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Sefton Council 

MEETING: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING)

DATE: 26th September 2017

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Town Hall Bootle

Member

Councillor
Cllr Paula Murphy (Chair)
Cllr Clare Louise Carragher (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Maria Bennett
Cllr Susan Bradshaw
Cllr Richard Hands
Cllr Pat Keith
Cllr Brenda O'Brien
Cllr Michael Pitt
Cllr Paula Spencer
Cllr Veronica Webster
Mrs S Cain
Stuart Harrison
Libby Kitt
Father Des Seddon
Mrs C. Palmer

Substitute

Councillor
Cllr Michael O'Brien
Cllr Carla Thomas

Cllr Matt Gannon
Cllr Catie Page
Cllr Iain Brodie - Browne
Cllr Haydn Preece
Cllr Anthony Carr
Cllr Terry Jones
Cllr John Kelly
Cllr Robert Brennan

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Ruth Harrison, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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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

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**

Members are requested to give notice of any disclosable pecuniary interest, which is not already included in their Register of Members' Interests and the nature of that interest, relating to any item on the agenda in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, before leaving the meeting room during the discussion on that particular item.
- 3. Minutes of the Previous Meetings** (Pages 5 - 18)

Minutes of the meetings held on 21 June and 30 June 2017
- 4. Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group Final Report** (Pages 19 - 50)

Report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance
- 5. Development of Family Well-Being Service** (Pages 51 - 60)

Report of the Director of Social Care
- 6. Updated Children's Social Care Improvement Plan** (Pages 61 - 92)

Report of the Head of Children's Social Care
- 7. Adoption Annual Report** (Pages 93 - 122)

Report of the Head of Children's Social Care
- 8. Fostering Annual Report** (Pages 123 - 138)

Report of the Head of Children's Social Care
- 9. Ofsted Inspection Framework - Presentation**

Further to Minute No. 5 (4) of 21 June 2017, the Head of Children's Social Care to give a presentation.
- 10. Cabinet Member Report** (Pages 139 - 144)

Report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance
- 11. Work Programme - Key Decision Forward Plan** (Pages 145 - 164)

Report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING)

MEETING HELD AT THE BIRKDALE ROOM, TOWN HALL,
SOUTHPORT
ON WEDNESDAY 21ST JUNE, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor Murphy (in the Chair)
Councillor Carragher (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Bennett, Bradshaw, Hands, Keith,
Brenda O'Brien, Spencer, Webster,
Mrs Sandra Cain, Ms Libby Kitt and Mrs C. Palmer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pitt and his Substitute Member Councillor Jones and Father D. Seddon.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were received.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee considered the Minutes of the meetings held on 21 March and 4 April 2017.

Mrs. C. Palmer indicated that she was present at the meeting of the Committee held on 21 March 2017 but that her attendance was not recorded in the Minutes.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2017 being amended to include the attendance of Mrs. C. Palmer the Minutes of the meetings held on 21 March and 4 April 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT

Further to Minute No. 4 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 25 May 2017 the Committee considered the report of the Director of Public Health which incorporated his independent annual report on the health and wellbeing of the population of Sefton highlighting key issues. The annual report had been developed through collaborative working with a range of Council and external partners and it considered the root causes of health inequalities across Sefton, what actions are already being undertaken locally to address these issues, as well as recommendations for future actions on nine key areas, which are:

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- The best start in life
- Healthy schools and pupils
- Helping people find good jobs and stay in work
- Active and safe travel
- Warmer and safer homes
- Access to green and open spaces and the role of leisure services
- Strong communities, wellbeing and resilience
- Public protection and regulatory services
- Health and spatial planning

The Cabinet had resolved that the annual Public Health report be received and the Council be recommended to approve the publication of the report.

Attached as an Appendix to the report was a copy of the statutory independent report of the Director of Public Health.

Charlotte Smith, Specialty Registrar, Public Health presented the Annual Report and highlighted issues associated with health data for Sefton; the general socioeconomic, cultural and environmental conditions affecting the wider determinants of health; life expectancy in Sefton; and the health and wellbeing indicators in Sefton in 2016.

Ms. Smith focused on issues contained in the report relating to children and young people and In particular drew attention to:-

- The importance of the best start in life for a child as early life experiences help to shape future habits, behaviours and attitudes to the world around us. This means that positive early experiences, both with our family and in early years education settings, can provide children with better life chances and more chance of being healthy
- The importance of healthy schools and pupils as helping each child and young person reach their full potential at school provides them with better life chances and it can also help them to live a longer and healthier life
- The importance of warmer and safer homes as living in a home that is warm, safe and in a good state of repair is fundamental to keeping ourselves well, whatever our age or circumstances. When our housing meets our needs we are better able to access services and
- build relationships with people living in our local community

Ms. Smith concluded by detailing the aims of the Annual Report for 2017/18 to include a proposed topic regarding the mental health and emotional wellbeing of young people; and that the report would take a multi-media approach using film and social media.

Members of the Committee raised the following issues:-

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- there was no mention in the report of illegal drug use
- perceived anomalies in the statistical data comparisons of Sefton to the England average
- the high numbers of deaths caused by dementia
- the large variances in life expectancy depending on where residents lived in Sefton and the much lower life expectancy in the south of the borough. Concern was expressed that despite past policies and plans the 10 year reduced life expectancy in the south of the borough had not improved for many years
- the detrimental effects of poor air quality in parts of the borough
- Sefton's performance in breastfeeding initiation was significantly below the north-west and England average and this needed improving. It was considered that mothers needed ongoing support with breastfeeding issues as their children grew; that in this regard, mothers should be able to breastfeed whenever and wherever they wanted; and to achieve this aim, the stigma associated with breastfeeding should be removed and baby friendly environments created
- Concern was raised about the poor childhood obesity statistics in Sefton; and that it was considered that improved systems of educating parents to encourage lifestyle/healthy eating changes were required to tackle the problem. It was acknowledged however that this was a national problem and not one confined to Sefton.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Director of Public Health which incorporated his independent annual report on the health and wellbeing of the population of Sefton highlighting key issues be noted.

5. CSC IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE AND SCORECARD

Further to Minute No. 5 of 12 July 2016 the Committee considered the report of the Director of Social Care and Health on the Children's Services Improvement Plan Update and Scorecard.

The report indicated that In April 2016, an Inspection took place of services of need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers; that the inspection concluded that Children's services in Sefton required improvement to be good across all areas and made 11 recommendations; that Sefton was required to develop an Improvement Plan that addressed all 11 recommendations and this was submitted to Ofsted and the DfE in October 2016; and that the Improvement Plans, which had been shared previously with the Committee, identified the following three key objectives:

- (1) Ensure frontline practice is consistently good, effective and focussed on timely, measureable outcomes for children;

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- (2) To improve management oversight at all levels to ensure effective services for children and young people receive good quality supervision; and
- (3) Ensure that frontline services are sufficiently resourced and the workforce appropriately skilled to enable high quality work to be undertaken with children and young people.

The report provided a summary of the progress in relation to the action plan for 2016 /17 and should be considered alongside the Improvement scorecard data.

The report concluded that there was evidence of improvement across a number of areas; that the actions identified in the Ofsted Improvement plan had been completed but there now needed to be a period of 'bedding – in' change and sustained improvement and this would be supported as part of the new staff structure and as caseloads became more manageable; that the Improvement plan was being reviewed and refreshed with a greater emphasis on impact and outcomes and this would be shared at a future meeting of the Committee; and that Quality of Practice and Supervision Audits would continue to ensure that the Service focused on quality as well as data and that the focus would remain on supporting staff and the partnership to understand the child's lived experience.

Members of the Committee raised the following issues:-

- The overall increase in the rate of referrals (137 more than in 2015/16) and the re-referral rates increased to 21.6%
- Problems associated with children seeing different social workers
- The improvement required regarding the capturing of information arising from assessments, visits and through direct work
- The average caseloads of social workers and the potential to reduce such caseloads
- The proportion of Children Looked After who had been looked after for over 12 months who have had an assessment completed within the latest 12 month period

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Director of Social Care and Health be requested to submit Bi – annual progress reports and score card updates to the Committee:
- (2) the Director of Social Care and Health be requested to submit the refreshed version of the Children's Social Care Improvement Plan to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 26 September 2017;
- (3) Kara Haskayne, Service Manager, Children's Social Care and Trish Galloway, Service Manager, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) be requested to attend the meeting of the Committee when it next considers a child sexual exploitation report to update Members on the work of the MASH; and

- (4) the Head of Children's Social Care be requested to make a presentation to the next meeting of the Committee providing an overview of the Ofsted inspection framework.

6. SEND INSPECTION - STATEMENT OF ACTION

Further to Minute No. 52 of 4 April 2017 the Committee considered the report of the Head of Schools and Families on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Inspection final Statement of Action which had been submitted to Ofsted.

The report indicated that the SEND inspection was an inspection of a local areas' effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who had special educational needs and/or disabilities; that the inspection was undertaken in Sefton jointly by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission and that inspectors were required to examine the local areas' effectiveness in:

- The identification of Children and Young People (CYP) with SEND
- Meeting the needs of CYP with SEND
- Improving outcomes for CYP with SEND

and that In Sefton's case a written 'statement of action' was required on 5 areas of concern, namely:-:

Action 1 - the poor progress made from starting points by pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an EHCP at key stages 2 and 4.

Action 2 - the poor operational oversight of the DCO across health services in supporting children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families.

Action 3 - the lack of awareness and understanding of health professionals in terms of their responsibilities and contribution to EHCPs.

Action 4 - the weakness of co-production with parents, and more generally in communications with parents.

Action 5 - the weakness of joint commissioning in ensuring that there are adequate services to meet local demand.

The report concluded that the Statement of Action submitted to Ofsted jointly by the Clinical Commissioning Groups and Sefton addressed the five areas identified above and was attached as an Appendix to the report.

The Committee also considered a letter received by the Director of Social Care and Health, dated 9 June 2017, from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission on their joint evaluation of the Council's written statement of action submitted to them on 18 April 2017. The letter indicated that the statement of action was deemed not fit for purpose in setting out how the

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local area would tackle the significant areas of weakness identified in the published report letter; that the plan was not fit for purpose because the actions to deliver improvements across health commissioning and provision were not sufficiently specific, measurable, relevant or timely; and that Sefton was required to re-submit a statement of action to Ofsted and CQC within 20 working days.

Debbie Fagan, South Sefton and Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), indicated that the statement of action would need to be re-submitted to Ofsted and CQC by 6 July 2017; that to address the issues raised in the Ofsted/CQC letter the CCG had taken on external support to ensure that actions were specific and evidence based rather than "broad brush" and the CCG was working in partnership with Sefton colleagues and other providers in the health economy; that the first re-draft of the statement of action had been shared with NHS England; and that a further meeting would be held week commencing 26 June 2017 with NHS England to review and update the statement of action.

Members expressed concern that they had only been provided with the Ofsted/CQC letter on the day of the meeting; that they had commented at the meeting held on 4 April 2017 that the actions required specific targets and outcomes in relation to addressing the areas of concern; and that Members should have the opportunity to consider the re-drafted statement of action prior to its submission to Ofsted/CQC.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report on the Special Educational Needs and Disability Inspection final Statement of Action which had been submitted to Ofsted be noted; and
- (2) A Special Meeting of the Committee be held on 30 June 2017 to consider the re-drafted statement of action prior to its submission to Ofsted/CQC.

7. SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND SCHOOL PLACES

The Committee considered the annual report of the Head of Schools and Families on school organisation and school places in Sefton based on the annual School Capacity (SCAP) return to the Department for Education.

The report indicated that the figures contained in the report were based on the 2016 SCAP return and the School Census in January 2016 and 2017; and that the following range of factors and issues impacted on school organisation:-

- Government Policy
- Local Authority Statutory Duties
- Government's vision for Local Authorities
- Factors affecting Pupil Place Planning
- Education reform

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- School funding reform
- Demographic Issues
- Planning Areas

The report also provided information on both the primary and secondary sector pupil places and numbers and detailed the variations in different parts of the borough; and that regarding capital projects, Sefton did not receive any Basic Need allocation for 2017/18 and 2018/19 as the pupil projections submitted to the DFE via SCAP in 2014 and 2015 did not demonstrate enough growth. However, based on the 2016 SCAP return Sefton would receive an allocation of £2,876,486 in 2019/20.

The report concluded that managing pupil places was a complex matter taking into account a range and variety of factors; and that the demand for school places was reviewed annually and proposals developed to meet local pressure points as they arose.

Members of the Committee raised the following issues:-

- Could information be provided on the pupil admission numbers for all schools and what places had been allocated as at June 2017?
- Confirmation was given that regarding new housing within the borough the DFE would not allow local authorities to factor housing developments in to their pupil projections until planning permission had been granted
- Confirmation was given that pupil movement into and out of the borough was taken into account in the planning of school places

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report on school organisation and school places in Sefton based on the annual School Capacity return to the Department for Education be noted; and
- (2) The Head of Schools and Families be requested to provide Committee Members with on the pupil admission numbers for all schools and what places had been allocated as at June 2017.

8. CABINET MEMBER REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance in relation to the most recent report of the Cabinet Member - Children, Schools and Safeguarding for the May 2017 period. The report included details of National Funding Formula for Schools, Academisation, South Sefton College, SEND Inspection and an update on the Children's Social Care restructure.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member update report be noted.

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9. WORK PROGRAMME - KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance that sought the views of the Committee on the draft Work Programme for 2017/18, the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group appointed by the Committee and the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2017/18, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) the following additional item be added to the Work Programme and be considered at the 26 September 2017 meeting:-

“Progress report on the implementation of recommendations of the Not in Education, Employment and Training Working Group“;
- (3) It be acknowledged that the Committee has one outstanding Working Group in relation to the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service; and that work would be undertaken by the Working Group over Summer 2017 and that an Interim Report would be completed by Autumn 2017;
- (4) upon completion of the Interim Report referred to in (3) above a Working Group be established to review the topic of “Special Educational Needs and Disability process of assessment“; and
- (5) the Head of Regulation and Compliance be requested to contact Members to seek their interest in serving on the Working Group referred to in (4) above.



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING)

MEETING HELD AT THE BALLROOM, TOWN HALL BOOTLE ON FRIDAY 30TH JUNE, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor Murphy (in the Chair)
Councillors Hands, Brenda O'Brien, Pitt and Spencer
Mrs Sandra Cain and Mrs C. Palmer

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bennett, Bradshaw, Carragher, Keith (and her substitute Councillor Booth) and Webster (and her substitute Councillor Brennan), Education Added Member Father Des Seddon and Associate Member Mrs. Libby Kitt.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were received.

12. SEND INSPECTION - STATEMENT OF ACTION

Further to Minute No. 6 (2) of the meeting held on 21 June 2017 the Committee considered the report of the Head of Schools and Families seeking approval of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Inspection re-drafted statement of action prior to its submission to Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Attached as annexes to the report were:-

- (1) the letter from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission on their joint evaluation of the Council's written statement of action submitted to them on 18 April 2017. The letter indicated that the statement of action was deemed not fit for purpose in setting out how the local area would tackle the significant areas of weakness identified in the published report letter; that the plan was not fit for purpose because the actions to deliver improvements across health commissioning and provision were not sufficiently specific, measurable, relevant or timely; and that Sefton was required to re-submit a statement of action to Ofsted and CQC within 20 working days; and
- (2) the amended statement of action taking into consideration the feedback from Ofsted which had been developed following discussions with NHS England, Department for Education, Health providers and the Parent Carer Forum.

The Special Meeting had been arranged to comply with the timetable set by Ofsted and CQC for the re-submission of the statement of action.

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Dwayne Johnson, Director of Social Care and Health introduced the report and indicated that a statement of action was required “to address the poor operational oversight of the DCO across health services in supporting children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families”, “to improve the lack of awareness and understanding of health professionals in terms of their responsibilities and contribution to EHCPs” and “to address the weakness of joint commissioning in ensuring that there are adequate services to meet local demand“ which Ofsted/CQC considered were not fit for purpose because the actions to deliver improvements across health commissioning and provision were not sufficiently specific, measurable, relevant or timely. The main areas where this contained weaknesses and steered by CQC/OFSTED related to Sections 2, 3 and 5.

Mr. Johnson concluded by reminding Members that the Council had to work to tight timescales as the re-drafted version of the statement of action had to be submitted to Ofsted on 6 July 2017; that comments made by Members would be included in the re-drafted statement; and that prior to its resubmission, the re-drafted version would be circulated to Members.

Debbie Fagan, South Sefton and Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) indicated that the re-drafted statement of action presented to Members had increased in size to reflect the consultation feedback provided by NHS England, Department for Education, Parent’s Forum, provider colleagues and local authority health colleagues; and that re-formatting of headings within the statement would be undertaken to aid the flow of the document for the reader.

Members of the Committee commented on and asked questions on the following issues:-

Section 2

- The establishment of the roles of Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) and Designated medical Officer (DMO)
- The Speech and Language Therapy Service and in particular, the discharge of pupils from the service to schools; and waiting times to access services
- Concern was expressed regarding the format of the re-drafted statement because it was suggested that it was difficult to cross-reference actions in the original and re-drafted statements. It was suggested that this may draw criticism from Ofsted/CQC Inspectors
- Action A2.1.7 relating to the production of an options appraisal for a future DCO / DMO model across Sefton and wider, if agreed, across the North Mersey LDS footprint; and why there had been a slippage in the timescale

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- What would happen if Ofsted/CQC rejected the re-drafted statement of action
- The concern that schools did not notify the Council when they accepted pupils with SEND needs
- The monitoring of progress made against actions contained in the statement
- The timeframe for the DCO to assess pupils with issues such as food allergies
- Action A2.1.5 relating to the establishment of a series of meetings with local health partners to review the current DCO model and to determine the future model; and in particular the timeframe for the completion of this exercise

Section 3

Debbie Fagan updated Members on Action A3.1.1 (Promote the role and function of the DCO / DMO and develop a heightened awareness across the local system of the SEND reforms including EHCPs) regarding tightening up governance and accountability arrangements; Action A3.1.3 (Ensure the completed training needs analysis is reviewed to inform the commissioning of specific training to meet the needs of local health providers of services for children and young people with SEND) and the co-ordination and alignment of the plan for SEND children; and Action A3.1.5 (Agree and initiate a regular process for audit to inform the multi-agency assurance model for EHCPs) regarding quality assurance and the audit of plans.

- 0 -25 Community Health providers
- The differing levels of SEND support
- The role of the DCO and DMO in the hands-on delivery of care
- The assignment of names to job roles within the plan

Section 5

Debbie Fagan updated Members on Action A5.1.7 (A new Neuro-developmental Pathway (which will include pathways for autism, ADHD and Asperger's) will be co-produced) and advised how this area had been strengthened and explained the process of the strategic needs assessment. Reference was also made to a "Big Chat" event to be held on 11 July 2017; and that the event, organised by the South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group, would enable local residents to hear about some of the plans for local healthcare in the local area, have a say on the development of these services and how to get involved and share their experiences. This event was similar to one that had recently taken place in the north of the borough organised by the Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group.

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- Regarding Action A5.1.7 concern was expressed over the timescales relating to the action; whether information could be included in a newsletter seeking volunteers; and that this action provided good, real engagement and that it should therefore be included in greater detail in the plan
- The inequality of service provision in connection with Action A5.1.9 (Ensure robust performance management of key health services for SEND are in place to support improved outcomes for Children & Young People) and Action A5.1.10 (Commissioners to address the inequity of service provision across north and south Sefton with regards to the Children's Complex Needs Team following the completion of the NHSI led transaction process)
- Assurance was sought that both South Sefton and Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Groups commissioned services to the same specifications
- Do officers consider that the re-drafted statement is robust and addresses the points raised by Ofsted/CQC in their letter of 9 June 2017; and how the covering letter to Ofsted/CQC would be written to identify that the three areas of concern had been addressed.

Mr. Johnson indicated that:-

- with regard to the format of the statement of action, Ofsted/CQC would look at the document afresh to ensure that the statement addressed the three bullet points referred to in their letter of 9 June 2017; and that he would contact Ofsted/CQC to clarify their position regarding the reappraisal of the statement of action
- in the event that the re-drafted statement of action was rejected by Ofsted/CQC further work would be undertaken on the identified areas of concern; and that it was possible, but conjecture that an external appointee could be assigned to support the Council to produce the statement of action although this scenario was considered unlikely.

RESOLVED: That:-

- (1) subject to the inclusion of comments made by Members, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Inspection re-drafted statement of action be approved for submission to Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission;
- (2) prior to the submission of the re-drafted statement the Director of Social Care and Health be requested to circulate a copy, together with the covering letter, to all Members of the Committee;
- (3) the Head of Schools and Families be requested to submit six

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monthly monitoring reports on progress made against the actions contained in the statement;

- (4) Members and officers be thanked for their attendance at the meeting at short notice; and
- (5) details of the "Big Chat" event to be held on 11 July 2017 be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

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Agenda Item 4

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)	Date of Meeting:	12 September 2017
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)		26 September 2017
	Cabinet		5 October 2017
Subject:	Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group Final Report	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Report of:	Head of Regulation and Compliance		
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes	Is it included in the Forward Plan?	Yes
Exempt/Confidential	No		

Purpose/Summary

To present formally the final report of the Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group.

Recommendations:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory Compliance and Corporate Services and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)

That Cabinet be recommended to:-

- (1) request Sefton's Members of Parliament to lobby the Home Secretary to strengthen the existing Legislation regarding personal licences to Include:-
 - a) A national data base of personal licences
 - b) A fit and proper persons test
 - c) In particular provision to allow a Council to defer determination of a personal licence where the Individual is currently involved in a Police Child Sexual Exploitation investigation where a licenced premises is central to those investigations;
- (2) request Sefton's Members of Parliament to lobby the Secretary of State for Education to ensure that Care Providers who offer residential

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placements for 16 – 18 year old children and young people are inspected by a regulatory body;

- (3) in order to raise awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation issues with Sefton parents, request the Head of Schools and Families to promote the Child Sexual Exploitation e-learning tool with all schools and governing bodies and with a request that school e-newsletters contain a hyperlink to the e-learning tool;
- (4) Rather than the Merseyside local authorities dealing with licensing/CSE issues in a piecemeal or individual way, the Liverpool City Region be contacted to seek the adoption of pan-Merseyside standardised policies particularly bearing in mind the cross boundary nature of taxi/private hire journeys; and
- (5) request that the Head of Regulation and Compliance and the Head of Children's Social Care submit a joint monitoring report to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Resources) and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) to be held on 16 and 30 January 2018 respectively, setting out progress made against each of the recommendations set out in the report and that thereafter, monitoring reports be submitted to the Committees on a six monthly basis.

Cabinet

That:-

- (1) Sefton's Members of Parliament be requested to lobby the Home Secretary to strengthen the existing Legislation regarding personal licences to Include:-
 - a) A national data base of personal licences
 - b) A fit and proper persons test
 - c) In particular provision to allow a Council to defer determination of a personal licence where the Individual is currently involved in a Police Child Sexual Exploitation investigation where a licenced premises is central to those investigations;
- (2) Sefton's Members of Parliament be requested to lobby the Secretary of State for Education to ensure that Care Providers who offer residential placements for 16 – 18 year old children and young people are inspected by a regulatory body;
- (3) in order to raise awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation issues with Sefton parents, the Head of Schools and Families promote the Child Sexual Exploitation e-learning tool with all schools and governing bodies and with a request that school e-newsletters contain a hyperlink to the e-learning tool;
- (4) Rather than the Merseyside local authorities dealing with licensing/CSE

issues in a piecemeal or individual way, the Liverpool City Region be contacted to seek the adoption of pan-Merseyside standardised policies particularly bearing in mind the cross boundary nature of taxi/private hire journeys; and

- (5) the Head of Regulation and Compliance and the Head of Children’s Social Care submit a joint monitoring report to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Resources) and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services and Safeguarding) to be held on 16 and 30 January 2018 respectively, setting out progress made against each of the recommendations set out in the report and that thereafter, monitoring reports be submitted to the Committees on a six monthly basis.

Reasons for the Recommendation:

The Working Group has made a number of recommendations that require approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services), the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services and Safeguarding) and the Cabinet.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options were considered. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) established the Working Group to review the topic of Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation and the Working Group has performed this task.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no financial implications arising for the Council as a direct result of this report. The implementation of recommendations that result in efficiency savings and any necessary financial investment will be the subject of separate reports.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no financial implications arising for the Council as a direct result of this report. The implementation of recommendations that result in efficiency savings and any necessary financial investment will be the subject of separate reports.

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial	
Legal	
Human Resources	
Equality	
1. No Equality Implication	<input type="checkbox"/>

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2.	Equality Implications identified and mitigated	
3.	Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose

Protect the most vulnerable:

The terms of reference and objectives of the Working Group were selected to:-

- review the Council's legal and safeguarding position in relation to the issue of any licence following allegations of child sexual exploitation;
- consider whether all relevant pathways, methods of referral are sound with respect to escalation of CSE referrals;
- ensure that key sectors are informed, aware of how to raise concerns concerning CSE; and
- liaise with the Home Office and lobby for legislative change should the need arise.

The Working Group's recommendations have been formulated with the aim of strengthening the existing Legislation regarding personal licences issued under the Licensing Act 2003; to ensure that Care Providers who offer residential placements for 16 – 18 year old children and young people are inspected by a regulatory body; and to make parents/guardians in Sefton aware of an online learning tool that amongst other things, provides them with a valuable source of information to learn the signs and indicators of when a child might be being exploited. It is anticipated that the recommendations will help to protect the most vulnerable in Sefton.

Facilitate confident and resilient communities:

The Working Group's recommendation to make parents/guardians in Sefton aware of an online learning tool to learn the signs and indicators of when a child might be being exploited will create the capacity and motivation for parents/guardians to get involved and create an environment in which they are less reliant on public sector support.

Commission, broker and provide core services: Not applicable

Place – leadership and influencer: Not applicable

Drivers of change and reform: Not applicable

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Not applicable

Greater income for social investment: Not applicable

Cleaner Greener: Not applicable

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD 4727/17/17) has been involved throughout the review work.

The Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD 4011/17) has been consulted and has no comments to add to the report.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

Contact Officer: Paul Fraser

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Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection

Introduction/Background

At its meeting held on 21 June 2016 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) approved the establishment of a Joint Working Group to review the topic of Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation with the following objectives:-

To review the Council’s legal and safeguarding position in relation to the issue of any licence following allegations of child sexual exploitation;

To consider whether all relevant pathways, methods of referral are sound with respect to escalation of CSE referrals;

To ensure that key sectors are informed, aware of how to raise concerns concerning CSE; and

To liaise with the Home Office and lobby for legislative change should the need arise

Accordingly, the Working Group has met on numerous occasions to undertake such review and its Final Report, together with associated recommendations, is attached.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services), the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services and Safeguarding) and the Cabinet are requested to support the contents of the Working Group Final Report and approve the recommendations contained therein.

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(REGULATORY, COMPLIANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES)**



Licensing Act 2003



**LICENSING/CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION WORKING GROUP
FINAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2017**

Overview
& Scrutiny



Overview & Scrutiny



**‘Valuing
Improvement’**

www.sefton.gov.uk
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LEAD MEMBER'S INTRODUCTION

I am very pleased to introduce this Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group report.

The Working Group adhered to its established terms of reference and objectives (see paragraph 2 below) in interviewing witnesses and its drafting of recommendations.

I wish to thank all those people who gave up their valuable time to be interviewed by the Working Group. The input and expertise of interviewees greatly helped the Working Group in the formulation of its recommendations. Finally, I am extremely grateful to my fellow cross-party Working Group Members for their commitment and their ideas and contributions.



Councillor Dave Robinson
Lead Member, Licensing/Child Sexual
Exploitation Working Group



1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 21 June 2016 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) approved the establishment of a Joint Working Group, with members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services and Safeguarding), to review the topic of Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation.
- 1.2 Councillors Bradshaw, Keith, Brenda O’Brien, Robinson and Thomas and Mrs. Sandra Cain, an Associate Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services and Safeguarding) were appointed to serve on the Working Group.
- 1.3 At the first meeting of the Working Group Councillor Robinson was appointed Lead Member. Details of Working Group meetings are set out below:-

Date	Activity
29.09.16	Scoping Document approved Background reading material identified
2.11.16	Working Group received presentation from Kara Haskayne, Service Manager, Safeguarding Children - Independent Reviewing and DCI Gayle Rooney on Child Sexual Exploitation Selection of witnesses approved
25.10.16	Consideration of documentation regarding agile working
6.12.16	Interview Key Witnesses – Michael Hearty, Merseyside Police Licensing Sergeant Andrew Naisbitt, former Trading Standards and Licensing Manager Kevin Coady, Principal Licensing Officer
8.12.16	Interview Key Witness – Peter Yates, Service Manager, Corporate Parenting
27.04.17	Site visit to Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
May 17	Final Report and Recommendations signed off by Working Group Members via email

2.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The Terms of Reference and Objectives of the Working Group were approved as part of the scoping exercise at the first meeting and are set out below.
- 2.2 Terms of Reference and Objectives
- 2.2.1 To review the Council’s legal and safeguarding position in relation to the issue of any licence following allegations of child sexual exploitation;
- 2.2.2 To consider whether all relevant pathways, methods of referral are sound with respect to escalation of CSE referrals;
- 2.2.3 To ensure that key sectors are informed, aware of how to raise

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concerns concerning CSE; and

- 2.2.4 To liaise with the Home Office and lobby for legislative change should the need arise

3.0 METHODS OF ENQUIRY

- 3.1 Literature Review
- 3.2 Legislation Review and Legal Opinion
- 3.3 Critically assess current protocols
- 3.4 Assess Case Studies – Rotherham and others
- 3.5 Compare / contrast permissive -v- restrictive licensing regimes and the concept of fit and proper person

4.0 PRESENTATION/KEY WITNESSES

Members of the Working Group gathered evidence through various methods, including presentations, briefings and receiving reports. Evidence was also obtained when Members had the opportunity to interview key witnesses, various Officers and Partners.

Paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3 provide a summary of the points raised in presentations/discussions held with key witnesses who had been invited to attend Working Group meetings.

4.1 PRESENTATION FROM KARA HASKAYNE, SERVICE MANAGER, SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN - INDEPENDENT REVIEWING AND DCI GAYLE ROONEY, MERSEYSIDE POLICE

- 4.1.1 Ms. Haskayne/DCI Rooney identified:-

The definition of CSE as follows:-

‘Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (a third person or persons) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs or alcohol, cigarettes, affections, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment/gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and



intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships are characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social / economic and /or emotional vulnerability.'

Safeguarding Children from Sexual Exploitation (DFE 2009:9)

National lessons learned to date;
Signs that a child may be exploited;
How agencies were advised to refer their concerns regarding CSE;
Multi agency actions undertaken to safeguard the child and disrupt and prosecute offenders;
Specific actions regarding CSE and licensing; and
Feedback received from the Ofsted Inspection that showed that a highly effective multi-agency strategy had resulted in innovative practice to safeguard children from CSE.

A copy of the presentation can be viewed [here](#)

Following the presentation Working Group Members commented/asked questions as follows to Kara Haskayne, DCI Gayle Rooney and Terry Wood, Environment and Licensing Manager :-

- 4.1.2 How many CSE successful prosecutions had there been? – DCI Gayle Rooney. An example of a successful prosecution was given. Furthermore, the Police cyber-crime unit was now expanding and this would help to gather information to improve the prospect of successful prosecutions
- 4.1.3 Information was sought on Child Abduction Warning Notices – Kara Haskayne. Child Abduction Warning Notices were formerly known as Harbourers' Warnings. They could be issued against individuals who were suspected of grooming children by stating that they had no permission to associate with the named child and that if they did so they could be arrested under the Child Abduction Act 1984 and Children Act 1989. They could be a useful tool for parents because they required a statement from the person(s) with parental responsibility for the child. This was important if a parent identified a risk, but your child insisted that the person was a legitimate 'friend' or 'boy/girlfriend'. A problem with Child Abduction Warning Notices was that the police were able to issue them for children up to the age of 18 only if they were in the care of the local authority. At the moment they could only be issued to children up to the age of 16 if they were living at home. The Council and several other organisations were lobbying the Government to amend the legislation to ensure that notices could be served for all children up to the age of 18

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- 4.1.4 A member indicated that they worked in a Community Centre and that a “7 Minute Briefing” (that provided information on various current safeguarding children topics) would be very helpful for staff – Kara Haskayne. This could be arranged
- 4.1.5 Information was sought on action plans for child victims of CSE who were 16 or 17 years of age – Kara Haskayne. Information was provided on the close working relationship with parents/carers; each child being allocated a social worker; “Catch 22” involvement in the process; the identification of the person with the best relationship with the victim to be the victim’s key worker; the gathering of evidence; and the multi-agency approach adopted
- 4.1.6 What happens if a child continually goes missing and refuses to cooperate with the authorities and it is known that the child frequents a particular property continually? - DCI Gayle Rooney. Targeted disruption activity is undertaken at the property and we have the power to use a Closing Order.
Kara Haskayne. Meetings would be held about the address and Independent Return Interviews would be undertaken with the child to identify and deal with any harm the child had suffered, to understand and try to address the reasons why the child or young person ran away, to help the child feel safe and understand that they had options to prevent repeat instances of them running away [and] provide them with information on how to stay safe if they ran away again, including helpline numbers
- 4.1.7 What happens if a child is very young and their parent or family member is the abuser? – Kara Haskayne. This is not classed as CSE but as child abuse. Nonetheless the issue would be reported and dealt with
- 4.1.8 Are statistics available on the numbers of CSE referrals made by the licensed taxi trade? – Kara Haskayne. Taxi drivers make referrals to Merseyside Police who review the information and in turn make CSE referrals to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. Analysis of the statistics would be sought from Merseyside Police and reported to the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board in September 2017. Furthermore statistics relating to CSE were reported to Cabinet on a regular basis and were included in an annual report
- 4.1.9 How sure are we that all out of borough children coming into Sefton are known to the Council? – Kara Haskayne. Since 2014 annual meetings had been held with all children’s homes operators and representatives; and we are notified by children’s homes when out of borough children arrive. We are confident as a Council that we know of all out of borough children coming into Sefton to either



children's homes or fostering agencies

- 4.1.10 Out of borough children (as victims) could still be contacted via social media – Kara Haskayne. On arrival the child completes documentation. A pan-Merseyside protocol is in place and when CSE of a child is known it is immediately referred to MACSE and staff from the child's home authority have to attend the MACSE meeting
- 4.1.11 Are we confident that if an organised group (targeting children from a CSE perspective) was operating in Sefton that we would know about it? – Kara Haskayne. We have all the systems and processes in place but there was always more work to be done; and unfortunately we could never say it wouldn't happen in Sefton. Members of the community would pick up on CSE behaviour before the Police or the Council and therefore more work was required to engage with our local communities to give them the confidence to report CSE
- 4.1.12 Were all taxi operating firms on board with the CSE proposals contained in the Taxi Licensing Handbook? – Terry Wood. Yes and all drivers were issued with the Handbook and were made aware of the CSE elements
- 4.1.13 Was there any training given to the hotel industry? – Terry Wood. There was no statutory provision to do this. KH referred to correspondence between the Chief Executive and the Home Office that identified a conflict between the statutory requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 and the prevention of CSE
- 4.1.14 Following the complaints made against the Police in respect of the raid on Sir Cliff Richard's home and the now dropped allegations of indecent assault against a youth, would this hinder the prospect of people reporting incidents of CSE? – Kara Haskayne. It was understandable that this may happen. Following reports of abuse by Jimmy Saville lots more referrals were made citing incidents of historical abuse
- 4.1.15 A member referred to a CVS training session on CSE that they had attended and that she was concerned at the lack of input from the Faith Sector. Accordingly, she had spoken to a number of faith organisations on the matter and would continue to do so – Kara Haskayne. We work closely with the Diocese and Archdiocese and both had a CSE point of contact and associated action plans. Inter-faith group meetings had also been attended to promote the issue of CSE. This has also been discussed with Safeguarding Leads for the Diocese and Archdiocese who have indicated that and they will raise the at an all-Faith Merseyside Meeting to discuss with other

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non-Christian faith leads. Feedback will be reported to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Child Sexual Exploitation Group in September 2017

- 4.1.16 Was CSE information available in other languages? – Kara Haskayne. We have access to Beacon Language Service who support translation during 1:1 work. The need for leaflets to be translated will be raised with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Business Manager and Merseyside Police in connection with the translation of the 'Listen to my Story' Merseyside CSE website.
- 4.1.17 What would happen if a child victim had a learning disability? – Kara Haskayne. The case would be discussed with colleagues in Children's Social Care

4.2 LICENSING REGIME – WITNESS INTERVIEWS MICHAEL HEARTY, MERSEYSIDE POLICE LICENSING SERGEANT ANDREW NAISBITT, FORMER TRADING STANDARDS AND LICENSING MANAGER KEVIN COADY, PRINCIPAL LICENSING OFFICER

Michael Hearty, Merseyside Police Licensing Sergeant, Andrew Naisbitt, former Trading Standards and Licensing Manager and Kevin Coady, Principal Licensing Officer were present at the meeting of the Working Group at the same time and responded to the following questions as part of a general discussion.

4.2.1 **Do you consider that the licensing framework actually evaluates the people involved in these 'tempting' industries or does it just make them comply with various requirements?**

- It was acknowledged that each application was taken on its individual merits and that the licensing framework forced applicants to comply with various requirements; although an element of evaluation was undertaken by checking an applicant's past history. Furthermore, the Head of Children's Social Care was consulted on certain licensing applications and could advise and make recommendations on safeguarding issues.
- Discussion was also held on the distinction between applications relating to the taxicab and private hire trade and those relating to alcohol related licences. A restrictive fit and proper person test was adopted for taxicab/private hire licences whilst a permissive test was adopted for alcohol related licences. This meant that so long as the applicant complied with the following 4 conditions, then a licence must be granted by the Council:-
 1. Must be aged 18 or over;
 2. That no personal licence held by them has been forfeited



- within the period of five years before making the application;
3. That they possess an accredited licensing qualification; and,
 4. That they have not been convicted of any relevant or foreign offence.

(From 6 April 2017 a further condition has been added, namely, to ensure that the applicant has a right to work in the UK)

- However, discussion took place on a recent personal licence application that had been refused by the Licensing Sub-Committee; the applicant met the 4 conditions but various counsel advice had been sought and the Sub-Committee were persuaded by the position presented by the opinion of one of those counsels – that a mandatory duty may be vitiated where there are public policy considerations to justify the same. The Sub-Committee considered that they had an over-arching duty to the public as a whole – which is far greater than the applicant's need for a personal licence. The Sub-Committee considered that their duty to protect children from harm outweighed their duty to comply with s.120 of the Licensing Act 2003; accordingly, the Sub-Committee had been mindful of the applicant's job prospects but it did not feel that the lack of a personal licence would hinder the applicant unduly. That being the case, the application was refused. This case also generated correspondence between the Chief Executive and Theresa May, the then Home Secretary. The Chief Executive sought the Home Secretary's views on how the existing regulations could be strengthened to include:-
 - A national data base of personal licences
 - A fit and proper persons test
 - In particular provision to allow a council to defer determination of a personal licence where the individual is currently involved in a police CSE investigation where licenced premises is central to those investigations
- A holding response was received from Karen Bradley MP, Minister for Preventing Abuse, Exploitation and Crime indicating that while it is not Government policy to comment on specific cases, she had asked her officials to look into the legislative point raised and to consult the police and licensing authority representatives, including Sefton's licensing officers, for views about the best way to address this matter; but to date no further correspondence had been received despite a follow up letter from the Chief Executive
- It was acknowledged that the fit and proper person test was deliberately removed by Government in respect of alcohol licences and replaced with the 4 conditions; but that with regard to safeguarding issues a balance of probability test should be used; and that lots of deregulation was being

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introduced but not in the safeguarding field. **It was agreed that licensing should not be considered in isolation and that more regulation and accreditation was required and that it was right for Government to be made aware of this**

- It was noted that Liverpool City Council had organised a one-day voluntary CSE awareness scheme for Security Industry Authority regulated door staff.
- Concern was expressed at some activities associated with underage events at which alcohol was not served. Often young people turned up to the events drunk and were then refused admission. This then generated the problem of young people being drunk and roaming round town/city centres leaving them in a vulnerable position. It was agreed that lots of young people would drink alcohol at home, with the consent of their parents, before they left to attend underage events. The success of campaigns and controls on the retail off-licence sector clamping down on underage sales may have contributed to younger people drinking at home. The safeguarding position regarding parents allowing their children to consume alcohol was a difficult one to address. If it was believed that there was a real problem and issues of neglect arose then the local authority would take appropriate action. Finally, if the Police found young people intoxicated then they would return them home and try to find out where they obtained the alcohol.
- Reference was made to a House of Lords Select Committee currently reviewing the Licensing Act 2013. Although the issue of CSE was not contained in the Select Committee's brief, the Council had made a submission on the same lines as the Chief Executive to the Home Secretary.
- In response to a question as to how do we determine who is a fit and proper person in respect of taxis it was indicated that the process was bureaucratic and time consuming; and that the applicant had the right of appeal if refused a licence. On those occasions where a licence was refused on fit and proper grounds, the Council very rarely lost appeal cases in the Magistrates Court.

4.2.2 **Do you think we could/should have a 'fit and proper' test for the individuals or not – what would be the pros and cons of that?**

- As the law stands at present we can't adopt a fit and proper person test in accordance with the terms of the Licensing Act 2003; as mentioned earlier there was a distinct difference between the permissive and restrictive licensing regimes; and the view was that the Licensing Act 2003 was geared up



towards the licensed trade. It was agreed that lobbying of the Government should be undertaken for the introduction of a fit and proper person test in relation to Licensing Act 2003 applications

- A question was asked that once an applicant had received their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance, did such clearance stay with them for life. Yes. A further question was asked whether we could make applicants renew their DBS on safeguarding grounds. Not without a change in legislation in relation to the Licensing Act 2003. However, the taxi/private hire trade had to renew DBS every three years. It was noted that the Government changed the legislation last year, in respect of personal licences, to remove the need to renew after 10 years. This as the Government wanted to reduce red tape for the industry.
- The Council had stronger controls in respect of Premises Licences. Reviews of such licences could be sought but without hard evidence or concerns it was difficult to provide a strong case for revocation to the Licensing Sub-Committee

4.2.3 **What do you see as the strengths and benefits and weaknesses and dis-benefits of the current system?**

- Aspects of this question were partly discussed as part of question 2 above.
- The great weakness was that the permissive nature of the Licensing Act 2003 meant that strong evidence was required to refuse applications; that the legislation was geared up to favour the licensed trade; and the view was that the system was too deregulatory. It would be helpful if we could use the balance of probability test in respect of Licensing Act 2003 matters to reduce the risks of CSE and improve safeguarding issues
- A strength was that the police and local authorities could use Closing Orders to shut down problem premises.

4.2.4 **How would you describe the relationship between the licensed industries, those who operate in the licensed industries and children who might be vulnerable to being tempted by the lures of those industries?**

- It was considered that there was a disconnect.
- The vast majority of operators were responsible and complied with all training requirements; and welcomed conditions such as CCTV installation in premises and compliance with the “Knock Back” scheme for example. However, no specific training was required to be undertaken

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with regard to CSE as was the case with the taxi/private hire trade. Furthermore, evidence had shown that CSE issues had been identified by the taxi/private hire trade and this could be deemed a success. Raising awareness of CSE in all licensed trades was essential; and to achieve this aim, the Home Office could be lobbied to add a CSE module to the existing nationally accredited training certificate for Personal Licence applicants. It was agreed that the Working Group could adopt a recommendation seeking Licensing Act 2003 applicants for Personal Licences to complete a CSE module as part of the Home Office accredited national training certificate scheme.

- Rather than the Merseyside local authorities dealing with licensing/CSE issues in a piecemeal or individual way, it was suggested that the Liverpool City Region could be contacted to seek the adoption of a pan-Merseyside standardised policy to the problem, particularly bearing in mind the cross boundary nature of taxi/private hire journeys
- Could we use e-learning packages for the licensed trade? – the big licensed operators would probably agree but this may meet some resistance from smaller operators

4.2.5 **What other/more safeguarding could be/should be done?**

- By raising awareness of CSE not only by the Council but by all partner agencies such as the Police, Sefton CVS, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service etc.
- it was confirmed following a question that if a Personal Licence holder had been convicted of a relevant offence then the Police would contact the local authority about it; and that an information sharing scheme was in place between the Police and the Council. However the Courts, upon convicting an offender, may not know that he/she held a Personal Licence and therefore the Police would not be notified in this regard. This was a loophole in the system. It was noted that at present only the Courts could revoke a personal licence.

4.3 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN – WITNESS INTERVIEW PETER YATES, SERVICE MANAGER, CORPORATE PARENTING

The Working Group interviewed Peter Yates, Service Manager, Corporate Parenting and raised the following issues:-

- #### 4.3.1 **How do we ensure that looked after children are not exposed to CSE and reduce the risk for those that have been identified at risk of CSE?**



As of 9 December 2016 Sefton has 467 looked after children (LAC); and the primary way to ensure that LAC are not exposed to CSE and reduce the risk for those that have been identified at risk of CSE is to make sure that we provide the children with a sense of belonging and permanency and that they have a good emotional attachment. Good placement decisions ensure security and continuity. A significant decision facing Sefton as the corporate parent is whether we place children locally or further afield. Children are rarely placed further afield unless it is absolutely necessary to remove the child from risk. However, this is not without its problems because children can sometimes run away and return alone over long distances and this can also increase exposure to risk.

The Sefton Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation (MACSE) Panel is used to understand and minimise risks.

4.3.2 If a child is identified at being at risk and have been involved in unhealthy peer relationships or gangs then what steps are taken to combat this?

The MACSE is used, all risks are considered by the panel and actions are agreed to minimise the risk and the agency responsible for each action.

4.3.3 Is social media monitored?

Yes it is but this often difficult to do. Colleagues in Regulation and Compliance have had success in getting various posts removed from Facebook.

4.3.4 What procedures are in place if a child continually absconds from their placement?

We would look at preventative measures and maybe use an external placement or a residential resource with the aim of cutting negative links. There is a very clear policy around children who are missing and the actions to be taken. A strategy meeting may consider a secure placement if the risk are very concerning, however this would only be used if we felt that it was the only way to protect the child; and the use of such placements require court orders. We would continually work with the young person and their carers to reduce the risk; and the child's social worker would work with agencies such as Catch 22 who provide return interviews and support to children on such issues.

4.3.5 Do we have enough resources to ensure the safety of LAC?

Yes we do, LAC are prioritised, re external placements can be



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costly, so we would constantly review to ensure that the child's needs are being met and it is the most appropriate placement for them.

4.3.6 **How far away would we send LAC to external placements?**

We always avoid placing LAC children away from their local communities when possible. Children are rarely placed more than 100 miles away. On occasion placements more than 100 miles away have been used but this is due to the specialist nature of the placement and always to meet the child's needs.

4.3.7 **Where are Sefton's 476 LAC?**

10% in residential care, 60 to 70% in foster care and 20% with parents.

4.3.8 **How many out of borough LAC are in private care homes?**

On average about 210 children who are in the care of another LA. Some are very high risk children due to CSE issues from their original local authority area and we work closely with their LA to ensure they are safe.

Some of Sefton's LAC are placed in residential homes but rarely in the same ones as out of borough children if we have concerns about the operation of a home we would discuss the matter with our Contracts and Monitoring Team so that they could assess its standards.

4.3.9 **What powers of regulation do we have over children's homes?**

The Council has no statutory powers over children's homes. We do have a Designated Officer who will become involved if there are safeguarding concerns in relation to staff members; Independent Returns Home Officers are also employed and they support children in the homes who are reported missing. The Council works closely with Ofsted, who regulate and inspect children's homes, we have been successful in the closure of three homes that did not meet the required standards. We use the North West Commissioning Framework to ensure quality assured standards in the homes.

4.3.10 **Could a private children's home provider open a home in Sefton without notifying the local authority?**

We work very closely with our planning colleagues on this matter, looking at risk factors in communities which may impact on



children. We consider that we already have a very high number of out of borough LAC in Sefton. Sefton is concerned that it cannot provide the resources to ensure these private homes are safe. Sefton cannot stop applications for planning permission being submitted and these will need to be determined in accordance with planning policy and on their individual merits. Furthermore, we do not currently have a planning policy regarding such homes.

It was agreed – that the Head of Regulation and Compliance investigate whether a planning policy could be introduced to stop or restrict the establishment of further private residential care homes for LAC in Sefton.

(NOTE: following an investigation into the above matter by the Head of Regulation and Compliance it was established that no such planning policy could be introduced)

4.3.11 **What training and support do we offer to our foster carers and residential workers to ensure they understand the signs of CSE and can support young people in their care?**

We provide supervision and encourage work to promote attachment with the placement family; training is provided on the role family contact plays within the placement; and training is provided to foster carers regarding e-safety, social media and CSE issues. The aim is to achieve an overall sense of belonging for the child so that they invest in the carers looking after them and remain safe.

4.3.12 **Are the training courses managed?**

Yes, very carefully. Mandatory training is provided as part of the foster carer core offer and courses are updated on an annual basis.

4.3.13 **Can we ensure that staff in private homes are trained to the same standards?**

Yes. Multi-agency training is provided and this includes CSE awareness issues; training courses are run every six weeks at Ainsdale Corporate Learning Centre. Furthermore, meetings are held on a frequent basis with private care home representatives. This is very important because children in private care homes are at a much greater risk than Sefton's LAC. Finally, it was stated that it was the responsibility of the private children's home to undertake a compatibility risk assessment of the children they accepted to ensure that they can manage their needs.

4.3.14 **Can we have a say on what out of borough LAC come into Sefton?**



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No, we have no statutory powers in this respect. When we become aware of problems we use MACSE plans and when children are considered to be unsafe this is passed on immediately to the originating out of borough Director of Children's Services. Following a question as to whether it would be helpful to have such a statutory power it was indicated that this was a dilemma – as the Council could potentially have the direct responsibility for an additional 210 out of borough LAC but with no control or funding for such children. As mentioned previously, it was suggested that it would be helpful if the opening of further private homes could be restricted through the planning process, as Sefton was at optimum capacity in this regard from a safeguarding point of view. The Council has however been influential in getting a notification system in place so that we are aware of all the Out of Borough children in Sefton.

It was agreed – that further reflection on the issue of gaining statutory influence of out of borough LAC coming into Sefton be reflected upon as a potential recommendation of the Working Group.

4.3.15 **How do we ensure that private providers and independent fostering agencies understand the signs of CSE, are familiar with Sefton's procedures and support the young people in their care?**

In terms of the Council's expectations when a Sefton child is placed in with a private provider we draw up a contract to include the identification of CSE risks, the child's care plan and mitigating factors.. This contracting process ensures that the child's exposure to CSE risks is minimised. There is also a performance management framework in place and data in relation to CSE is analysed and quarterly update reports are submitted to Cabinet.

The Lead Member, Councillor Robinson referred to an e-learning course for parents to assess the risks of CSE.

It was agreed - that the Head of Children's Social Care be requested to promote the e-learning course to all foster parents and carers.

5. SITE VISIT TO MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB (MASH)

The Working Group undertook a visit to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 28 April 2017 and considered a briefing note that provided background information on MASH. The briefing note advised that Serious Case Reviews and inspections had highlighted concerns about agencies



sharing information when children are at risk; that the MASH was a government backed approach that has been further endorsed in the MUNRO review of child protection; that the MASH offers a confidential information sharing service that has representation from statutory agencies as a minimum; and that each MASH is governed by an Information Sharing Agreement so that professionals are clear of expectations.

The main aim of the MASH is:-

- to enable timely, well informed decision making that leads to early help;
- to enable agencies to collate a multi-agency chronology that forms the basis for decision making;
- to use a risk assessment form to grade referrals to determine priority for actions and which agency is best placed to respond; and
- to enable the least intrusive approach to be taken by the agency deemed most appropriate. Most importantly, children should not fall between agencies without any support service.

This concept supports the golden thread running through the Children's Social Care Service re-design of right intervention, at the right time with least changes of workers. The briefing note indicated that Sefton has a vision for MASH that encompasses a strong operational focus; and that Sefton recognises that professional relationships are critical. As such co-location, good interagency communication and the opportunity for multi-agency professionals to undertake joint visits within the community will be key features of the Sefton MASH design.

The briefing note also identified the key drivers for change, namely:-

- Vulnerable children get a better service;
- Agencies co-located e.g. police, health, Early Intervention and Prevention, Children's Social Care, Probation = better relationships, improved understanding of each other's professional role, and improved information sharing on a need to know basis;
- Early intervention by least intrusive service (early help);
- Repeat incidents identified and a problem solving approach initiated;
- Professionals have a central point for advice and access to information from a range of agencies; and
- Quicker, better informed decision making

With regard to Governance arrangements the briefing note indicated that the Director of Social Care and Health was responsible for the MASH, discharged through the Head of Children's Social Care; and that the Local Safeguarding Children's Board provides governance to the MASH.

Sefton have achieved/will achieve the MASH proposals above by the adoption of an agreed governance structure, the creation of a draft performance

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framework to measure how much we are doing (this will need to be populated as cases are progressed through the MASH), developing operational procedures and processes to support the MASH and marketing the MASH.

The briefing note concluded by detailing that phase one of Sefton's MASH had commenced on 24 February 2014; and that representatives from Children's Social Care, Early Intervention, Merseyside Police, Health and Merseyside Probation (virtual member) will process referrals on Domestic Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Protection.

The Working Group also received a presentation from Julie Bucknall, Nicola Driscoll, Ellie Fairgrive and Emma Murphy on the working of the MASH Team regarding:-

- The Sefton Local Safeguarding Children's Board Partnership system to address child sexual exploitation concerns
- Child sexual exploitation referrals for the period 1 January to 20 April 2017
- How the MASH Team engage with schools/parents to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation issues
- The five types of child sexual exploitation grooming models, namely, boyfriend/girlfriend model, party model, on-line model, friendship model and groups and gangs model
- Ofsted involvement in the regulation of private children's homes

As a result of the presentation the Working Group resolved that the Head of Schools and Families be requested to promote the Child Sexual Exploitation e-learning tool with all schools and governing bodies and with a request that school e-newsletters contain a hyperlink to the e-learning tool.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Licensing Act 2003 – Issue of a Personal Licence

There is a conflict between the statutory requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 (LA03) and the prevention of Child Sexual Exploitation in that the permissive process for granting a Personal Licence differs to that applied to applications for Premises Licences.

There is a statutory duty set out within the Licensing Act 2003 for Responsible Authorities to be informed of Premises Licence applications, enabling relevant checks to be undertaken. In Sefton the Safeguarding Children Unit represents the 'Responsible Body for protecting children from harm' and is informed of all Premises Licence applications, so checks can be undertaken regarding any safeguarding issues, including any involvement in Child Sexual Exploitation concerns. Merseyside Police are also consulted in their capacity as a Responsible Authority. If any concerns are identified, objections to the Premises Licence application can be made



to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee with regard to any of the 4 Licensing Objectives. With regard to Child Sexual Exploitation concerns, objections can be made by the Responsible Body for Safeguarding Children, the Safeguarding Children Unit and Merseyside Police regarding the following Licensing Objectives:

- Prevention of Crime and Disorder
- Public Safety
- Protection of children from harm

The Licensing and Regulatory Committee has a statutory duty to consider such objections when making their decision whether or not to grant the Premises Licence.

However, with regard to Personal Licence applications, the legislation (Section 120 LA03) requires that the Local Authority must grant a Personal Licence if it appears to it that:

- (a) The applicant is aged 18 or over
- (b) The applicant possesses a licensing qualification or is a person of a prescribed description,
- (c) No personal licence held by the applicant has been forfeited in the period of five years ending with the day the application was made, and
- (d) The applicant has not been convicted of any relevant offence or any foreign offence.

(From 6 April 2017 a further condition has been added, namely, to ensure that the applicant has a right to work in the UK). There is no ability to undertake Responsible Authority Checks. In the event that requirements (a) – (d) are met Merseyside Police are not permitted to express any objections to a Personal Licence application. The Safeguarding Children Unit is not permitted to be informed of Personal Licence applications, as this is a permissive process if all the requirements outlined above are met, even in the case where the applicant, or a member of their family, is currently being investigated with regard to child sexual exploitation. Merseyside Police are not able to express any objection to the application if the individual has not been convicted of an offence, despite the fact that they may be undertaking a Child Sexual Exploitation investigation regarding the individual at the time of the application.

The Chief Executive for Sefton Council and Merseyside Police Chief Constable have previously written to the Home Office, drawing to their urgent attention the conflict between the statutory requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 (LA03) and the prevention of Child Sexual Exploitation. A formal response from the Home Office as to how this matter is to be addressed remains to be received.

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RECOMMENDATION

That Sefton's Members of Parliament be requested to lobby the Home Secretary to strengthen the existing Legislation regarding personal licences to Include:-

- a) A national data base of personal licences
- b) A fit and proper persons test
- c) In particular provision to allow a Council to defer determination of a personal licence where the Individual is currently involved in a Police Child Sexual Exploitation investigation where a licenced premises is central to those investigations

6.2 16-18 year old Non-Regulated Care Provision

Not all Care Providers who offer residential placements for 16 – 18 year old young people are inspected by a regulatory body. Local Authorities across the NW region have processes in place to gain assurance in relation to the provision of care and support provided by those establishments that fall outside of Ofsted's regulatory regime. However it would provide clarity and consistent standards across England if all residential placements providing care and supported accommodation for 16 – 18 year olds fell within a national regulatory scheme. A [letter](#) from Lisa Pascoe, Ofsted's Deputy Director, Social Care Policy dated 4 May 2017 to all Directors of Children's Services provides clarity on this issue; and in particular, paragraphs 9 and 11 as detailed below:-

Accommodation for young people aged over 16

9. This remains an area of challenge and fluidity. A provider can provide accommodation for young people over the age of 16 without registration. If they provide care and accommodation then they should be registered. However, the level of care provided is not specified in the Care Standards Act 2000 and clearly some young people as they move into independent living require some level of support in order to make the transition. This level of care usually reduces over time and does not include the provision of meals, medication, personal care etc. The young people are free to come and go as they wish. Staff may be present for parts of the day and even overnight for security reasons but are not providing direct care. These are unregulated settings and can operate without registration. However, providers who accommodate young people under the age of 16 are then operating an unregistered setting and therefore operating illegally;

11. The challenge is that it is the needs of the young people which determines the requirement of registration and not the model, and therefore it is not



possible to define with any certainty that a setting will never require registration.”

RECOMMENDATION

That Sefton’s Members of Parliament be requested to lobby the Secretary of State for Education to ensure that all residential placements for 16 – 18 year olds, whether care or supported accommodation are inspected by a national regulatory body.

6.3 Keep them safe: an interactive Child Sexual Exploitation learning tool

Keep them safe is a free online learning tool from Pace and Virtual College which has been accessed by more than 29,000 parents and professionals (as of March 2016).

The course is aimed at parents and the 20-30 minute e-learning training course is a valuable source of information to:

- find out more about child sexual exploitation
- learn the signs and indicators of when a child might be being exploited
- understand the impact child sexual exploitation can have on families
- know what to do if you suspect a child might be at risk of this abuse

RECOMMENDATION

In order to raise awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation issues with Sefton parents the Head of Schools and Families be requested to promote the Child Sexual Exploitation e-learning tool with all schools and governing bodies and with a request that school e-newsletters contain a hyperlink to the e-learning tool.

6.4 Pan-Merseyside Standardised Policy

RECOMMENDATION

Rather than the Merseyside local authorities dealing with licensing/CSE issues in a piecemeal or individual way, the Liverpool City Region be contacted to seek the adoption of pan-Merseyside standardised policies particularly bearing in mind the cross boundary nature of taxi/private hire journeys

7. DOCUMENTATION CONSIDERED BY THE WORKING GROUP

- 7.1 Care Quality Commission document “Not Seen, Not Heard - A review of the arrangements for child safeguarding and health care for looked after children in England [click here](#)



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- 7.2 Taxicab Licensing Handbook and Partnership Pathway documentation [click here](#)
- 7.3 report considered by Cabinet on 10 March 2016 on Child Sexual Exploitation Post Rotherham [click here](#)
- 7.4 relevant sections relating to Licensing/CSE from the recent Ofsted inspection report into Children's Services in Sefton [click here](#)
- 7.5 revised Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 [click here](#)
- 7.6 Alexis Jay report - Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (1997 – 2013) [click here](#)
- 7.7 report considered by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee on 26 September 2016 on the implications of the recent review into the South Ribble Taxi Licensing Service [click here](#)
- 7.8 correspondence between the Chief Executive and the former Home Secretary regarding the issue of a personal licence [click here](#)
- 7.9 'Time to listen' – a joined up response to child sexual exploitation and missing children [click here](#)



8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

In producing this report on licensing/child sexual exploitation acknowledgements and thanks are attributed to the following individuals for their time and input:-

- Kara Haskayne, Service Manager, Safeguarding Children - Independent Reviewing
- DCI Gayle Rooney, Merseyside Police
- Michael Hearty, Merseyside Police Licensing Sergeant
- Andrew Naisbitt, former Trading Standards and Licensing Manager
- Kevin Coady, Principal Licensing Officer
- Peter Yates, Service Manager, Corporate Parenting
- Julie Bucknall, Nicola Driscoll, Ellie Fairgrave and Emma Murphy from the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

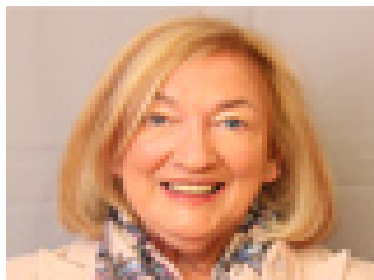
Thanks must also go to the Members of the Working Group who have worked hard and dedicated a great deal of time to this review, namely:-



Councillor Dave Robinson, Lead Member, Licensing/CSE Working Group



Councillor Sue Bradshaw



Councillor Pat Keith



Councillor Brenda O'Brien



Councillor Carla Thomas

Mrs Sandra Cain

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Sefton Council 

**Overview
& Scrutiny**



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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 26 September 2017
Subject:	The development of Family Well-being Service		
Report of:	Director of Social Care and Health	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Children, Schools & Safeguarding		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

In March 2017 the Council approved the proposed development of locality working. This report provides Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) the opportunity to comment on the proposals to develop Family Wellbeing Centres.

Recommendation(s):

Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- (1) Comment on the draft strategic vision and principles for the development of Family and Wellbeing Centres
- (2) Comment on the proposal to implement a new funding formula
- (3) Note that public engagement and consultation is planned to commence week beginning 25th September

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The Council faces significant demographic and financial pressures. This proposal is part of the Early Intervention & Prevention project approved by Council in March 2017. This proposed model will tackle the multiple needs of families in a more joined-up way.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

Remaining the same is no longer viable.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

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(A) Revenue Costs

The total revenue budget in support of Children’s and Family Centres is currently £6.5m and this figure includes services commissioned from other external agencies that support the current Children’s Centre delivery model. The merger of Children’s and Family Centres will make some efficiency savings and reduce duplication of provision. Any savings that may result from this new model of working would contribute towards the Early Intervention and Prevention (EiP) transformation savings workstream that was agreed by Council as part of the current Medium Term Financial Plan 2017 – 2019.

(B) Capital Costs

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
Legal Implications:
Equality Implications: Equality implications will be further considered following the community engagement planned.

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: the proposed model seeks to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure a focussed response on providing improved outcomes for the children and young people themselves on occasions where the “whole family” approach does not work.• Ensure that the child's voice is heard and that safeguarding thresholds are maintained through service redesign and delivery
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: the proposed model seeks to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect families starting points, and intervene early to provide the required support in a timely way.• Develop a “whole family” approach where root cause issues can be addressed and families limit the number of times they need to tell their story• Support children and families that are failing to thrive or reach their potential, particularly with regard to attachment, language acquisition and early childhood milestones• Promote good mental health and emotional wellbeing for all children and young people, parents and care givers in Sefton and improve access to targeted support to address health inequalities.
Commission, broker and provide core services:
Place – leadership and influencer:
Drivers of change and reform: the proposed model seeks to

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure a targeted and evidence-based approach for those children and families who are in the greatest need
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:
Greater income for social investment:
Cleaner Greener

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD.4867/17) and Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD.4151/17) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Headteachers have been engaged in the development of this strategic approach.

Implementation Date for the Decision

NA

Contact Officer:	Jacqueline Finlay
Telephone Number:	
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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

<http://smbc-modgov-01/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD2293&ID=2293&RPID=15618794>

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- 1.1 For some time our communities have told us that they want a joined up approach. In March 2017 Council Members approved the concept of locality working. As part of this work the Director of Health and Social Care has led a review of the current Children's Centre and Family Centre offer, delivery points and associated funding.
- 1.2 Since the introduction of the Children and Family Centres in 2006-2007 there has been no overall strategic vision or strategic direction, and given the significant change in successive government and local policies, Sefton now wants to take a strategic approach.
- 1.3 The Director of Health & Social Care has held internal working groups and conducted a number of meetings with Headteachers and the Centre Managers to develop a strategic approach. In addition, visits to all the Children and Family Centres have been undertaken, including some visits alongside Cabinet Members.
- 1.4 Following extensive work a draft strategic vision for the future of the Children & Family Centres has been undertaken and resulted in the strategic vision presented within this paper

2. Context – Children's Centres

- 2.1 Currently within Sefton, there are 10 Children's Centres operating from a number of schools, Council and community bases. Nine Centres are based on Nursery or Primary School premises; they operate as a commissioned service, governed by the school and quality assured by the School Readiness Team. The tenth centre is under direct management of the Council and operates from a Council building.

2.2

Children's Centre	Phase & yr. established	Governance
Cambridge	1 27/04/2007	Commissioned service, governed by Cambridge Nursery School
Linaker	1 11/07/2006	Commissioned service, governed by Linaker Primary School
Litherland	1 24/03/2006	Commissioned service, governed by Litherland Moss Primary School
Netherton	1 18/09/2006	Council
Seaforth	1 13/02/2006	Commissioned service, governed by Sand Dunes primary School
Springwell	1 23/03/2006	Commissioned service, governed by Springwell Primary

Children's Centre	Phase & yr. established	Governance
		School
First Steps (Kings Meadow & Farnborough Road)	2/3 25/02/2008	Commissioned service, governed by Farnborough Road Infant School
Hudson	2 25/02/08	Commissioned service, governed by Hudson Primary School
Waterloo/Thornton	2 01/11/07	Commissioned service, governed by Waterloo Primary School
Freshfield	3 28/02/2010	Commissioned service, governed by Freshfield Primary School

2.3 The 10 centres are located across Sefton, primarily serving areas of deprivation. However the size of the locality they serve is very different and ranges from 792 to 3,356 under 5's within the reach area.

3. Context - Family Centres

3.1. The Family Centre resource have traditionally been aligned to support Children's Social Care assessments, plans and interventions. In 2012 the Council restructured this resource alongside Children's Centres, Integrated Youth Support, Aiming High and Emotional Health and Wellbeing to form the new Early Help Service. Since its creation the Family Centre team have maintained integrated working with Children's Social Care (CSC) alongside the development of an Early Help offer and leadership of Early Help plans. The allocation of resources has shifted from 100% CSC to 70% CSC and 30% Early Help.

3.2 The Council operate 4 Family Centres:

- Netherton – Netherton Children's Centre, Magdalen Square, Netherton
 - Seaforth – Seaforth Children's Centre, 39 Caradoc Road, Seaforth
 - Marie Clarke – Alt Road, Bootle
 - Southport – St Andrews Place, Talbot Street, Southport
- NB. 2 Centres are co-located with Children's Centres (Netherton and Seaforth)

3.3 Although the family centre functions and core offer differ to Children Centres the data scrutinised clearly identifies similar cohorts of families attending both centres, or outreach services. Clearly by integrating the centres it is possible to offer a more universal offer which is in line with our proposed strategic approach. This would provide better outcomes with more joined up partnership working with a focus on health and well-being, identifying early help and preparing children for school. It also provides some opportunities to identify efficiencies through staffing changes.

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4. The Operating Model

- 4.1 The proposals for remodelling and developing a family well-being service is part of a wider transformation process relating to Early Intervention and Prevention – Locality Teams. The proposals will create five distinct geographical service delivery areas across the Borough, which align to the three identified localities.
- 4.2 The strategic direction for a Family Wellbeing service clearly outlines the vision and approach the Council wishes to adopt. It was proposed that we widen the offer to 0-19 by providing outreach support into schools and the community. This would complement the approach the Council has taken surrounding health and well-being services and their approach to multi-disciplinary working in the context of working within defined bases.
- 4.3 The key principles of the family well-being service are to:
- Respect families starting points, and intervene early to provide the required support in a timely way.
 - Develop a “whole family” approach where root cause issues can be addressed and families limit the number of times they need to tell their story
 - Ensure a focussed response on providing improved outcomes for the children and young people themselves on occasions where the “whole family” approach does not work.
 - Ensure that the child's voice is heard and that safeguarding thresholds are maintained through service redesign and delivery
 - Ensure a targeted and evidence-based approach for those children and families who are in the greatest need
 - Support children and families that are failing to thrive or reach their potential, particularly with regard to attachment, language acquisition and early childhood milestones
 - Promote good mental health and emotional wellbeing for all children and young people, parents and care givers in Sefton and improve access to targeted support to address health inequalities.
- 4.4 **Overview and scrutiny are asked to comment on the above principles**
- 4.5 It is proposed that each locality will be served by a lead Family and Wellbeing ‘hub’. A Manager will be allocated to each locality. The lead ‘hub’ centre will be responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of the family well-being service and managing the distribution of activity and staff within their area according to need. The impact on staffing will be a reduction of management. Frontline and admin staffing will be reduced according to the formula. This approach will allow for increased joint planning and management across the whole locality and particularly in relation to service design and improvement.
- 4.6 In order to account for the large geographical area; the North and Central localities will be sub divided into two service delivery hubs – this will ensure that the budget and staffing can be aligned closer to communities.

- 4.7 It is expected that each lead ‘hub’ will be supported by the majority of remaining Children’s Centres and Family Centres, which will operate as link or satellite centres and will effectively be delivery points.
- 4.8 Although the existing Family Centre functions differ to Children Centres; the data scrutinised, clearly identifies, in some cases, similar cohorts of families attending both family and children’s centres. By integrating the centres it is possible to offer a more universal offer which is in line with our strategic approach. This will provide improved outcomes with more joined up partnership work. A renewed focus will be on health and well-being, identifying early help and supporting families through periods of need. It will also provide some opportunities to identify efficiencies through staffing changes.
- 4.9 The proposed new model will support the concept as outlined in the Statutory Guidance for Children’s Centres 2013, which states that children’s centres are as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, as they are about providing premises in particular geographical areas. In practical terms, this means less centres will be registered as standalone children’s centres with Ofsted. The remaining centres will be listed as linked or satellite sites and will no longer be subject to individual inspections.
- 4.10 The table below highlights the differences between the current operating model (including existing reach areas) to the proposed service delivery areas and their place within the locality model.

Locality area	Proposed Main Base	Additional Complementary Bases
North	Talbot Street - Potential Family Wellbeing centre	Linaker Freshfield Farnborough & Kingsmeadow
South	Waterloo - Potential Family Wellbeing centre Or Marie Clarke - Potential Family Wellbeing centre	Cambridge Seaforth (the place that you currently use may change)
Central	Netherton – Potential Family Wellbeing Centre	Hudson Litherland Thornton Springwell

- 4.11 The proposed model also aligns with how we anticipate Children’s Centres will be inspected by Ofsted in the future. Rather than a single centre inspection, it is expected that they will be considered as part of the overall Children’s Service inspection regime; as recent Joint Targeted Area Inspections have included some inspection of Children’s Centre service delivery. In practical terms, this means less centres will be registered as standalone children’s centres with Ofsted. The

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remaining centres will be listed as linked or satellite sites and will no longer be subject to individual inspections.

- 4.12 The proposed operating model will be delivered from a number of key sites, either community or school based. This network of delivery points will ensure services can be delivered close to the community and ensure travel times are not drastically increased for service users accessing the provision. It will enable a more focused and targeted approach to meeting resident needs and priorities.
- 4.13 Further detailed work will be required to determine conclusively which buildings the offer will be delivered from, however, the strategic vision is committed to delivering the offer as close to the community as possible.
- 4.14 Location of the three proposed Family and Well-Being Centres - To deliver the new funding formula the proposal is to have one main family well-being hub within each locality and each overseen by a manager. This central hub would see the delivery of children centre and family centre functions. Existing children's centres would potentially be delivery sites along with additional outreach venues.
Proposed sites include:
North – Talbot Street
Central – Netherton Children's Centre and Family Centre
South – Waterloo Children's Centre or Marie Clarke Family Centre

5. Finance Background

- 5.1 Funding for each Children's centre is based on historic reasoning. When subject to detailed analysis it appears not to follow any pre-determined formula or clear rationale. This is highlighted when the Children's Centre budget is aligned to the number of under 5's the centre serves. The amount of budget per under 5 ranges from £99 to £334, with the average amount of £206.
- 5.2 The Children's Centre budget is distinct from the school, with any deficit returning to the Local Authority as opposed to being incorporated into school budgets. In the vast majority of cases comprehensive re-charges are made to the school to cover utilities, cleaning, maintenance etc. Charges are often also made for management oversight and/or admin and caretaking support. However, currently there is no standardised fee or calculation set, to determine this amount across the centres.

6. Proposed funding formula to support new operating model

- 6.1 As funding has been based on historic reasoning, conversations with head teachers have confirmed there is a will to develop a funding formula which will provide a more equitable and fair distribution of funding across our most deprived areas. It is anticipated that this will provide improved outcomes where most needed. In line with the strategic vision outlined above it is proposed that a new funding formula is introduced which will encompass both current Children Centre and Family Centre delivery by way of a new Family Well-being service. The formula will allocate staffing and operational costs on a clearly defined basis that reflects the ambition of the service within the resources available.

- 6.2 The proposal is that a weighted funded model is adopted which takes account of levels of deprivation and need across pre-determined reach footprints within localities, and that this supports a flexible and well trained workforce.
- 6.3 Officers are developing a model which will propose to set out staffing resources to reflect an allocation for universal / targeted outreach, early years home visits, early intervention family work, family intervention to support social care cases, admin and data oversight.
- 6.4 it is anticipated that the formula will weights the following factors, subject to a detailed assessment of an equality report:
- Numbers of children (0-5) within each reach area with higher weighting for areas of deprivation in higher IDACI banding. (IDACI is the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index)
 - A weighting linked to the proportion of referrals to social care
 - Numbers of early help cases
 - Population for 6-19 year olds
 - Time allocated to social care cases
- 6.5 The effect of the new funding formula will be that existing children's centres will be unlikely to have the same budget as they currently have now.
- 6.6 **Overview and Scrutiny are asked to comment on the approach being taken towards the development of a funding formula.**

7. Legal considerations

- 7.1 In order to implement the new operating model, consideration will be given to the relevant legislation incorporated within the Childcare Act 2006.

8. Consultation and Engagement

- 8.1 In order to gain the views of the public, service users, partners and staff and realise statutory requirements on the proposed changes to the delivery of Family Centre and Children's Centre roles within Sefton it will be necessary to enter a period of consultation and engagement. A more detailed plan will form the basis of a report presented to the Public Engagement & Consultation Panel, available [here](#).
- 8.2 The feedback from this consultation will be considered by Cabinet in December 2017
- 8.3 **Overview and Scrutiny are asked to note the intention to fully engage on the proposals**

9. Equality Impact Assessment

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- 9.1 It will be essential that careful consideration is given to the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010, particularly section 19 and section 149 of the act. With this in mind, we will conduct a full equality analysis across the programme, with recommendations where appropriate, for consideration by Cabinet and Council prior to any final decision being made.
 - 9.2 Re-configuration of activities delivered at Children's Centres – In order to ensure a greater understanding of the specific changes to services on offer, an analysis of information and data will be required on which services will continue to be delivered, reduced and or ceased in line with the new proposals linked to protected characteristic, demographic needs and usage trends. Assessment will also be required on the how families currently access or are signposted into the provision along with the reasons why.
 - 9.3 Funding formula – as this is new policy and practice, an equality analysis will be required, to ensure that the new funding formula meets PSED and does not inadvertently contain bias that will disadvantage any protected groups.
 - 9.4 Due to the potential impact on staff, service users any anyone with a significant interest, there will be, as part of a consultation and engagement strategy, meaningful and clear communications to all appropriate parties enabling them to form considered responses. Given the breadth and reach of the programme there are a number of aspects which will need to be given specific consideration and analysis in order to help form a coherent proposal for consulting upon.
10. **Property Considerations**
- 10.1 Further detailed work is required to determine conclusively which buildings the offer will be delivered from. However, the strategic vision is committed to delivering the offer as close to the community as possible. An equality analysis report and consultation will assist with this.

Agenda Item 6

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 26 September 2017
Subject:	Updated Children's Social Care Improvement Plan		
Report of:	Head of Children's Social Care	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Children , Schools and Safeguarding		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

In April 2016 an Inspection took place of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. The report was published on 27th June 2016.

An action plan was developed that addressed the 11 recommendations made in that report and this was submitted to Ofsted in October 2016.

The plan has now been reviewed and updated to focus on current priorities and ensure that the service continues to improve to ensure that all services provided to children are good or better and improve their outcomes.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) Committee endorsed the new action plan and priorities for continuous improvement.
- (2) Committee continues to receive 6 monthly progress reports with the performance scorecard that underpins the action plan.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

Over view and Scrutiny Committee have a key role in the governance of the plan to ensure that actions are progressed and the service continues to improve.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

Agenda Item 6

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

(B) Capital Costs

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
Legal Implications:
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: This is a core function of the service who provide statutory social work services to children and young people including those in need of help and protection, looked after and care leavers.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Ensuring children are safeguarded improves their life chances and supports them to become successful adults.
Commission, broker and provide core services: The service provides statutory social work services to vulnerable children.
Place – leadership and influencer: N/A
Drivers of change and reform: N/A
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Protecting vulnerable children supports them to achieve and attain and increase their chances of becoming successful adults.
Greater income for social investment: N/A
Cleaner Greener N/A

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD.4860/17) and Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD.4144/17) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee.

(Please delete as appropriate and remove this text)

Contact Officer:	Vicky Buchanan
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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Children Social care Improvement Plan

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

Agenda Item 6

- 1.1 In April 2016 an Inspection took place of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. The report was published on 27th June 2016.

An action plan was developed that addressed the 11 recommendations made in that report and this was submitted to Ofsted in October 2016. The plan has now been reviewed and updated to focus on current priorities and ensure that the service continues to improve to ensure that all services provided to children are good or better and improve their outcomes.

The updated plan is available for committee to provide them with an opportunity to comment on the plan, the actions and priorities.

Progress reports and the performance scorecard that underpins the plan will continue to be brought to committee on a six monthly basis.

Sefton MBC
Children's Services
Draft Improvement Action Plan
202017-18



Foreword

One year on intro update

.Welcome to our Children and Young People’s Improvement Plan 2017 – 2018. This plan sets out how we will ensure that outcomes for children and young people in Sefton continue to improve and we achieve our aspiration that all our services for children and young people are good or better.

We want all children and young people in Sefton to have a positive start in life and to be safe. In order to achieve this we need to continue to find ways to put children and young people at the heart of all our activity and focus on listening to them.

Key areas of focus for 2017-18

The Senior Management Team have met regularly throughout 2016 and 2017 to review the improvement plan and ensure all staff are aware of the priorities and actions through practice and performance workshops and our practice champions. We have reviewed progress made against the previous plan, alongside performance management information and quality audit findings. The following areas remain a focus of the 2017-18 plan

1. Ensure frontline practice is consistently good, effective and focussed on timely, measureable outcomes for children.

1.1 Assessment and Planning

1.2 Voice of child and understanding the daily live experience

1.3 Looked After Children and Care Leavers

2. To improve management oversight at all levels to ensure effective services for children and young people and that frontline staff receive good quality supervision.

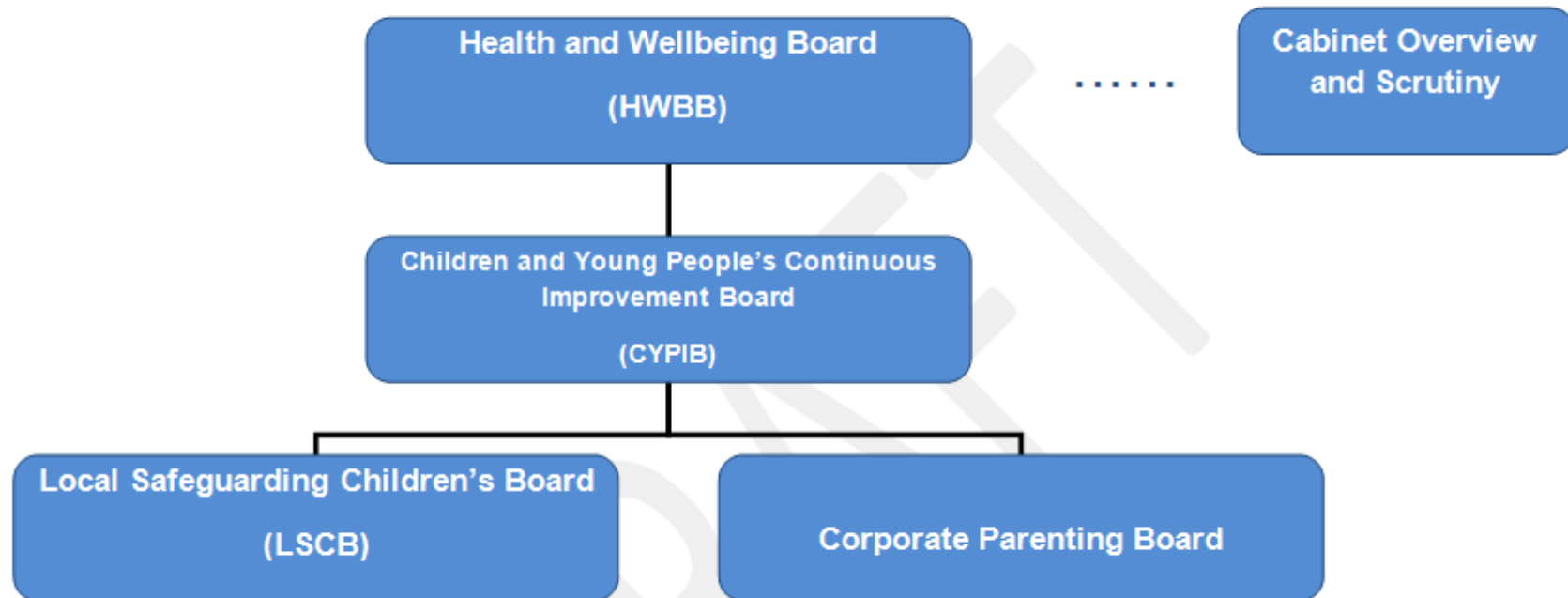
3. Ensure that frontline services are sufficiently resourced and the workforce appropriately skilled to enable high quality work to be undertaken with children and young people.

We are committed to embedding a culture of continuous learning, support and challenge. Our staff are passionate and committed and they are key to driving this improvement.

The plan addresses our areas for improvement building on the recommendations from the Ofsted inspection in April 2016 and the action plan that

was developed. The wider plans for Children's services are contained within the Children and Young People's Plan 2015 – 2020, The LSCB Business Plan, The LSCB Improvement Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Corporate Parenting Strategy. In addition the plan aligns with Sefton Borough Councils 2030 vision and Framework for change.

The plan is focussed on activity to continually improve services. The plan will evolve over time in response to feedback from children, young people, partners, staff and external review and challenge. Our plan will be regularly reviewed and scrutinised, with the help of our children and young people, to ensure we are achieving the desired impact we need for children and young people to reach their full potential, through the following Governance Arrangement.



Agenda Item 6

Recommendation	1.1 Front Line Practice – Assessment and Planning
<p>Our ambition (what ‘good’ looks like)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children who need help and protection, assessments (including common or early help assessments) are timely, proportionate to risk, and informed by research and by the historical context and significant events for each case • Assessments¹ (including children in need assessments) result in a direct offer of help to address any identified needs • Assessments and plans are dynamic and change in the light of emerging issues and risks • Viability assessments of members of the family are carried out promptly to a good standard and sequential assessments are avoided • Children who are looked after benefit from assessments that are routinely updated in response to a change in circumstances or changing need • Information from specialist workers, such as substance misuse workers and mental health professionals, is used to inform assessments where relevant factors are present • Assessment and subsequent planning for children and young people is sensitive and responsive to age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, gender identity, language, race and sexual orientation • All plans are SMART – specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time limited, and outcome focused • Plans are based on individual needs of children and young people and their family • Contingency plans are in place to mitigate risk and protect children and young people • There is a clear process for assessing whether the outcomes in the plan have been achieved, which is understood by all parties: children, young people, parents, carers, and all agencies • Progress against the plan is robustly monitored and the action taken is timely and results in improved outcomes • The sustainability of changes is fully considered and appropriate support and contingency plans are in place to support families to maintain changes • Pathway planning is effective and plans address all young people’s needs in particular education, employment and training and are updated as circumstances change • Plans, Social Work Reports and Case Records are kept up to date and are clear and concise • All children benefit from good robust plans regardless of where they are placed • Children and young people who are privately fostered are identified by the local authority, in conjunction with partners • Once they are identified, Sefton discharges in full its statutory responsibility to ensure that they are safe and that their health and well-being are properly promoted • Workforce and partnership all have a clear understanding of what Private Fostering is and our statutory duty • All young people aged 16 or 2017 who present as homeless to be assessed in accordance with statutory guidelines within 10 working days • All such assessments explore the wishes of the young person in relation to becoming a looked after child and the need for this measure • Appropriate risk assessment and management to be put in place for all young people who present as homeless and require emergency accommodation • Continue to provide a range of good quality accommodation

¹Assessments and local protocols for assessments should be in line with *working together to safeguard children*.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care plans are regularly reviewed to ensure that the child or young person’s current and developing needs continue to be met Care plans for Looked After Children are updated within 10 days of the review
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WHAT WE WILL DO TO DEVELOP CONSISTENTLY GOOD PRACTICE

Ref	Action	Progress / Review Date	Lead	Update Commentary
1.1.1	Ensure all training to front line workers and managers covers analysis, planning, and recording, use of chronology and risk assessment to embed consistently good practice.	Oct 2017	Vicky Buchanan, Head of Service	This work is ongoing. MW to update on training offer in response to latest audit findings SMT October 202017
Page 70	1.1.2	Oct 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	Survey has been designed and will be implemented by end of sept. Supervision completed and demonstrated improvement.
	1.1.3	Ongoing	Vicky Buchanan, Head of Service	Continue to be held quarterly with positive feedback from staff.
1.1.4	Pilot Focus on Practice Week, evaluate effectiveness and outcomes and implement learning modelling good practice to workforce	Dec 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	Focus on Practice week completed. Learning to be shared and discussed at September P&P workshop. Review learning SMT Dec 2017
1.1.5	Develop Practice Standards further including a quick reference version and to include a focus on permanence planning including Adoption and Early Help.	Dec 2017	Sarah Hodgson Quality Assurance Manager	Quick Reference version has been completed, SH to work with PY to weave permanency and adoption into practice standards.
1.1.6	Organise Peer review in early 2018 to evaluate improvement since Ofsted Inspection	Dec 202017	Vicky Buchanan, Head of Service	Peer review set up meeting Nov 2017 with a plan to undertake in Spring 18 allowing new structure to bed in.

Ref	Action	Progress / Review Date	Lead	Update Commentary
1.1.7	Implement a new assessment and plan in the child's record that supports higher quality recorded assessments and plans including Pathway Plans.	Oct 2017	Trish Galloway, Service Manager	Assessment and plan have been redesigned and a business Case has been submitted to Avarto Review progress in October SMT.
1.1.8	Maintain focus on good quality recording on the child's record through audit, through training, through practice and performance workshops and by better enabling workforce through roll out of mobile working.	Dec 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	Review progress following next quarterly audit.
1.1.9	Ensure are children are safe and the majority are being seen within 5 days of the referral through performance management using daily performance management reports.	Oct 2017	Trish Galloway, Service Manager	This will be a focus with TM's in next performance meeting at Sept end.
1.1.10	Ensure that policies and procedures are adhered to in every day practice through reference in MoS, promotion through P&P workshops, Focus on Practice Week, 7-minute briefings, and Yammer.	Oct 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	Publish the 7 minute briefings with links to policies and procedures. SH check with comms on traffic / usage of intranet site.
1.1.12	Continue to roll out the electronic Early Help Module to the wider partnership including schools and commissioned services to ensure consistent recording of Early Help offer.	Oct 2017	Tracy McKeating, Service Manager	Ongoing. TM to update SMT in Oct 202017.
1.1.13	Ensure children at risk of DA are appropriately identified and recording is clear in line with the MARAC protocol.	Dec 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	The flag has been created and a case note type. SH to select some DA cases in dip sample audit. Audit has been completed and findings sent to SM to action. Re-audit in Nov 202017
1.1.14	Review Early Help action plan developed to better engage families in an early help offer.	Oct 2017	Jacqui Kerr, Service Manager	Action plan in place. JK / TM provide update to October 202017 SMT.
1.1.15	Continue to raise workforce and partnership awareness of Private Fostering and compliance with procedure.	Oct, 2017	Trish Galloway , Safeguarding Service Manager	Annual Report completed and numbers demonstrate a slight increase in numbers. Marketing materials have all been developed and are awaiting I LSCB sign off.

Ref	Action	Progress / Review Date	Lead	Update Commentary
1.1.16	Develop an action plan in relation to the annual young homeless audit that was completed in March 202017.	Dec, 2017	Mark McCausland, Service Manager	Risk Assessment Tool and action plan has been completed. Review data and action plan in Dec 202017.
1.1.2017	Introduce a performance measure to monitor the number and percentage of care plans updated in line with practice standards and national statutory guidelines	Oct 2017	Sarah Hodgson, QA Manager	SH has met with BIP and this reporting is in progress and will form part of the new TM monthly performance dashboard.
1.1.18	Develop performance score card to monitor timeliness of step down/ across process to Early Help to support better performance management	Oct 2017	Sarah Hodgson, QA Manager	As above

HOW WE WILL KNOW OUR PRACTICE IS GOOD?

Performance Measure	What does it show?	Thresholds		
		Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding
Percentage of children and young people seen within 10 days of the children and family assessment start date.	Children and young people's views and experiences are considered from the start of the assessment.	65-75	75-84	85+
Percentage of assessments completed within 15 days	The amount of assessments that are completed in a timely way, within Sefton's standard for good practice to drive improvement to timeliness for assessments.	30-39	40-49	50-100
Percentage of assessments completed within 35 days	The amount of assessments that are completed in a timely way.	65-74	75-80	85+
Percentage of assessments completed within 45 days	The amount of assessments that are completed within the national standard for timeliness.	75-80	81-89	90+
Percentage of assessments that are completed as NFA	That assessments are thorough and	40-50	49-25	>24

	that children and families are not subject to multiple assessments in a short period of time, that support is afforded at the earliest opportunity.			
Percentage of assessments audited that meet or exceed good (audit measure)	That the quality of assessments is of a good standard	50-60	61-80	81+
The proportion of Children Looked After (CLA) who have been looked after for over 12 months who have had an assessment completed within the latest 12 month period	That Children Looked After are having their changing needs and circumstances assessed regularly.	50-60	61-80	81+
The proportion of Children with Disabilities subject to CiN for over 12 months who have had an assessment completed within the latest 12 month period	That Children with Disabilities receiving a service from Aiming High have a plan that is based on a current assessment of need.	50-60	61-80	81+
The proportion of CP plans ending that are accompanied by a C & F assessment that has been completed within 3 months of plan ceasing.	That social workers are making informed decision to end the plan using a C&F to assess whether the risk as suitably reduced risk and the child's daily lived experience has improved	50-60	61-80	81+
Percentage of plans meet or exceed good across all service areas (audit measure)	The amount of cases that have SMART plans – so these are clear and measurable, and this indicates they are a good quality, and it should be easy for professionals and families to know what is required, and to measure progress.	65-79	80-89	90-100
Percentage of children and young people with an up to date plan in line with practice standards	The amount of cases that have an up to date plan. This should increase as practice improves.	65-79	80-89	90-100
Percentage of children and young people subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time	The amount of children which have had support from children's social care were there was a high level of concerns, but then need this again at a later date. Demonstrates how well families are able to maintain the changes they have made – a low percentage is an indicator of good performance.	25-20	19-15	<14

Percentage of children seen within 5 and 10 days of the referral	That children are being visited regularly at a minimum in line with statutory timescales and are thus effectively being safeguarded	70-84	85-94	95-100
Percentage of CP review outcome forms completed by IRO that report that the child has been seen within timescales in accordance with the plan	That children are being visited regularly both in statutory timescales and in line with individual requirements	70-84	85-94	95-100
Number of 16/2017 year olds who present as homeless who are progressed to referral	That the Sefton Joint Homeless Protocol is embedded in practice	Increase		
Percentage of 16 and 2017 year olds who presented as homeless who have a C&F completed within 10 working days	That Sefton is compliant with statutory guidance and outcomes are improved for this vulnerable group	70-79	80-89	90-100
Percentage of cases judged as meet or exceed good for assessment and risk (audit measure)	That practice is compliant and to a good standard and that risk is mitigated effectively.	65-79	80-89	90-100
Proportion of care plans completed within 10 days of the LAC review	That Sefton is compliant with practice standards and statutory guidelines and children have up to date high quality care plans	65-79	80-89	90-100
Timeliness of cases stepped down or across to early help from date stepped over to date allocated a Lead Practitioner and first TAF meeting	That children are being effectively safeguarded and risk is mitigated by tight partnership arrangements and working	Increase		
The percentage of cases closed in Early Help in a 12 month period because we have not engaged the family	That families understand and engage with Early Help offer and that parents feel supported and helped.	25-21		
Qualitative Information	Feedback from Children and Young People, Parents and Carers	Feedback from Staff		

<p>Audits – show that the quality of front line practice is improving across all areas and can be clearly evidenced in records</p>	<p>Survey of families and young people in conjunction with voluntary sector and through Focus on Practice week as well as feedback from MAD group – demonstrate children, young people and parents feel they have received a good service that has helped them. Children, young people and parents report that they are clear on why the plan was in place and how this met their needs.</p>	<p>Practice and Performance Workshops and Supervision – Staff reflect on what support they need to strengthen practice, and that their knowledge or relevant research, policies and procedure is evident</p>
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Recommendation	1.2 Front Line Practice – Voice of the child
<p>Page 75</p> <p>Our ambition (what ‘good’ looks like)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The influence of age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, gender identity, language, race and sexual orientation on the identity of the child / young person are considered during assessment and clearly recorded upon the child’s record • Children, young people and families benefit from improved multi-agency interventions and the impact of their feedback is well evidenced through improved performance, quality of practice and increased positive feedback • Prompt action is taken to address areas identified for improvement through analysis of feedback • Frontline staff know what the common themes are from feedback from children, young people and families, what they want services to look like, and how frontline staff can influence and affect this vision • There is evidence of practice and service design that is informed, modified and sustainably improved by feedback about the quality of services and the experiences of children, young people and families who use them across the system • The child’s lived experience is understood and well evidenced in assessments and planning processes and informs decision making • Views of children and young people are routinely used to inform planning • Children and young people are encouraged to and are appropriately involved in meetings and reviews • Children and young people are seen by their social worker alone and understand what is happening to them, their views, wishes and feelings are listened to on visits, captured in written records and used to update planning • Visits to children and young people are a viewed as a priority and valued by all staff

WHAT WE WILL DO TO DEVELOP CONSISTENTLY GOOD PRACTICE

Ref	Action	Progress Review Date	Lead	Update Commentary
1.2.1	Present findings from complaints and compliments bi annually in Practice and Performance workshops and complete quarterly reports for All Managers Meeting, Learning, and Development to ensure learning is informing front line practice.	Sept 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	Present findings in at practice and performance workshop in September.
1.2.3	Communicate the action and learning taken from complaints in a “you said, we did” briefing circulated to service users and staff.	Dec 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	SH work with Catherine Larkin to further improve complaints report and develop you said we did.
1.2.4	Improve outcomes for children by listening to their feedback through newly designed feedback mechanisms through young advisors and focus on practice week surveys.	Oct 2017	Caroline Watts, Service Manager	CW meeting with young advisors to finalise the actions.
Page 5 76	Ensure that staff have access to a suite of direct work tools to support them in work directly with children and young people.	Oct, 2017	Caroline Watts, Service Manager	Maria Melchor has completed. SH to chase up MM and publish on intranet,
1.2.6	Continue to promote importance of recording direct work on child’s record and using it to inform assessments and plans through practice and performance workshops and training	Ongoing	Caroline Watts, Service Manager	Audit demonstrates an improvement, continue to monitor and report on as part of audit.
1.2.7	Continue to embed use of Signs of Safety by developing a 7-minute briefing partnership guide to SoS report writing.	Completed	Kara Haskayne, Service Manager	7 minute briefing has been completed and circulated.
1.2.8	Continue to promote the importance of capturing the child’s lived experience in assessments and planning processes through practice and performance workshops, as a theme in all training delivered and through continued promotion of research in practice via Yammer	Dec 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	Ongoing. SH is frequently pushing latest research briefings on Yammer and use of Research in Practice. Audit findings have all been fed back to the work force via practice and performance workshop. SH has spoken to Training Unit to incorporate how they have used audit findings to inform training delivery in their annual report.

Ref	Action	Progress Review Date	Lead	Update Commentary
				Review progress Dec 202017.
1.2.9	Building on the strengths of the M.A.D group provide regular report to be developed to CP Board regarding engagement of younger CLA.	Oct 2017	Karen Gray, Participation Officer	Engagement of younger LAC has commenced and M.A.D are working with younger LAC to capture views and experiences. This is now being reported to CP Board.

HOW WE WILL KNOW OUR PRACTICE IS GOOD?

Performance Measure	What does it show?	Thresholds		
		Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding
Percentage of statutory visits and CiN visits completed within timescale increases	That children are being visited regularly at a minimum in line with statutory timescales.	70-84	85-94	95-100
Percentage of CP review outcome forms completed by IRO with report that the child has been seen within timescales in accordance with the plan	That children are being visited regularly both in statutory timescales and in line with individual requirements	70-84	85-94	95-100
Percentage of audits that score good or exceed good for diversity (audit measure)	That the impact of diversity on the child / young person's identity is captured in assessments and plans and is clearly recorded	65-79	80-89	90-100
Percentage of audits that meet or exceed good with regards to children benefit from and are appropriately involved in reviews (audit measure)	That children are being listened to and their voice is informing their plan and outcomes	65-79	80-89	90-100
Percentage of audits that meet or exceed good for children and young people and their families are appropriately involved (audit measure)	That children are being listened to and their voice is informing their plan and outcomes	65-79	80-89	90-100
The proportion of all CLA 5 and over who participate in the annual pledge survey	That children, young people are engaged and that they value the help, support, and interventions that they received.	25-33	34-66	67-100

Qualitative Information	Feedback from Children and Young People, Parents and Carers	Feedback from Staff
<p>Audits – show that the quality of front line practice with respect to capturing the child’s voice is improving across all areas and can be clearly evidenced in records</p>	<p>Survey of families and young people in conjunction with voluntary sector and through Focus on Practice week as well as feedback from MAD group – demonstrate children, young people and parents feel they have received a good service that has helped them. Children, young people and parents report that they are clear on why the plan was in place and how this met their needs.</p>	<p>Practice and Performance Workshops and Supervision – Staff reflect on what support they need to strengthen practice, and that their knowledge or relevant research, policies and procedure is evident</p>

Recommendation	1.3 Front Line Practice – LAC and Care Leavers
<p>Our ambition (what ‘good’ looks like)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions to look after children and young people are timely and made only when it is in their best interests. Those decisions are based on clear, effective, comprehensive and risk-based assessments involving other professionals working with the family where appropriate. There is evidence of the effective use of the Public Law Outline, including letters before proceedings, family group conferences and parallel planning. Care is used only if this is in the child’s best interests. Children and young people are safely and successfully returned home; where this is not possible for them, permanent plans are made for them to live away from the family home. Families are made aware of, and encouraged to access, legal advice and advocacy. Where the plan for a child or young person is to return home, there is evidence of purposeful work to help the family to change so it is safe for the child to return. Further episodes of being looked after are avoided unless they are provided as a part of a plan of support. Applications and assessments for care or other orders are accepted by the courts, minimise the appointment of experts and avoid unnecessary delay. The wishes and feelings of children and young people, and those of their parents, are clearly set out and contemporary. Viability assessments of members of the family are carried out promptly to a good standard and sequential assessments are avoided. Children and young people are protected or helped to keep themselves safe from bullying, homophobic behaviour and other forms of discrimination.

- Any risks associated with children and young people offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, going missing or being sexually exploited are known by the local authority and by adults who care for them. There are plans and help in place that are reducing the risk of harm or actual harm and these are kept under regular review by senior managers.
- Children and young people are in good health or are being helped to improve their health and their health needs are identified. Child and adolescent mental health provision, therapeutic help and services for learning or physically disabled children and young people are available when needed and for as long as they are required.
- Children and young people attend school or other educational provision and they learn. Accurate and timely assessments of their needs, as well as specialist support where it is needed, help them to make good progress in their learning and development wherever they live. They receive the same support from their carers as they would from a good parent. The attainment gap between them and their peers is narrowing. The local authority maintains accurate and up-to-date information about how looked after children are progressing at school and takes urgent and individual action when they are not achieving well. All looked after children and young people attend a good school.
- Children and young people who do not attend school have access to 25 hours per week of good-quality registered alternative provision. They are encouraged and supported to attend the provision and there is regular review of their progress. Urgent action to protect children is taken where they are missing from school or their attendance noticeably reduces.
- The local authority holds clear records in respect of the numbers of children receiving alternative education and for those missing from education.
- Social workers, residential staff and carers support children and young people to enjoy what they do and to access a range of social, educational and recreational opportunities. Those adults have delegated authority to make decisions about children's access to recreation and leisure activities.
- Children and young people live in safe, stable and appropriate homes or families with their brothers and sisters when this is in their best interests. They move only in accordance with care plans, when they are at risk of harm or are being harmed. They do not live in homes that fail to meet their needs and they do not move frequently.
- Care plans comprehensively address the needs and experiences of children and young people. They are regularly and independently reviewed, involving as appropriate the child or young person's parents, kinship carers (connected persons), foster carers, residential staff and other adults who know them. This helps ensure that the placement and plans for their future continue to be appropriate as well as ambitious.
- Children and young people have appropriate, carefully assessed and supported contact with family and friends and other people who are important to them (*applies to adoption judgement*).
- Children and young people who live away from their 'home' authority have immediate access to education and health services that meet their needs as soon as they begin to live outside of their 'home' area. Placing authorities adhere to the requirements of the placement regulations including notifying the 'receiving' authority that a child is moving to the area and assessing the adequacy of resources to meet the child's need before the placement is made (*applies to adoption judgement*).
- The placement of children and young people into homes and families that meet their needs is effective because there is a comprehensive range and choice available (*applies to adoption judgement*).
- Family-finding strategies are informed by the assessed needs of children and young people. There is decisive action to find

families and the avoidance of drift and delay is a priority. Respite care is only used when this is in the best interests of children and young people (*applies to adoption judgement*).

- The recruitment, assessment, training, support, supervision, review and retention of foster carers including kinship carers (connected persons) and, as appropriate, special guardians, ensures that families approved are safe and sufficient in number to care for children and young people with a wide range of needs. This enables children to be placed with their brothers and sisters and have contact with their birth family and friends when this is in their best interests.²
- Children and young people whose care and support is provided by a third party provider to which statutory functions have been delegated will receive the same high quality services that they could expect from the social work service provided directly by a local authority
- Early planning and case management results in appropriate permanent placements, including Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Orders, that meet the needs of children and young people without delay or unnecessary moves (*applies to adoption judgement*).
- Well-trained and supported social workers engage effectively with the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), courts and other partners, including health professionals, to reduce any unnecessary delay in proceedings or in achieving permanence and to support arrangements once they are made (*applies to adoption judgement*).
- Children and young people are effectively prepared for, and carefully matched with, a permanent placement. Their wishes and feelings are understood and influence the decisions about where they live (*applies to adoption judgement*).
- Children and young people are helped to develop secure primary attachments with the adults caring for them. Social workers help them to understand their lives and their identities through life history work that is effective and provided when they need it. Therapeutic materials are made available to the child and their family when and wherever the child is placed (*applies to adoption judgement*).
- Case records reflect the work that is undertaken with children and clearly relate to the plans for their futures. The style and clarity of records enhances the understanding that children and young people have about their histories and experiences.
- Children and young people are represented by a Children in Care Council or similar body which is regularly consulted on how to improve the support they receive.
- Children and young people receive care that is sensitive and responsive to age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, gender identity, language, race and sexual orientation (*applies to adoption judgement*).
- Care leavers are safe and feel safe, particularly where they are living, and are helped to understand how their life choices will affect their safety and well-being
- The health needs of care leavers are clearly assessed, prioritised and met including regular dental appointments for care leavers
- Child and adolescent mental health services, adult mental health provision, therapeutic help and services for learning or physically disabled young people and adults are available when they are needed
- Care leavers are helped to find housing solutions that best meet their needs. Risks of tenancy breakdown are identified and alternative plans are in place
- Accommodation and support for care leavers is appropriate and of good enough quality for each young person to safely develop their independence skills
- Ensure risk assessment is completed when placing care leavers are placed in emergency accommodation.

² Services should be delivered in accordance with the national minimum standards and regulations.

WHAT WE WILL DO TO DEVELOP CONSISTENTLY GOOD PRACTICE

Ref	Action	Progress Review Date	Lead	Update Commentary
1.3.1	Use a range of tools including the Permanence Tracker to continue to reduce drift, delay, and improve timely outcomes for children.	Oct 2017	Caroline Watts. Service Manager	Ongoing - Permanence Tracker in child's electronic record has been developed and is now operational. In addition to monitoring. Practice Review Meetings have now been introduced as a way of reflecting on plans and using evidence based research to move plans on and feedback in P&P workshop was positive from workforce.
1.3.2	Ensure children are placed at home with parents only when it is absolutely right and safe to do with clear MoS	Dec 2017	Caroline Watts, Service Manager	Sefton is leading and participating in a North West Multi Agency Audit to understand the increase across the North West in placement at home with parents. Sefton has reduced year on year the number placed on a full care order.
1.3.3	Review children placed at home on care orders for 9 months at legal gateway to review whether there is a plan for discharge	Dec 2017	Trish Galloway Service Manger	Flagging system now in place, continue to monitor via legal gateway.
1.3.4	Continue to focus on discharges of children placed at home for 2 or more years where it is safe to do so	Oct 2017	Peter Yates, Service Manager	Work has been ongoing and the pwp population has reduced as a result. Continue to monitor via P&P meeting.

Ref	Action	Progress Review Date	Lead	Update Commentary
1.3.5	Improve school attendance for Looked After Children by continuing to work closely with partnership and early help	Dec 2017	Peter Yates, Service Manager	VB to send all foster carers a letter. Care plans to address and identify poor attendance for care orders at home. SH to have a focus on this in Dec Practice and Performance Workshop and SH to complete audit of care plans with N Walsh audit Jan 2017.
1.3.6	Ensure Looked After Children have timely initial health assessment and annual health checks	Nov 2017	Peter Yates, Service Manager	Regular improvement meetings held with Health to improve performance. Joint audit completed with health to understand the issues. Notifications are monitored weekly. Action plan in place to improve.
Page 7 82	Improve NEET status of care leavers of all ages by continuing to work with in partnership with connexions	Oct 2017	Peter Yates, Service Manger	This is now regularly monitored at performance and planning meetings. Capacity of care leavers team has been increased through the recent restructure. Sefton's Keeping in Touch rate is good and the Team Manager is providing regular updates on progress.
1.3.8	Aim to reduce number of care leavers accessing emergency accommodation by ensuring robust contingency planning as part of pathway plans	Oct 2017	Peter Yates, Service Manger	Risk assessment as part of the new homeless protocol and quarterly audit. All pathway plans are quality assured by the Team Manager. Continue to monitor use of emergency accommodation.
1.3.10	Share learning from adoption audit with workforce and develop action plan.	March 2018	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	Report completed and learning has been shared with workforce at p&p and with training unit. Next Adoption Audit to be completed Feb / March 202017
1.3.11	Produce Care Leavers passport and liaise with communication team regarding publication	Oct 2017	Peter Yates, Service Manager	Peter Yates has been working with Comms Team to complete this piece of work. Review progress October.

Ref	Action	Progress Review Date	Lead	Update Commentary
1.3.12	Conduct a joint audit of care leavers and transitions to adult service alongside adult social care	Jan 2018	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	SH to liaise with Adults in Jan 202017 with a view to theming a quarterly audit.

HOW WE WILL KNOW OUR PRACTICE IS GOOD?

Performance Measure	What does it show?	Thresholds		
		Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding
Percentage of cases judged to meet good or exceed good for quality of placement (audit measure)	That placements are of a high quality and meet the assessed needs of children and young people.	65-79	80-89	90-100
Proportion of children and young people looked after with 3 or more placements in a 12 month period	That placements are of a high quality and meet the assessed needs of children and young people.	8-15	7-5	<5
Proportion of children placed on a full care order at home with parents at any time	That there is careful scrutiny by managers and legal to ensure placement at home is the correct decision.	16-25	6-15	0-5
Proportion of children placed on a full care order at home with parents at any time	That there is careful scrutiny by managers and legal to ensure placement at home is the correct decision.	16-25	6-15	0-5
Percentage of statutory visits for children placed at home with parents completed in timescales	That children placed at home with parents are safeguarded and the order is being robustly managed.	60-79	80-94	95-100
Percentage of LAC that are classed as persistently absent from education	That educational outcomes for LAC are improved as a result of being in care	40-20	20-10	<10
Percentage of Initial Health Assessment's completed within in timescale	That notification is effective and that children and young people do not experience undue delay in receiving	65-79	80-89	90-100

	an Initial Health Assessment.			
Percentage of Children Looked After with a health check completed within 12 months	That there is no delay for children and young people in relation to their Annual Health Assessment.	65-79	80-89	90-100
Percentage of care leavers living in suitable accommodation	That care leavers are living in accommodation that is viewed as suitable for their needs and their accommodation needs are being prioritised across the partnership.	80-89	90-94	95-100
Percentage of audit cases that score good for young people being prepared for independence (audit measure)	That good quality work is being undertaken with care leavers and young people preparing for leaving care.	65-79	80-89	90-100
Percentage of audit cases that meet good for Pathway Plans (audit measure)	That good quality work is being undertaken with care leavers and young people preparing for leaving care.	65-79	80-89	90-100
Qualitative Information	Feedback from Children and Young People, Parents and Carers	Feedback from Staff		
<p>Audits – show that the quality of front line practice is improving across all areas and can be clearly evidenced in records</p> <p>Audits – demonstrate that timely interventions for emotional health and wellbeing have had a positive impact on the outcomes for children and young people and that care leavers are appropriately engaged, prepared for independence and transitions to adult services</p>	<p>Survey of families and young people in conjunction with voluntary sector and through Focus on Practice week as well as feedback from MAD group – demonstrate children, young people and parents feel they have received a good service that has helped them. Children, young people and parents report that they are clear on why the plan was in place and how this met their needs.</p>	<p>Practice and Performance Workshops and Supervision – Staff reflect on what support they need to strengthen practice, and that their knowledge or relevant research, policies and procedure is evident</p>		

Recommendation	2.0 Management Oversight
<p data-bbox="96 614 336 678">Our goal (what 'good' looks like)</p> <p data-bbox="96 726 145 893">Page 85</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child's record gives a clear account of the story and experience of the child or young person, their individual needs, their place and relationships within the family, the work undertaken with them and activity in relation to them and what matters to them. • Supervision is frequent, reflective, challenging and is well recorded in the practitioner's file and on the child's record • Practitioners value the support and challenge they receive through supervision, and know how this has improved their practice • Team managers clearly evidence direction, challenge and support in supervision notes as a clear evidence record for all parties to demonstrate learning • Annual Personal Development Plans (PDPs) are tailored to the individual learning and development needs of practitioners, which is related to improvements to services as a whole. Progress against PDPs is evaluated in supervision to ensure these outcomes are attained and there is a continual focus on learning and development opportunities • There is no drift or delay for children and young people, action is timely, plans are effective, and this leads to improved outcomes for children, young people and families • Plans to make permanent arrangements for children and young people are effectively and regularly reviewed by independent reviewing officers (IROs). IROs bring rigour and challenge to the care planning and monitor the performance of the local authority as a corporate parent, escalating issues as appropriate. They enable timely plans to be agreed to meet the needs of children and to ensure that their best interests remain paramount. IROs engage with children's guardians and there is evidence that this is focused on what children need and how the plans for them can be properly progressed (<i>applies to adoption judgement</i>). • Management oversight of practice, including practice scrutiny by senior managers, is established, systematic and demonstrably used to improve the quality of decisions and the provision of help to children and young people • Authoritative action is taken where change is not secured and the risk to children intensifies or remains • Team managers can clearly evidence direction given with clear rationale on the child's record

WHAT WE WILL DO TO DEVELOP CONSISTENTLY GOOD PRACTICE

Ref	Action	Review Date	Lead	Commentary Update
2.1	Managers are reviewing and tracking actions agreed as part of MOS and Supervision (audit measure)	Oct 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	Audits demonstrate improvement, complete next supervision audit in September 2017.
2.2	Performance and Planning Meetings to continue focus on team and individual performance and ensure Team Managers take responsibility for discussions concerning performance. Continue to develop their confidence and skills in performance management reports.	Dec 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	SH to develop and run some basic excel on performance reporting in conjunction with training unit once Team Managers are in new posts.
2.3	Set up a system for SMT to systemically review all policies and procedures to ensure they are up to date.	Oct 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	SH to send updated spreadsheet and forward plan to SMT October 202017.
2.4	Evaluate the impact of the Supervision Module through audit and survey and feedback to CYPIB	Oct 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	Ongoing – impact reported via audit reports and survey to improvement board. Next report due October.
2.5	Repeat the staff supervision survey annually to gauge progress and staff evaluation.	Completed	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	Next survey March 18.
2.6	Review Performance Management Dashboards and agree targets for 202017-18	Oct 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	SH has met with BIP and agreed a new more focused dashboard. Dashboard due to be ready Oct 2017 .
2.7	Ensure managers are routinely chairing key decision making meetings (audit measure)	Dec 2017	Sarah Hodgson, Quality Assurance Manager	Some evidence that this is improving. SH to audit following restructure.
2.8	Continue to ensure all children assessed as high risk including CSE and Missing and placed out of borough have a care-planning meeting	Oct 2017	Peter Yates, Service Manager	PY completed audit, result to be fed into performance and planning meeting Oct

Ref	Action	Review Date	Lead	Commentary Update
	chaired by a Team Manager every 3 months. IRO's to quality assure that this is happening.			2017.

HOW WE WILL KNOW OUR PRACTICE IS GOOD

Performance Measure	What does it show?	Thresholds		
		Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding
Percentage of supervisions that met the practice standard for frequency (audit measure)	Supervisions are taking place as regularly as they need to.	70-79	80-89	90-100
Percentage of supervisions that met the practice were of a good quality and reflective (audit measure)	Supervisions are good quality.	70-79	80-89	90-100
Percentage of staff report that supervision is beneficial to them with supervision from the annual survey	That staff value the support and challenge they receive through Supervision.	70-79	80-89	90-100
Percentage of cases that meet good for decision Making (audit measure)	That decision-making is well informed and evidenced based, timely, proportionate to risk and that there has been appropriate management direction at key points.	65-79	80-89	90-100
Percentage of re-referrals within 12 months	That decision-making is well informed and evidenced based, timely, proportionate to risk and that there has been appropriate management direction at key points.	20-24	19-16	<16
Qualitative Information	Feedback from Children and Young People, Parents and Carers	Feedback from Staff		
<p>Supervision Audits – show improved quality of supervision and that supervision is increasingly reflective and evidence based research is used to inform decision making</p> <p>Quality Practice Audits and Case Review – demonstrate good quality decision making</p>	<p>Complaints Report – shows specific themes are not recurring, we have good performance on the number of complaints being resolved at the first stage, compliments are received from children, young people and families</p>	<p>Practice and Performance Workshops and Supervision – Staff reflect on what support they need to strengthen practice, and that their knowledge of relevant research, policies and procedure is evident</p> <p>Staff Supervision Survey – Staff report that supervision is regular,</p>		

<p>based on clear management oversight and good quality supervision, that management direction is clearly recorded and impacts on the direction of the case and that procedures are adhered to</p> <p>Complaints Report – shows specific themes are not recurring, we have good performance on the number of complaints being resolved at the first stage, compliments are received from children, young people and families.</p>	<p>Survey of families and young people in conjunction with voluntary sector and through Focus on Practice week as well as feedback from MAD group – demonstrate children, young people and parents feel they have received a good service that has helped them. Children, young people and parents report that they are clear on why the plan was in place and how this met their needs.</p>	<p>valued, prioritised. Staff feel supported and that supervision is reflective and effective</p>
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<p>Recommendation:</p>	<p>3. Resources</p>
<p>Our ambition (what ‘good’ looks like)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Care Teams are well designed and caseloads and capacity is evenly managed across the system and allows innovative work to flourish and be undertaken with children and families • Children and families receive the right intervention at the right time • The Principle Social Worker function is a valued and highly visible role and is able to provide challenge to Head of Service and Leadership, which results in demonstrable change • Change of worker is minimised particularly at key transition points so that children foster and enjoy strong relationships with adults who care for them • Care plans comprehensively address the needs and experiences of children and young people. They are regularly and independently reviewed, involving as appropriate the child or young person’s parents, kinship carers (connected persons), foster carers, residential staff and other adults who know them. This helps ensure that the placement and plans for their future continue to be appropriate as well as ambitious • Plans to make permanent arrangements for children and young people are effectively and regularly reviewed by independent reviewing officers (IROs) • IROs bring rigour and challenge to care planning and monitor the performance of the local authority as a corporate parent, escalating issues consistently and appropriately in line with procedure. IRO’s enable timely plans to be agreed to meet the needs of children and to ensure that their best interests remain paramount • Practice alerts result in clear and timely action by Service and Team managers • IROs engage with children’s guardians and there is evidence that this is focused on what children need and how the plans for them can be properly progressed.

WHAT WE WILL DO TO DEVELOP CONSISTENTLY GOOD PRACTICE

Ref	Action	Progress Review Date	Lead	Commentary update
3.1	Implement design of CSC review	Oct, 202017	Vicky Buchanan, Head of Service	Restructure completed and new model due to be implemented 1 st October 202017.
3.2	Increase IRO resource and reduce IRO caseloads	Completed	Vicky Buchanan, Head of Service	Completed and caseloads have reduced.
3.3	Increase use of appropriate practice alerts by IRO service	Jan 2018	Kara Haskayne, Service Manager	Practice alerts have increased and this monitored fortnightly in IRO performance clinics via the IRO PMF. Next need to review impact on quality and outcomes.
3.4	Implement mobile working across the CSC workforce	Oct, 202017	Vicky Buchanan, Head of Service	VB request WL to provide update to SMT

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HOW WE WILL KNOW OUR PRACTICE IS GOOD

Performance Measure	What does it show?	Thresholds		
		Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding
Average number of practice alerts raised across all IRO's	That the policy is being evenly and consistently applied.	Increase		
Percentage in the number of cases that meet good for review in audit (audit measure)	That IRO's have the capacity to effectively chart reviews to ensure the plan is being progressed.	65-79	80-89	90-100
Reduction in average team caseloads and a reduction in the highest caseload	That the design of Children's Social Care allows good quality and innovative work to be undertaken.	35-26	25-20	19-10

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Percentage of workforce who are enabled for mobile working	That Children’s Social Care staff are adequately resourced to allow good quality, timely and innovative work to be undertaken	50-60	61-75	75+
Timeliness of recording of assessments, plans and visits improves following roll out	That Children’s Social Care staff are adequately resourced to allow good quality, timely and innovative work to be undertaken	Increase		
Qualitative Information	Feedback from Children and Young People, Parents and Carers	Feedback from Staff		
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 92</p> <p>Audits - show that the quality practice is proved with increased resources and that undue drift and delay is minimised, there is case progression and improved outcomes and impact for children, young people and their families</p>	<p>Survey of families and young people in conjunction with voluntary sector and through Focus on Practice week as well as feedback from MAD group – demonstrate children, young people and parents feel they have received a good service that has helped them. Children, young people and parents report that they are clear on why the plan was in place and how this met their needs.</p>	<p>Practice and Performance Workshops and Supervision – Staff reflect on what resource they need to strengthen their practice and are able to identify and articulate gaps in service / resource that would enable them to do their job more efficiently</p>		

Agenda Item 7

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 26 September 2017
Subject:	Adoption Annual Report		
Report of:	Head of Children's Social Care	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:			
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

This report is provided as part of the monitoring of Sefton Adoption Service required under Local Authority Adoption Service Regulations 2003 and Adoption Minimum Standards 2011.

This end of year report provides details of adoption activity from 1.4.16 to 31.3.17.

Almost all children placed for adoption have been placed from public care. It is a challenging task for Local Authorities and the courts to analytically conclude that parents cannot safely parent their child/children. Adoption is a last resort for children after all other options have been completely exhausted. This report details the activities in respect of 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017

Recommendation(s):

- 1) To note the content of Sefton's Adoption Service Annual Report 2016 – 2017.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

Overview and scrutiny committee have a good understanding of adoption activity, including the needs of the children who are placed for adoption and the work to ensure that we assess and support potential adopters

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

N/A

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What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

N/A

(B) Capital Costs

N/A

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
Legal Implications:
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Children who are looked after and cannot remain with their family have the opportunity to be adopted by parents who are able to meet their needs and can grow to adulthood as a member of a family.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Children's life chances are improved by growing up in a safe and secure family.
Commission, broker and provide core services: Adoption services are a core function of Children's social Care.
Place – leadership and influencer: N/A
Drivers of change and reform: N/A
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: N/A
Greater income for social investment: N/A
Cleaner Greener N/A

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What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD4865/17) has been consulted and has no comments as the report has no direct financial implications.

The Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD4149/17) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Implementation Date for the Decision

N/A

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Appendices:

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Background Papers:

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Agenda Item 7

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 Almost all children placed for adoption have been placed from public care. It is a challenging task for Local Authorities and the courts to analytically conclude that parents cannot safely parent their child/children. Adoption is a last resort for children after all other options have been completely exhausted. Minimum delay is crucial in securing permanence for children.

Attachment and neuroscience research have been key in identifying that early permanence provides better outcomes for children. Due to their previous experiences of trauma, abuse, broken attachments and separation children placed for adoption often have greater difficulties in managing their emotions, behaviours and feeling safe in relationships.

Adoptive parents need to be exceptional parents and provide therapeutic parenting that over time will help children heal from trauma. As an Adoption Agency we have a duty to find the right families for children, families who have fully evidenced their motivation, emotional resilience, adoptive parenting capacity and openness/ reflection of their own attachment history.

In recent years the Government has made significant policy and legislative changes to promote children leaving the looked after system to the emotional and legal security that adoption provides. It is now expected that 80% of care proceedings will be completed within 26 weeks. The younger a child is on placement, the better chances of successful adoption. This led to the "Fostering to Adopt" initiative that has allowed children to be placed in their potential place of permanence with approved adopters who are temporarily approved as foster carers. This route to adoption promotes early attachment and minimises the disruption of moves for children.

The Adoption Scorecard was introduced in May 2012 in order to compare, monitor and improve Local Authorities' performance against specific timescale measures. Significant changes have also been made relating to the recruitment and assessment process for prospective adopters which reflects a speedier process. These changes were published as Statutory Guidance.

The Annual report details Sefton's progress in the last year.

Sefton adoption service Annual report 2016–2017



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Sefton adoption service Annual report 2016-2017

Foreword

This report is provided as part of the monitoring of Sefton Adoption Service required under Local Authority Adoption Service Regulations 2003 and Adoption Minimum Standards 2011.

This end of year report provides details of adoption activity from 1.4.16 to 31.3.17.

Introduction

Almost all children placed for adoption have been placed from public care. It is a challenging task for Local Authorities and the courts to analytically conclude that parents cannot safely parent their child/children. Adoption is a last resort for children after all other options have been completely exhausted. Minimum delay is crucial in securing permanence for children.

Attachment and neuroscience research have been key in identifying that early permanence provides better outcomes for children. Due to their previous experiences of trauma, abuse, broken attachments and separation children placed for adoption often have greater difficulties in managing their emotions, behaviours and feeling safe in relationships.

Adoptive parents need to be exceptional parents and provide therapeutic parenting that over time will help children heal from trauma. As an Adoption Agency we have a duty to find the right families for children, families who have fully evidenced their motivation, emotional resilience, adoptive parenting capacity and openness/ reflection of their own attachment history.

In recent years the Government has made significant policy and legislative changes to promote children leaving the looked after system to the emotional and legal security that adoption provides. It is now expected that 80% of care proceedings will be completed within 26 weeks. The younger a child is on placement, the better chances of successful adoption. This led to the Fostering to Adopt initiative that has allowed children to be placed in their potential place of permanence with approved adopters who are temporarily approved as foster carers. This route to adoption promotes early attachment and minimises the disruption of moves for children.

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Significant changes have also been made relating to the recruitment and assessment process for prospective adopters which reflects a speedier process. These changes were published as Statutory Guidance.

Service Structure

The Adoption team have experienced the retirement of the team manager in February 2017, following a period of long term sickness absence from August 2016; a lead practitioner for assessment and recruitment and a lead practitioner for adoption support are currently undertaking all managerial responsibilities, including Agency Advisor role and Panel Advisor role. The Adoption Support Lead Practitioner chairs all “moving on” meetings to support the team working around the child to complete the necessary work for children to make a healthy transition. This is in line with the most recent research. The Lead Practitioner for Assessment tracks children’s cases (A1 and A2 scores). Both lead practitioners chair all matching meetings and placement planning meetings in the child’s journey.

The Adoption Service is split into two functions under the two lead practitioners who supervise staff accordingly. Social workers in the team can accept work relating to assessment or support as demand dictates. One dedicated recruitment worker covers most of the initial visits and deals with statutory checks, and stage one work books in respect of prospective adopters. Family finding activities for children are now distributed more widely across the team after it was acknowledged that this expertise needed to be held by more than one dedicated family finder. The family finding regarding adults continues to be carried out by the family’s allocated worker.

The children’s family finders provide a consultation point with children’s adoption workers (based in Locality Teams) regarding adoption process and planning. The family finder may be asked to complete a virtual search of locally, regionally and nationally available families for particular children, although the plan

for adoption is based on the child’s needs and not the current availability of adopters.

Placement Support Workers (PSW) work alongside social workers working directly with families. PSWs arrange a range of social activities for both families and children. There are 4 PSWs in the adoption team. One of them is solely dedicated to Recruitment and Stage 1. The team has 7.9 Social workers, two business support officers and share one targeted Publicity and Marketing Officer with the Fostering Team.

Sefton Adoption Team provides a service for the Borough of Sefton and works closely with all of the children’s Locality and Assessment teams in relation to Sefton children who have a plan for adoption; or are likely to need a plan for adoption. Children should not be precluded from being considered for adoption because of age, disability, complexity of need or because they are part of a sibling group. Older children and young teenagers often have established attachments to birth family through contact and their need to remain emotionally and legally part of their birth family is of more value than severing these links in favour of a new adoptive family.

Sefton Children Service is currently organised to ensure that all children have the same social worker throughout their journey to permanence / adoption, therefore children’s adoption social workers are located within Locality teams and work within the Adoption and Children Act 2002 once an adoption plan is formalised at a LAC review.

The Adoption Team will work jointly with children’s adoption workers during linking, matching and placement of children and in completion of the annexe A report until the adoption order is granted.

Care planning and permanency planning

The point at which the Adoption Team becomes involved encompasses both a formal and informal process. Due to tracking systems in place including Permanence Planning Meetings (PPM) and the Family Finder, there is in most cases a knowledge of children for whom adoption may well be the plan before any decision is formalised. A Public Law Outline (PLO) compliance officer has been useful in keeping track of cases in the court arena and also at Legal Gateway Meetings. The Lead Practitioner for Assessment and Recruitment is part of the Adoption PPM meetings. PPM tracks all LAC cases and ensures adoption planning and process is timely with the aim to achieve the A1 and A2 timescales. The request for an ADM decision for an adoption plan is given priority. Both lead practitioners quality assure the CPRs and read all supporting evidence in their roles as agency advisors to offer advice to the ADM when considering a decision of whether the Agency considers adoption to be in the best interests of the particular child. The views of the IRO, guardian, legal person and medical advisor are sought. A formal meeting takes place with the ADM, agency advisor, child's social worker and legal advisor to consider all the evidence. This new process is working well and is in line with how other agencies work to reach an adoption decision.

PPM is a tracking system in place to ensure timeliness. The lead practitioner and family finders work closely with children's social workers providing guidance and support as cases progress. The Child's electronic record has also been developed to send alerts to the Adoption Team when adoption plans have been formalised at a LAC review and also when CPR's have been authorised.

Early knowledge of the child or children is key in effective care planning in order to consider early family finder profiling, photography and possible referral to a forthcoming exchange day or activity day. Professional photographs and DVD's are commissioned for all hard to place children to maximise exposure of the real child. Use is also made of national and regional family finding search sites (Link Maker, Adoption Match). Where appropriate, advertisements are placed in professional or other targeted journals/publications or local press eg National adoption week. Adopter led family finding has continued to progress and has created opportunities for children who otherwise may not have been considered for those adopters.

Children and Adoption: Measuring Performance

For timeliness in respect of the child's and adult's journey to adoption, the Adoption Team aim to ensure that the journey to adoption is as short as possible, and in line with the adoption scorecard indicators. The two most significant indicators for the Adoption Team and wider Children's Service are the A1 and A2 scores.

A1 = the number of days between the child entering care (including S.20) and moving into the adoptive home.

A2 = the number of days between the granting of the Placement Order and the agency agreeing a suitable adoptive match (ADM agrees match).

The Government set an expectation (in days) for A1 and A2 and provided a sliding scale which gradually reduced between 2011 -2016. The scores are measured in days to emphasise the significance of every day in the child's journey with the aim of minimising delay.

The current (and final) expectation for A1 is 426 days.

The current (and final) expectation for A2 is 121 days.

SHOBPA decisions/Placement Orders/ADM match/Placed for adoption

- 28 SHOBPA (should be placed for adoption) decisions were made by Sefton's ADM during this year. The previous year 2015/16 15 SHOBPA decisions were made.
- From the 28 above, 20 Placement Orders were subsequently granted. Of the 28 SHOBPA decisions, 5 are still awaiting a final hearing with a number being contested. These consist of a sibling group of two and three single children. With regard to the other three children, two had a change of

plan, one child was relinquished (placement order not required).

- Sefton Adoption Panel have recommended 10 matches as suitable, all of which were ratified by the ADM. These include: a sibling group of two (placed externally), four single children under the age of 1 (placed internally), 1 single child under the age of 1 (placed externally due to his ethnic and cultural needs) and a sibling group of three who were placed externally (their placement order was in the previous financial year). These ten children were all placed during 2016/17. An additional two children were placed externally for adoption in the previous financial year but have only just had their final adoption order. Therefore, in total 10 children remain placed for adoption, with no adoption order yet granted.

The following provides the A1 and A2 scores for the 10 children mentioned above, as the sibling group of 2 falls into the previous financial year (2015/16)

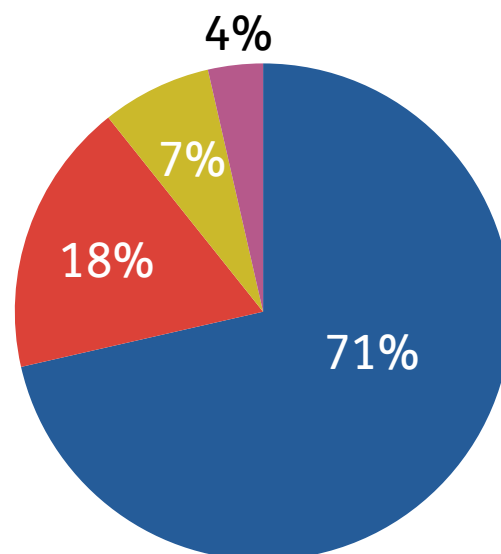
Of the 10 children:

- 4 met the A1 threshold (426 days) with scores of 321, 364, 301 and 214. One other child has met the A1 threshold with a score of 203 but this falls within the current financial year (2017/18) as date of placement for adoption was 22.5.17.
- 6 children failed the A1 score. These consist of a single child, a sibling group of two and a sibling group of three.
- The score for the single child was 542 days. The delay was linked to a court directed extension of family finding to identify an ethnic match which was achieved.

- The score for the sibling group of two was 467 days. This slight delay was due to an internal link not being progressed at a later stage in the linking process due to prospective adopters support networks being neighbours of extended birth family.
- The score for the sibling group of three was 791 for 2 of the children and 639 for the youngest child. The adoptive match has taken longer to identify because the children are part of a sibling group of three and when considering each of the sibling's individual and combined needs this reflects they were 'hard to place'. This significant delay was linked to a number of complexities, initially during the care planning stages. A Placement for the two older children with a family member disrupted prior to them returning to a Local Authority foster placement and their younger sibling being placed in an unplanned way. Local, regional and national searches were undertaken to secure a family. A previous match was identified for the children together and progressed to Adoption Panel; however the decision was made to defer this match due to a number of issues and a recent move for the children which brought about changes in their behaviour and a need to further assess the decision regarding placing the children together as a sibling group of three. Subsequently this couple withdrew. A further 6 weeks of family finding was directed following a Care Planning meeting to identify a suitable match for all three children together. This was achieved following a very intense period of family finding which ultimately avoided the separation of the sibling group.
- Of the 10 children;
- 3 children met the A2 threshold of 121 days with scores of 54, 110 and 119 days. One other child has met the A2 threshold with a score of 30 days but this falls within the current financial year (2017/18) as date of placement for adoption was 22.5.17. This was a Foster to Adopt Placement.
- In respect of 6 children the A2 score was not met; the sibling group of two was 203 days, the single child was 238 days and the sibling group of three was 424 days. This delay is linked to reasons explained above.
- One child was relinquished and therefore no placement order is granted under this process. The time between SHOBPA decision and ADM match is 125 days. There was delay in the family finding stage due to significant health uncertainties and that prospective adopters were awaiting the results of numerous tests.

SHOBPA Decisions

- Placement orders
- Change of plan
- Awaiting final decision
- Placement order not required



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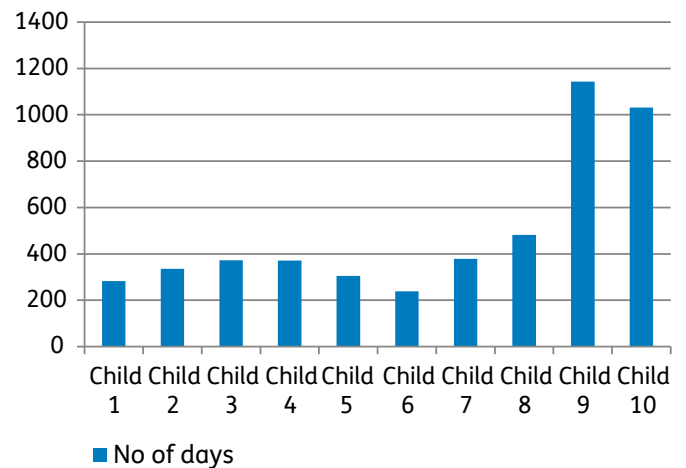
Children Adopted

10 children were adopted during this year. These include a sibling group of three all under 5 years of age, one child aged five and the other were single children all under two years of age. This is the lowest number adopted for more than 5 years, and reflects both changes in the Court’s approach to adoption and Local Authority care planning practice during 2015-16.

- Of the 10 children adopted 7 met the A1 score (426 days) with scores of 283, 335, 373, 371, 305, 239 and 379 days, being significantly below the threshold of 426 days.
- The child with a score of 379 was part of the sibling group of three placed together. The other two children within this sibling group failed the A1 score (more information to follow).
- The remaining three children did not meet the A1 threshold with scores of 482 (single child) and 1143, 1031 days (two children from sibling group of three). The significant delay in respect of the two siblings (part of a group of three) was linked to significant delay within the court proceedings. The A2 score of 10 days as outlined below from Placement Order to ADM match evidences that family finding/linking run concurrently alongside the delay within the proceedings for these children in order to prevent any further delay. The prospective adopters were on hold for a significant period until the proceedings were concluded and the match was considered as soon as possible for the children to be placed for adoption.
- Of the 10 children adopted, all met the A2 score threshold of 121 days. Sefton’s scores were: 10, 10, 10 (sibling group of three as mentioned above), 113, 80, 87, 79, 121, 102 and 97 days.

Following Sefton’s Ofsted inspection between the 11.4.16 and 5.5.16, the graded judgement for adoption performance was as “requiring improvement”. A number of strengths and improvements were highlighted and the service is committed to building on these. The following information is abstracted directly from the Ofsted report, published 27.6.16.

No of days - threshold 426



7 children met the threshold, of the remaining three there were significant delays with court proceedings

Sefton’s adoption service was made the subject of an improvement notice between December 2012 and June 2014 due to its poor performance in placing children with adopters quickly. Since that time, effective tracking systems that ensure that children’s plans consider permanence at an early stage and monitor their progress through care proceedings have been routinely used, and unnecessary delay is avoided. Oversight of progress by a dedicated family finder and senior managers through adoption permanence panels ensures that plans do not drift. Good communication with the family finder enables the adoption team to give early consideration to the adopters already approved and those who are in the assessment process as potential matches for children.

The authority's performance against the Department for Education's adoption scorecard shows a year-on-year improvement in timeliness performance.

The local authority's average number of days between receiving the court authority to place a child to be adopted and the authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family in 2012-15 was 253 days, which is an improvement on the 282 days for 2011-2014. This is still 132 days outside the national scorecard threshold of 121 days. However, in the last year, despite having five children over the target number of days, the average for all 11 children was 107 days, which again demonstrates positive progress, and below the national target.

Adoption Permanence Planning Meetings are held every other month and dates and deadlines tracked for all children with a plan for adoption. This allows for the process of family finding matching and approval to be closely synchronised, as well as identifying those children whose health or developmental needs will potentially cause delay in the plan for adoption.

Interagency Placements:

There were 9 interagency placements for Sefton children consisting of 4 single children, a sibling group of 3 and a sibling group of 2. Four of these adoptive placements were via voluntary adoption agencies and one Local Authority. The cost of these placements was £157,133.

2 Sefton approved families had children placed with them from different Local Authorities. This generated an income of £54,000.

With regard to the sibling group of three, as they had been Looked After for 18 months at November 2016, this met the DfE criteria for reimbursement of the Inter-Agency fee.

Inter-agency placement Net cost for 2016/17 was £43,133.

Recruitment/Assessment/Family finding

Advertising/publicity

Word of mouth continues to be one of the most effective ways of recruitment. Approved adopters play a pivotal role in recruiting and mentoring potential new adopters. Their experience is vital to help dispel some of the myths that prevent people from coming forward. Our adopters are involved in Information sessions, drop in events and recruitment stands. We also have a number of adopters who actively engage and support media work (press / radio / social media) to share their stories. Case studies feature prominently on our website as do videos of our adopters sharing their experiences.

Social Media as in previous years continues to be successful in generating enquiries. Alongside Sefton's Facebook and Twitter accounts, the service has access to a wide range of Local Authority Social Media Channels. The social media channels with the greatest impact for the service are Facebook and Twitter.

For each 'hard to place child' a quality paper profile, professional picture and video is produced. These are used extensively during the family finding process on Adoption link, Adopt Northwest and exchange days etc. These have proved to be invaluable in making high quality matches.

The adoption team recruits adults from both within and outside of the borough of Sefton (geographic proximity) who appear most able to meet the likely needs of children requiring adoption. Sefton's priority is to recruit adopters willing to consider children who are older (over 4 years), part of a sibling group or having complexity of need.

The team facilitate 6 Information Evenings per year to enable people interested in adoption to

learn about the adopter process, decide whether to progress their interest further and begin to learn about the nature of children needing adoptive families. The team will complete an Initial Visit as a follow up to any initial enquiry to the team or following an Information Evening. Most enquiries to adopt come electronically through Sefton's adoption website.

The Two stage Approval Process

The team facilitates the Stage One (learning and self-development) of the adopter process enabling adoptive applicants a two month period to learn more about their own motivation to adopt and about the task of adopting children who have suffered trauma and abuse. Statutory agency checks, DBS and medical checks are taken in Stage One and applicants attend 3 day Preparation Groups facilitated by the team and other relevant speakers.

The team progress only those applicants who appear most able to meet most of the needs of children to Stage Two of the adopter process; this being an assessment of their qualities and ability, culminating in the prospective adopter report - PAR. Four months is permitted to conclude Stage two - to complete the assessment and PAR, attend panel and achieve the agency decision maker's approval (ADM) and becoming registered adopters with Sefton.

Adoption Preparation Training

All prospective adopters in stage one of the process are required to attend 3 days Adoption Preparation training that is facilitated by two adoption social workers and the Adoption Lead Practitioner for Assessment. Sefton and Wirral have successfully alternated every two months the delivery of this training for Sefton and Wirral prospective adopters since January

2014. As part of the forthcoming transition to a regional agency (the agency will be part of AIM, Adoption In Merseyside) which consists of Sefton, Liverpool, Wirral and Knowsley we have more recently shared adoption preparation training between the four Local Authorities. This has meant prospective adopters do not have to wait to attend training as they are running even more frequently and it has also supported the promotion of good practice by sharing ideas to improve adopter preparation training.

The areas covered in adoption preparation training include attachment, brain development, therapeutic parenting, life work, contact, child care procedures, adoption process, family finding, adoption support, looked after children's health, adoption medical and personal experiences of adopters. There are a variety of guest speakers that includes social workers, adoptive parents, foster carers, art psychotherapist and a medical advisor.

The following are direct quotes taken from prospective adopter's evaluation feedback following attending training. These include feedback from the four Local Authorities:

A very concise, interesting course which has given me a good understanding of what is ahead. The facilitators have a passion for their roles which is a joy to see

Outstanding trainers- passion and knowledge gave me hope and positivity moving forward

The course was very insightful-full of information and skills on how to move forward in the adoption process- Thank You

The recent Ofsted findings reported both good and poor practice:

Adopters are positive about the quality of information and the welcome that they receive when making an enquiry to become adopters. This includes relevant literature and research findings, and adopters are asked to complete a comprehensive workbook at stage one.

The majority of assessments are timely and comprehensive, and delays are due to factors outside of the control of the service. Adopters in the last year have been from a suitably diverse range of backgrounds and family composition, and include people from ethnic minorities, single people and same-sex couples.

In the year 2015-16, none of the 11 Sefton children placed for adoption both with Sefton adopters and adopters from other local authorities experienced a disruption of the placement. However, Sefton adopters experienced unusually high levels of placement disruptions. No formal consideration of learning or identification of themes has happened and, consequently, no actions have been taken to prevent further disruptions in the future.

During 2016/17 there have been no disruptions within Sefton and in November 2016 a joint team and panel training day took place "Lessons learned from disruptions". The day focused on the critical points when considering these disruptions;

- Assessment, training and preparation for adoption (adopters/child)
- Child/ren placed not in original age range/ number considered by adopters
- Introduction process experienced difficulties, e.g. rushed, plans not followed, geographical distance.

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- Difficulties in relationship with existing child in family
- Child's behaviour (physical, emotional, sexual, additional case needs)
- Issues arising subsequent to the placement, e.g. family issues
- Availability/consistency of support

A psychotherapist also provided a training session on the importance of an adopters own attachment history in parenting a child who has suffered trauma and abuse and how "blocked care" can have a devastating impact on the therapeutic parenting children require.

The following are the common themes and issues noted from the feedback of the training day:

Child issues:

- In all cases, the children had spent a significant period in care, often more than half their lifetimes.
- Some had experienced neglect and abuse prior to becoming looked after and/or several changes of care giver.

Placing authority issues

- The preparation of some children for the transition to an adoptive placement had been inadequate.
- In some cases, placement planning was late/insufficiently detailed. This was seen to be a particular issue with inter-agency placements, where differing processes can lead to differing expectations.
- Some introductions were too short or otherwise flawed. This was a particular issue where children were being placed some distance away or where the timing of the introduction was dictated by other events, for example, foster carers' commitments. In one case, a substantial part of the introduction time was taken up

with "farewell parties".

- A lack of consideration/assessment of the differing/competing needs of siblings when seeking to place sibling groups.
- Changes in the child's social worker.
- Prospective adopters were not always given all the available information about the child. The language used to describe children's behaviour may not have been as explicit as it should have been.

Adoption agency issues

- Inter-agency matching presented particular challenges. The agency knew its adopters, their strengths and vulnerabilities, but needed to have confidence in the placing agency's assessment of the child's needs.
- In two cases, the prospective adopters had identified potential matches prior to the completion of their assessment. Consequently, the terms of their recommended matching criteria were determined with the children they had identified in mind, rather than being more objective.
- Following the disruption, some adopters acknowledged that their enthusiasm to become parents/proceed with the placement prevented them hearing all the information they were given about the child.
- In one case, although the prospective adopters' birth child had been fully involved in the assessment, their response to the placement of a child had not been anticipated and had precipitated the disruption.

Adopter issues

- There was a lack of a shared understanding of the descriptions of children's behaviour, see comment above re the language used

to describe children's behaviour.

- Adopters' limited informal network of support, or supporters who proved unreliable.
- Adopters not being prepared to accept the agencies' support.
- Unexpected post-placement changes in the adopters' circumstances.
- Adopters not recognising the value of having a gradual, rather than abrupt, transition from the foster carers' parenting style.

Learning for the practice of the Adoption Team and Panel

- These four disruptions should be considered in the context that all adoption carries some risk and the overwhelming majority of placements work well. Also, while there is always scope to improve practice and to use research and experience to learn about risk factors, assessment and matching cannot be an exact science and many placements work because of the idiosyncrasies of the adults and children.
- There have already been some practice developments, for example some training for family and friends of prospective adopters, i.e. their informal support network, is planned.
- Regarding the assessment of prospective adopters, all groups had concluded that they would have recommended approval. The reaction of the birth child in one case indicates a desirability of an assessment of the emotional resilience of any children already in the household.
- Adoption agency staff need to feel confident to challenge the placing agency's processes and plans. They should be satisfied that the assessment of the child's needs and their preparation for placement

has been adequate, that the proposed placement arrangement for siblings is appropriate and that placement planning is timely and sufficiently detailed.

- Sufficient time should be allowed for introductions and as far as possible they should reflect what will be normal post-placement life for the child and prospective adopters.
- Where prospective adopters are identifying their own links, the assessment's conclusion about matching considerations should be informed by their capacity to care for those children.
- More detailed assessment/preparation of those prospective adopters wanting to be matched with sibling groups would have been desirable. In some cases, extra time may be necessary to ensure that prospective adopters' expectations of the child/ren with whom they have been linked are realistic. It was noted that impediments to spending extra time pre-placement include the target timescales for matching, the desire to minimise the time children spend waiting and prospective adopters enthusiasm.
- When developing support plans, prospective adopters should be consulted about the nature of support they would find helpful.

Family/Friend Preparation Training (New Sefton Development)

This development has been part of the lessons learned from disruptions as adopters own support networks are crucial in a successful adoptive placement. Sefton Family and Friends training was delivered for the first time on the 17th January 2017 at Merton House where thirteen people attended. The course content included why children come into care, attachment theory and children's experiences of trauma, loss and

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grief. This then progressed to relating this to understanding children's behaviours and shared strategies of how support networks can assist carers in meeting a family's needs pre and post adoption order to prevent disruptions. The feedback form attendees were positive:

I have found the course helpful and informative for our role as adoptive grandparents of an adopted child

Very informative and will help me to give support to my family

Everything was explained in an excellent way- perhaps too much on the worst case scenario but I suppose it needs to be

This feedback alongside a course rating of excellent and good demonstrates how well received the course was by attendees. The next course has been scheduled to be delivered on 20.6.17 with family and friends being invited from our regional partners Knowsley, Wirral and Liverpool local authorities in preparation for the Merseyside regionalisation. We anticipate delivering the course three to four times a year as part of the pre order interventions within the new adoption agency Adoption In Merseyside (AIM)

Bump Into meetings (New Sefton development)

Although many agencies are using 'bump into' meetings, these are a new practice in Sefton that so far have proved to be very positive and we plan to continue with this practice. These meetings are where the prospective adopter/s meet

the child/ren before matching panel. Sefton's Adoption Panel have recently been provided with a briefing about the benefits of these.

Rationale

The majority of children requiring adoption today are older, non-baby placements. Because these children are older they have lived in birth family environments that have caused them 'significant harm' for longer. Recent advances in neuroscience have highlighted that children's brain development, most rapid in the first years, is adversely affected by trauma. Frequent, prolonged exposure to abuse or neglect in the early years results in 'developmental trauma' (Van Der Kolk). These children have high levels of anxiety and this can manifest in varied ways.

This is highly significant when thinking about placement transitions. A foster carer may see a move to adoption for their child as a cause for celebration. For the prospective adopters the move will may represent a long awaited, much longed for moment in their life when they will become parents for the first time, often after years of longing and frustration. For the child, this change of carer and routine will be seen as a threat to their safety and will inevitably trigger fight, flight or freeze responses of the primitive brain. Unremembered but neurally wired memories of past separations, moves and new carers will be triggered. (Perry 2006)

However well planned a move is by the adults, the child will perceive it to be a repetition of past abandonments and rejections unless that experience is acknowledged and the child empowered to approach this transition differently. Using a brain informed approach to managing anxiety in introductions is essential. In the current fashion of introductions a first meeting between adopters and older children is usually a highly stressful event on all sides and

leads to the risk that the child's limbic brain will associate these adults with fear.

Family Futures is an independent adoption support agency well known for evidence based therapeutic interventions. In their document "Planning Transitions for Children moving to Permanent Placement" they advise

"It is probably better that the child meets his/her prospective adopters in person before being told anything about them. The rationale for this is that talking to the child, showing them photographs, sharing information about the prospective adopters will inevitably raise the level of the child's anxiety, meaning that this information becomes linked to an experience of heightened anxiety. This may seem counter intuitive as the sharing of information is intended to reassure the child. However it is not the information that will impact the child, it is the stress associated with change and separation that will be triggered. If the child meets the prospective adopters and has a positive experience of being with these real people it will be easier for the child to associate these new people with positive feelings and experiences"

Adoption Panel

Sefton Adoption Panel's role is;

- To consider and make recommendations concerning whether:
 - Individuals/couples/families are suitable to adopt;
 - Proposed matches for the purposes of adoption are appropriate.
- To quality assure reports presented to panel in respect of the above and feedback to the agency accordingly
- To review adopters and children "waiting" for placement and, where relevant, recommend de-registration of adopters

- To offer the agency advice about matters such as placement support plans, delegation of parental responsibility and contact arrangements.
- In addition to this core business, panel should also receive reports on the disruption of placements.
- Panel may also comment on whether the agency is timely in its assessment of prospective adopters and in matching children in need of adoption with prospective adoptive parent/s.

Sefton's independent adoption panel uses an Independent Chair and a pool of 'Central list' members who have an interest and expertise in adoption to make recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker.

For full information please refer to Sefton Adoption Panel Annual Report 2016/17

Adult: Data and Performance

Pre-Stage Activity

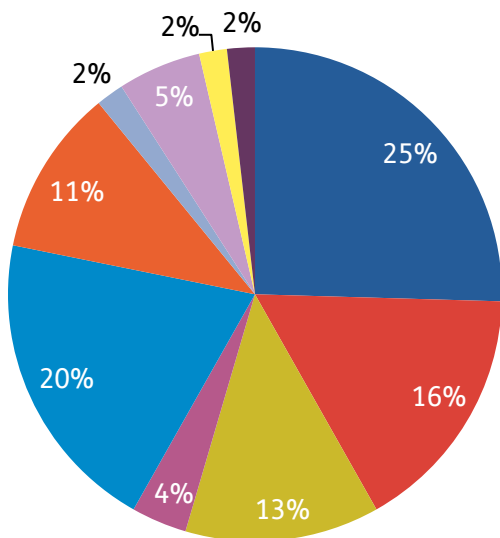
Adoption Enquiries received - 82

Telephone calls by Adoption Service duty -76

Of all the calls made there was no response from 14 enquirers despite a number of attempts by duty workers.

21 progressed to an initial visit.

Reasons for not progressing to an initial visit



- No response to initial contact
- Information only
- In process of moving/building work
- Exploring other LA's and voluntary agencies
- Still exploring IVF, last cycle recent or recent loss
- Birth child too young
- Birth child transitioning into high school
- Very recently stopped smoking
- Recent death of close family member
- Mental health issues

Data for not progressing to an initial visit

No response from their initial contact - 14

Information only - 9

In process of moving/building work/no spare room - 7

Exploring other LA's and voluntary agencies - 2

Still exploring IVF or last cycle very recent or recent loss - 11

Birth child too young - 6

Birth child transitioning to high school - 1

Very recently stopped smoking - 3

Recent death of close family member - 1

Mental health issues - 1

Stage One

Of the 21 initial visits 9 progressed to Stage One. Some reasons for not progressing include applicant's decision or Agency decision for example:

Applicant's needed more time

One couple were second time adopters who decided it was not right time for their adopted son

Agency decision's made not to progress included financial, issues, accommodation issues.

Mental health issues highlighted and complexities with their birth child.

One couple decided to explore another cycle of IVF.

Two initial visits of the 21 were fast tracked to Stage 2 (one single prospective adopter had opted for 6 month break between stage 1 and 2. The second was fast tracked to stage two as second time adopters).

From the 9 progressed to stage one, three couples were not progressed to Stage two. Agency decision based on :

Significant concerning information received from referees.

A lack of openness and honesty relating to mental health highlighted within applicant's medicals.

Concerns highlighted relating to unresolved/unprocessed trauma and abuse in applicants' own history.

One couple withdrew from Stage One due to pregnancy.

When the Agency reaches a decision not to progress to Stage 2 of the process this is a fully considered child-centred decision and the Adoption Lead Practitioner for Recruitment/assessment completes a detailed written account of the reasons.

The remainder of those in Stage One as of 31.03.17 either remain in Stage One or have since progressed to Stage 2.

Stage Two

For the period of 01.04.16 to 31.03.17, 6 adoptive families were progressed to Stage 2. Two of these included the fast tracked ones mentioned above. Five of these were approved as suitable to adopt. One single prospective adopter opted to withdraw following a negative Stage 2 assessment.

Approved Adopters

During the period from 01.04.16 to 31.03 17, 12 adoptive families were approved as suitable to adopt. All approved adopters with the exception of one single adopter for this period met the stage two timescales of four months to the Agency Decision Maker ratifying panel's recommendation of suitability to adopt. With regard to the one single adopter, stage two was extended by a month due to further time needed to explore some complex issues.

- Couple approved 16.4.16: Matched to Blackpool child on 20.10.16, placed 16.11.16
- Couple approved 9.6.16: Matched to Sefton child 7.3.17, placed 16.3.17
- Couple approved 9.6.16: Matched to Sefton child 16.8.16, placed 11.9.16
- Couple approved 5.7.16: ongoing family finding
- Couple approved 5.7.16: approved foster to adopt 13.12.16 for specific child. Placed

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8.1.17 under Regulation 25A. Following Placement Order on 18.4.17, match ratified on 17.5.17

- Couple approved 4.8.16: linked to Sefton child (matched 7.6.17)
- Couple approved 26.10.16: Matched to Sefton child 10.2.17, placed 20.2.17
- Same sex couple approved 26.10.16: Approved as Foster to Adopt under Regulation 25A for specific child 29.3.17. Child not yet placed due to contested proceedings. Couple remain on hold awaiting outcome
- Single male adopter approved 18.11.16: Link to Sefton child and been on hold for this child whilst proceedings concluded. Match being considered 26.6.17.
- Couple approved 18.11.16: External match; Tameside Local Authority.
- Couple approved 18.11.16: Matched to Sefton child 31.3.17
- Couple approved 7.3.17 linked to Lancashire child

In addition, to the number of approvals in 2016/17 the following four adoptive families were approved in the previous financial year but are at different stages of the process;

- Couple approved 15.12.15: This couple remained on hold for a significant period for a child the responsibility of Lancashire Council. Child placed on 14.3.17.
- Single female adopter approved 19.2.16: matched to Sefton child 7.12.16, child placed 17.12.16. Final adoption hearing scheduled for 20.6.17
- Couple approved 19.2.16: A number of potential links since approval. Linked to Sefton child. Match being considered by panel on 26.6.17.
- Couple approved 3.3.16; Matched to Blackpool child on 17.10.16, placed 9.2.17.

In addition, a further four Sefton approved families had final Adoption Orders granted in this financial year for Sefton children, including a sibling group of three and three single children.

Foster to Adopt

The Adoption team actively promote this child centred route to adoption from the point that a prospective adopter/s make an enquiry and throughout the two stage process. In 2016/17 6 of the families approved could consider Foster to Adopt.

A Foster to Adopt placement will only be made where there is clear evidence to the Local Authority that there is little likelihood that the birth parents can resolve their problems or that other family members can care for the child.

Foster to adopt places a child with approved adopters who can accept the level of uncertainty that this route to adoption may bring before the court's final decision. The Agency Decision Maker approves the adopter/s as temporary foster carers (named child) under Regulation 25A (Care planning, Placement and Review Regulations).

The children's teams are key in identifying the child that this route maybe suited to and some of the reasons are as follows:

- Where parents have had one or more children previously placed for adoption or other forms of permanent placement and the evidence strongly suggests that their circumstances have not changed and pose the same risks as they did to the previous child/ren. The local authority does not have a proactive plan to rehabilitate the child as the circumstances of the parents are such to pose a serious on-going risk.
- Where this is the first child, the circumstances of the parents and the risks to the child are such that there is no

proactive plan to return the child to the birth parents or to other family members.

- Where parents have indicated that they may want their child adopted, but have not formally consented. (S52(3) Adoption and Children Act 2002) (Relinquishment)

As part of the forthcoming RAA, it has been confirmed that non-agency applications will remain within the Local Authority.

Advantages of Foster to adopt

- The child is placed with carers who may become their adopters at an early stage and avoids multiple placements for the child.
- It will avoid the stressful upheaval for the child if he/she has to move from foster home to a new adoptive family once a court has reached a final decision.
- The bonding period between the child and adoptive parents can begin sooner thus creating a secure and loving family life for the child.

Non-Agency applications

The adoption service also has responsibility of the completion of the Annex A report for all private adoption applications (step parent adoptions). Letters of intent are provided to the adoption lead practitioner (Recruitment/assessment). This letter is giving the Local Authority three months' notice before the court will accept the adoption application. The lead practitioner aims to allocate the Annex A report prior to the three months, however this depends on caseloads of the adoption social workers as Agency adoptions are the Service's priority. Some of the non-agency applications are complex with birth fathers not in the UK and interpreters have been used on occasions to ascertain wishes/feelings.

In 2016/17, 8 letters of intent have been received. Currently, 4 Annex A reports are in process. 3 adoption orders have been granted in this year (one of these included Sefton foster carers who made a private application for a Sefton Child in their care).

Adoption Support

The provision of adoption support services is a crucial element of the statutory framework. Adoptive children and their families are likely to have a range of additional needs throughout their lives.

The team responds to adoptive families' requests for support and complete assessments of need. Adopters are prepared by the team to respond to their children with a 'therapeutic' style of parenting which takes account of the long term effects of early trauma. Many adopters need assistance in their parenting responses when behaviours or coping strategies become triggered at different stages. Therapeutic input at a low level is available from Sefton's therapeutic team and all adopters attend 'Safebase' training (attachment based parenting programme) during the initial stages of placement. The Safebase training programme has been jointly commissioned by Sefton and Mr Timpson for the last four three years. Twenty families a year have had the opportunity to attend this training if they had a Sefton child placed with them or if they were Sefton approved adopters.

Placement support Workers in the team provide activity based respite to adoptive families; the respite also extends to providing regular 'short break' provision on individual cases where the family's need for short breaks has been assessed. The short break activities offered by the team usually fall within school holidays, while one to one support for struggling families is more readily available whenever the need arises. The role of the PSW is also to complete the life books for all children who have achieved adoption or those who have experienced an adoption placement breakdown.

The team facilitates the Letterbox system to enable written contacts between adoptive and birth families (while maintaining anonymity

of the adoptive placement). The team also facilitates the supervision of a small number of direct contact arrangements between birth relatives and adopted children.

The team commissions a service for adult adoptees living in the borough of Sefton from PAC-UK, regarding requests for access to adoption files and 'search and reunion'; also an intermediary service for birth relatives of adult adoptees is provided.

In 2016/2017 the team provided support to 160 adoptive families and 55 adult adoptees or birth relatives. This drop in numbers compared to data of previous year coincides with the completion of annual reviews on all families in receipt of services which resulted in the identification of cases that no longer required Local Authority support.

Adoption has lifelong implications for birth families, adoptive parents and adopted children. Adopted children have complex needs and the post adoption team provides a range of specialist therapeutic and practical support which is tailored to meet individual needs.

This includes supporting parents in better understanding the effects on their child of the parenting strategies they use and the impact of the child's early life experiences in the child's behaviour; and providing advice on what could be described as 'therapeutic parenting techniques'. During 2015 to 2016 two team members completed specialist training on Non Violence Resistance and one completed training on Developmental Dyadic Psychotherapy level 1. In March 2017 another team member completed training on Developmental Dyadic Psychotherapy Level 1. The intention of skilling staff in the team was not only to provide more effective support

to adopters, but also to be able to start making our own applications to the adoption support fund to generate an additional income or to incur expenses of previous support services offered to the provision of therapeutic respite to adoptive families that has been funded by the ASF.

Adoption support services provided by Sefton include:

- Post adoption support, advice, training to any adoptive families living in Sefton and for three years following the making of an adoption order for those children who have been placed by Sefton.
- Sign posting prospective adopters of children to the service provided by preventative services when appropriate.
- Providing access to adoption records, counselling for adopted adults and intermediary services for those who wish to trace birth relatives. From 2014 birth relatives are entitled to the provision of intermediary services from their council.
- Direct work with children who require additional respite provision or the support from a Placement Support Worker. Direct work has often been identified prior to the placement for adoption of children or just after when large sibling groups of children have been placed.
- Provision of weekend short breaks to families in need of this service who have children from the ages of 7 to 15. This service takes place twice a year and four placement support workers take a group of children away for the weekend to activity based camps. This service is highly valued and receives very positive feedback from adoptive families.
- Applications to the adoption support fund.
- The provision, review and assessment of

financial support packages to adoptive families.

- The setting and management of the letterbox contact including the provision of information and advice to all parties.
- The organisation of social events for adoptive families: Christmas Party and Summer Picnic.
- Provision of training around trauma and attachment to school staff in adoption support cases.
- Provision of adoption related training to adopters or any other professional that is outlined within Sefton's training calendar.
- Provision of life books to every child who has been placed for adoption.

With regard to Sefton's adoption support, the Ofsted report stated;

Adoption support is an area of strength. Effective support is available to birth families, children and adopters. A wide range of support is available, including direct work with families, letterbox contact, direct contact supervision and general advice giving. A range of therapeutic services are available through the use of the adoption support fund. Following a social work assessment, appropriate support is provided. Support packages are available to all adoptive families, regardless of the length of the placement. The support offered is timely and responsive. The service also offers a range of activities to adopted children, such as bowling, walking and residential trips as well as direct work.

Adoption Support fund

On 24th January 2013, the Department for Education (DfE) published their report 'Further Action on Adoption: Finding more loving homes', setting out their proposals to attract adopters and improve the support available to adoptive families. This led to the implementation of the

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Sefton adoption service Annual report 2016-2017

Prototype Adoption Support Fund in December 2013 which worked with ten Local Authorities to generate sustainable improvement to the assessment and provision of appropriate therapeutic support to adoptive families.

The Adoption Support Fund was opened to all 152 Local Authorities in England on 1st May 2015.

The Adoption support fund requires the Local Authority to complete an assessment of needs identifying with the family the therapeutic intervention that it's required.

Adoption Support data/activity

During 2015/2016 the team has seen a considerable increase in the number and complexities of children referred for adoption support.

Between 1.4.16 and 31.3.17 the adoption service completed 46 assessments of adoption support needs in relation to 35 families. Just two of them did not result in the provision of adoption support although some of these assessments have not been completed yet, the families have been provided with different types of services from the team.

During this period the team has dealt with two adoption placement break downs whilst currently working to prevent others; three children were placed in care with parental consent, although one of these families received child in need short break care for 74 nights prior to the children becoming Looked After. A third family currently in receipt of short breaks (provided by foster carer) in an attempt to prevent accommodation. Currently only one these children have a Child in Need plan and a social worker is allocated from one of the Assessment Teams.

Adoption support fund applications

27 families have benefitted from the adoption support fund during this financial year.

Life books

In 2013 and as a result of the Adoption Improvement Grant, Sefton commissioned 20 life books from a local voluntary adoption agency to reduce the backlog of life books that needed completing at the time. After a slow start in ensuring the voluntary agency workers had access to children's information on the ICS system and processes were complying with information compliance requirements, the work commenced in July 2014. Unfortunately the process was difficult and in October 2016 Sefton decided to negotiate the break of the contract and Sefton received a refund. These 20 life books were returned to be completed within the team.

During this year 18 life books were completed and currently there are 10 life books in the process of being completed. It is acknowledged that this has led to some delay for the children and families concerned.

Support to families

This area of work has experienced an increasing high demand for the service. Requests for support for adoptive families come to the team from a wide range of sources, although it is mainly adopters who call the adoption team duty social worker requesting help mainly due to their child/ren displaying behavioural difficulties.

All the assessment of adoption support needs are completed and a support plan is implemented. This type of work often involves making applications to the adoption support fund. All the requests for the completion of assessments involve adoptive families experiencing difficulties parenting children who continue to have complex emotional and behavioural needs. A proportion

of those involve teenage children, where the risk of adoption breakdown is more prevalent. In this year the team worked with 13 adoptive families who parented teenage children, completing 17 assessments of needs.

During this year 5 activity days out were provided by the team, involving a total of 49 children and 10 adults. Two therapeutic breaks were provided and twenty children were invited.

The annual Christmas party had in attendance over 65 children and the Summer Picnic had over 100 attendants.

Regionalisation

A VISION FOR CHANGE:

The DfE has published a policy paper, **Adoption A vision for change**, which sets out its plans for adoption reform, as part of its overarching vision for transforming the quality of children's social care services by 2020. The key objectives identified by the government are to reverse the recent marked decline in the number of adoptions, and to address concerns that some children still wait too long for adoption, too many families miss out on vital support services, and some children fail to get the permanence option that would be in their best interests.

In considering the recent sharp decline in adoption numbers, the paper outlines the perceived impact of recent court judgements, which have also been considered (at greater length) by the Adoption Leadership Board's (ALB) 'myth buster' publication, *Impact of court judgements on adoption – what the judgements do and do not say*.

Overview

Adoption: a vision for change sets out the government's vision for the adoption system in 2020, expanding on January's policy paper *Children's social care reform: a vision for change* and the accompanying announcement of plans to change adoption law.

The proposals aim to: address the unexpected recent fall in the number of adoption decisions; improve the effectiveness of the system through the introduction of Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs), with all local authorities (LAs) being part of an RAA by 2020; improve the professional skills and knowledge of the workforce through a new development programme and a new Specialist Knowledge and Skills statement setting out expectations on social workers; reduce the time children wait to be adopted; provide more high quality adoption support; and introduce new measures to embed further strong performance management and accountability.

Over coming months, views will be gathered on the proposed legislative changes, how they will be implemented in practice, and whether any further changes are required.

Merseyside Regionalisation Developments

The Merseyside Regional Adoption Agency (known as Adoption in Merseyside) includes Sefton, Wirral, Knowsley, Liverpool, Nugent Care, After Adoption and Adoption Matters. Regular strategic and operational meetings have taken place. The go live date for the RAA is January 2018, although more collaborate working is already taking place with regard to information evenings, preparation training and adopters support groups. The Service structure has been agreed and a number of workstreams including IT, commissioning, HR, finance, learning/development continue to meet regularly as we move closer to the RAA. Three task and finish groups have focused on Recruitment/assessment, family finding and adoption support. The venue for the hub has now been identified in the Halewood area.

Elaine Jamieson Lead Practitioner (Recruitment & Assessment)

Ana Maria Palmer Lead Practitioner (Adoption support)

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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 26 September 2017
Subject:	Fostering Annual Report		
Report of:	Head of Children's Social Care	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:			
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

This report provides information about the Fostering Service and outcomes for children and young people looked after by Sefton M.B.C, from 1st April 2016- 31st March 2017. The purpose of the annual report is to inform the Public, Elected Member's, Partners and Staff of the progress and developments in the Service during this period.

Recommendation(s):

(1) To note the activity that has taken place in relation to fostering in the year 2016 -17.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To provide assurance that Sefton's fostering service meets fostering national guidance and standards

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

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N/A

(B) Capital Costs

N/A

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
Legal Implications:
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Looked After Children who cannot live with members of their own family should be afforded good quality care in family arrangements within their local community.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Foster carer recruitment remains a focus to ensure that looked after children are afforded the highest quality of care.
Commission, broker and provide core services: Fostering services meet national guidance and standards.
Place – leadership and influencer: N/A
Drivers of change and reform: N/A
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: N/A
Greater income for social investment: N/A
Cleaner Greener; N/A

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD 4866/17.....) has been consulted and has no comments as the report has no direct financial implications.

The Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD.4150/17....) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee / Council meeting.

(Please delete as appropriate and remove this text)

Contact Officer:	Vicky Buchanan
Telephone Number:	Tel: 0151 934 3128
Email Address:	vicky.buchanan@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

(Please delete as appropriate and remove this text)

Background Papers:

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1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In 2016/17 the Fostering Service has continued to develop and improve practice to meet the needs of children/young people looked after by Sefton and address the requirements of national guidance and fostering standards.

The remit of the Fostering Service is highly circumscribed by legislation and regulations. The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 are the primary sources of legislation that guide fostering practice, but the service also takes account of other child care legislation such as the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and the Care Leavers (England) Regulation 2010.

When a child/young person becomes looked after, it is one of the most important and significant changes in their life and it is critical that the families who look after these most vulnerable children/young people through foster care are the best they can be. Sefton Council wants to create a fairer future for our most vulnerable children/young people and their families; we want every child/young person to grow up in a safe, stable and loving home. For those young children who cannot remain or return home safely to their birth families, good quality foster care offers them the best opportunity to experience a warm and loving family environment while appropriate plans are made for their future.

The aim of the Fostering Service is to provide high quality care for children and young people in safe, secure and nurturing families by means of recruiting and developing highly skilled foster carers.

Sefton currently has 86 mainstream fostering households, comprising of 70 couples and 16 single carers, with a total capacity of 130 children placed in short-term and long-term placements a number of these places are not currently available at the end of March 2017. This has been explored and we have developed a plan to make better use of the available capacity and to monitor this more regularly. There are 58 **Connected persons**/ kinship households, 96 carers, 38 couples, 20 single carers. Sefton foster carers do a good job in supporting children and young people who do not move placements frequently as a rule and they stay with their carer(s) until either the outcome of care proceedings or the care plan is for them to return to the care of birth parents.

The Annual report details the activities in 2016 – 2017.

Sefton fostering service Annual report 2016–2017



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Introduction

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made for their future.

The Fostering Service is a service for children/young people in care. It is committed to supporting stable placements for children and young people where foster care is their identified plan. The service is a key element in the council's drive to place more children and young people with Sefton foster carers in or near their community.

The aim of the Fostering Service is to provide high quality care for children and young people in safe, secure and nurturing families by means of recruiting and developing highly skilled foster carers.

A key strength of the Fostering Service is the ability of the staff to remain child focused whilst providing a high level of support to the foster carers. Over the last year, there has been an increase in the number of children needing permanence and a significant number of requests to place sibling groups of two and above. The team has continued to work hard to keep children/young people in local in-house foster placements thereby enabling them to maintain links with their birth families and their community.

Research indicates that placement stability for children/young people in care is an important factor for them having more positive outcomes during their lives. Changes of placement and primary carers cause instability in terms of attachment and sometimes disruption in education, friendships, etc. Young people find it hard to invest in placements if they do not believe they will remain there long-term and this in turn impacts on all aspects of their lives.

For Sefton, as for many other authorities, getting the right number and type of permanent placements is a significant challenge. The Fostering Service has a very good knowledge of

the local area and its resources and strives to consider diversity including ethnicity, culture, and religion when identifying placements.

Sefton's key objective is to keep children within their family of origin where it is safe to do so and to prevent children from unnecessarily entering the care system. Where children do enter care we seek to achieve, timely, secure attachment to permanent carers. We recognise the importance of family, particularly sibling relationships and promote meaningful contact if this is in the child's best interest. For those children in our care, we aspire to help them achieve their full potential.

The current number of children looked after (CLA) 447 represents a 5% reduction against the 474 children looked after at the beginning of the year and a rate of 84 per 10,000 of the population which is on par with the regional average. This reduction has largely been achieved by the discharge of care orders involving children placed at home with parents. In addition due to the high number of older teenagers entering care in 2014-15 we have had a higher number leaving care on their 18th birthday. It remains Sefton's objective to reduce the number of children coming into care where it is safe to do so and particularly to improve choices for those who do enter care in line with their needs. In our commitment to this strategic objective, there remains a concerted effort to monitor the number and reasons for children coming into care.

Recent Research

The children's commissioner has launched a new measure based on research of stability for looked after children/young people which brings together data on care placements, schools and social workers. The social worker changes data is based on pilot collection from 22 local

authorities. Findings from this initial index included that:

An estimated 50,000 children in care (71% of all children in care in England) on 31st March 2016 experienced a change in their placement, school or social worker over a 12 month period.

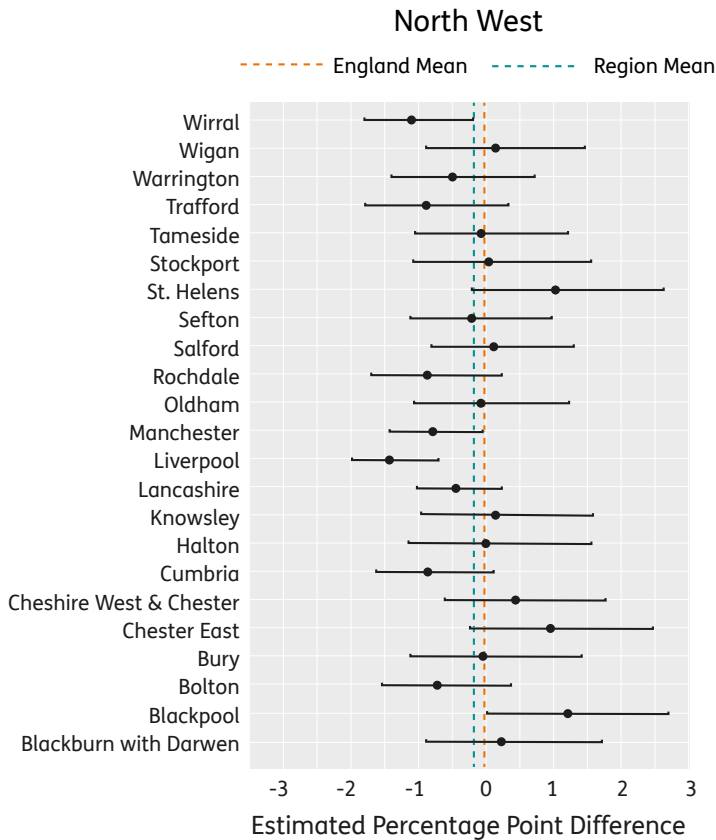
Of the 7,269 children/young people where information was available for all three stability measures 69% experienced a change in at least one measure and 5% experienced a change in all three.

Nationally, this would be equivalent to around 2000 children/young people in care attending school experiencing a change in their placement, school and social worker all within the same year.

Sefton strive for stability for children/young people in care. Children/young people work to fulfil their aspirations when in a stable secure placement. Sefton care leavers emphasise stability was the most important aspect of their experience in care.

The table below estimates the differences in the percentage of children/young people experiencing two or more placement moves by Local Authorities. Each black dot shows the difference between a local authority estimated percentage of children experiencing multiple placements (where lower is better). It must be considered that different authorities make use of different proportions of placement types and this may affect their ability to maintain stability. However, the table shows that Sefton's performance is in line with regional and national averages.

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quality. They do not stand alone, but are an integral part of achieving service strategies and policies and meeting procedural and operational requirements. The standards in the manual are designed to improve consistency in practice across the borough and drive up the quality of the service provided to the vulnerable children / young people of Sefton and their families.

Information about the Fostering Service

The Fostering Service and its foster carers continue to provide a high level of care and promote the health, welfare and safety of children/young people. Foster carers receive a high level of support from qualified workers in line with statutory regulations and guidance. A robust training and development package enables foster carers to develop their understanding and skills in supporting children/young people and promote positive outcomes.

Sefton’s Fostering Service supervises and supports foster carers to ensure they provide looked after children/young people with care that reasonably meets their needs, takes the children’s wishes and feelings into account, and actively promotes individual care, along with supporting their health, safety, enjoyment, education and their preparation for the future.

Sefton currently has 86 mainstream fostering households, comprising of 70 couples and 16 single carers, with a total capacity of 130 children placed in short-term and long-term placements a number of these places are not currently available at the end of March 2017. This has been explored and we have developed a plan to make better use of the available capacity and to monitor this more regularly. There are 58 **Connected persons/** kinship households, 96 carers, 38 couples, 20 single carers.

Sefton foster carers do a good job in supporting

Ofsted 2016

- Ofsted have stated in their report of (Education, Children’s Services and skills 2016) that they are worried that there are local authorities that are still not doing enough for children/young people. They believe that councillors and managers in the council are the ones that can make the most difference in order for this to happen they need to
- Make children/young people their priority
- Know what they should be doing for children/young people
- Help social workers to be able to do their job well by giving them the time they need and the right help and support.

Sefton as part of the Ofsted improvement plan have created a new practice Standards Manual for children’s social care. The aim of the manual is for children’s workers to view and approach the services that are delivered to an agreed

children and young people who do not move placements frequently as a rule and they stay with their carer(s) until either the outcome of care proceedings or the care plan is for them to return to the care of birth parents. Sefton's fostering service strongly believes that children/young people should not experience further trauma of a placement breakdown and is fully committed to providing support to placements that are at risk of breaking down. Where it appears that there will be a likely disruption, in the first instance a meeting will take place with the foster carer and social worker and the carers supervising social worker to offer additional support to address the issues of concern. Consultation and support for the child/young person takes place initially with their social worker, to enable them to express their views or to consider how issues can possibly be resolved. There is ongoing monitoring of the issues of concern through effective sharing of information of professionals and foster carers.

Sefton's foster carers live in close proximity to the child/young person's family and community making contact easier. Sefton also has a good track record of keeping siblings together. Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements do tend to be further away, so reducing the dependence on this type of placement would help keep Sefton children/young people local to their families and networks of support along with financial savings of less use of IFA placements.

A quarterly newsletter continues to be sent out to all foster carers keeping them up to date with any changes, news of what's happening within the service; and what's available.

Mentoring Scheme

The Fostering Service has introduced a mentoring scheme that consists of six experienced foster carers. This is presently in the pilot stage. The

aim of the service is to provide one-one support to newly approved foster carers. As the scheme becomes more established we will increase the number of mentors and consider providing existing foster carer's access to mentors. The feedback from carers that have been matched to a mentor has been positive and newly approved foster carers have found the scheme beneficial, useful and informative. As part of the service development we are looking to introduce a connected person /kinship mentoring scheme in the near future as this is a gap in the service.

Training attendances

There have been 450 training attendances over 49 courses this year. This compares with 365 in 2015-2016 over 43 courses. As a service we continue to be responsive to carers needs by developing our training and listening to carers views on which courses are crucial in assisting them in their fostering task. We use foster carers as co-facilitators on the Transitions and Endings course which helps make the training responsive to carers needs, reflect their lived experience and respond to the messages from research.

Connected persons/ Kinship carers

In 2016 tailored training was developed to meet the needs of connected persons/ kinship carers and increase their engagement with the service. In 2016/2017 connected persons/kinship carers attended training on 71 occasions making up 11.5% of all training attendance for the service and 16% of all foster carer attendance. The Special Guardianship workshop was attended by 12 carers. This flagged up the need for future development in regards to training and support services for carers with Special Guardianship Orders.

In common with most local authorities, Sefton has seen a significant increase in the number of extended family members assessed, as part

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of court proceedings, to provide placements either as a connected person (Kinship) fostering arrangement or more commonly under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO).

115 Viability Assessments were completed within this year a slight decrease than previous year 124. As a service we continue to recognise this is a high rate compared to those finally approved as carer for a child.

24 Regulation 24 (emergency) placements were assessed within this year.

7 Connected Persons / Kinship Assessments were terminated by the Fostering Service and presented to the Fostering Panel as per Regulation and the recommendation was also made by the Fostering Panel and ratified by the agency decision maker (ADM). Compared to the previous year when 14 were terminated at panel. No applications were made to the independent Review Mechanism (IRM).

24 SGOs were granted, enabling children/young people to leave our care and be safely care for by family members.

12 mainstream households have been deregistered.

- 4 households retired from fostering
- 3 households were deregistered following non-engagement with the service
- 1 through ill-health
- 3 households took up full time employment
- 1 at the carers request

In addition the Fostering Service undertakes work with family and friends who provide and support placements for children/young people with extended family members and other connected people who have a prior relationship with a child/young person. This area of activity continues to grow due to the demands made by the courts

following the implementation of the 26 week time scale for dealing with care proceedings. Emergency placements made under Regulation 24 of the fostering Regulations 2011 continue to be used.

Whilst it is not without challenges, the Fostering Service has a crucial role in keeping children within their own family setting and meeting the overall strategy of keeping children in local permanent placements. The recruitment and assessment process differs from that for mainstream foster carers but still requires compliance with the Fostering Regulations 2011.

The service will continue to focus on high quality outcomes for children/young people who are looked after in Sefton and ensure children/young people are consulted and views incorporated in their care plan

Staying Put

Staying Put is a national policy, introduced in April 2014, which allows looked after children to stay in their foster placement after their 18th birthday. The Fostering Service works closely with the child's social worker to ensure that if Staying Put is the plan both sides understand the changes in the legal and emotional relationship that this brings. Foster carers have raised some concerns about their understanding of the scheme and the Service plans to put on a training event in the near future. The number of Staying Put arrangements currently stands at 27.

Recruitment

There were 211 fostering enquiries shown in the table below from April 2016/ March 2017

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
14	29	14	2	6	34	18	10	6	23	26	29

61 progressed to Initial visit

In regards to the applicants that withdrew from their enquiry reasons why:

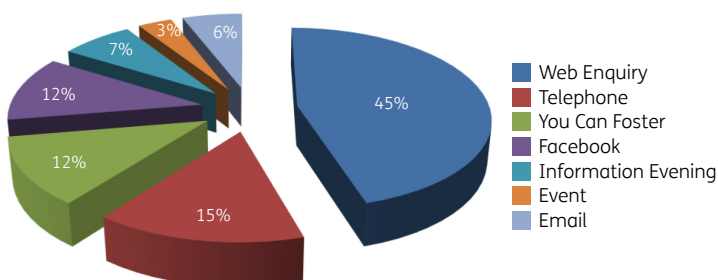
- Health reasons
- Work commitments
- Proceeding with another agency
- Pregnant/planning
- Reason unknown
- Financial reasons
- Worried about the impact
- Applying to adopt

Reasons the service felt applicants unsuitable

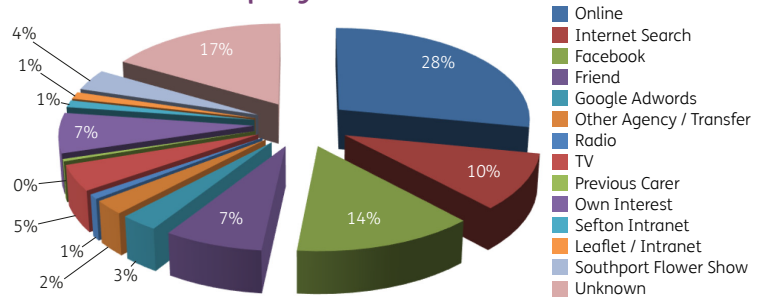
- Ill health
- Partner recently moved in
- Renovating the home
- CP concerns
- Unsuitable
- Too far out the area
- Ex-partner contact
- No discussion with their children had taken place.

The graphs below show statistics of where enquiries are generated from and which area carries the most interest.

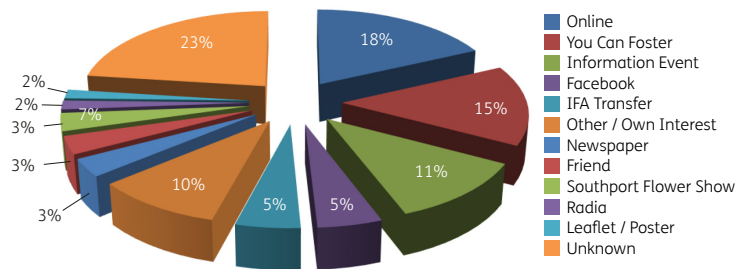
Method of Enquiry



Source of Enquiry



Source of enquiries that progress to registration of interest



Marketing publicity and communications staff that design and coordinate recruitment campaigns support the Sefton Fostering Service. Generally, campaigns build on existing links with the local community to ensure the service recruits carers from a wide range of backgrounds. Throughout the year the service has run carefully coordinated campaigns, which include a wide range of media such as poster sites, leaflet-drops, community events, information sessions, 4 day event at Southport Flower Show and press advertising, digital campaigns which include Google, Face book, and Twitter.

The Fostering Service has developed a new website in order to aid the recruitment of foster carers. The website provides a comprehensive and wide range of information for potential foster carers including a questions and answers page and it has an on-line application registration link. www.sefton.gov.uk/fostering

The number of children Looked After in Sefton has increased and therefore the need to recruit more foster carers has become increasingly important. As with other neighbouring authorities

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in recruiting carers has become an increasing challenge. There has also been a steady a number of carers transferring to Sefton from independent fostering agencies, which has been positive as they are generally experienced carers. They generally report that guaranteed placements plus the excellent support and training available in Sefton have influenced their decision.

Recruitment Objectives

The challenge to recruit Sefton foster carers continues to be high on the service agenda. This is the single most important area of need within the service to manage the demand for placements. The following are the objective priorities within our recruitment strategy:

- Continue to develop a comprehensive, high quality fostering service to Sefton's residents which is sensitive to the needs of all, recognises differences and is reflective of ethnic origin, culture, faith, gender, disability, economic and sexual orientation.
- Continue providing information, advice and guidance to those wishing to foster and to children and young people and their families using the service in Sefton.
- To actively recruit families for children/young people in Sefton who require permanence outside of their birth family.
- Continue to provide support to all those involved in fostering in developing the skills and competencies to provide the best possible care for looked after children/young people. This includes children and families who need support when children/young people are in care.
- The Fostering Service continues in its commitment to increasing the number of foster carers for all ages of children/young people especially for teenagers.

- That our foster carers continue to be actively involved in foster care recruitment.

The Fostering Team has worked hard to support and retain our current carers; however over the next few years some older established carers may consider retirement and there are always life events that contribute to all carers re-considering their fostering career. In order to ensure Sefton can continue to provide for children looked after to remain living within their local community we need to provide sufficient local placements to meet their needs. The Fostering Service will continue to work on recruitment and retention of carers.

Continued areas for development regarding recruitment

We have continued to analyse the trends in the general population, current and predicted looked-after children populations, and compared this with the foster carers available. Having compared the children placed with independent providers against those with in-house foster carers there is little difference in terms of age gender or needs overall, although there is a tendency for those placed with IFA carers to be older. The Service has continued to develop performance data to ensure we can better analyse trends or track specific data about recruitment activity that is required to be undertaken to ensure we have

- Emergency provision
- Respite carers
- Parent and child assessors
- Carers from ethnic minority backgrounds
- Carers with skills in managing challenging behaviour

The carers we are focusing on recruiting need to be able to care for:

- Teenagers in general
- Teenagers with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Asylum seeker children
- Children of all ages with disabilities and/or special educational needs
- Teenagers who offend – short-term emergency
- Parent and child placements (short-term assessment and longer term support)
- Children of all ages from ethnic minority (Eastern European) backgrounds

We need to continue to provide a comprehensive, high quality fostering service to Sefton’s residents, which is sensitive to the needs of all, recognises differences and is reflective of ethnic origin, culture, faith, gender, disability, economic and sexual orientation.

To increase placement choice we are continuing to recruit a number and range of foster carers to meet the diverse placement needs of our looked after children/young people.

One area for development is the development of a specialist fostering ‘teen scheme’ for the most traumatised, challenging and vulnerable young people. We are currently exploring the potential of an enhanced payment that will be competitive with Independent fostering providers and increased levels of support including specialist support and training. Once this scheme is implemented we will be looking to recruit up to 10 families under this scheme which will enable looked after children who have particularly challenging needs the opportunity to live in a stable home environment if unable to live with birth family.

The scheme will hopefully attract foster carers to care for older children and young people, this will put Sefton in direct competition with independent fostering agencies that have traditionally focussed on this age range but will also incur savings by using our own foster care provision, with the advantage of keeping young people within their area.

Panel Activity

The table below indicates the numbers of reports that have been dealt with by the Panel compared to the previous four years.

Assessments of foster carers	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Assessments of foster carers	50	44	57	61
Number of connected persons assessment	30	30	45	47
Number of Mainstream assessments (* see para below)	20	14	12	14
Annual review of Foster Carers	29	23	23	23
De-registration of Foster Carers	35	25	28	12
Other reports, i.e. approval changes, termination of assessments,	13	21	34	25
Extension for the time limited connected person reports.				

There continues to be has been an increase in the numbers of assessment reports coming to panel. This is related to the continuing increase in connected person (family friends) reports. There has been no decrease in this area of assessments and this continues to increase.

The numbers of mainstream assessment reports approved 14 the previous year to 12, this past year a trend that has now been evident over the past four years. Connected person reports continue to exceed the mainstream applicants (47 compared to 14) and remain easily the largest element of the Panel’s work.

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Allegations

There have been 8 allegations against foster carers all investigated through Sefton's designated officer. No foster carers were deregistered and further training had been recommended.

No complaints have been made this year about the fostering service.

Placement Breakdowns from 01/04/2016/31/03/2017

- The total number of placement breakdowns was 30.
- 19 of these were the result of behaviour by young people aged 11-17. This included aggressive behaviour, missing from care, criminal activities, and alcohol/drug issues. It is recognised that these behaviours are often a symptom of their pre-care experiences and we work hard to avoid acting in a way that disrupts young people's positive behaviour and support networks.
- 2 young people requested to be moved from their placement
- 7 children were removed from kinship care due to safeguarding concerns which included a sibling group of 4; all 7 children were in care proceedings during this time.
- 1 child moved from their foster carer due to concerns regarding the standard of care.
- 1 child moved from their foster carers who were unable to complete adoption introductions.

The Service recognises that due to pressure on placements young people are sometimes placed with foster carers who are outside of their 'comfort zone' and more importantly their skills and abilities, in caring for the older child. Despite these breakdowns the Service does provide appropriate placements for over 50

teenagers (the same number as independent fostering agencies) and we are hopeful that the Teen Scheme will further address this issue by making sure that children with additional needs can be matched with carers who have the level of skill and enhanced support to sustain their placements.

Foster placement breakdowns can be incredibly challenging and distressing for all those involved. As a service we are aware that there is sometimes a gap in provision for our most difficult to place young people but we are committed to improving the level of support to both young people and their carers.

As corporate parents we recognise the number of unnecessary placement moves it is therefore a priority as stable and nurturing are thought to directly influence the child/young person's ability to recover from the abusive and neglectful experiences they have previously had.

Other pressures on the Service

The number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) looked after by all local authorities in England has more than doubled from 2,050 at 31st March 2014, to 4,210 at 31st March 2016. A relatively small number of local authorities (largely the "port authorities") have been supporting a disproportionately large number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children. To address this, the national UASC transfer scheme (NTS), which is a voluntary scheme, came into force on 1st July 2016. It was predicated upon each local authority which included Sefton accepting UASC up to 0.07% of its child population (equating to 36 children in Sefton) in order to ensure a more equitable distribution across the country. If every local authority were to reach this proportion of UASC, that would equate to 8114 looked after by local authorities in England. There is no clear indication from

Government as to whether or by when this ceiling might be met.

In reality, there has not yet been a significant transfer of UAS children to Sefton. Of four children identified at the end of November 2016, 1 turned out to be over 18, 1 had a relative in another area and was helped to be reunited with them, and 2 were accommodated with Sefton foster carers. To-date the 2 girls are making excellent progress and are fully supported by their foster carer to engage in education and integrate into the local community.

Looking Forward 2017/18

- Recruiting foster carers who are able to offer permanent placements for children/young people whose plan is not to return to family.
- Adapting training programmes to support foster carers to offer permanence for children/young people into adulthood and beyond.
- Supporting colleagues in teams around the service in relation to specific issues which can impact on placement stability such as Delegated Authority.
- Working together to undertake life story work.
- Introducing "End of Placement" letters and we will support foster carers to complete these when a child/young person leaves their care.
- A significant and unpredictable amount of assessment capacity is taken up with the approval of connected person's, often for temporary periods during proceedings. We need as a whole service to understand if we are getting this area of practice and decision making right.
- Continuing to recruit to our priority areas.
- Implement our teen scheme
- Run information drop-in sessions during the day with our skilled foster carers
- Reviewing and recruiting to the short-break service as we are aware this is not consistently able to meet the needs of the children/young people requiring a service. In addition to targeted recruitment we will be assessing, training and development needs to better address this issue.
- Implement specific training to assist foster carers to successfully manage teenage placements.
- Responding to the needs of unaccompanied Asylum seeking children/young people following recent government announcements.
- Implement a mentor scheme specifically for kinship carers.

Agenda Item 8

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	Date of Meeting:	26 September 2017
Subject:	Cabinet Member Report – September 2017		
Report of:	Head of Regulation and Compliance	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Children's Services and Safeguarding		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To submit the Cabinet Member - Children's Services and Safeguarding report relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member - Children's Services and Safeguarding report relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation:

In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options have been considered because the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

Any financial implications associated with the Cabinet Member report which are referred to in this update are contained within the respective reports.

(A) Revenue Costs – see above

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(B) Capital Costs – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
Legal Implications:
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report. The Cabinet Member update provides information on activity within Councillor John Joseph Kelly's portfolio during a previous two month period. Any reports relevant to his portfolio considered by the Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Committees during this period would contain information as to how such reports contributed to the Council's Core Purpose.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: As above
Commission, broker and provide core services: As above
Place – leadership and influencer: As above
Drivers of change and reform: As above
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: As above
Greater income for social investment: As above
Cleaner Greener: As above

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Cabinet Member Update Report is not subject to FD/LD consultation. Any specific financial and legal implications associated with any subsequent reports arising from the attached Cabinet Member update report will be included in those reports as appropriate

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

Contact Officer:	Ruth Harrison
Telephone Number:	0151 934 2042
Email Address:	ruth.harrison@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

The following appendix is attached to this report:

Cabinet Member - (Children's Services and Safeguarding) update report

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 1.2 Attached to this report, for information, is the most recent Cabinet Member report for the Children's Services and Safeguarding portfolio.

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CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
John Joseph Kelly	Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Safeguarding	September 2017

Academisation

The following schools have had academy orders made by the Secretary of State : Holy Trinity CE Primary School; Litherland Moss Primary School; St Andrew's CE Primary School; St Teresa's Catholic Infant School; and St Thomas' CE Primary School; Savio Salesian College and Shoreside Primary School. Once an academy order is made the local authority have a statutory duty to facilitate the process and a report will be going to Cabinet seeking approval to enter into the relevant legal agreements needed as part of the academisation process.

South Sefton College

The merger of South Sefton College with Hugh Baird which had been approved by Cabinet was predicated on a minimum number of students enrolling in September 2017. Unfortunately this number of students did not enrol in the College and the merger has not taken place. Hugh Baird are reviewing their business plan to factor in the implications of a reduced number of students and will discuss this with the Council over the coming weeks.

SEND Inspection

The Council's statement of action which was required following the SEND inspection has been approved by Ofsted and will be monitored quarterly by DfE and NHS England.

National Funding Formula

Just prior to the parliamentary break for summer the Secretary of state announced that no schools would lose out as part of the implementation of the national funding formula for schools. The announcement did not come with any detail but this should be good news for Sefton schools which were due to lose around £3m as part of the ordinal proposal. Details of the financial settlements will be provided in the Autumn.

EYFS, KS1 and KS2 outcomes

Early information has been released by dFE on the early years and KS1/2 outcomes for 2017. This shows that Sefton schools' generally strong performance in these areas has continued this year. EYFS profile shows performance is in line with national averages and above regional and LCR averages. Yr1 phonics had lagged behind for a number of years but is now in line with national and regional figures and above the LCR figure. At KS2 the test scores for the proportion of children achieving the expected standard is above the national regional and LCR averages. KS4 data is not available yet.

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Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2017/18

The final update of the strategy and action plan was shared, to meet the duty set out below.

The duty to provide or procure placements for Looked after Children (LAC) is explicit in the Children Act 1989. This has since been strengthened by the introduction of the Sufficiency Statutory Guidance (2010) and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (implementation April 2011). There is a duty of 'sufficiency' that requires Local Authorities and Children's Trust partners to ensure that, through provision or commissioning, a range of placements sufficient to meet the needs of all LAC are available locally or that there is a plan in place to move towards that position.

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	Date of Meeting:	26 September 2017
Subject:	Work Programme 2017/18, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan		
Report of:	Head of Regulation and Compliance	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Children's Services and Safeguarding		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To seek the views of the Committee on the draft Work Programme for 2017/18, identify potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee and identify any items for pre-scrutiny scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan.

Recommendation:

That:-

- (1) the Work Programme for 2017/18, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be considered, along with any additional items to be included and thereon be agreed;
- (2) The Committee is requested to acknowledge that the CAMHS Working Group is ongoing and consider the appointment of Members willing to serve on the next Working Group to be established, to review the topic of "Special Educational Needs and Disability process of assessment".
- (3) the Committee considers items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the work programme referred to in (1) above.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To determine the Work Programme of items to be considered during the Municipal Year 2017/18 and identify scrutiny review topics which would demonstrate that the work of the Overview and Scrutiny 'adds value' to the Council.

The pre-scrutiny process assists Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues before making formal decisions.

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Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

No alternative options have been considered as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to approve its Work Programme and identify scrutiny review topics.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from the consideration of a key decision or relating to a recommendation arising from a Working Group review will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

(A) Revenue Costs – see above

(B) Capital Costs – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None
Legal Implications: None
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report but reference in the Work Programme to various reports could impact on the Council's Core Purposes in which case they will be referred to in the report when submitted.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: As Above
Commission, broker and provide core services: As Above
Place – leadership and influencer: As Above
Drivers of change and reform: As Above
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: As Above
Greater income for social investment: As Above
Cleaner Greener: As Above

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Work Programme Report is not subject to FD/LD consultation. Any specific financial and legal implications associated with any subsequent reports arising from the Work Programme report will be included in those reports as appropriate

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

Contact Officer:	Ruth Harrison
Telephone Number:	0151 934 2042
Email Address:	ruth.harrison@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2017/18
- Criteria Checklist For Selecting Topics For Review
- Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Introduction/Background

1. WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

1.1 The proposed Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the Municipal Year 2017/18 is set out in **Appendix 1** to the report. The programme has been produced in liaison with the appropriate Heads of Service, whose roles fall under the remit of the Committee.

1.2 Members are requested to consider whether there are any other items that they wish the Committee to consider, that fall within the terms of reference of the Committee. The Work Programme will be submitted to each meeting of the Committee during 2017/18 and updated, as appropriate.

1.3 At the last meeting of the Committee held on 21 June 2017, the Committee agreed to include the following additional item to the Work Programme, to be considered at this meeting:-

“Progress report on the implementation of recommendations of the Not in Education, Employment and Training Working Group”.

1.4 Unfortunately, it has not been possible to obtain a report for this meeting and every effort will be made to obtain a report for the next meeting, scheduled for 14 November 2017.

1.5 **The Committee is requested to comment on the Work Programme for 2017/18 and note that additional items may be submitted to the Programme at future meetings of the Committee during this Municipal Year.**

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2. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS 2017/18

- 2.1 It is usual practise for the Committee to appoint a Working Group(s) to undertake a scrutiny review of services during the Municipal Year.
- 2.2 A criteria checklist for selecting and rejecting potential topics to review is attached at **Appendix 2**, to assist the Committee in selecting topics and appointing Working Group(s) for the Municipal Year.
- 2.3 The Committee has acknowledged that it has one Working Group outstanding in relation to the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service. It is anticipated that the review will be completed sometime in the Autumn 2017, and an Interim Report will be produced for the next meeting, scheduled for 14 November 2017.
- 2.4 At the last meeting of the Committee held on 21 June 2017, the Committee agreed that upon completion of the Interim Report referred to above, a Working Group will be established to review the topic of "Special Educational Needs and Disability process of assessment"; and the Head of Regulation and Compliance will contact Members to seek their interest in serving on the Working Group referred to above.
- 2.5 **The Committee is requested to acknowledge that the CAMHS Working Group is ongoing and consider the appointment of Members willing to serve on the next Working Group to be established, to review the topic of "Special Educational Needs and Disability process of assessment".**

3. PRE-SCRUTINY OF ITEMS IN THE KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

- 3.1 Members may request to pre-scrutinise items from the Key Decision Forward Plan which fall under the remit (terms of reference) of this Committee. The Forward Plan, which is updated each month, sets out the list of items to be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration during the next four month period.
- 3.2 The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.
- 3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has requested that only those key decisions that fall under the remit of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be included on the agenda for consideration.
- 3.4 The latest Forward Plan is attached at **Appendix 3** for this purpose. For ease of identification, items listed on the Forward Plan for the first time appear as shaded.
- 3.5 Should Members require further information in relation to any item on the Key Decision Forward Plan, would they please contact the relevant Officer named against the item in the Plan, prior to the Meeting.
- 3.6 **The Committee is invited to consider items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the Work Programme referred to in (1) above.**

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APPENDIX 1

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING)

WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

Date of Meeting	21 JUNE 17	26 SEPTEMBER 17	14 NOVEMBER 17	30 JANUARY 18	20 MARCH 18
Cabinet Member Update Report	X	X	X	X	X
Work Programme Update	X	X	X	X	X
Service Operational Reports:					
Ofsted Annual Report (M. McSorley)				X	
Children and Young People's Action Plan (D. Johnson and M. McSorley)				X	
Public Health Annual Report "wider determinants of health" (M. Ashton)	X				
Public Health Annual Report "Mental Health and Wellbeing" (M. Ashton)			X		
Quarterly Progress on Improvement and Performance Scorecard Improvement Plan – Children's Social Care (V. Buchanan)	X	X			
Fostering Service – Details regarding the number of Foster Carers in Sefton and the number of placements that had broken down. (V. Buchanan)		X			
School Performance – Possible Reasons for the Deterioration of Attainment at Secondary School (M. McSorley)			X		
Special Educational Needs and Disability Service – Update on the Implementation of Actions arising from the Joint Inspection with OFSTED and CQC. (M. McSorley and D. Johnson)			X		
Public Health Annual Report (M. Ashton)					X

SEND Inspection – Statement of Action	X				
School Organisation and School Places (M. McSorley)					X
CAMHS Working Group – Interim Report			X		
Liverpool Women’s Hospital – Case for Change – Joint Meeting with O&S (ASC&H) on 12/10/17					
Licensing/Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group – Final Report		X			
Development of Family Well-Being Service		X			
Adoption – Annual Report		X			
Fostering Annual Report		X			
Overview and Scrutiny Progress Reports:					
School Performance Update (M. McSorley)			X		
Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report (K. Gray)				X	

Appendix 2

CRITERIA CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING TOPICS FOR REVIEW

Criteria for Selecting Items
▪ Issue identified by members as key issue for public (through member surgeries, other contact with constituents or volume of complaints)
▪ Poor performing service (evidence from performance indicators/benchmarking)
▪ Service ranked as important by the community (e.g. through market surveys/citizens panels)
▪ High level of user/general public dissatisfaction with service (e.g. through market surveys/citizens panels/complaints)
▪ Public interest issue covered in local media
▪ High level of budgetary commitment to the service/policy area (as percentage of total expenditure)
▪ Pattern of budgetary overspends
▪ Council corporate priority area
▪ Central government priority area
▪ Issues raised by External Audit Management Letter/External audit reports
▪ New government guidance or legislation
▪ Reports or new evidence provided by external organisations on key issue
▪ Others

CRITERIA FOR REJECTION

Potential Criteria for Rejecting Items
▪ Issue being examined by the Cabinet
▪ Issue being examined by an Officer Group : changes imminent
▪ Issue being examined by another internal body
▪ Issue will be addressed as part of a Service Review within the next year
▪ New legislation or guidance expected within the next year
▪ Other reasons specific to the particular issues.

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SCRUTINY CHECKLIST DO'S AND DON'TS

DO
◆ Remember that Scrutiny <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Is about learning and being a "critical friend"; it should be a positive process◆ Is not opposition
◆ Remember that Scrutiny should result in improved value, enhanced performance or greater public satisfaction
◆ Take an overview and keep an eye on the wider picture
◆ Check performance against local standards and targets and national standards, and compare results with other authorities
◆ Benchmark performance against local and national performance indicators, using the results to ask more informed questions
◆ Use Working Groups to get underneath performance information
◆ Take account of local needs, priorities and policies
◆ Be persistent and inquisitive
◆ Ask effective questions - be constructive not judgmental
◆ Be open-minded and self aware - encourage openness and self criticism in services
◆ Listen to users and the public, seek the voices that are often not heard, seek the views of others - and balance all of these
◆ Praise good practice and best value - and seek to spread this throughout the authority
◆ Provide feedback to those who have been involved in the review and to stakeholders
◆ Anticipate difficulties in Members challenging colleagues from their own party
◆ Take time to review your own performance

◆ DON'T
◆ Witch-hunt or use performance review as punishment
◆ Be party political/partisan
◆ Blame valid risk taking or stifle initiative or creativity
◆ Treat scrutiny as an add-on
◆ Get bogged down in detail
◆ Be frightened of asking basic questions
◆ Undertake too many issues in insufficient depth
◆ Start without a clear brief and remit
◆ Underestimate the task
◆ Lose track of the main purpose of scrutiny
◆ Lack sensitivity to other stakeholders
◆ Succumb to organisational inertia
◆ Duck facing failure - learn from it and support change and development
◆ Be driven by data or be paralysed by analysis - keep strategic overview, and expect officers to provide high level information and analysis to help.

KEY QUESTIONS

Overview and Scrutiny Committees should keep in mind some of the fundamental questions:-

Are we doing what users/non users/local residents want?
Are users' needs central to the service?
Why are we doing this?
What are we trying to achieve?
How well are we doing?
How do we compare with others?
Are we delivering value for money?
How do we know?
What can we improve?

INVESTIGATIONS:-

To what extent are service users' expectations and needs being met?
To what extent is the service achieving what the policy intended?
To what extent is the service meeting any statutory obligations or national standards and targets?
Are there any unexpected results/side effects of the policy?
Is the performance improving, steady or deteriorating?
Is the service able to be honest and open about its current performance and the reasons behind it?
Are areas of achievement and weakness fairly and accurately identified?
How has performance been assessed? What is the evidence?
How does performance compare with that of others? Are there learning points from others' experiences?
Is the service capable of meeting planned targets/standards? What change to capability is needed.
Are local performance indicators relevant, helpful, meaningful to Members, staff and service users?

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2017 - 31 JANUARY 2018

This Forward Plan sets out the details of the key decisions which the Cabinet, individual Cabinet Members or Officers expect to take during the next four month period. The Plan is rolled forward every month and is available to the public at least 28 days before the beginning of each month.

A Key Decision is defined in the Council's Constitution as:

1. 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;
2. 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

As a matter of local choice, the Forward Plan also includes the details of any significant issues to be initially considered by the Executive Cabinet and submitted to the Full Council for approval.

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the matters listed below may do so by contacting the relevant officer listed against each Key Decision, within the time period indicated.

Under the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution, a Key Decision may not be taken, unless:

- it is published in the Forward Plan;
- 5 clear days have lapsed since the publication of the Forward Plan; and
- if the decision is to be taken at a meeting of the Cabinet, 5 clear days notice of the meeting has been given.

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in the Forward Plan in accordance with Rule 26 (General Exception) and Rule 28 (Special Urgency) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

Copies of the following documents may be inspected at the Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle L20 7AE or accessed from the Council's website: www.sefton.gov.uk

- Council Constitution
- Forward Plan
- Reports on the Key Decisions to be taken
- Other documents relating to the proposed decision may be submitted to the decision making meeting and these too will be made available by the contact officer named in the Plan
- The minutes for each Key Decision, which will normally be published within 5 working days after having been made

Some reports to be considered by the Cabinet/Council may contain exempt information and will not be made available to the public. The specific reasons (Paragraph No(s)) why such reports are exempt are detailed in the Plan and the Paragraph No(s) and descriptions are set out below:-

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or b) to make an order or direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime
8. Information falling within paragraph 3 above is not exempt information by virtue of that paragraph if it is required to be registered under—
 - (a) the Companies Act 1985;
 - (b) the Friendly Societies Act 1974;
 - (c) the Friendly Societies Act 1992;
 - (d) the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978;
 - (e) the Building Societies Act 1986; or
 - (f) the Charities Act 1993.
9. Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992
10. Information which—
 - (a) falls within any of paragraphs 1 to 7 above; and
 - (b) is not prevented from being exempt by virtue of paragraph 8 or 9 above, is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Cabinet and Council which are held at the Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle or the Town Hall, Lord Street, Southport. The dates and times of the meetings are published on www.sefton.gov.uk or you may contact the Democratic Services Section on telephone number 0151 934 2068.

NOTE:

For ease of identification, items listed within the document for the first time will appear shaded.

Margaret Carney
Chief Executive

FORWARD PLAN INDEX OF ITEMS

Item Heading	Officer Contact
Purchasing of Fostering Placements for Children and Young People	Sarah Austin sarah.austin@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3293
Approval of Legal Documentation for Academy Conversions	Marie Stevenson marie.stevenson@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3427
Update on Regionalisation of Adoption - Adoption in Merseyside	Vicky Buchanan vicky.buchanan@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3128
Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services Working Group	Ruth Harrison ruth.harrison@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2042

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<p>Purchasing of Fostering Placements for Children and Young People</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to enable Cabinet to make decisions regarding the future procurement and contract arrangements of Fostering placements for children and young people. Since April 2014, wherever possible, fostering placements for children and young people have been procured through regional Framework Contracts. Regional work has been undertaken in 2017/18, to determine the best approach for procuring Fostering placements from April 2018</p>			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	5 Oct 2017			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Children's Services and Safeguarding			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Placements North West is commencing provider consultation and engagement to inform the future procurement framework			

Agenda Item 11

Appendix 3

Method(s) of Consultation	Meetings; emails; correspondence
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Purchasing of Fostering Placements for Children and Young People
Contact Officer(s) details	Sarah Austin sarah.austin@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3293

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<p>Approval of Legal Documentation for Academy Conversions</p> <p>To inform the Cabinet of the decision by the Secretary of State to convert Shoreside Primary School, St Teresa's Catholic Infants School and Savio Salesian College to sponsored academies and that the following schools have applied to become academies: Kew Woods Primary School, Litherland Moss Primary School, St Andrew's CE Primary School, Holy Trinity CE Primary School and St Thomas CE Primary School. Authorisation is requested for officers to sign the documentation required by the Government's academy conversion process.</p>			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	5 Oct 2017			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Children's Services and Safeguarding			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Parents, staff and trade unions			
Method(s) of Consultation	Meetings and letters			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Approval of Legal Documentation for Academy Conversions			
Contact Officer(s) details	Marie Stevenson marie.stevenson@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3427			

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Update on Regionalisation of Adoption - Adoption in Merseyside On 25th May 2017 Cabinet endorsed the model for Regionalisation of Adoption in Merseyside subject to the Director of Social Care and Health submitting a further report to the Cabinet clarifying the level of service provision within Sefton			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	5 Oct 2017			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	No	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Children's Services and Safeguarding			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Staff, Panel Members and adopters			
Method(s) of Consultation	Email and meetings			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Update on Regionalisation of Adoption - Adoption in Merseyside			
Contact Officer(s) details	Vicky Buchanan vicky.buchanan@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3128			

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services Working Group To submit the findings of the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services Working Group.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	5 Oct 2017 27 March 2017 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 06/04/2017 to 27/07/2017. Reason: The Working Group is still deliberating on its Final Report 26 June 2017 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 27/07/2017 to 05/10/2017. Reason: The Working Group is still deliberating on its Final Report			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	No	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Children's Services and Safeguarding			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Elected Members, Stakeholders and Residents (Service Users)			
Method(s) of Consultation	Meetings and Correspondence			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services Working Group			
Contact Officer(s) details	Ruth Harrison ruth.harrison@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2042			

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