for the post."

New entrants who are within their probationary period are excluded from the Local Disciplinary Procedure and the Grievance Procedure, which states that the procedure does not apply "where less than six months probationary service has been completed and dismissal arises from unsuitability for confirmation of appointment."

## 2. Principles

The purpose of the probationary period is to enable new entrants to the local government service to establish their suitability and this must be made clear at the time of appointment.

The probationary period is concerned solely with assessing an individual's ability to do the job and general standard of conduct (e.g. ability to properly observe normal work rules and conventions including punctuality, relationship with colleagues/managers/public, and standards of attendance). In this connection the expected standards, work rules etc. must be made known to the probationer as soon as he/she commences.

Whilst probationers will generally be excluded from the Disciplinary Procedure, it should be recognised that in exceptional circumstances where allegations of serious or gross misconduct arise, it will be both necessary and appropriate to apply the Disciplinary Procedure with the appeal rights it conveys.

The above paragraph recognises that most new entrants successfully complete the probationary period and it is only exceptionally that an individual's inherent ability, performance or general conduct is of such poor standard generally as to make non-confirmation the inescapable conclusion.

The question of whether or not disciplinary action is appropriate should be the subject of consultation with the Schools HR Team before any action is taken.

## 3. Administering the Probationary Period

At all stages the employee will be informed of the right to be represented either by a Trade Union representative or a work colleague<sup>1</sup>.

During the period new entrants must be properly monitored and formal supervisory sessions conducted at least once per month. A full record of the probationary process should be kept on the appropriate forms (appendix 1 & 2). The purpose of these

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy a work colleague is defined as a person who is employed at the same school



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sessions will be to provide the new entrant with feedback on his/her performance and conduct. Equally he/she should be invited to comment on any concerns or request any assistance he/she considers necessary. A note of each meeting should be recorded on the appropriate form (appendix 2) and made available to the individual for signature with an indication of any necessary action to be taken, by whom and by when; every reasonable and practical effort must be made by the headteacher/line manager to resolve any difficulties - this may include counselling, extra supervision, instruction, training.

Where the probationary period is successfully completed this must be confirmed by the Headteacher to the probationer in writing.

If at any stage and following counselling etc. a probationer's ability/conduct does not reach an acceptable standard, non-confirmation of appointment should be considered. A final decision should not be made until the employee has been given the opportunity to state his/her case with a trade union representative present (if he/she so wishes). A representative of the Schools HR Team will be available to advise the Headteacher if requested. The decision not to confirm a probationer's employment rests with the Headteacher.

If the probationer's appointment is not confirmed he/she must be given appropriate notice in accordance the Employment rights Act 1996 (i.e. for employees continuous service of more than one month but less than two years should be provided with not less than one weeks notice) and provided with a reason in writing of why his/her employment is not going to be confirmed. Notice must be served before the end of the probationary period; it is not necessary for the effective date of termination to be before the end of the period.

Where it is not the headteacher carrying out the probationary process with the employee, a report detailing any issues, action taken, recommendations and appending copies of all records of probationary meeting should be presented to the headteacher. The headteacher then should take a decision regarding confirmation of appointment based on the contents of the report.

## **4. Extensions**

Probationary periods cannot be extended other than where there has been a lengthy absence due to illness or some other reason authorised by the headteacher (e.g. special leave) during the period. Any extension must be by written mutual agreement. Where the probationer does not agree, a decision regarding confirmation of appointment will be taken on the basis of performance etc. during the period actually served.

**Under no circumstances will the probationary period be extended beyond twelve months.**

## **5. Appeals**

An employee whose appointment is not confirmed has a right of appeal to the Governors Appeals Committee, whose decision on the matter will be final.

Should an employee wish to appeal against the decision not to confirm the appointment, he/she must do so in writing within **Page 65** 5ys of receiving the letter notifying

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them of the decision. The grounds of appeal should be set out in full in the letter which should be sent to the Clerk to Governors who will acknowledge the letter and forward it to the Chair of the Appeals Committee.

The Chair of the Appeals Committee will convene a meeting which will take place within 28 working days from the receipt of the appeal from the employee. Any information the employee wants to be considered by the Appeals Committee must be supplied to the Clerk to Governors no later than 10 working days before the hearing.

At the hearing the employee will have a right to be represented by a trade union representative or be accompanied by a work colleague of their choice. The employee or their representative will be given the opportunity to put their case to the committee. The headteacher will respond to the employee's appeal and confirm the reasons for the non confirmation of the appointment. There will be an opportunity for questions from both sides and the committee, and the headteacher, followed by the employee, may sum up.

The committee will adjourn to reach a decision on the appeal and the employee will be notified of the decision in writing within 5 working days of the decision.

## Appendix 1

### Record of Probationary process.

Name	
Post	
School	
Headteacher/Line Manager	
Date appointed	

### Dates of Monthly Meetings

Probationary Meeting 1.		Probationary Meeting 4.	
Probationary Meeting 2.		Probationary Meeting 5.	
Probationary Meeting 3.		Probationary Meeting 6.	

### Extension.

#### Reason for extension

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### Date of meetings

Extension meeting 1.		Extension meeting 4.	
Extension meeting 2.		Extension meeting 5.	
Extension meeting 3.		Extension meeting 6.	

### Reporting

Date report to Headteacher	
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## Confirmation

Date Confirmation letter sent	
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## Non Confirmation

Date of Non confirmation sent	
Reason for non confirmation	

<b>Signed</b>	
<b>Print</b>	
<b>Dated</b>	

**Note:** All probationary records must be expunged from an employee's file if/when the probationary period has expired/is confirmed as successful.

**Record of Monthly probationary Meeting**

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Meeting No.:</b>	<b>Meeting date:</b>

<b>Headteacher/Managers comments:</b>

<b>Employees comments:</b>

<b>Other points discussed.</b>

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<b>Actions Agreed</b>		
Action	To be taken by	Completion (Date)

Employees Signature	
Date	
Headteacher/managers signature	
Date	



SEFTON COUNCIL

**CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING**  
**Policy and Procedure for Schools**  
**("Whistleblowing" in the Public Interest)**

**Produced by Children, Schools and Families, Human Resource  
Team (Schools).**

**[www.sefton.gov.uk](http://www.sefton.gov.uk)**

**V0.2 January 2011**

**School:**

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**Date Adopted by the Governing Body:**

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**Signed:**

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**Chair:**

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**Headteacher:**

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## Introduction

The Confidential Reporting Policy ("Whistleblowing" - In the Public Interest) for Schools/Colleges has been developed to ensure compliance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The Act introduced new rights for employees not to suffer detriment or dismissal for making a protected disclosure.

### Policy Statement

"The School/College is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity, integrity and accountability. In line with that commitment the school expects employees and others that the School/College deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the School's/College's work, to come forward and voice those concerns without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

### 1.0 Preamble

1.1 Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the School/College. However, individuals may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the School/College. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances they may feel that it is easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

1.2 The Confidential Reporting Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the School/College rather than overlooking a problem or "blowing the whistle" outside.

1.3 This Policy is in addition to the Council's complaints procedures and other statutory reporting procedures applying to Schools.

1.4 Consultation about this policy has taken place with the relevant trade unions and professional organisations

### 2.0 Aims of this Policy

2.1 This policy aims to:

- Encourage employees to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice;
- Provide avenues for employees to raise genuine concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- Ensure that employees receive a response to their concerns and are aware as to how to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the School's /College's response
- Reassure employees that steps will be taken to protect employees from possible reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith.

### 3.0 Scope of This Policy

3.1 The Policy covers all employees with a contract of employment with the School/College, including non-permanent contracts and any other persons acting in the name of the School/College, for example agency workers and employees on secondment from other organisations.



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3.2 There are existing procedures in place to enable employees to lodge a grievance relating to their own employment. The Confidential Reporting Policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

- Conduct which is a criminal offence;
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice;
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees;
- Damage to the environment;
- Unauthorised use of public funds;
- Possible fraud and corruption;
- Sexual, racial or physical abuse of pupils/employees; or
- Other unethical conduct.

3.3 Any serious concerns that employees have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of other employees or members of the School or others acting on behalf of the School can be reported under the Confidential Reporting Policy. This may be about something that:

- Makes them feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, their experience or the standards they believe the School/College subscribe to; or
- Is against the School's/College's policies; or
- Falls below established standards of practice; or
- Amounts to improper conduct

3.4 This policy does **not** replace Sefton's Corporate complaints procedure or the School's/College's complaints procedure. There is also Sefton's Corporate Confidential Reporting Policy for issues outside of the School/College.

## 4.0 Safeguards

4.1 The School recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what an employee is saying is true, they should have nothing to fear in doing their duty to the employer and those for whom a service is being provided.

4.2 The School is committed to good practice and high standards, wants to be supportive of employees and will ensure the following safeguards:

### 4.2.1 Harassment and Victimisation

The School/College will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect employees when they raise a concern in good faith.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence, or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect an employee.

### 4.2.2. Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made where possible not to reveal the identity of the employee raising the concern if it is so wished. However, it must be appreciated that, in the interests of natural justice, any investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by the individual raising the concern may be required as part of the evidence.

### 4.2.3 Anonymous Allegations

This Policy strongly encourages employees to report their name to any allegation.

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Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful. Anonymous allegations will be considered and any action taken at the discretion of the School/College.

In exercising this discretion the School will take the following factors into account when considering how to deal with any allegations:

- The seriousness of the issues raised;
- The credibility of the allegation and
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

## 4.2.4 Malicious or Vexatious Allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the employee who raised the concern. If, however, an allegation is made maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action will be taken against the employee concerned in accordance with the School's/College's Disciplinary Procedure. The School will provide full support to anyone who is falsely or maliciously accused of malpractice or wrongdoing.

## 5.0 How to Raise a Concern

5.1 As a first step, employees should normally raise a concern with an immediate Line Manager or Headteacher. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if it is believed that the employee's line manager is involved, then an approach to the Headteacher may be appropriate. If it is believed that the Headteacher is involved, an approach to the Chair of Governors would be appropriate. If the governing body is involved, then a referral to the Local Authority's Complaints Officer, Children, Schools and Families would be appropriate.

5.2 Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Employees who wish to make a written report are invited to set out the following:

- The background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible
- The reason why there is particular concern about the situation.

5.3 The earlier an expression of concern is made the easier it will be for the School to take action.

5.4 Although employees are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for initial enquiries to be made.

5.5 Advice and guidance on how matters of concern may be pursued can be obtained from:

- The relevant Line Manager
- The Headteacher
- Chair of Governors
- Complaints Officer – Children, Schools and Families

5.6 Employees may wish to consider discussing their concern with a colleague first and may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of them who have had the same experience or concerns.

5.7 Employees may invite their trade union representative or a work colleague to be present during any meetings or int

## 6.0 How the School Will Respond

6.1 The School will respond to concerns raised. However, testing out concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them.

6.2 The action taken by the School will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:

- Be investigated internally by the relevant Line Manager, Headteacher, Chair of Governors supported by the appropriate Local Authority Officers e.g. HR Officer-Schools, Internal Audit, or through the disciplinary process;
- Be referred to the police (following consultation with the relevant Local Authority officers);
- Be referred to the external auditor;
- Form the subject of an independent inquiry.

Note: The course of action will be taken by the person to whom the matter is referred and not by the individual employee who raises the issue.

6.3 In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. The overriding principle, which the School/College will have in mind, is the public interest. Concerns or allegations, which fall within the scope of specific procedures, (for example, child protection or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.

6.4 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required, this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.

6.5 Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the School/College will write to the employee:

- Acknowledging that the concern has been received;
- Indicating how the School/College proposes to deal with the matter;
- Giving an estimate of how long it will take to deal with the matter and provide a final response;
- Informing them whether any initial enquiries have been made;
- Supplying information on employee support mechanisms; and
- Stating whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

6.6 The amount of contact between the person considering the issues and the employee will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, the person considering the concern on behalf of the School/College will seek further information.

6.7 Where any meeting is arranged, an employee can be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague, who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates and who could not be called as a witness. The meeting can be arranged off site if preferred.

6.8 The School/College will take steps to minimise any difficulties, which may be experienced, as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if employees are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the School will arrange for them to receive advice about the procedure.

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6.9 The School/College accept that an employee needs to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, the School/College will inform the member of staff of the outcomes of any investigation.

6.10 Any employee who is the subject of an allegation should, at the appropriate times, be given details of the allegation in order to respond. The employee concerned would have the right to trade union representation.

## 7.0 The Responsible Officer

7.1 Within the School/College, the Headteacher, as Monitoring Officer, has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. The Monitoring Officer maintains a record of genuine concerns raised and the outcomes are reported as necessary to the Governing body in a form that endeavours to maintain the employee's confidentiality as far as possible. See 4.2.2

## 8.0 How the Matter can be Taken Further

8.1 This policy is intended to provide an avenue within the School/College to raise concerns. The School/College hopes employees will be satisfied with any action taken. If not, and if they feel it is right to take the matter outside the School, the following are possible contact points:

- Public Concern at Work (0207 4046609 or <http://www.pcaw.co.uk/>);
- External Auditor;
- Local Government Ombudsman (01904 380200 or <http://www.lgo.org.uk/>);
- Trade Union;
- Local Citizens Advice Bureau;
- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations;
- Relevant voluntary organisation;
- Police
- Other bodies prescribed under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 e.g.:
  - The Audit Commission for England and Wales
  - Data Protection Registrar
  - Serious Fraud Office
  - Environment Agency
  - Health and Safety Executive

8.2 If the matter is taken outside the School/College, steps should be taken to ensure that there is no disclosure of confidential or privileged information. Where confidential or privileged information is inappropriately disclosed, the employee disclosing the information may be subject to disciplinary action.

## Management Guidelines on the Confidential Reporting Policy (“Whistleblowing” in the Public Interest)

### 1. Introduction

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 is designed to protect staff from being penalised by their employers for raising concerns about serious misconduct or malpractice that threatens the public interest. The legislation requires individuals to raise such matters internally at first, if they are to be protected. If this recourse is ineffective, an external disclosure through an appropriate avenue may be necessary.

As an employer the School is required to:

- ensure that procedures are in place in line with the legislation;
- develop rules and codes of conduct on “whistleblowing”; and
- establish dedicated “whistleblowing Contacts” and support structures.

Any member of the school’s Leadership Team can be approached by an employee expressing concern under the “Whistleblowing” Policy. Depending on the matter of concern other “contacts” could be the Chair of Governors or the LA’s Complaints Officer.

### 2. The Role of the “Contact”

The role of the “Contact” is to:

- offer to interview the employee raising the concern within **two working days**, (or immediately, if circumstances require);
- give advice regarding the route to lodge a complaint if it does not fall within the Confidential Reporting Policy (see paragraph 7 below); and
- make recommendations to management regarding remedial action, provide feedback and/or implement the recommendations/action to be taken.
- in the case of the LA’s Complaints Officer he/she will inform the appropriate officer of the complaint in order that it can be dealt with in the prescribed timescales.

### 3. Raising the Concern

Concerns can be raised verbally, or in writing. In either case, the employee must be invited to provide the following information:

- details of the background and history of the concern - giving relevant dates;
- the reason why there is particular concern about the situation.

Every effort must be made not to reveal the identity of the employee raising the concern; however, it may be necessary to use him/her as a witness at a later date.

The employee may invite his/her trade union/professional association representative, or a work colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concern(s) raised. However, it must be made clear that this person’s attendance is for the purpose of providing support only, and he/she will not be allowed to become involved in the proceedings. The manager, as the “Contact” may be accompanied by a note taker, who will not identify the discloser in any way.

In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, the manager will make initial enquiries to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required, it must be taken before any investigation is conducted.

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Within **ten working days** of a concern being raised the manager, as "Contact", will write to the employee:

- ◆ acknowledging receipt of the complaint;
- ◆ indicate how you will deal with the matter;
- ◆ give an estimate of how long it will take to provide a full response;
- ◆ inform him/her whether any initial enquiries have been made;
- ◆ supply information on employee support mechanisms (e.g. Counselling); and
- ◆ state whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

## **4. Course(s) of Action**

The course of action must be taken by the manager, as the "Contact" to whom the matter is referred, not by the individual employee who raises the issue. The manager may need to refer to, or seek the advice of, another member of the Leadership Team or the appropriate officer of the LA.

Where appropriate, the action taken could be that:

- the matter be investigated internally drawing on appropriate support (e.g. relevant Managers, or staff from within the Human Resources/Finance/Legal Department(s);
- the matter be reported to Internal Audit, or a relevant public body;
- the matter be reported to the Police (following liaison with the Legal Director);
- the employee be given the opportunity to seek redress through another Procedure of the Authority (see paragraph 7 below);
- that no further action be taken.

## **5. The Grounds on Which No Further Action Be Taken**

The grounds on which no further action should be taken are as follows:

- the manager is satisfied that on the balance of probabilities, there is no evidence that malpractice within the meaning of the policy has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur;
- the manager is satisfied that the employee is not acting in good faith;
- the matter is already (or has been) the subject of proceedings under one of the School's other procedures;
- the matter concerned is already the subject of legal proceedings, or has already been referred elsewhere i.e. Internal Audit, the Police, and other relevant public authority.

The outcome of an investigation and any action proposed/taken will be reported back to the concerned employee. All responses to the employee who raises the concern will be made in writing to his/her home address. If no further action is proposed, the employee will be informed of reason for this.

## **6. Further Action That May Be Taken By An Employee**

If the employee who raised a concern has exhausted the internal channels, as laid out in the Policy, or has not had a response within the above stated times, or otherwise feels that the complaint is not being dealt with appropriately, he/she may take the matter further. However, before taking any such action, the employee should inform the manager, as the "Contact".

The employee may take the matter externally (as detailed in paragraph 8 of the Policy) and may at anytime disclose the matter, on a confidential basis, to a professionally qualified lawyer for the purpose of taking legal advice.

## **7. Complementary Policies and Procedures**

The Confidential Reporting Policy (“Whistleblowing” in the Public Interest) is complementary to the following policies/procedures:

- Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Anti-fraud
- Dignity at Work - Dealing with Harassment & Bullying

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# Agenda Item 6

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet Member Children's Services

**DATE:** 8th February 2011

**SUBJECT:** Looked After Children Placement Strategy

**WARDS AFFECTED:** All wards in Sefton

**REPORT OF:** Peter Morgan  
Strategic Director

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Colin Pettigrew  
Service Director  
0151 934 3333

**EXEMPT/  
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:** To inform Members of the Looked After Children Placement Strategy and the progress towards delivering the Fostering Strategy.

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:** This strategy will deliver better outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in Sefton, including those looked after by the authority, as well as make best use of council resources. This includes the implementation of a Fee Paid Scheme for the recruitment and retention of Sefton's mainstream approved foster carers.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**  
The Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families approves the report

**KEY DECISION:** NO

**FORWARD PLAN:** Not appropriate

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Following the expiry of the "call-in" period for the Minutes of the meeting.

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## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

Alternative options have been considered, the CSF Overview and Scrutiny Committee conducted a thorough review of both the Fostering Service and Corporate Parenting and the contents of this report are in line with these findings.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### Budget/Policy Framework:

The strategy will be delivered within existing resources that have been identified for placement pressures within the MTFP.

### Financial:

<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2006/ 2007 £</b>	<b>2007/ 2008 £</b>	<b>2008/ 2009 £</b>	<b>2009/ 2010 £</b>
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b><u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

### Legal:

### Risk Assessment:

### Asset Management:

## CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

### FOSTER CARERS AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

LD00038/11 The Acting Head of Corporate Legal Services has been consulted and has no comments on this report.

FD629 Interim Head of Corporate Finance and ICT has been consulted and has no comments on the report

**CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:**

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		x	
2	Creating Safe Communities		x	
3	Jobs and Prosperity		x	
4	Improving Health and Well-Being		x	
5	Environmental Sustainability		x	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities		x	
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy		x	
8	Children and Young People	x		

**LINKS TO ENSURING INTEGRATION:**

**IMPACT UPON CHILDREN'S SERVICES TARGETS AND PRIORITIES:**

This Strategy has direct relevance to all CSF priorities: Safeguarding, Think Family and Community, Narrowing the Gap and Resources

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

**1. BACKGROUND:**

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- 1.1 Sefton's Children's Trust's vision for all of its children and young people is to have access to high quality services and facilities. The intent of the Looked After Children Placement Strategy (attached) is to support the priorities and principles of the Children's Trust and the Children and Young People's Plan. The Placement Strategy has evolved from the *Corporate Parenting Strategy, Fostering Services 2010-2013* Strategy and the operational *Fostering & Adoption Services Marketing Plan* (2010).
- 1.2 Every child living in Sefton has the right to access universal services such as nurseries, schools, dentists and general practitioners. Some children and their families may need extra support for a short period of time to stop their problems becoming worse and this support can be provided through access to a range of time limited resources such as, educational support in the classroom for children, or for specialist counselling for parents.
- 1.3 There are other children who are at risk of significant harm if targeted support is not provided. Sefton's Children's Social Care has structured its core service delivery into a commissioner and provider framework with each team having a specific role when working with children and their families
- 1.4 There are also those children who need a safe and secure place to live (either for a short while or until they reach adulthood) because their parents are unable or willing to care for them. These children are accommodated by the local authority in a range of 'looked after' placements.
- 1.5 Placements can be with birth parents, family and friends foster carers (kinship care), other foster carers, (local authority or independent fostering providers), within residential settings (local authority or independent residential providers), in semi-independent accommodation (local authority or independent providers), or with a permanent alternative family, through adoption.
- 1.6 Some children with complex health and/or educational and behavioural needs will require a specialist type of placement and these are generally commissioned with external providers and are jointly or tripartite funded with health and education.
- 1.7 Sefton has a higher than average usage of externally, commissioned placements for factors others than the child's complex needs and whilst Sefton's unit costs are lower than the average, the high volume of commissioned placements means that the actual level of spend remains high.
- 1.8 The placement strategy challenge is to significantly reduce the use and reliance upon external placement providers and re-invest resources into local authority foster placements and into more support to more vulnerable families through prevention and early intervention services.

## **2. STRATEGIC AIM**

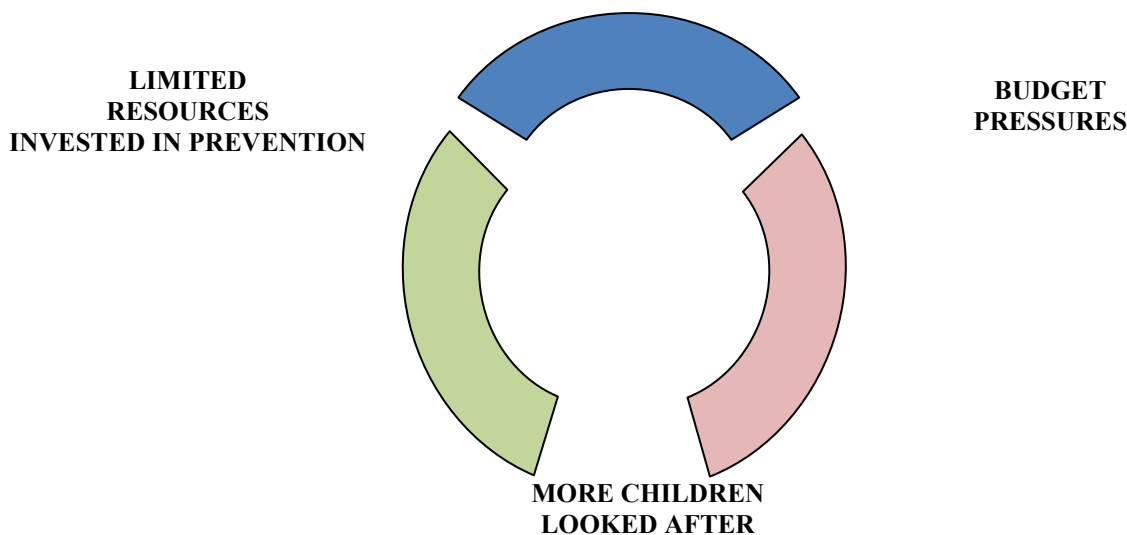
- 2.1 To promote good outcomes for children and young people by providing good quality cost effective services for children in need

## **3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 To shift the balance of expenditure so that more resources are invested in helping families to care for their children
- 3.2 To ensure children in need of protection are kept safe
- 3.3 To achieve good outcomes for children and young people in need, in particular those who are not able to live with their families

## 4. CORE OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Improved access to support services for children and their families
- 4.2 Continue to improve the timeliness, quality and quantity of multi-disciplinary assessment, planning and provision
- 4.3 Greater emphasis on partnership, community-based and family-based intervention and prevention support services
- 4.4 Continue to improve the quality and timeliness of care planning
- 4.5 Continue to improve the quality and timeliness of permanence planning
- 4.6 Develop resource commissioning and robust contracting arrangements for children in need, their families and for children looked after and care leavers
- 4.7 Decrease in expensive and inappropriate placements
- 4.8 Control and reduce the volatile Looked after Children and Placements Budgets



- 4.9 The document sets out the current pressures on the 'looked after' system and the ways in which these will be addressed. It also describes the progress that has been made against the Fostering Strategy which includes a number of the key developments required to achieve the planned objectives.
- 4.10 The Fostering Strategy had 11 core objectives for 2010. These objectives would help us to achieve placement choice, good standards of care and enhanced safeguarding for children looked after. Only one (1) objective was not achieved (management information). Nine (9) of the objectives were achieved at nil or minimum cost. The 11<sup>th</sup> objective (Fostering Marketing Plan) was funded through part of the 2010 Care Matters Grant.
- 4.11 A core objective was to scope the potential costs for Sefton Council moving to a fee paid scheme for foster carers. Whilst Sefton's fostering allowances (that are used to care for any child in placement) are commensurate with other local authorities, Sefton is one of only a few authorities nationally that does not have a fee paid scheme. The implications of this are quite obvious in so far as we cannot compete in the fostering market place, especially with our neighbouring

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authorities. Our inability to recruit and retain foster carers has had a major financial impact on the Placement Budget because we have had to purchase fostering and residential placements from the private sector. A Fee Paid scheme is more than a financial reward for foster carers it allows us to move to a position whereby foster carers become competent and skilled in different aspects of fostering. A skill and competency fee paid scheme would give us placement choice for: teenagers, sibling groups, remanded young people, emergency placements, and children with complex health needs or behavioural problems and for mother and baby assessments. Each of these types of placement is currently purchased from the private sector. A Fee Paid scheme is, therefore, an invest to save scheme as over the next three years there will be significant savings on the Placement Budget through more internal fostering placements.

4.12 The financial scoping exercise has been completed and the costs of a Fee Paid scheme are within the Placement Strategy. This document has been developed from the Fostering Strategy and it also embraces the Council's requirement for a Sufficiency Strategy. The Placement Strategy is concerned with placement choice, support to foster carers and adopters, support to care leavers and in developing prevention and intervention services to vulnerable children and their families.

4.13 The costs for the Fee Paid Scheme are over a three year period and will rise as we recruit more foster carers and the costs will come from savings on the Placement Budget.

<b>Year 1</b>	<b>£188,180</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>£361,296</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>£534,916</b>
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## 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Looked After Children Placement Strategy is intended to provide a three-year framework for the development of placement choice for children in need. It also offers proposals for reducing the placement budget and re-investing into more family support service to vulnerable families. The summary list below identifies the outcomes that could be achieved through the various Placement Strategy proposals and all of the current service developments that are in place.

### 5.2 Summary - Outcomes of Placement Strategy

- Children and young people who need to be looked after by Sefton Council are in appropriate placements for the right length of time
- More effective use of Council's resources
- Improved recruitment position in fostering market place
- Improved retention in fostering market place
- Improved standards of care in fostering placement market place
- Improved capacity of local authority fostering services to meet the needs of children and achieve good outcomes for them
- Improved residential choice, placement stability and better outcomes for children and young people
- Cost effective semi-independence accommodation and choice for care leavers
- Potential for joint working for increased efficiency and sustainability through innovative solutions for family mediation (family group conferencing), contact and child minding arrangements
- Placement stability though access to specialist services to carers, children, and adopters
- Meet the sufficiency requirement for provision for looked after children

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- Potential for preferred providers to meet Sefton's needs

## LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLACEMENT STRATEGY

2010-2013





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3	PLACEMENT STRATEGY ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS
4	PLACEMENT STRATEGY PLACEMENT FACTORS
5	SEFTON'S FOSTERING MARKET PLACE POSITION 2010
6	THE FOSTERING STRATEGY DEVELOPMENTS
7	ADOPTION SERVICE & PERMENANCE FOR CHILDREN
8	RESIDENTIAL SECTOR
9	CARE LEAVERS
10	SUMMARY SHORTFALLS IN PROVISION
11	PREVENTATIVE & EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES
12	FINANCING THE PLACEMENT STRATEGY & CONCLUSION
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2	FOSTERING STRATEGY OBJECTIVES
3	SUSTAINING THE VIRTUOUS CIRCLE
4	SERVICE MODELS OF PLANNING AND COMMISSIONING
5	CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE TEAMS
6	BUSINESS PLANNING MODEL
7	YOU CAN FOSTER - FOSTERING CAMPAIGN
8	SOCIAL CARE PLACEMENTS - FINANCE SUMMARY 26/11/10
9	COMPETENCY BASED FEE PAID FOSTER CARE SCHEME
10	THE KEY AIMS OF SEFTON CHILDREN'S TRUST
11	MANAGEMENT INFORMATION & HARDIKER MODELS

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## INTRODUCTION

The Looked After Children Placement Strategy is supported by the three year strategic fostering framework document *Fostering Services 2010-2013* and the operational *Fostering & Adoption Services Marketing Plan (2010)* as well as the Sefton Corporate Parenting Strategy. These documents contain information about our intention to deliver best quality and value to children, their families, social workers, foster carers and adopters. It is envisaged that the Placement Strategy with the previously mentioned documents will, in part, inform Sefton's 2011 Sufficiency Strategy.

Reference will be made throughout this document to the terms, 'child or children' as defined within the Children Act 1989 for ease of reading. Where reference is specific, the term 'young person or young people' will be used.

## CONTEXT

This is the first Looked After Children Placement Strategy to be developed in Sefton and it is intended that it will be an organic document in that it will change shape and further develop over the next three years. Whilst the focus of the Placement Strategy is upon developing placement choice and as such deals primarily with fostering provision, the residential sector and adoption, reference is made to wider services that impact upon the Placement Strategy and on how we respond to the needs of vulnerable children and their families.<sup>1</sup>

Every child living in Sefton has the right to access universal services such as nurseries, schools, dentists and general practitioners. Some children and their families may need extra support for a short period of time to stop their problems becoming worse and this support can be provided through access to a range of time limited resources such as, educational support in the classroom for children or for specialist counselling for parents with drug, alcohol or debt problems. There are other children who are at risk of significant harm if targeted support is not provided. There are also those children who need a safe and secure place to live (for a short while or until they reach adulthood) because their parents are unable or willing to care for them. These children are accommodated by the local authority in a range of placements.<sup>2</sup>

Placement of looked after children can be with birth parents, family and friends foster carers (kinship care), other foster carers, (local authority or independent fostering providers), residential settings (local authority or independent residential providers), in semi-independent accommodation (local authority or independent providers), or placed for adoption.

Some children will require a specialist type of placement. Some specialist placements are jointly or tripartite funded with health and education because of the complex needs of the child. Such provision is likely to be commissioned from external residential or fostering providers. However, Sefton has a higher than averages use of external, commissioned placements for factors others than the child's complex needs.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendices 3 Making Ends Meet SSI & Audit Commission – The Virtuous Circle of Children's Services

<sup>2</sup> See Appendices 4 Model of Level of Need and Service

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Sefton Children's Social Care department has structured its core service delivery into a commissioner and provider framework with each team having a specific role when working with children and their families<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendices 5 Descriptive narrative of teams and their role

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## **PLACEMENT STRATEGY AIM & CORE OBJECTIVES**

A business planning model has been used to help determine the core objectives that will provide children and their families with a range of support that also includes placement choice. The model also helps us to take a strategic over-view of what we need to know and what we need to do in order to move to a position whereby we spend our resources on offering more support to more families, including offering suitable placements to children.<sup>4</sup>

## **STRATEGIC AIM**

To promote good outcomes for children and young people by providing good quality cost effective services for children in need

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

To shift the balance of expenditure so that more resources are invested in helping families to care for their children<sup>5</sup>

To ensure children in need of protection are kept safe

To achieve good outcomes for children and young people in need, in particular those who are not able to live with their families

## **Core Objectives**

1. Improved access to support services for children and their families
2. Continue to improve the timeliness, quality and quantity of multi-disciplinary assessment, planning and provision
3. Greater emphasis on partnership, community-based and family-based intervention and prevention support services
4. Continue to improve the quality and timeliness of care planning
5. Continue to improve the quality and timeliness of permanence planning
6. Develop resource commissioning and robust contracting arrangements for children in need, their families and for children looked after and care leavers
7. Decrease in expensive and inappropriate placements
8. Control and reduce the volatile Looked after Children and Placements Budgets

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<sup>4</sup> Making Ends Meet SSI & Audit Commission – The Virtuous Circle of Children’s Services

<sup>5</sup> Appendices 11 Example Model –objectives, indicators and targets

## **PLACEMENT STRATEGY ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

Environmental factors, such as central government social and fiscal policy or changes in legislation for children will significantly impact upon our ability to deliver an effective service to children and their families. Other environmental factors that have to be considered include: changing demographics, new geographic areas of high deprivation, the long term impact of child and adult morbid obesity on service type and service demand, the rising population of children with complex medical needs and/or disabilities due to medical advances with very premature babies.

### Sefton demographics<sup>6</sup>

The key features of Sefton's population are:

- The population is declining

- There is a high and growing population of older people

- There are reducing numbers of children and young people of working age

- There is a small black and minority ethnic population, albeit with an increased number of international and European workers

### Size and Age of Population

The size of Sefton's population is changing. The number of people who live in the borough continues to fall. In 2007, it was estimated as, 276,200. Sefton has seen the biggest percentage fall of any local authority in the North West since 2001 (2.4% or 6,700 fewer people).

Over 20% of the population on Sefton is aged over 65 (compared with 16% in England) and the number of older people will continue to grow. By 2012 it expected that there will be over 28,500 people over the age of 75 years with a greater concentration of older people in the north of Sefton.

The number of people under the age of 20 years in Sefton is falling. It has fallen by 5,500 over the last ten years and is predicted to fall by another 4,600 by 2012 and to continue to fall beyond 2012.

### Ethnicity

Sefton has a fairly small population from the black and minority ethnic groups (about 7,200 i.e. 2.6% in 2006). The borough is becoming more diverse with a small number of European/international workers and their families who mainly live in the Southport area.

### Wealth and Deprivation

Some areas in Sefton are amongst the most affluent in England but close to these are some of the poorest places; Sefton is in the 15% most deprived local authority districts in England in terms of concentration of deprivation. The areas of highest deprivation are concentrated in the south, particularly within the wards of Linacre, Derby, Netherton, St Oswald, Ford and Church. There are also areas of high deprivation around the centre of Southport. The areas of deprivation closely correlate with areas where people have the poorest health and are areas of highest income deprivation affecting children.

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<sup>6</sup> Demographic information taken from NHS Sefton Better Health Better Life Strategic Plan 2008-2013)

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The internal and external environmental factors that have been identified and summarised below are current and they will present us with challenges in the coming months and years.

## Internal Factors

There is an imperative to reduce the Placement Budget and over reliance on external providers. There is, therefore, a strategy needed to move from reactive 'looked after services' towards an investment in prevention and early intervention services for children in need and their families.<sup>7</sup> This may mean that over a three year period there has to be an 'invest to save' initiative to achieve these objectives. The points summarised below are some of the greatest challenges to us:

- Reduction in number of looked after children
- Reduction of length of time children are looked after
- Providing looked after children with placement choice that meet their individual identified needs
- Driving up standards of the quality of care children are given
- Ensuring social worker understands of, and need to be compliant with, permanence planning for looked after children
- Implementing the New Life Work Model for looked after children
- Having a departmental stance on the Southwark judgement in relation to accommodating 16 and 17 year olds
- Embedding rigorous resource/provision allocation, resource monitoring and evaluation of services provided

## External Factors

The greatest challenge comes from an historic use and current reliance upon external providers of placements for looked after children. We need to shift the balance to local authority provision whilst also driving down current external costs and introducing systems for monitoring outcomes delivered by external providers. Some arrangements are already in place to gate-keep resources and care plans for children but these arrangements need to be further developed.<sup>8</sup>

The other significant challenge comes from the Court arena where decisions for looked after children are made in the context of their current placement e.g. long-term foster care for very young children who are placed with an Independent

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<sup>7</sup> Prevention can be described as a process of promoting positive outcomes for children and young people by focusing on key 'protective factors'. This approach enables children's own capacity to avoid developing problems.

Prevention can work on any number of levels but each level is aimed at promoting a child's resilience. For example, promoting positive attachments in infancy builds up resilience for every child. Universal services provide protective and preventative resources for children and families some of these include: health visitors; children's centres and schools for children over the age of five years.

Early Intervention is a process that should allow for the active engagement of any agency with children and their families where more than one risk factor has been identified in advance of emerging problems. Every agency should therefore work in a preventive manner.

Early intervention means that any agency should become involved as early as possible to tackle problems that have already become known. Early intervention in a family will reduce the need for more intrusive and/or complex interventions at a later stage. Early intervention should target specific children, young people and their families with an identified need for additional support once problems have already emerged.

<sup>8</sup> MAPP and PPM's introduced in 2010

Fostering Agency. We need to build confidence in Court and in challenging Children's Guardians.

External agency decisions prevent us reducing the looked after population and furthermore may not be in the long term interests of the children (generally younger children under 9 years should have had a plan for adoption) and they impact on the Placement Budget for several, if not many, years.<sup>9</sup>

The final external factor that affects the Placement Strategy is the delay in being able to either access services or receive advice from targeted or specialist services, (such as CAMHS) particularly for those children that have suffered emotional abuse and neglect; these delays results in multiple placement breakdowns including adoption breakdowns when adopted children enter adolescence.<sup>10</sup>

## **PLACEMENT FACTORS**

### **Fostering Services Market Challenges and Market Competition**

Much research has been recently undertaken on a national and regional basis regarding the recruitment and retention of foster carers.<sup>11</sup> The following list captures some of the research headlines:

- There is a shortage of local authority foster carers and a large percentage of the foster carer population is reaching retirement age. Throughout the UK there is a typical loss of foster families of 10-15% per year. Nationally, over 18% of current foster carers are over the age of 55 years<sup>12</sup>
- There has been an increase in the numbers of looked after children, Sefton has a higher increase in looked after children population than statistical neighbours
- The independent fostering agency sector has become saturated with referrals from local authorities and as a consequence there has been a shift to local authorities commissioning residential care at a much higher cost than fostering placements
- Local authorities have varying fostering allowances and reward schemes in place – they have entered into the competitive market place for the recruitment and retention of foster carers
- The interpretation of Southwark Judgement is putting extra pressure on local authorities for suitable placements for much older children
- There has been a rising uptake of the use of Special Guardianship Orders taken up by foster carers – whilst reducing the looked after children population the fostering resource for future looked after children also withdrawn

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<sup>9</sup> Appendices 8 Costs of Social Care

<sup>10</sup> As at 03.12.10 there were three older children in residential care as a result of their adoptive breakdown and one family in crisis because of their son's behaviours and emotional state

<sup>11</sup> See for example NW Placements Report 2010 and Appendices 6

<sup>12</sup> Fostering Network research The True Cost of Foster Care 2010

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- There has been a rise in the placement of looked after children with kinship carers – these carers receive the same services as mainstream foster carers but they do not offer a general resource to the wider looked after children population; moreover, there is a high level of placement breakdowns and/or de-registrations within Kinship care.

## **Position in the Market**

In 'marketing' terms, Sefton's 'Social Care Market' can be viewed as unique in that it has a higher use of independent providers than most other local authorities.

Usually, local authorities, be they unitary or metropolitan, are market leaders they provide the most services and placements for their children. Normally, local authorities do not compete with each other in the market place rather they are likely to collaborate and jointly fund, commission or provide services. Such arrangements are common between neighbouring local authorities of a similar size as the benefit to each local authority comes through economies of scale. However, the drive for foster carer recruitment and retention by local authorities has resulted in competition within this niche of the market between authorities, most particularly between neighbouring boroughs. Sefton's neighbouring local authorities (e.g. such as Liverpool, Knowsley) are market competitors when it comes to recruiting potential foster carers.<sup>13</sup>

## **Threats to the Market**

### Current threats

- The high numbers of emergency placements with family or friends under section 20 and regulation 38 arrangements (voluntary care and emergency foster carer status)
- The rising looked after population of older teenagers – this is in part due to a deficit in an alternative crisis support service and in part due to self referral of older teenagers through the Southwark judgement
- The numbers of looked after children who are siblings and the associated drift in permanence planning for sibling groups - some sibling groups have complex, re-constituted birth and extended families. Delays can be caused in planning for children due to the number of assessments that have to be undertaken or because the siblings have different social workers
- The incapacity to respond to emergency placements
- The incapacity to focus on mainstream foster recruitment because of the high numbers of kinship carers
- The regional and local encroachment and expansion of the Independent Fostering Agencies that are a financial and local resource threat<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Appendices 9 example fee paid schemes

<sup>14</sup> Not only are the IFA fees higher than local authority unit costs, they also have real potential to impact upon the retention of the local authority foster carers; they can appear to offer excellent remuneration and support services and can choose their 'customers' whereas local authorities cannot.



- The inability to re-align budgets into family support services because of pressures and commitments on the Placement Budget
- The lack of a 'modelled' residential resource that meets present needs - factors that hinder developing capacity in residential provision that are absent in the residential market for older people.<sup>15</sup>
- Insufficient and early access to specialist services (e.g. such as CAMHS, play therapists)
- Insufficient and early advice from specialist services for adopters and foster carers

## Future threats

- The growing numbers of disabled children or children with special needs for example, children diagnosed on the higher end of the autistic spectrum whose behaviours become very challenging when they enter adolescence and the increased life chances of premature babies due to medical advances.
- The likelihood of increased family pressures and stresses associated with present fiscal policies and austerity.

## **SEFTON'S FOSTERING MARKET PLACE POSITION 01.10.2010**

Sefton has a higher usage of independent fostering agency sector than any other local authority within the North West regions

Sefton has lower numbers of local authority foster carers than any other local authority within the North West regions

Sefton has a higher than average number of kinship carers than other local authorities

Sefton has lost a number of foster carers (and potential placements) through their right to make SGO or adoption applications

Sefton does not have a comprehensive financial or incentive recruitment package for foster carers

Sefton pays similar fostering allowances to other regional local authorities (our competitors) but is the only authority without a skill based payment scheme

Payments to foster carers can be problematic (unreliable and inaccurate) causing distress to carers and increased workload to fostering social workers

Enhanced payments to foster carers are neither equitable nor transparent

There is no transport scheme for foster carers (e.g. 7 seated lease cars)

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<sup>15</sup> The residential market for vulnerable adults is far greater than for children; even where audits and analyses of needs have taken place it is difficult to have a clear picture of demand or duration for children's residential provision

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## **Managing the Threats**

### Placement Stability

Improving placement stability is a key outcome of the Placement Strategy but children with complex needs or challenging behaviours and who have high levels of need are unlikely to have their needs met by newly recruited foster carers unless the new recruits are people with professional experience of working with troubled children.<sup>16</sup>

It is more likely that an existing foster family could be identified and then given specific training and support to enable them to care for the young person. This would mean that young people with lower levels of need could be placed with newly recruited families.

The length of time children are looked after has significantly increased over the last two years, with there being a threefold increase for children being in care for between 6 months and a year (2008/09 n= 10: 2009/10 n=31) and a twenty five percent increase in children remaining in care between 1 and 2 years (2008/09 n= 25: 2009/10 n=33). Some children will have long term plans with current foster carers who are externally commissioned; thus, disabling plans for Placement Budget reductions.<sup>17</sup> The ratio of males to females becoming looked after has significantly changed over the two-year period; in 2008/09 there were 35 males and 51 females compared to 51 males and 56 females at 31.03.10. Further investigation into the reason and ages groups of higher male entrants is warranted.

The New Life Work Model will be introduced in 2011 and the primary aim of the model is to prepare children for 'moving children on'. A child may move back to their family or have plans for permanence either way the model will assist children to understand their genetic identity and their circumstances; thus improving their outcomes

### Areas of Development

Even though threats are present there are a number of routes that the Department has developed to ensure that children with priority needs are provided for. Services developed in 2010 include:

- Permanence Planning Meetings (PPM's launched 01.04.10) at the child's 4 month review – earlier contingency planning
- The PPM's to address potential drift in care planning. Reducing drift will also increase resource capacity.
- The revised role and functions of the Fostering Panel and Adoption and Permanence Panel, alongside the department's amended procedures, will

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<sup>16</sup> One of the Waterhouse recommendations, partially included with the Regulations and national Minimum Standards is for local authorities to exercise extreme caution when assessing and approving a professional worker previously known to a young person who applies specifically to foster that young person

<sup>17</sup> Jim Conalty (Appendices 11)

ensure that there is rigour in matching children who have plans for long term foster care to a suitable carer, rather than external placements being a result of drift and the courts decisions.

- Revised contract with After Adoption to assist birth parents who are unwilling to co-operate with the child's social worker for permanence planning
- Multi-Agency Planning Meetings to access and monitor resources
- Revised procedures for looked after children (all placements to be short-term in the first instance, be they internal or external placements)
- Weekly, agency expenditure & agency budget commitment monitoring meetings
- Nine of the eleven fostering strategy objectives achieved <sup>18</sup>
- A number of the Marketing Plan objectives achieved <sup>19</sup>
- Panel business meetings developed for improved performance
- Fostering Network Form F Assessments being trialled <sup>20</sup>
- Development of self completed Movement Forms for foster carers
- Foster carer service development group established

## **THE FOSTERING STRATEGY – PLACEMENT DEVELOPMENTS**

The second year of the strategy will commence in April 2011. During 2010 attention has been focused on the Marketing Plan for the recruitment and retention of foster carers and capturing those children without permanence plans where special guardianship or adoption is appropriate.<sup>21</sup>

There is no generally recognised formula to calculate the ideal number of foster families to allow placement choice without incurring unnecessary costs through having an excess of foster families. Formulae that could be used include:

- 10% placement vacancies on any given night
- 110% of the number of looked after children
- Placement vacancies in each secondary school catchments area

Instead, most local authorities and independent fostering providers use pragmatic targets such as 10% increase in foster families year-on-year, or a target number of new families for the coming year.

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<sup>18</sup> Outstanding objectives include Tier paid competency scheme

<sup>19</sup> Insert here

<sup>20</sup> New framework with competency based and quicker assessments

<sup>21</sup> Appendices 3

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Sefton needs to recruit both foster carers who match the profile of existing foster carers and people who have a significantly different profile. These require overlapping but separate approaches.

Previous recruitment campaigns have resulted in a loss of potential carers because assessments could not be allocated – in 2010 a ‘trickle’ approach to recruitment has been more successful and resulted in all mainstream applicants being allocated to a social worker. There has been a focus on hard to reach communities such as, single carers, same sex couples, male carers, carers from different religious beliefs and cultures, different race and ethnicity and carers from the eastern European community.

The recent North West region foster carer recruitment initiative resulted in Sefton at one period generating as many contacts from interested people as Liverpool City. However, the take up for further information for Sefton was very much lower than Liverpool. One major factor for this was Sefton’s ‘terms and conditions’ compared to Liverpool i.e. no fee paid scheme.

Target efficiencies for recruitment of foster carers by the Fostering Team are:

- 100% initial enquiries answered and information pack sent on the same day or next working day

- 100% of first home visits will take place within two weeks of receiving the initial enquiry form

- 100% of applicants will be allocated a supervising social worker within two weeks of the first home visit

- 100% of assessments will be completed within six months (unless the delay is at the request of the applicant or due to inability to complete background checks)

The PPM process now means that the fostering and adoption services have been able to start profiling children who are waiting against applicants within the preparation groups.

BAFF Licence and Form F’s are to be replaced by April 2011 with Fostering Network Licence and Form F’s – this move will ensure that all fostering applicants have been assessed against core competencies and will help to ensure that the quality of care is improved; the assessments will also be swifter by several weeks resulting in earlier approval status.

Other developments in year two will be a move towards a Competency Based Foster Carer Payment Scheme. Such schemes operate in numerous local authorities, including our closest market competitors and is a more transparent and equitable process.

Sefton must move towards such a scheme if it is to stave off present and future competition within the foster carer recruitment market place. The timing for the launch of a fee paid scheme is now at a critical point:

- We compete against our neighbouring authorities in the recruitment of foster carers
- We compete against the terms and conditions offered by external private fostering agencies that are encroaching and saturating our region
- We are over reliant on external providers including the increasing use of expensive residential placements

## **Projected Costs**

Based on the current 59 mainstream foster carer numbers (i.e. exclusive of kinship carers who do not provide a generic placement resource) and inclusive of statutory training at £8k annually the costs for launching such a scheme would be:

**Year 1 £188,180   Year 2 £361,296   Year 3 £534,916**

These costs cover annual training and training materials but do not cover any growth in staffing that will have to be factored in with foster carer growth.<sup>22</sup> The costs will rise as we attract further carers.

## Added Value

A fee paid scheme brings other added value to a local authority; for example, the quality of care will be driven up because foster carers cannot progress through the payment tiers unless they have completed compulsory and then specialist training; also, the foster carers that reach the upper end of the scheme will be able to offer placements for children and young people who are currently in specialist providers; for example

- Remanded young people
- Truculent teenagers
- Sexually abused or sexually vulnerable children and young people
- Children with attachment issues
- Mother and baby assessment placements
- Emergency and assessment placements
- 3-4 disabled children have been identified who may have benefit from short break foster care, especially overnight respite care.

## New Market Opportunities

Lost jobs and redundancies caused through the current economic climate and public sector cuts offers an opportunity to look at a new market place for potential foster carers. This market will have people seeking paid employment and a fee paid scheme could bring new applicants with a wealth of knowledge and skills into the fostering service.

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<sup>22</sup> See staffing ratio growth and costs form NW Placements Report 2010

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## Lease Car Scheme

Currently there are ad hoc arrangements in place for supporting foster carers with transport arrangements where there are more than five family members and a larger vehicle would be required (e.g. two parents, three of their own children). Sefton needs placements for babies and sibling groups and also needs to expand the foster stock in order to reduce the agency expenditure. The following proposal has been thoroughly explored with other local authorities, (in terms of costs, the pitfalls and positive outcomes), discussions with the foster carer steering group and looking against current expenditure.

It is proposed to move to a lease car scheme that will be cost effective and will also deliver an equitable service to foster carers; this in then will support Sefton's position within the recruitment and retention market for foster carers.

### Current Costs – No Growth Capacity

Number of cars	Annual current costs	Total costs
4 hire cars on ad hoc arrangements	£45, 731.52	£45, 731.52
Enhanced payments @ £50.00 week	7 families @ £2600 per annum	£18,200.00
<b>Total costs</b>		<b>£ 63,931.52</b>

### Proposed Costs

By transferring over to lease agreement we would immediately reduce costs (See table below)

Annual Current Hire Car Costs (4 cars)	Lease no. of car seats and cars	Lease annual costs over 3 years	Lease annual costs over 5 years	Combined annual savings on a 3 years lease	Combined annual savings on a 5 years lease
<b>£45, 731.52</b>	7 x 2 9 x 2	15,681.12 17,057.04	10,903.20 11,737.44	12,993.36	23,090.88
<b>Annual Costs £</b>		<b>32,738.16</b>	<b>£22,640.64</b>		

Currently enhanced payments to foster carers are neither transparent nor equitable. Some foster carers receive a payment of £50.00 per week because they have taken out loans to buy larger cars; other carers have bought larger cars and receive no financial support from the Council.

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It is proposed that where foster carers buy their own cars to carry out the fostering task within their approval status (when the family falls within the 5 seats criteria) that the council service gives them an annual enhancement equivalent to their road tax and car insurance. This would be paid for from the savings made from a lease car scheme. It is proposed to review outstanding loans of foster carers and bring the current arrangements to an eventual end.

## Future Needs of Service

We have to build in capacity for the car lease scheme to grow to meet present and future demands. In the first stage, it would be cost effective to lease 2 pool vehicles, which would prevent one-off high cost payments for hire cars in times of crises (e.g. emergency sibling placements) or for planned arrangements (e.g. fostering household holidays/contact etc). Moreover, as new foster carers become approved for sibling groups one the pool cars would be re-designated

Annual Current Care hire costs	Number of car seats and cars	Annual costs over 3 years	Annual costs over 5 years	Combined Savings 3 years	Combined Savings 5 years
4 cars 45,731.52	7 x 2 9 x 2	15,681.12 17,057.04	10,903.20 11,737.44	12,993.3 6	23,090.8 8

## Insurance

This is not included with any of the above proposals and would be the responsibility of the foster carer.

It is proposed that if a foster carer do not have a child in placement for three months then their lease car would be returned.

## Mileage for Foster Carers

Currently mileage is paid on submission of mileage undertaken and is paid at the council flat rate. It is proposed that we move to a 'petrol and fee paid scheme'. This will reduce costs and encourage foster carers to transport children.

The proposal is to agree the mileage at the time of placement or at review this will be in-line with the cost table identified below. This will be paid in the form of a weekly amount, which will reduce the admin and social work time and costs.

Daily mileage	0-20	20-40	40-60	60-80	80-100
Payment amount	8.00	16.00	24.00	32.00	40.00

We currently pay Independent providers £12.50 – £ 8.50 hour to carry out this task. Proposal hourly rate be paid to the foster carer for travelling time of £6.50 hour.

## ADOPTION SERVICE – PERMANENCE FOR CHILDREN

The implementation of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 sees a new vision raising the status of adoption as an option for permanence for looked after children. It requires the exploration of a number of options including: returning to the child to the parents (with support where necessary); long-term placement with the child's wider

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family; long-term placement with foster carers; residential placements until independence; and placement for adoption.

The adoption service was inspected in June 2010 and it improved upon its previous Ofsted rating from satisfactory to good. Internal changes to the team at nil extra costs have resulted in an identified adoption social worker for family finding for children.

A revised Statement of Purpose was produced in 2010 with the first Adoption Service Marketing Plan. Care Matters grant funding was secured for service improvements and this included the establishment of a dedicated Adoption Panel Administrator and an Adoption Support Service social worker. The latter post will further drive up the standards of care for looked after children who have a plan for adoption and to adopters; this will be achieved through a centralised support service as defined in the Adoption and Children Act.

The PPM process is having a positive impact for younger children in the care planning process through earlier contingency planning that includes: starting the medical processes at 4 months, identifying life work to be undertaken by the foster carer and in setting up profiles of the children. Adoption staff and Adoption Panel Members have had training on Equality and Diversity and the New Life Work Model; materials have been purchased for the Model's launch in 2011. Internal training was delivered to children's social workers on the writing of Child Permanence Reports in 2010 as this was an area identified by Ofsted for improvement.

The Adoption Panel was reviewed in 2009 and the review recommendations implemented in April 2010. The panel was reconstituted to an Adoption and Permanence Panel so that it could deal with applications for Special Guardianship Orders for children under the age of 11 years. Sefton has made a commitment that looked after children placed with mainstream foster carers who are to be subject of SGO's will have the same rigour applied as in the adoption process; for example, full medicals, matching and support plans.

The Panel business was reviewed in June 2010 and a Panel Business Plan is being developed with the Adoption and Fostering independent Panel Chairs.

As part of the improvement in placement planning for looked after children the Adoption Panel will now receive 6 monthly updates on children who should be placed for adoption (SHOBPA) but who have not be linked or matched to a family from the Family Finder social worker; furthermore, annual up dates will be presented to Panel on approved adopters who have not had a child linked, matched or placed within 12 months of their approval. Each of these processes will keep Panel informed of the Adoption Service's efforts towards children and adopters.

The recruitment of adopters is constant. Sefton is a geographically long and narrow borough and Sefton children are more likely than not to be placed with Sefton adopters. Most children with a plan for adoption (but not exclusively) come from the south of the borough and most are placed with adopters in the north. This means



that Sefton does not have to purchase adopters from other authorities or adoption agencies as frequently as councils<sup>23</sup>.

## Areas for Development

There is a critical gap in specialist services for foster carers and adopters (and children placed with them) in terms of services (e.g. play therapy) and advice via consultation.

Foster carers have told us that delays in getting advice and support has resulted in some of the children they have looked after having to move placement (multiple placements on occasion) because they could not longer manage the child's behaviours. Foster carers have also told us that accessing support or services is not equitable but depends upon where the foster carer lives.<sup>24</sup>

The child's placing authority is responsible for providing adopter's assessments and services for a period of three years from the date of the making of the Adoption Order.<sup>25</sup> However, there are times when adoption teams are unable to provide the specialist type of advice or service that adopters need and they go into crisis. The family experiences a range of behaviours (some times extreme) that they cannot cope with. Some types of crises and circumstances around them are:

## Adolescence

Some adoption breakdowns are more likely when the adopted child reaches adolescence. Adolescence is a significant child development stage, physically, emotionally and psychologically and is, experienced by all young people. However, some adopted children have to deal with thoughts and feelings about their genetic identity<sup>26</sup> and feelings of self worth, even perhaps, guilt.

An urgent and informed response is needed to adoptive parents in order to help them understand their child's behaviours and to manage those behaviours appropriately. The consequence of delays can be a rapid and often permanent family breakdown. (In November 2010, three young people were accommodated by the local authority who were adopted; all three children were boys of a similar age)

## Placement of Sibling Groups

Immediate specialist advice and services are needed when a sibling group is placed with adopters. Some of the siblings may not have been placed together child will have competing needs. This short-term work has proved to be effective in terms of giving the children a good foundation for their permanence with their new family.

## Second Child Placements with Adoptive Family

Although adopter's birth child/ren are fully involved and prepared by their parents and the adoption social worker for the placement of another child into the family

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<sup>23</sup> Families approved in 2009 = n13, 2010 to date = n 7: children placed within time 67% and 72%

<sup>24</sup> Foster Carers Support Group November 2010 and Foster Carers Service Development g Group

<sup>25</sup> Financial arrangements and contact arrangements remain the placing authorities responsibility until the child's 18th birthday

<sup>26</sup> Research undertaken by Professor David Howe talks more fully about adopted children and genetic identity and kinship identity – See East Anglia University Research

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there are risks that the placement disrupts<sup>27</sup> breakdowns quite early in the placement because of the birth child's competing feelings of loss and jealousy. This situation is also applicable where the adopters have already adopted a child and a second child enters the adoptive family. *Specialist support* may be needed for the birth child, the first child placed and or the parents of the children so that a solid relationship can be formed between the different members of the family.

The proposal is for a professional Play Therapist, with filial qualifications<sup>28</sup> to be located within the Provision Service for Looked after Children. This accessible and specialist service has been a successful project with one of our market competitors. The option has been tentatively explored with the Assistant Director of Integrated Services with a Play Therapist from a neighbouring authority who has been running this kind of project for two years.

The Play therapist offers rapid response initial phone consultations to foster carers and adopters at times of high need, undertakes direct work with children (including older children in residential care) as well as putting on training programmes for foster carers, adopters and school teachers. Other work offered by the therapist includes the use of developmental charts for helping children and families where children have become 'stuck' in their development because of previous abuse or neglect. This category of need figures highly in the numbers of looked after children in Sefton

## **Costs of Play Therapist for Looked After Children and Adoptive Families**

**Salary £40,000 (plus on costs)**

**Clinical Supervision has to be commissioned for the therapist**

## **RESIDENTIAL SECTOR**

Residential placements (i.e. children's homes) are the most expensive placement resource for looked after children. Residential care affords some children the right placement type for their particular needs and/or their behaviours. Wherever it is appropriate, Sefton continues to emphasise foster placements over residential children's homes options. The priority however is to identify and address the individual needs of the child. In some cases residential care or care commissioned from the independent residential sector may be appropriate.

As at October (2010), Sefton has five children's homes.<sup>29</sup> One home provides respite care for children with learning disabilities, and one home provides residential care on a longer term for a younger age group at the time of their placement. The three other children's homes have similar Statement of Purposes and each holds an emergency bed provision.<sup>30</sup>

A decision has been taken to close one children's home by April 2011. The closure was the result of earlier recommendations that the building (not the service) was unfit for purpose.

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<sup>27</sup> Adoption disruption is different to an adoption breakdown and as such a Disruption Meeting has to take place and be Independently Chaired

<sup>28</sup> The filial therapy approach is advantageous as it also offers a long arm model of support

<sup>29</sup> Melrose House, Kirwin House, Knowsley Road, Cherry Road, Springbrook

<sup>30</sup> Statement of Purposes can be requested from the relevant children's home as they are public documents

The remaining residential provision needs to have a fundamental re-modelling exercise in 2011 to develop Statement of Purposes and Registration status that reflects the current and projected demands for residential services.

Sefton has a high use of external residential provision and predominantly this is for older children (i.e. teenagers 15, 16 & 17). Research shows that the lack of local authority fostering placements and saturation within the private sector fostering agencies has resulted in an increase in residential care<sup>31</sup>. However, local data shows that a large percentage of current residential placements are for young people who had been moved from our own children's homes.

Further investigation needs to take place on this observation. It may be that there are common factors that can be addressed, or further developed, to prevent future external placements being made.

Sefton has a highly trained and comparatively well-paid children's homes staff group. So terms and conditions of employment and lack of training would not appear to be a factor in children being moved out of the home.

Examination of Ofsted statistical neighbour's reports shows that those children's homes with outstanding ratings are generally small homes, taking one or two children.

An option for Sefton would be to rent social housing of three bedrooms, which could take the placement of two young people. Smaller homes offer a wider choice of placement for children and they offer the opportunity to specialise; for example, matching children to staff expertise and to other children placed.

This is not the current situation within Sefton. Rather, as quickly as beds are emptied they are filled and often on an emergency basis. This results in a 'storming stage' of group behaviour and often results in escalating behaviours of children placed and inevitably the change of placement for some children.

## AREAS OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

### Placement Planning for Children in Residential Care

There are regulatory requirements for placement planning of looked after children and for children placed in residential care.<sup>32</sup> Observations show that emergency admissions are made to Sefton's children's homes without proper and timely placement planning arrangements being undertaken. This causes drift for some young people and difficulties in managing their unknown behaviours and needs; these factors are significant where the young person has no written and agreed placement plan, behaviour management plan and or risk assessment. Firstly, their presenting behaviours and unmet needs affects the smooth running of the home and the safety and security of other children and staff alike and the young person is likely to be moved<sup>33</sup> and secondly the young person is less likely to be returned home if their case goes into drift.

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<sup>31</sup> NW Placements June 2010

<sup>32</sup> Children Act 1989 and Volume 4 Children Act Guidance, Care Standards Act 2000 and Children's Homes National Minimum Standards 2002

<sup>33</sup> Data form TTT December 2010

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It could be that the present staffing structures are not fit for purpose (4 team leaders in each home) and the structure leads to a lack of clear communication about how staff shifts are to deal with behaviours and respond to placement plans. A review of the structure has been undertaken in 2010 and there was a consensus from the home's managers that the deletion of team leader posts and the creation of an assistant manager post would enhance communication and consistency of care.

It could be that there has been a culture within the children's homes that moving children out was a way of managing the home generally. *This is not a fact but a factor to be investigated*. The children's homes managers are Registered Managers with Ofsted and as such are competent personnel. They are also part of the 'provision arm' of the department. It is recommended that they become more visible within Children's Services through attendance at general and service area management meetings. Such a move would bring a more inclusive approach to achieving the Placement Strategy objectives.<sup>34</sup>

It is proposed that Children's Homes Managers present emergency placements to MAPP to avoid drift and home disruption.

## **CARE LEAVERS**

Sefton has a dedicated Care Leavers team and they are currently providing services to 150 young people.

### Pathway and Placement Planning

All of Sefton's young people who are looked after and/or who qualify as a previously looked after child under the Care Leavers Act have a Pathway Plan. The Plan will have started and be reviewed whilst the young person was still accommodated and receiving placement care (i.e. fostering or residential provision). Observation of financial data and other management information shows that a significant proportion of young people need specialist leaving care placement services because of either their lack of maturity, social skills and independent living skills or because of their presenting anti-social behaviours.

Further, observation shows that this group of young people in external or specialist care leaving services have not come directly from fostering placements but from the residential sector.

### Areas of further development

A review of pre-independence outcomes needs to be undertaken within the current cohort of young people in residential care to establish if there are shortfalls in preparation planning.

**Young people from the Make a Difference group (MAD) have told us that they value the services offered by Connexions they have also told us they would like an accommodation scheme.**<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> The establishment of the Resource Manager post is the opportunity to have Resource Management Meetings

A semi-independent facility (no more than 2 young people) should be considered through using rented social housing with 'hostel' or 'group dwelling' status with floating care, (rather than an older children's residential home status.) This option could be provided by the employed workforce, by partnership arrangements or by a commissioned or voluntary sector service. This link of placement choice development would offer an alternative to requests for external provision for care leavers on emergency basis

## **PREVENTATIVE & EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES**

The reality of family support at present involves some or all of the following:

- Services geared towards children at risk of abuse or neglect
- Emphasis on support to vulnerable families and communities
- Services provided by a number of different agencies with different agendas
- Services developed in an ad hoc way not necessarily reflecting the needs of the community
- Poor co-ordination between services
- Increasingly influenced by policy agendas

## CURRENT PREVENTION SERVICES

Entrants into the looked after system (exclusive of care order) using the category of need criteria shows that family dysfunction numbers has nearly doubled in two years (2008/9 and 2009/10). Data provided on the 10.10.10 shows that apart from babies the significant entrants into the looked after system is those children in the 10 -16 years age groups.<sup>36</sup>

The impetus is to prevent this group of children becoming looked after and to strengthen families. It is intended that future reductions in expenditure for out of area placements could be invested in years two and three to expand support services, to more families, children and young people in crises.

This CRYSYS team will become operational in 2011 with the closure of Kirwin House and the subsequent re-deployment of the experienced residential staff group. There will be a new service created for families of older children who are at risk of coming into care and work with older looked after children with the aim of early reunification to their family.

This will be a 7-day service and will operate outside of core working hours. In the first phase of operation the CRYSYS Team will sit under the Provision sector. The service will be Borough wide but the largest groups of children becoming looked after are living in the Bootle area of Sefton.

The success of the service will be measured and evaluated against the reduction of numbers of older looked after children and the quicker reunification timescales

Sefton does not have an overarching prevention and early intervention strategy. At the time of writing this document it is evident that there is a wide range of

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<sup>35</sup> MAD Corporate Parenting Board Meeting December 2010

<sup>36</sup> Jim Conalty Children, Schools and Families (Appendices ?attached as excel workbooks)

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intervention providers within Sefton and that there are gaps in how these are located and commissioned. In terms of family support we need to identify what is the evidence for best practice nationally and how this can be promoted locally.

## **Area for development**

### Scoping of Services

A mapping exercise of all preventative and early intervention services agencies, schemes and pilot projects would need to be undertaken so there is a family support strategic framework from which a signposting service can be accessed for families and children in need and for looked after children. Such an exercise would assist with consensus building and a shared vision and agreed priorities with all stakeholders.

### Family Group Conferencing

It was previously mentioned that Sefton has the highest Kinship care ratio of foster carers compared to other authorities in the North West.

Kinship care is a vital resource for children who cannot live with their parents and is normally the first consideration when planning for permanence for children. However, the high numbers of kinship carers has significant impact upon social work resources, looked after budgets and the ability to recruit mainstream foster carers and thus reduce the Placement Budget.

Family Group Conferencing (FGC) has been used as a process for mediation between families and social workers by many authorities for some time. The lack of a FGC scheme in Sefton may account for the multiple viability assessments that are requested by families and courts; emergency placements with family and friends (reg.38 arrangements) it may also account for the use of court proceedings for some children when the No Order principle could be applied.<sup>37</sup> Children may have been able to be supported through Section 17 budgets under the Carers and Reviews new arrangements.

Various models of FGC's have been tried and tested over the years and with the introduction of other family support arrangements such as those provided by the Common Assessment Framework and dedicated Family Support Teams the need and importance of family group conferencing has been recognised.<sup>38</sup>

It is proposed that funding is made available and a FGC scheme is established to coincide with the launch of the CRYISIS service. It is further suggested that the scheme is run independently to deal with the levels of conflicts between family members and conflict resolution between families and children's social workers. Our membership to consortiums such as Adoption 22 and Fostering North West would allow a quick and easy review of other authority's arrangements and costs.

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<sup>37</sup> The Children Act 1989 has the welfare of the child as the key principle and says that there should be no court order unless all other options for supporting the child have been explored

<sup>38</sup> A local authority with an outstanding judgment was used for references purposes

## Management Information Intervention based on the Hardiker Grid

More information is needed to enable to authority to shift its resources to family intervention and prevention, offering families and their children support where and when it is needed.

The conceptual framework that was devised by Pauline Hardiker 'pyramid of service provision' and re-worked for the Every Child Matters Green Paper has been used as a tool by other authorities.<sup>39</sup> This methodology would give us current and projected needs and identify referral management, decision-making and resource gate-keeping processes. Mapping children's ages and needs against numbers and methods of intervention would give us a clearer picture of where to re-direct our efforts and resources.

## **SUMMARY OF SHORTFALLS IN ALL KINDS OF PLACEMENT PROVISION**

A quick review of placement requests and use of commissioned external placements indicate that the most urgent requirement is for more placements for:

Young people with high levels of need/risk – (this includes those young people who self-harm, are at grave risk in the community or are in trouble with the police and known to the Youth Offending Service)

Truculent teenagers

Care leavers

Homeless teenagers (Southwark rule assessments of need)

Sibling groups

Children who need permanence through foster care arrangements

Emergencies

Short term or shared care arrangements for disabled children

## **COMMISSIONING & PARTNERSHIP BUILDING**

Sefton uses a number of internally and externally commissioned services; these range from specialist mental health services to private sector placements, from targeted leisure opportunities for looked after children to child minding arrangements, through Early Years provision.

### Commissioning and Contracting

Work is in progress to develop the monitoring of outcomes and costs for externally commissioned placements<sup>40</sup>. Currently we have insufficient knowledge if the higher cost services are delivering the outcomes commensurate with the significant additional investment.

### Child Minding and Contact Provision

Better commissioning arrangements need to be developed with the Early Years Service in relation to child minding provision for foster carers, including and most specifically, to Kinship Carers. Kinship carers may be in full time work and often need an intensive child minding and /or nursery support package to maintain the

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<sup>39</sup> See for example, North Lincolnshire (2005)

<sup>40</sup> TtT Meetings

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child/ren in placement. These arrangements can be withdrawn by a partner agency and as such the placement may breakdown.

Birth-family contact arrangements are often intensive and they are complex to arrange, monitor and manage; this is due to the numbers of familial siblings being looked after, the different placements at which they may be living and the characteristics of the birth family e.g. re-constituted family. Moreover, foster carers may have other children placed with them that have their own contact arrangements.

Arranging and sustaining contact is a resource intensive process for foster carers, children's social workers and for the fostering service staff, both qualified and unqualified. Moreover, frequent contact arrangements during the school holidays (when foster carers are likely to be holidaying with their birth children) place the fostering family under a lot of stress, thus affecting the retention of foster carers.

It is proposed that a scoping exercise is undertaken to map the viability of developing a centralised contact service for children and their families. It is envisaged that by pooling resources with partner agencies this would be a low cost service development.

## **FINANCING THE PLACEMENT STRATEGY**

Sefton's Children's Trust has identified key priorities that have been determined following consultation and engagement with:- children, young people and their families, findings from the analysis of trends and identified needs, key stakeholder events and on-going evaluation, inspection findings, meetings with the Department for Education and Skills, and new legislation.<sup>41</sup> The vision for the borough of Sefton is for all children and young people in to have access to quality services and facilities.<sup>42</sup>

The intent of the Placement Strategy is to support the priorities and principles of the Children's Trust and the Children and Young People Corporate Plan. It will do this through effective commissioning of services with partner agencies, improved access to support services for children and their families, developing intervention and prevention services, improving the timeliness, quality and quantity of multi-disciplinary assessment, planning and provision and by reducing the need to rely upon external placement providers.

Sefton has a lower than average unit cost for commissioned fostering and residential services.<sup>43</sup> This will not offset the higher costs Sefton faces from the rapid growth in the use of IFA placements and the higher than average use of external residential provision, both internally and externally. A reduction in the placement budget could finance more family support to vulnerable families and allow us to develop capacity within our own fostering provision through a fee paid scheme.

As at 03/08/10

Total External residential costs/commitments were:

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<sup>41</sup> Appendices 10 & 11

<sup>42</sup> Children and Young People Corporate Plan

<sup>43</sup> North West Regional Placements Report June 2010



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£3,522,376 (34 beds) average £1992.29  
Total Internal residential costs/commitments were:  
£2,839,922 (27 beds) average £2022.73 (this does not take into account staff overtime and associated staff training costs)

Total IFA costs/commitments were:  
£4,620,848.00 average costs £797.01  
Total internal fostering costs/commitments were:  
£1,457,377.00 average costs £226.94

Special Guardianship costs are only just being collated and stand at £56,250 and this is likely to rise and be a commitment for many years (until children reach the age of 18 years) as foster carers take this option for children they have had placed with them for over 12 months. SGO status offers the child better life chances as they will not suffer the stigma of being 'in care' and hidden costs are reduced for example, social work time, health and educational assessments.

Residence Order costs currently stand at £385,200

Children with disability costs are £1,315,102 made up of  
Independent fostering agency 102,619 average cost £ 927.87  
External Residential Provision £1,212,483 average cost £2883.64

The work undertaken by Placements North West revealed that Sefton would need an additional 76 placements and when using the placement mix at the time they did their research this would mean:-

- 48 fostering placements
- 12 residential placements
- 9 placements with parents

The estimated costs of these placements would be £2.6 million annually

An additional 70 Independent fostering agency placements would cost Sefton £2.85 million annually. To recruit 35 fostering households (offering 2 placements) would cost Sefton:

Foster Carers Form F's £3750.00 x 35	£131,250.00
Cost of 70 placements at £165.00 a week x 52	600,600.00
2 Additional social worker posts	72,000.00 (circa)
Training for foster cares	7,500.00
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>£811,550.00</b>

From the £2.85 million a savings of £2,038,450 could be made. A further £23K could be saved through a lease car scheme for foster carers. These savings could be used to fund the following:

- Scoping for remodelling to community- based, low occupancy children homes
- Scoping for centralised and rationalised Contact/ Child Minding Service
- Semi-independent living accommodation
- Family Group Conferencing

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LAC Play therapist	<b>41K + on costs</b>
Phase 1 Fee Paid Fostering Scheme	<b>£188,180</b>
Phase 2 Fee Paid Fostering Scheme	<b>£361,296</b>
Phase 3 Fee Paid Fostering Scheme	<b>£534,916</b>
Independent Fostering Reviewing Officer	<b>45K</b> inclusive of on costs
Increase in fostering social workers	<b>72 K + on costs</b>

## **CONCLUSION**

This document is intended to provide a three-year framework for the development of placement choice for children in need. It also offers proposals for reducing the placement budget and re-investing into more family support service to vulnerable families. The summary list below identifies the outcomes that could be achieved through the various Placement Strategy proposals and all of the current service developments that are in place.

### Summary - Outcomes of Placement Strategy

- Children and young people who need to be looked after by Sefton Council are in appropriate placements for the right length of time
- More effective use of Council's resources
- Improved recruitment position in fostering market place
- Improved retention in fostering market place
- Improved standards of care in fostering placement market place
- Improved capacity of local authority fostering services to meet the needs of children and achieve good outcomes for them
- Improved residential choice, placement stability and better outcomes for children and young people
- Cost effective semi-independence accommodation and choice for care leavers
- Potential for joint working for increased efficiency and sustainability through innovative solutions for family mediation (family group conferencing), contact and child minding arrangements
- Placement stability though access to specialist services to carers, children, and adopters
- Meet the sufficiency requirement for provision for looked after children
- Potential for preferred providers to meet Sefton's needs

## APPENDIX 1

### Year 1 - Fostering Marketing Plan & Fostering Strategy

The Fostering Marketing Plan has been implemented with the following being achieved:

- Dedicated free phone line
- Loyalty Scheme for Kinship and Mainstream foster carers
- Introductions Scheme
- Targeted recruitment on hard to reach communities
- Part of the NW Recruitment Initiative
- Recruitment materials reviewed and amended – (improved information)
- Initial Visits reviewed and practice changed – (earlier and better screening)
- Foster Carer Applicant Preparation Groups extended (to capture mandatory training)
- Bootle Town Hall chosen as venue, rather than tired Ellesmere House, for all future preparation groups and information events (thus, raising the profile of Sefton)
- Fostering Panel Procedures reviewed and amended – (to capture older children with a plan for permanence and to drive up quality assurance)
- Fostering Panel Chair contract reviewed and renewed – (driving up standards)
- Fostering Panel Administrator appointed – (drive up performance and now able to capture management information)
- Foster Panel Members financially recognised for service to Panel
- Fostering Manager and Team Manager permanently appointed
- Kinship Care Pilot reviewed and two permanent posts established
- Staff, Panel and foster care training being rolled out on the New Life Work Model
- New Life Work Model materials purchased ready for full launch 2011
- Permanence Planning Meetings launched and reviewed to capture all looked after children under the age of 14 years within 4 month review period so plans for permanence are drawn up – thus, early profiling of children against new foster carers started
- Foster Carer Steering Group established (participation and consultation to deliver strategy)
- Partnership (library, education and social care services) Right To Read Project being developed (Every Child Matters outcomes)
- Two dedicated posts created: one to bring independence and scrutiny to the fostering service the other to assist all foster carers (i.e. kinship and mainstream) achieve their CWDC accreditation, NVQ and foster carer portfolio)
- Itemised payroll for foster carers in New Year
- Development of foster carer self-completion of Movement Forms to ensure timely payments

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## APPENDIX 2

The Fostering Strategy has been implemented with the following strategic objectives for 2010 achieved:

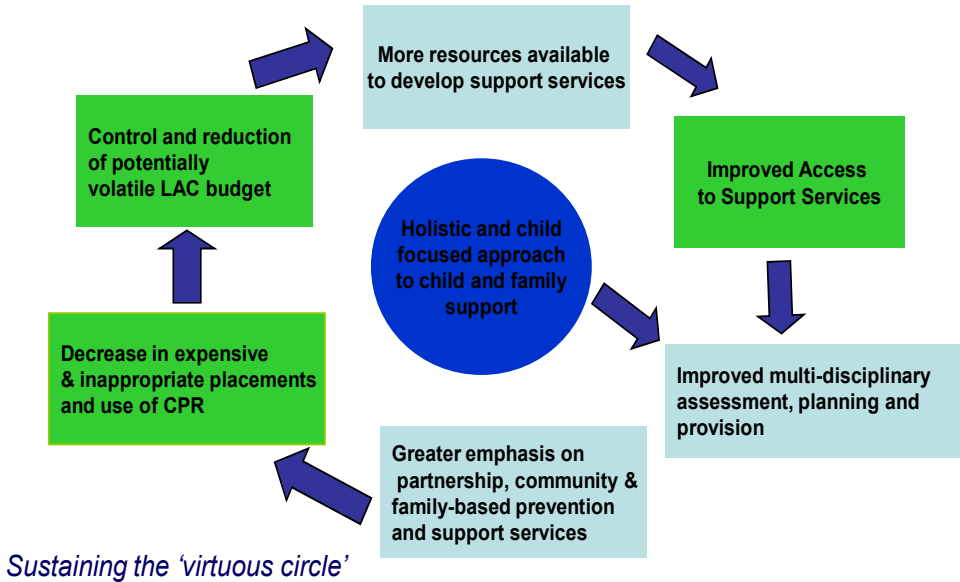
- 1 A Marketing Plan will be developed in 2010 to take forward these aims.
- 2 The Fostering Service Statement of Purpose will be reviewed
- 3 Comprehensive electronic policies and procedures
- 4 The Panel Review recommendations implemented
- 5 Permanence Planning Meetings launched
6. Foster Carer financial review undertaken 2011 target implementation
- 7 Fee Paid Foster Care scheme: potential target for implementation 2011
8. Position statement on Special Guardianship Orders in relation to foster carer's status as permanent carers and their ongoing financial support.<sup>44</sup>
- 9 Branding exercise to raise the profile of the service. This will include consideration to changing the service name from Family Placement Team to Fostering Team;

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<sup>44</sup> See Adoption 22 Position Statement on Special Guardianship Orders 2009

APPENDIX 3

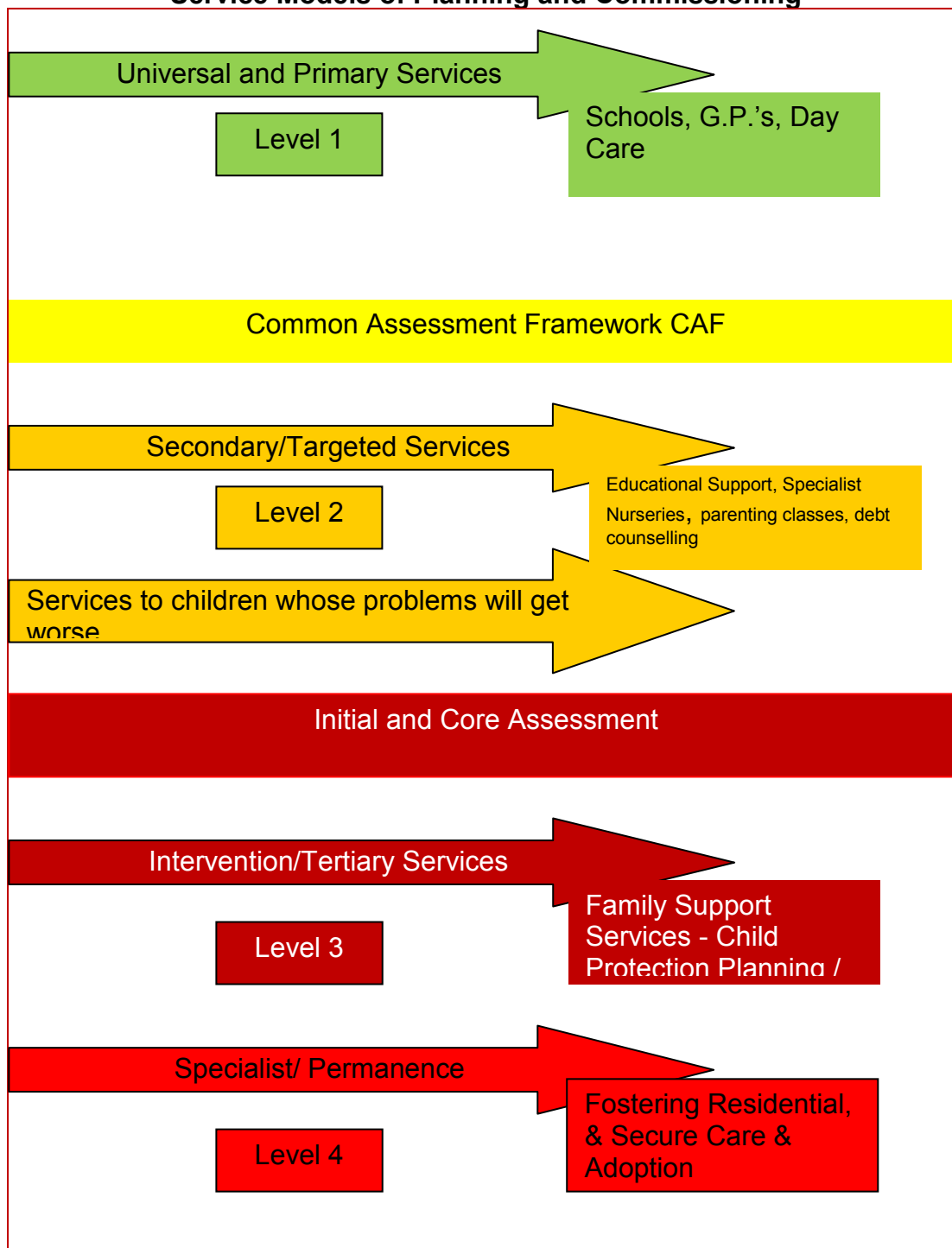
*Sustaining the 'Virtuous Circle'*



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## APPENDIX 4

### Service Models of Planning and Commissioning



## APPENDIX 5

### CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE TEAMS

#### Contact and Referral

The threshold criteria for the Assessment Service are based on 'Child in Need'. Children are assessed as being 'in need' via the 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' guidance. Services are provided, following an assessment, which identifies a child as being 'in need', via Family Support Agreements, Child Protection Plans and Looked After Children Procedures. Support Services are provided in conjunction with Universal, Targeted and Specialist Services.

There are two Social Work Teams based in the South of the Borough and one Team in the North. New contacts are processed via the Social Care Access Team. There is a qualified social worker/decision maker based with the SCAT to ensure timely and appropriate responses. There is also a qualified Social worker/decision maker based with the FCIU who processes contacts received by the police in relation to domestic violence. This is currently a pilot scheme.

The Social Work Teams are based in two sites, Bootle and Southport and cover the whole of the borough, with defined geographical boundaries.

The Service includes a borough wide Out of Hours Social Work Service, whose responsibilities include an emergency response to children and their families in crisis. This service is provided 365 days per year and includes all out of hours periods and Bank Holidays.

#### Family Support

The Family Support Service operates across the borough. There are three field social work teams. One team is based in Southport in the North of the Borough and two teams are based at the Litherland office in the South of the borough. The work of the service is supported by the Family Support Teams based at four Family Centres across the borough. The aim of the service is the safeguarding of children in the community.

The threshold criteria for the Family Support Service is defined within the Children Act 1989, updated by the Children Act 2004 and is based on 'Children in Need'. Children are assessed as being 'in need' via the 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' guidance. Services are provided via Child in need plans, Child Protection Plans and Looked After Children Procedures.

**Support Services are provided in conjunction with Universal, Targeted and Specialist Services on a multi-agency basis.**

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## **APPENDIX 5 (ctd)**

Child in need plans are provided to children and families, where the child is assessed as 'in need' and ensure that services are provided to support and assist families in relation to the difficulties they are facing. Children are also supported via Child Protection Procedures, where the child has been deemed 'at risk of significant harm'.

### **Family Centres**

There are 4 Family Centres in the Sefton Borough, 3 in the South and 1 in the North.

The Family Centres offer valued support to area social work teams in all of the statutory work involving children subject to Child in Need Plans, Child Protection Plans and Care Plans for Looked After Children. This work includes group work, parenting programmes, assessment, supervised and assessed contact, life story work, direct work with children and young people, practical support for families in their home, if appropriate staying overnight in family homes to ensure families can remain together, advice and support. The services provided by the centres are commissioned, and the services being commissioned are identified in the individual child's plan. The commissioned services will be reviewed regularly at the child's review in order to ensure the child receives appropriate services to meet need.

The Family Centres also play a crucial role in supporting Social Workers to identify an appropriate exit strategy for families when they no longer meet the criteria for social care involvement.

### **Children With Disability Team**

Briefly, this team provides support to children with significant disabilities and their families through outreach, social clubs and overnight short breaks. The aim is to promote social inclusion for the children, which also acknowledges parents needs for support due to the additional demands that are often associated with caring for disabled children. The team is also responsible for safeguarding issues or if children need to become looked after children.

Overnight short breaks are commissioned through internal and external providers and these include Springbrook, Nazareth House and the Direct Payments Scheme is being used by parents too.

For some children overnight foster care would be more appropriate if they could not cope or would not benefit from a residential environment. This is generally for younger children aged 5/6 years whose health needs. Overnight fostering respite for children with complex health needs is definitely a short fall in terms of resources and this is linked to being able to recruit the right kind of foster carer and for the foster carer to be willing to have their home physically adapted to meet the needs of the child.



## APPENDIX 5 (ctd)

### **Looked After Children's Teams**

The Looked After Children Service will provide children and young people who cannot return to their birth families with a framework of emotional, educational, physical and developmental security within a legal context that gives every child a sense of continuity, commitment and identity.

The threshold criterion for the service is that a child or young person is accommodated by the local authority either by agreement with their parents (Children Act S.20) or via court order (Interim Care Order S.38 or Care Order S.31).

The Service operates across the borough. There are 3 social work teams working with Sefton looked after children and young people wherever they are placed. Approximately one third of children are placed outside of Sefton although the majority of these within a 20 mile radius.

Two of the teams work with children and young people up to the age of sixteen. The other team is the Leaving Care Team that works with looked after children when they reach 16 and continues to support them through the transition from care into independent adult life at 18.

The service works to rehabilitate children with their parents or other family members. Where this is not possible, or appropriate, an alternative plan for permanence is created involving foster care, adoption or residential care (depending on the age and circumstances of the child). Wherever possible the service seeks to maintain and promote contact between children and their birth families to promote a positive sense of identity and emotional security.

The service works closely with the provision arm of Social Care to provide appropriate adoptive, fostering and residential placements. It also employs the services of education and health workers, Connexions advisor and youth worker, and has access to support from Leisure Services and the CAMHS Service.

### **Fostering Team**

As a local authority, Sefton MBC holds statutory powers and responsibilities in relation to fostering services and looked after children. Acting on behalf of the local authority, the Fostering Team actively endeavours to ensure that equal opportunities are incorporated into all aspects of service delivery. All prospective foster carers are recruited and supported on the basis of their ability to undertake the fostering task, and the needs of the service regardless of their particular group or individual characteristics.

The Fostering Team is made up of qualified and unqualified staff. Qualified staff undertake foster carer recruitment, assessment, training, support, professional development and reviews.

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## APPENDIX 5(ctd)

Qualified staff are also responsible for assessing and supporting family and friends as carers and for Special Guardianship assessments and reports on foster carers. Unqualified staff undertake a wide range of support activities for foster carers and children looked after.

### **Adoption Team**

As a local authority, Sefton MBC holds statutory powers and responsibilities in relation to adoption services and looked after children. The Adoption Team undertakes the following roles and tasks:-

Deciding whether a child with a permanence plan should be placed for adoption and where appropriate, match and place these children with prospective adopters

Providing a range of information, advice and support to each child and their birth family where there is a plan for adoption

Ascertaining the wishes and feelings of the child and their birth parents with regard to adoption and to any future contact arrangements

Providing or commissioning services to assist with the assessment and preparation of children subject to adoption plans, or as when needed post adoption

Providing a comprehensive family finding service for children with a plan for adoption including participation in local and regional consortia and the National Adoption Register

Providing access to the financial assessment scheme where there is special need or circumstances where financial pressure is an obstacle to their adoption

Providing an adoption Letter Box system to provide a confidential exchange of information between adopted children and their birth relatives

### **ADOPTION SERVICES FOR BIRTH PARENTS & OTHER BIRTH RELATIVES**

Counselling for birth parents relinquishing their child for adoption, including written information and translation services or advocacy services about the legal implications of giving consent to the placement and making of a Court Order

Social worker assessment, advice and support for birth families and children subject to proceedings and a proposed plan for adoption

Independent support services for birth relatives

Information, advice and support for birth relatives who were adopted

Ascertaining the wishes and feelings of birth parents with regard to adoption and potential contact arrangements

Appropriate intermediary services for adopted adults and their birth relatives

## APPENDIX 5(ctd)

### **SERVICES FOR ADOPTERS**

The recruitment, assessment, preparation, approval and support of prospective adopters

Comprehensive family finding services, including membership to Adoption22 (the North West Consortia and CHARMS data base), and the National Adoption Register

Appropriate financial assistance to adoptive families to assist with costs arising from matching, bridging, placement and adoption

Adoption support services for all new adoptive families through a dedicated social worker, provision of placement support workers, support groups, post-approval training, family-based activities, newsletters and access to services provided by After Adoption.

Providing specific training or support for adopters to prevent a placement disruption

### **SERVICES FOR ADOPTED ADULTS**

Counselling and support for adopted adults making application for original birth record information

Access to adoption records at a time and place appropriate for the enquirer's needs

### **GENERAL ACTIVITIES**

The Adoption Service can undertake general duties that include social worker assessment, advice and support to families in 'non-agency' adoption placements such as stepparent adoption. In conjunction with Adoption 22A a designated adoption social worker undertakes the monitoring and inputting of the CHARMS adoption website. This staff member is also the Family Finding social worker

### **Youth Offending Service**

YOS primary aim is to prevent offending and re-offending. Sefton YOS is composed of 3 teams; Business Support provide administrative support, oversee local and national youth justice performance returns, information management/data analysis and quality assurance oversight; Court Services provide the multi-agency case management of court orders and includes police officers who oversee pre-court disposals and victim contact/mediation, probation officers and social workers oversee court orders; Hornby Centre provide key worker programmes & interventions with young people, Education Training Employment Team including teachers, Connexions, and partnership links.

The service is based on 2 sites; Marsh Police Station-Court Services & Business Support, Hornby Centre Ford.

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## APPENDIX 5(ctd)

In relation to the Placement Strategy, historical gaps have always been for remand beds or remand fostering. Given the low level of remands to custody a generic foster carer (teenage fostering placement) would link with our remand strategy and could provide a pragmatic and flexible resource for homeless teenagers allied to our Southwark obligations. A short-term resource, time limited would meet the need of social care as well as YOS. The government Green Paper on Justice outlines proposals for charging LA's for the full cost recovery on remands and potentially custodial sentences for young people in the future. Therefore, presenting a corporate challenge for LA's to do more across service areas to prevent custody

### **Education of Looked After Children**

There are good arrangements in place for looked after children through the role of the Virtual School Head Teacher and the Education Attendance and Welfare Service Every looked after child has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) and designated teachers have had awareness training on the New Life Work Model

Areas for development:

**Young people have told us that they do not like PEP's or the arrangements for them being undertaken<sup>45</sup>**

A working group will explore good and poor practice in relation to the PEP's process as a result of what young people told us.

### **Health of Looked After Children**

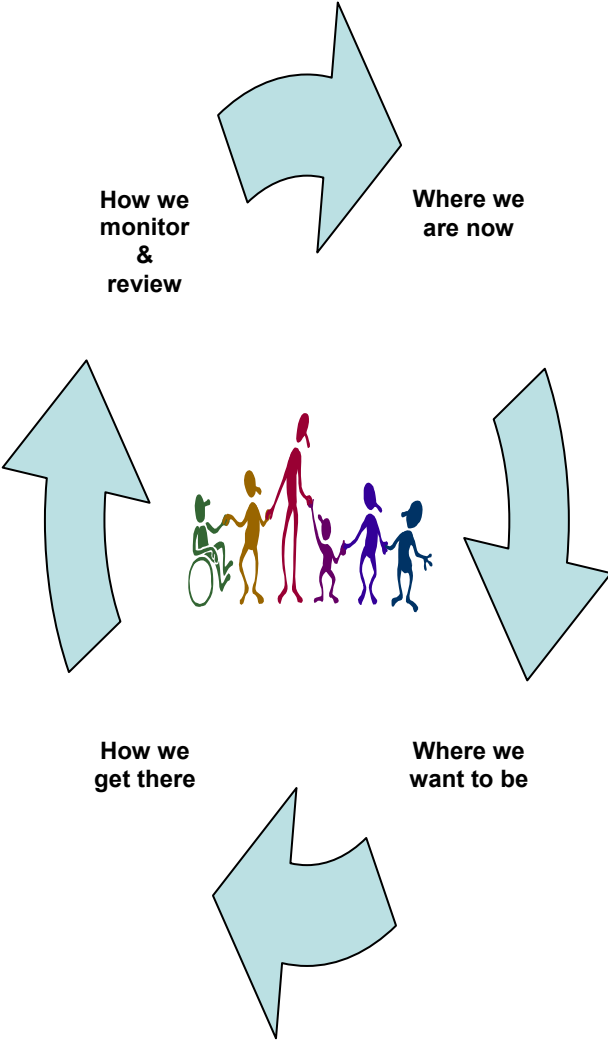
There are good arrangements in place for children looked after with a lead professional nurse – there is a Be Healthy Working Group that links onto the Corporate Parenting Board

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<sup>45</sup> MAD Corporate Parenting Board December 2010

APPENDIX 6

Business Planning Model



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## APPENDIX 7

### You Can Foster regional fostering campaign - statistics

Results until Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November

Total enquiries – 502

Call Centre - 84

Website – 422

#### Enquiries received - Breakdown by authority

Every Local Authority has received at least 6 enquiries. (Dumfries and Galloway are outside this campaign, but have received an enquiry as the ITV Borders advertising goes into their area).

The foster care recruitment process consists of two separate phases: the initial contact, enquiry, assessment, preparation and approval process and then the supervision, support, training and reviewing requirements. Assessing and training applicants is resource intensive. Increased numbers of applicants will result in significantly increased workloads within the Fostering Service. There is a risk that this will become a limiting factor. Thus the setting of targets has to be realistic and take into account that there has been no staff growth to deal with mainstream fostering recruitment and foster carer training since the Care Standards Act and subsequent NMS.

	Call centre	Website		Call centre	Website
Blackburn with Darwen		8	Oldham	1	14
Blackpool		11	Rochdale	2	13
Bolton		19	Salford	11	16
Bury	1	6	Sefton	5	26
Cheshire East	3	14	St Helens	6	15
Cheshire West	7	31	Stockport	3	10
Cumbria	2	26	Tameside	3	7
Dumfries and Galloway		1	Trafford		6
Halton	1	6	Warrington	1	8
Knowsley	2	6	Wigan	5	29
Lancashire	13	92	Wirral	4	5
Liverpool	6	27			
Manchester	8	26	Total	84	422

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## APPENDIX 8

### Social Care Placements - Finance Summary as at 26th November 2010

	<u>Budget Allocation</u>	<u>Commitment</u>	<u>Variance to Budget</u>
Independent Fostering Placements	£4,352,900	£4,056,243	£296,657
Residential Agency Placements	£3,440,800	£3,686,434	-£245,634
Leaving Care Placements	£818,500	£903,569	-£85,069
In House Residential	£2,353,650	£2,332,348	£21,302
In House Fostering	£1,445,750	£1,521,038	-£75,288
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£12,411,600</b>	<b>£12,499,631</b>	<b>-£88,031</b>

### Social Care Placements - Finance Summary as at 15th December 2010

	<u>Budget allocation</u>	<u>Commitment</u>	<u>Variance to Budget</u>
Independent Fostering Placements	£4,352,900	£4,044,658	£308,242
Residential Agency Placements	£3,440,800	£3,787,535	-£346,735
Leaving Care Placements	£818,500	£971,436	-£152,936
In House Residential	£2,353,650	£2,327,456	£26,194
In House Fostering	£1,445,750	£1,424,693	£21,057
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£12,411,600</b>	<b>£12,555,778</b>	<b>-£144,178</b>

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## APPENDIX 9

### Competency Based Fee Paid Foster Care Scheme

Two local authorities have been used to prepare a model for Sefton, one is Knowsley a neighbouring authority who is in direct competition in terms of geographical recruitment of potential foster carers and the other is the East Riding of Yorkshire who has similar numbers of looked after children. Neither of these authorities relies upon independent fostering agencies to the same extent as Sefton.

A fee paid scheme would see the demise of the current 'Community Parent' Scheme that is outdated and inequitable. The scheme was set up many years ago and paid a higher boarding our allowance for some children.

### Fee Paid Scheme Costs

Knowsley		East Riding of Yorkshire	
Level 1 Newly approved		Level 1 Newly approved	
Level 2	67.48	Level 2	23.00
Level 3	202.30	Level 3	56.00
Level 4	393.33	Level 4	97.00

***The amount is for the first child in placement- each subsequent placement within the household is paid at 50% of the level fee.***

The proposed scheme for Sefton foster carers has been calculated on the mean between Knowsley and East Riding of Yorkshire figures as they represent a higher and lower scheme rate

### Fee Paid Scheme Costs

KNOWSLEY		ERY		SEFTON	
Level 1 Newly approved		Level 1 Newly approved		Level 1 Newly approved	
Level 2	67.48	Level 2	23.00	Level 1	45.00
Level 3	202.30	Level 3	56.00	Level 2	129.00
Level 4	393.33	Level 4	97.00	Level 3	245.00



**APPENDIX 9 (ctd)**

<b>AGE</b>	<b>Knowsley WEEKLY RATE</b>		<b>Sefton WEEKLY RATE</b>	<b>VARIANCE</b>	<b>Knowsley RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL</b>	<b>Sefton RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL</b>	<b>VARIANCE</b>	<b>Knowsley BIRTHDAY</b>	<b>Sefton BIRTHDAY</b>	<b>VARIANCE</b>	<b>Knowsley HOLIDAY</b>	<b>Sefton HOLIDAY</b>	<b>VARIANCE</b>
0-4	125.09	0-2	109.00	<b>16.09</b>	125.09	218.00	- <b>92.91</b>	125.09	109.00	<b>16.09</b>	250.18	163.20	<b>86.98</b>
	125.09	3-4	111.00	<b>14.09</b>	125.09	222.00	- <b>96.91</b>	125.09	111.00	<b>14.09</b>	250.18	163.20	<b>86.98</b>
5-10	142.49	5-10	122.00	<b>20.49</b>	142.49	244.00	- <b>101.51</b>	142.49	122.00	<b>20.49</b>	284.98	204.00	<b>80.98</b>
11-15	177.38	11-15	140.00	<b>37.38</b>	177.38	280.00	- <b>102.62</b>	177.38	140.00	<b>37.38</b>	354.76	255.00	<b>99.76</b>
16+	215.74	16+	164.00	<b>51.74</b>	215.74	328.00	- <b>112.26</b>	215.74	164.00	<b>51.74</b>	431.48	306.00	<b>125.48</b>

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## APPENDIX 10

### The key aims of Sefton Children's Trust

Our priorities in Sefton have been determined following consultation and engagement with children, young people and their families, findings from the analysis of trends and identified needs, key stakeholder events and on-going evaluation, inspection findings, meeting with the Department for Education and Skills, and new legislation.

### Children & Young People's Plan Priorities

#### Be Healthy Priorities for 2009 / 10

- Focus on emotional health and mental well-being.
- Reducing health inequalities with a particular focus on breast feeding, oral health, obesity and reducing teenage pregnancy in specific wards (taking forward the teenage pregnancy national support team's recommendations).
- Reducing risk taking behaviours in relation to alcohol, drugs and sexual health
- Improve services for disabled children to meet the Aim Higher Disabled Children offer by 2011.

#### Stay Safe Priorities for 2009 / 10

##### Home based risk, including:

- Parenting
- Domestic Violence
- Child Protection Plans
- Accidental Death-Child Safety
- Child Death Overview

##### Community based risk, including:

- Housing
- Public Protection
- Youth Offending including First time entrants
- Substance Misuse by adults and its links to Criminality and its impact on parenting- Hidden Harm agenda
- Implement recommendations from 2009 inspection

##### School based risk, including:

Child on child harm in and out of school 16-18 year olds – access to services, early identification of risk to reduce the numbers of those not in education or training

- Developing systems for identifying children not receiving a suitable education and maintaining contact with them including Looked After Children (LAC) placed in Sefton from other Local Authorities
- E-Safety

#### Enjoy & Achieve Priorities for 2009 / 10

- To raise attainment in the Early Years Programme especially by focussing on the percentage of children gaining 78 points across the Foundation Stage with at least 6 points in Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL)
- To improve the percentage of pupils gaining 5 A\*-C GCSE (including English and Maths) and in particular in those schools below the 30% threshold
- To raise the attainment of vulnerable young people (i) with special needs (ii) those Looked After in the secondary phase and (iii) those receiving free school meals in the secondary phase
- To progress the educational transformation agenda including capital projects in the primary and secondary phases and the integration of associated improvement programmes including through extended schools, community involvement and services to young people

## APPENDIX 10 (ctd)

### **Make Positive Contribution Priorities** for 2009 / 10

- To develop the Integrated Youth Support Service to maximize opportunities for young people in Sefton and support transition to adult life
- To consult with children, young people, parents and carers in Sefton, including those who are hard to reach, and communicate how their views improve services
- To enhance opportunities for children and young people, parents and carers to be involved in planning, developing and evaluating services and policies that affect their lives
- To promote and enhance positive activities for young people in Sefton
- To promote positive images of young people and challenge negative stereotypes.

### **Achieve Economic Well-being Priorities** for 2009 / 10

- Average points score (A level) to be addressed in terms of quality of provision and choice
- Focus upon vulnerable groups, especially: learning difficulties and or disability (LDD) looked after children, (LAC) and Teenage Parents. (There is a disproportionate amount of children and young people with LDD in NEET category)

### **Universal Priorities** for 2009 / 10

- Information and guidance to young people about the range of services available and where to go for help
- More joined up work to support families - a “think Family” approach

### **Local Area Agreement Priorities**

**NI 51** Effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)

**NI 53** Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks from birth

**NI 56** Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6

**NI 62** Stability of placements of looked after children: number of placements

**NI 72** Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with a least 6 in each Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy

**NI 73** Achievement at Level 4 or above in both English and Maths at KS 2

**NI 75** Proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A\* - C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and Maths

**NI 80** Achievements of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19

**NI 87** Secondary school persistent absence rate

**NI 91** Participation of 17 year olds in education or training

**NI 92** Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest

**NI 93** Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 1 and K S 2

**NI 94** Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and KS 2

**NI 99** Looked after children reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2

**NI 100** Looked after children reaching level 4 in Mathematics at Key Stage 2

**NI 101** Looked after children reaching 5 A- C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths)

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## APPENDIX 10 (ctd)

**NI 102 (A)** The percentage point gap between pupils eligible for free schools meals (FSM) achieving at least Level 4 in English and Maths at Key Stage (KS) 2 and pupils ineligible for FSM achieving the same outcome

**NI 102 (B)** The percentage point gap between pupils eligible for FSM achieving 5A\*-C grades at GCSE (and equivalent), including GCSE English and Maths, at KS4 and pupils ineligible for FSM achieving the same outcome.

**NI 110** More participation in Positive Activities

**NI 111** First time entrants into the Youth Justice System

**NI 112** Under 18 conception rate

**NI 115** Reduce the proportion of young people frequently using illicit drugs, alcohol or volatile substances

## APPENDIX 11

### MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

#### Placement Planning - Cost Volume Approach

#### **National Key Messages – What We Know**

On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 there were over 83,000 children in care in the UK (in England 60,900)<sup>46</sup>.

The rise in numbers of looked after children began before the effect of publicity in relation to the Haringey case in late 2008.

Since the autumn of 2008 there has been a sustained rise in the numbers of all ages taken into care or under supervision order.

Other factors impacting simultaneously are the economic down turn, which is imposing additional strains on families, and the Southwark judgement, which is requiring local authorities to consider accommodating young people previously referred to their housing department.

There may be further increase to come as the full effect of 'staying put' in relation to 18 year olds and homeless 16 & 17 year olds.

Support for some placements now lasts for the duration of adulthood

Many children in care have long-term health problems and disabilities, and many have severe emotional health problems. Recent research found that 45% of looked after children aged 5-17 in England experience mental health problems.<sup>47</sup>

Residential care is the best option for a only a small minority of children

In recent decades foster care has expanded, increasingly replacing residential care as the preferred option for children.

Foster care is lower in cost than residential care

In 2008-09 the weekly unit cost of foster care is £383, but appears to be an under-representation of the true cost<sup>48</sup>

In 2008-09 the weekly unit cost of independent provided foster care is £864<sup>49</sup>

Eighty percent of children looked after away from home are in foster care

There is a UK-wide shortage of foster carers and many foster carers are in their 50's and 60's, suggesting there will be an impending shortage of foster carers when these carers retire.

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<sup>46</sup> Full Briefing: The Cost of Foster Care, June 2010 the fostering network

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

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## Sefton's Looked After Children Profile of Need

Sefton's LAC population per 10,000 over the period of 2005 to 2008 has been lower than the regional average and has been atypically stable. In 2008 there were 310 looked after children.

Since 2008 it has grown at a much faster rate than the rest of the North West.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2010 there were 394 looked after children this compared to a total of 375 on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, an increase of 5% in 14 weeks.

## Sefton's Current Provider Position

As at February 2010 there were 106 Sefton foster care households

- 44 relative/ friend households
- 62 mainstream fostering households

With a total number of carers of 178

- 72 couples of which 21 are relative/friends and 51 are mainstream foster carers
- 34 single carers of which 23 are relative/friends and 11 are mainstream foster carers

## Children Placed

On the 22.01.10 there were a total of 413 looked after children (this is a rise of 24% post Haringey) and 248 of these children were in fostering placements. Relative/friend foster carers accounted for 66 children.

**Sefton has shown the second largest proportional increase in IFA use and the second highest increase in number of placements. The majority of these additional placements were made prior to the large increase in LAC numbers post Haringey.**

On the 22.01.10 there were more children placed in independent fostering agency placements (99) than were with our own foster carers (83).

The proportion of foster placements has fallen by 2% since 2008

Placements with parents has risen by 1% since 2008

Placements with family/friends has risen

Sefton makes much greater use of residential provision to cater for LAC than is typical in the North West and in England. The population of placements in residential is the same in 2009 as in 2008.

Sefton had a higher ratio of internal children's homes to other local authorities in the North West region. (5)

## North West Region Key Messages – What We Know<sup>50</sup>

There has been an increase of 739 children becoming looked after in the last 18 months

Whilst commissioned residential services decline in 2007 & 2008 placement numbers in October 2009 were 20% than in October 2008

A 60% rise in IFA placements

An 8% fall in internal fostering provision in the last three years

If IFA growth continues in 2010 there will be an additional 335 IFA placements - estimated cost would be £14 million

Increased usage of exempted fostering households

The increase in demand for foster care placements is now increasing demand for independent foster care providers and external residential placements as placement choice diminishes

Many local authorities are in negative equity in numbers of carers and numbers of placements

There is a small gap between the ethnicity of children and the ethnicity of carers

Performance management of the recruitment process is not supported by ICS (as yet) or by IT generally

The shortfall in adoption placements is growing and likely to increase further

There is an increasing use of Special Guardianship which is leading to significant numbers of children being financially supported long term but who are not looked after

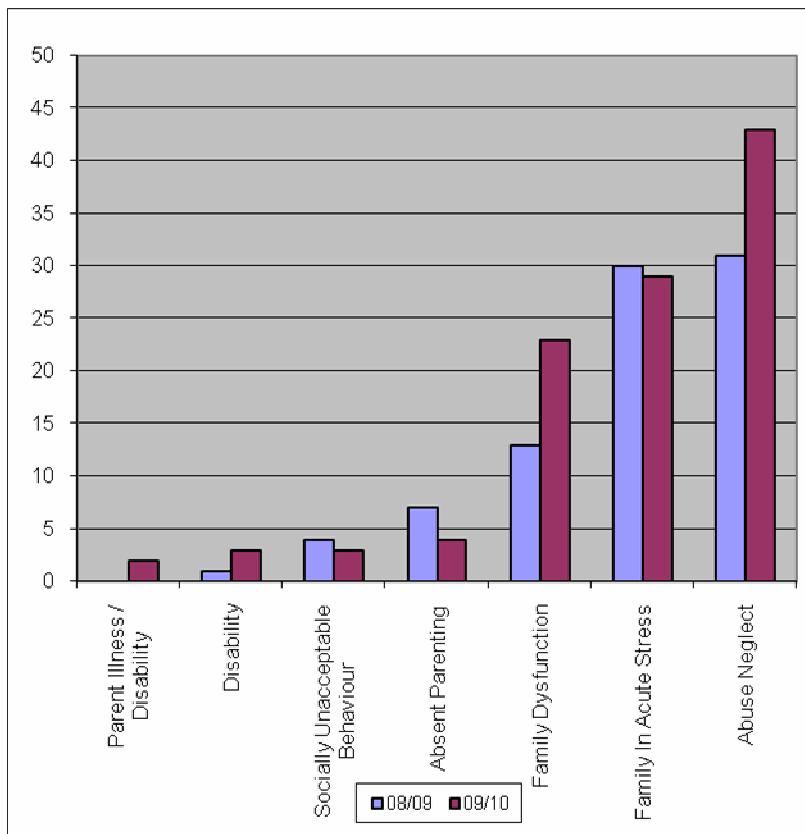
The requirements of post adoption support are now beginning to manifest themselves, with implications for families and for services

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<sup>50</sup> Northwest Regional Placements Report – Fostering & Adoption Strategies June 2010)

**Children started to be looked after (Not Care Order) 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2010 - Need at BLA**

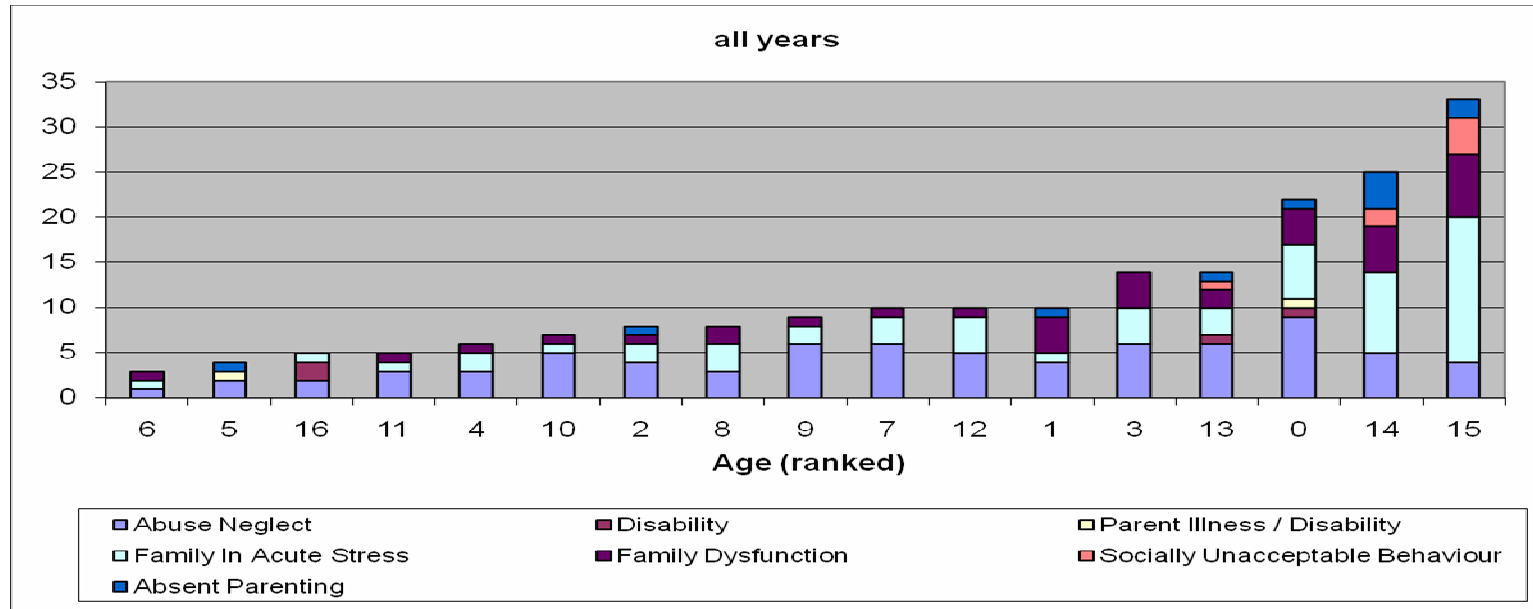
BLA Children In Need	08/09	09/10	Total
Parent Illness / Disability	0	2	2
Disability	1	3	4
Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	4	3	7
Absent Parenting	7	4	11
Family Dysfunction	13	23	36
Family In Acute Stress	30	29	59
Abuse Neglect	31	43	74
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>193</b>





**All years**

	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
Abuse Neglect	1	2	2	3	3	5	4	3	6	6	5	4	6	6	9	5	4
Disability			2											1	1		
Parent Illness / Disability		1													1		
Family In Acute Stress	1		1	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	4	1	4	3	6	9	16
Family Dysfunction	1			1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	4	4	2	4	5	7
Socially Unacceptable Behaviour														1		2	4
Absent Parenting		1					1					1		1	1	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33</b>



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## APPENDIX 11

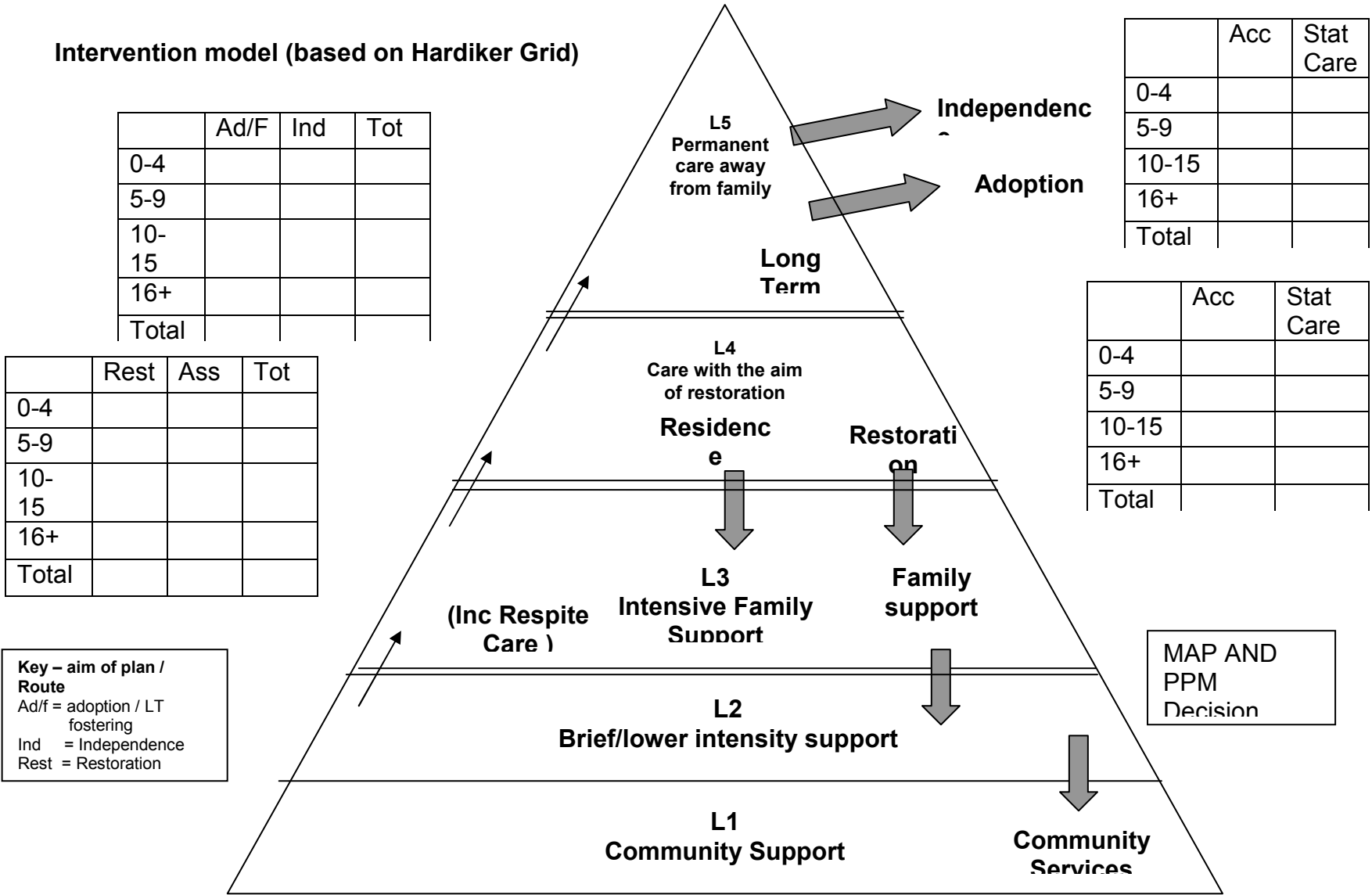
### Example - Objectives, Indicators and Targets

OBJECTIVE	KPI'S	TARGETS		
		2010	2011	2012
To shift the balance of expenditure so that more resources are invested in helping families care for their children	Unit cost of foster care & residential provisions	Same		
	Unit cost of commissioned foster care & residential provisions	Reducing		
	Spend on family support	Increasing		
	Numbers of looked after children	Reducing		
	Numbers of looked after children placed in commissioned placements	Reducing		
	Number of cases which are neither looked after children or Child Protection with a care plan	Increasing		

### Example of Financial Plan

Re-commissioning cost neutral	Current £	2011£	2012£	2013£
Savings - IFA				
Savings – Sefton placement provision				
Increased expenditure infrastructure in- house fostering stock preventing children being looked after care planning – preventing drift for permanence quicker re- unification and intensive family support				

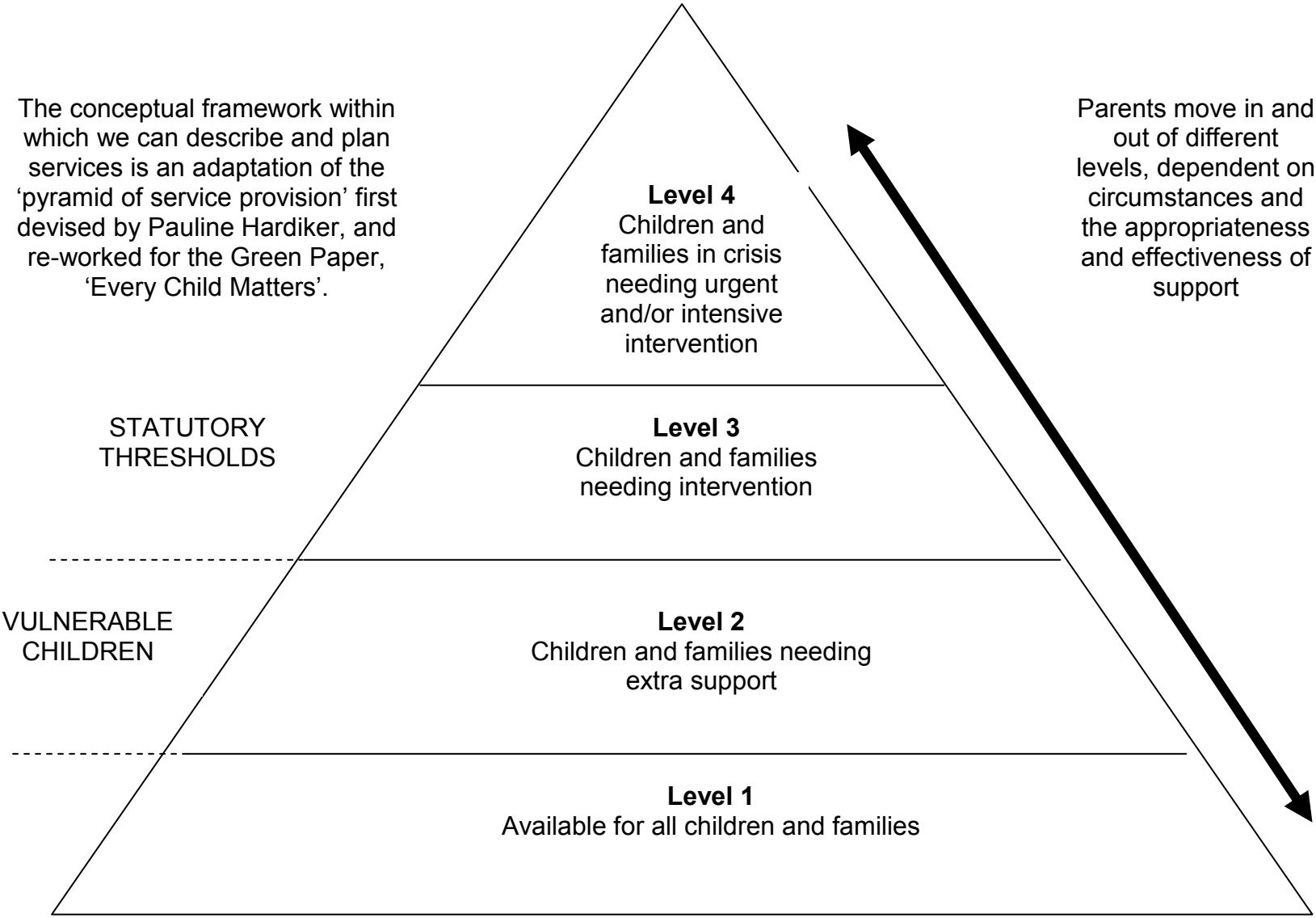
**Intervention model (based on Hardiker Grid)**



**Family and Parenting Support Strategy – framework to describe service provision**

The conceptual framework within which we can describe and plan services is an adaptation of the 'pyramid of service provision' first devised by Pauline Hardiker, and re-worked for the Green Paper, 'Every Child Matters'.

Parents move in and out of different levels, dependent on circumstances and the appropriateness and effectiveness of support



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# Agenda Item 7

**CABINET REPORT TO:** Cabinet Member (Children's Services)  
Cabinet Member (Regeneration)

**SUBJECT:** 8<sup>th</sup> February 2011  
19<sup>th</sup> January 2011  
Skills Funding Agency (SFA)/ European Social Fund (ESF)  
Provision (Greater Merseyside Provision for NEET ESF 2011 –  
2013 Youth Programme)

**WARDS AFFECTED:** All

**REPORT OF:** Peter Morgan  
Strategic Director Children Schools and Families  
Andy Wallis  
Planning and Economic Development Director

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Eddie Sloan 3410  
Mo. Kundi 3447

**EXEMPT/  
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:**

To inform Members of the Greater Merseyside Provision for NEET ESF 2011 –2013 Youth Programme, and to seek Cabinet Member approval to enter into a contract with the Skills Funding Agency to deliver the Sefton element of the project.

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:**

Cabinet Member approval is required to extend the current contract with the Skills Funding Agency, and to accept the offer letter (should our bid be successful) for the Greater Merseyside Provision for NEET ESF 2011 –2013 Youth Programme project for Sefton.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

It is recommended that Cabinet Member for Children's Services:-

1. Agree that, subject to the bid being successful, authorise Officers to accept the officer letter and to enter into a contract with the Skills Funding Agency for the Greater Merseyside Provision for NEET ESF 2011 – 2013 Youth Programme project for Sefton, and
2. Agree that Management and Delivery of the NEET project be transferred to Council's Planning and Economic Development Department. In consultation with 14-19 representation from Children, Schools and Families

Cabinet Member for Regeneration:-

3. Note the report, and
4. Request further progress reports.

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**KEY DECISION:** No

**FORWARD PLAN:** Not appropriate

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Following the expiry of the "Call-In" period for the Minutes of the meeting.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:** Any proposals not to support and continue with the provision of such services risks future provision becoming unsustainable, and loss of pre matched funding for this purpose.

**IMPLICATIONS:**

**Budget/Policy Framework:** None

**Financial:**

There are no calls on Council's financial resources as all costs associated with management and delivery of the project will be met in full by the project.

<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2011/ 2012 £</b>	<b>2012/ 2013 £</b>	<b>2013/ 2014 £</b>	<b>2014/ 2015 £</b>
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources	0	0	0	0
Specific Capital Resources	0	0	0	0
<b><u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				0
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources	0	0	0	0
Funded from External Resources				0
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? YES	When? 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012			
How will the service be funded post expiry?	Provision will cease			

**Legal:** A legal agreement will be drawn up between the provision delivery agents and Sefton Council.

**Risk Assessment:** NA

**Asset Management:** NA

**CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS**

Legal,  
Finance  
Children, Schools and Families

**CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:**

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	/		
2	Creating Safe Communities		/	
3	Jobs and Prosperity	/		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being		/	
5	Environmental Sustainability		/	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities		/	
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy		/	
8	Children and Young People	/		

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

Report to Cabinet Member for Children's Services (7<sup>th</sup> December 2010), and Cabinet Member for Regeneration (15<sup>th</sup> December 2010) entitled Skills Funding Agency (SFA)/European Social Fund (ESF) Co-Financed Provision

# Agenda Item 7

## 1.0 Background

1.1 Cabinet Member for Children's Services (7<sup>th</sup> December 2010), and Cabinet Member for Regeneration (15<sup>th</sup> December 2010) at their respective meetings considered a report entitled Skills Funding Agency (SFA)/European Social Fund (ESF) Co-Financed Provision, which provided background information on Learning & Support during the KS4 project (contract value £699,999) and Retention in Post 16 Learning project (contract value £574,169). The report highlighted the current delivery arrangements whereby Sefton Council is the accountable body, and manages the two projects, but partners undertake the actual delivery. Cabinet Members noted the successful delivery model, and agreed to extend the end date of the two projects from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011, which would result in Sefton Council being able to attract additional £78,025.50 grant.

1.2 The Skills Funding Agency and European Social Fund have now combined the Learning & Support during KS4 and the Retention in Post 16 Learning strands into one single activity labelled Greater Merseyside Provision for NEET ESF 2011 –2013 Youth Programme. As with the previous two projects SFA funding will be co-financed with the European Social Fund, and again there will be no call on Sefton resources.

1.2 An Invitation to Tender (ITT) was issued by the SFA for new activity under the Greater Merseyside Provision for NEET ESF 2011-2013 Youth Programme in October 2010, with a deadline for submission by 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010. In light of the very tight deadline Officers have responded to the Invitation to Tender, and if successful this will give Sefton Council the opportunity to draw down £647,163 of co-financed funding from April 2011- December 2013. The decision making time table is as follows:-

ITT evaluation completed by SFA	- 13 <sup>th</sup> January 2011
Contract award decision	- 21 <sup>st</sup> January 2011
Notification letters issued	- 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2011
Formal contract award letter issued	- 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2011
Project start	- 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2011

## 2.0 Key Components

2.1 The project will run from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013 and will support 295 young people, aged 14-18 (or up to 25 for young people with LLDD) in Sefton who are not in education, employment or training.

2.2 The project will focus on the following priority areas for Sefton:

- Supporting LLDD/Vulnerable Groups e.g. looked after children & young parents
- Developing Employability Skills
- Developing bespoke packages of support

2.3 Young people supported on this project will be assessed and offered customised packages of support resulting in the young person going onto further education or employment with training. Sefton Education Business Partnership (EBP) will assume



responsibility for young people in Key stage 4 (aged 14-16) with the focus on “prevention of NEET”. The Connexions Service will take responsibility for re-engaging with young people post 16 who are already in NEET.

Key activities covered by this project will include: -

- Identification of young people
- Assessment of needs
- Action Planning
- Mentoring support
- Customised programme of activity
- Supported work based learning opportunities.

### **3.0 Delivery Arrangements**

3.1 Service Level Agreements will again be agreed at the onset of the project with delivery partners named in the application. Clearly defined roles, responsibilities, the nature of activities and what was expected from the provider and all partners, together with financial and monitoring details will be included in the agreements.

3.2 The Authority has extensive experience in managing and monitoring the performance of externally funded projects and their beneficiaries, ensuring that delivery partners meet identified targets and contractual milestones and outcomes are achieved.

3.3 These arrangements will remain in place until the end of the projects on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013, or any revised end date be agreed by the SFA. If a revised date is agreed by the SFA, then contracts with delivery partners be amended.

### **4.0 Management Arrangements**

4.1 In light of the changes taking places in the Children’s Schools, and Families Services, it is now proposed that management and delivery responsibility for the project be now transferred to Planning and Economic Development Department. However Children’s Schools and Families Services will continue be involved with the project from a strategic, and policy perspective, and regular progress reports will be presented to Cabinet Member for Children’s Services.

### **5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 The total cost of the project if successful, is £647,163. There will be no call on Sefton resources as all costs associated with its management and delivery will be charged to the project.

### **6.0 Legal Implication**

6.1 Sefton Council is the accountable for the two existing ESF Projects. As the Greater Merseyside Provision for NEET ESF 2011 –2013 Youth Programme is a continuation of existing two strands, it is proposed that Sefton Council continues to be the accountable body for the NEET Project.

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## 7.0 Summary

- 7.1 Sefton Council is currently managing two Skills Funding Agency (SFA)/European Social Fund (ESF) Co-Financed projects until March 2011. In future these two strands have been combined into single activity labelled Greater Merseyside Provision for NEET ESF 2011 –2013 Youth Programme. Sefton Officers have responded to the ITT, the outcome of which will announced in January/February 2011. If successful this will give Sefton Council the opportunity to draw down £647,163 of co-financed funding from April 2011- December 2013.
- 7.2 As with existing two ESF projects Sefton Council will continue to be the accountable body. However, there are no financial implications, as both the management and delivery costs will be charged to the NEET Project.
- 7.3 The two existing ESF projects are currently managed by Children's Schools and Families, with Planning and Economic Development Department ensuring that all contractual, monitoring and compliance procedures are met. In light of the changes taking place within the Children's, Schools and Families Services it is proposed that management responsibility for the NEET, together with contractual, monitoring and compliance procedures should now all rest with Planning and Economic Development Department.