

# CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE



**Wednesday, 14 July 2021**

**Democratic and Members' Services**  
Fiona McMillan  
Monitoring Officer

**16:00**

Shire Hall  
Castle Hill  
Cambridge  
CB3 0AP

## **AGENDA**

**Open to Public and Press by appointment only**

- 1. Notification of the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee for 2021/22 and a Change to Membership**

Verbal item. To note:

1. The appointments of Councillor Anna Bradnam as Chair and Councillor Philippa Slatter as Vice Chair of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee for 2021/2022.
2. To note that Councillor Mac McGuire replaces Councillor Simon Bywater as a member of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee.

- 2. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**

*Guidance on declaring interests is available at*  
<http://tinyurl.com/ccc-conduct-code>

- 3. Minutes of the meeting on 13 January 2021 and Action Log** **1 - 14**
- 4. Petitions and Public Questions**
- 5. Participation Report** **15 - 20**
- 6. Report from Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association** **21 - 24**  
Appendix 1 to follow.

<b>7.</b>	<b>Fostering Service Annual Report 2020-21</b>	<b>25 - 50</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report 2020-21</b>	<b>51 - 74</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Clinical Services</b>	<b>75 - 80</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Performance Report May 2021</b>	<b>81 - 88</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Health Data Update Report July 2021</b>	<b>89 - 94</b>
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The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee comprises the following members:

Councillor Anna Bradnam Councillor Alex Bulat Councillor Anne Hay Councillor Mac McGuire and Councillor Philippa Slatter

*This meeting will be streamed live on the Council's website, if you wish to attend the meeting you must contact*

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## Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee: Minutes

Date: Wednesday 13 January 2021

Time: 4.04pm – 6.32pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Present: Councillors A Bradnam, A Costello, L Every (Chair), A Hay (Vice Chair) and E Meschini

Non-voting observer:  
K Arrowsmith – Chairwoman, Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association

Meeting theme: Education

### 167. Chairwoman's Announcements

The Chairwoman welcomed Kevin Arrowsmith to the meeting as a non-voting observer following his appointment as the Chair of the Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association (CFCA) in November 2020. She also placed on record the Sub-Committee's thanks to the previous Chair of the CFCA, John Priest.

It had been intended that members of the Sub-Committee would meet with the Children in Care Council (CiCC) in November 2020. However, due to Covid-19 it was not possible for this meeting to be held in person. It had been felt that it was not appropriate for this first informal meeting to be held virtually, so it had been postponed. The CiCC had though been provided with photos and pen portraits of the Sub-Committee members as a preliminary introduction.

### 168. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest.

### 169. Minutes – 9 September 2020 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020 were approved as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chairwoman when the Council returned to its offices. The action log was noted.

A Member raised a query on the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2020. The Democratic Services Officer advised that the minutes of that meeting had been approved as an accurate record at the Sub-Committee meeting on 25 March 2020 and could not be amended. However, the issue of clinical service provision to which the query related could be raised later in the meeting when the agenda plan was discussed (minute 178 below refers).

## 170. Petitions and Public Questions

No petitions or public questions were received.

## 171. Participation Report

The report set out the events and activities which had taken place during the summer and autumn. In response to Covid-19, this had included a successful programme of virtual events during the summer. Officers had also sought feedback from children and young people on their experience of Covid-19 and lockdown and how this was impacting on them. Officers were keen to get back to offering face to face events as soon as it was safe and practical to do so, but the online offer which had been developed in response to Covid had proved popular and would be incorporated into the wider participation offer. There would also be a re-launch of the 'Mind of my Own' app in the coming months.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Noted that children in general were spending more time online due to Covid. Children in care were recognised as being particularly vulnerable to exploitation and they asked what measures were in place to protect children and young people in care from coercive and inappropriate interactions online. Officers stated that online exploitation was unfortunately not a new issue and addressing it remained the subject of careful thinking and planning. All foster carers received training and support on this and the potential risk to each child was evaluated on an individual basis and a response planned accordingly. Foster carers could also raise any concerns with social workers and appropriate support would be put in place. The Chairman of the Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association commented that there was lots of training on this for foster carers and that each fostering household would have a safety plan in place covering all IT within that household. This often included keeping devices downstairs overnight.
- Congratulated officers on the work which had been done to maintain contact with children in care and care leavers in the difficult circumstances created by Covid.
- Highlighted the insightful comments from a young person that had been included in a recent newsletter and expressed the hope that the virtual art exhibition would remain part of the events' programme post-Covid as this offered an excellent opportunity to showcase this work.
- Noted that the enhanced digital engagement offer during Covid had suited some young people better than more traditional forms of engagement and had enabled some Personal Advisors to have more contact with young people.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Comment or provide feedback on the range of consultation events and activities the Participation Service provide for children in care and care leavers.

## 172. Report from Cambridgeshire Foster Carer's Association

The Head of Service for Fostering stated that the Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association (CFCA) and Fostering Service had worked in collaboration with the Virtual School to seek foster carers' views on their experience of education. This included working with schools, the support offered by the Virtual School and the personal education plan (PEP) process. Thirty eight responses had been received which was considered a good response level and these were presented in the appendix to the report.

The Chair of the CFCA commented that this was the second survey which the Association had conducted so far. Respondents had identified a number of areas of strength including:

- i. A good number of schools understood the needs of children and young people in care.
- ii. The STEPS approach to behaviour management in schools was felt to have worked well.
- iii. Some schools had good communication with carers.
- iv. The Virtual School (VS) had provided excellent support for some carers during lockdown. However, some respondents had been unsure about what support was available for the VS and it was felt that there was a need to manage expectations around what the VS could do.
- v. The new VS model of supporting schools outside of PEP's had allowed more focus on the schools' training needs.
- vi. The VS would be continuing to work in partnership with the CFCA to empower Foster Carers to advocate for the children in their care at PEP meetings through the provision of training and advice.

The survey had also identified a number of areas for development. These included:

- i. Some foster carers were not receiving completed PEP paperwork following the review.
- ii. It was felt that some schools could benefit from additional training and greater awareness to improve their support of children with attachment difficulties.
- iii. More training was needed for schools on trauma and its impact on children accessing education.
- iv. A child's potential should be placed at the forefront of the process, rather than just measuring their progress.
- v. It took a long time for education, health and care plans (EHCPs) to be completed and approved and it was requested that consideration be given to a fast-track system for Children in Care.
- vi. Some carers felt that there could be more support from the Virtual School in PEP meetings.

- vii. Support to develop a better understanding of the roles of different professionals within the PEP meetings, specifically that of the foster carer and child's social worker.
- viii. The process of transitioning and transferring between schools required additional focus to ensure that this was managed smoothly for Children in Care.

As foster carers became more aware of the Virtual School offer the hope was that this could help bridge any gap with schools and support a more joined-up approach. The CFCA intended to conduct surveys on other topics going forward and also to hold question and answer sessions to inform future reports. It was hoped to align these with the Sub-Committee's meeting themes.

The Head teacher of the Virtual School (VS) expressed her thanks to the CFCA for their work on this. From her perspective, the key would be to enhancing the relationship with the Chair of the CFCA and foster carers and ensuring effective communication about the support available to them from the VS now that it no longer attended PEP meetings. A working group was being established to support this work going forward and would comprise representatives of the VS, the CFCA and the PEP provider. Some officer time had also been freed up within the VS to focus on work with the CFCA. The Head of the Fostering Service echoed the view that communication was key and stated that the Fostering Service would work closely with both the CFCA and the VS to ensure that the right information was communicated in the right way to all of the County's foster carers.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Expressed concern that a small proportion of respondents felt that their school or early years setting had little or no understanding of the need of traumatised children. The Head of the Virtual School stated that there was an extensive training offer available on this at no cost to settings. A number of virtual reality headsets had also been purchased to support adults' understanding of the lived experience of the child and these would be available when face to face training was able to resume. Videos were being incorporated into the webinar training offer which was being rolled out whilst face to face training was not an option.
- Asked whether teachers had time to undertake training at present, given the demands placed on them by Covid. They were concerned that this should not become an additional burden. The Head of the Virtual School stated that the training on trauma and attachment would take a couple of hours to complete, but most VS webinars were about 15 minutes long in recognition of how busy teaching staff were. These could be accessed at a time convenient to them and contained links to additional information which they could follow up if required.

The Chairwoman thanked the CFCA for a substantial piece of work which had been extremely valuable to the members of the Sub-Committee.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the comments from foster carers in regards to their views and experiences of the education provided to the children in care they look after.

- b) Note the comments from foster carers in regards to their interactions with and support from the Virtual School.
- c) Note the continuing collaborative work from children's services, foster carers and the Virtual School to improve educational outcomes for children in care.

## 173. Virtual School Report

Since the report was written, England and Wales had entered into a further period of lockdown due to Covid-19. In response to this, the VS's first priority had been to liaise with the Service Director for Education and Social Care colleagues to confirm advice on school attendance and ensure that this was communicated to all concerned. Decisions on school attendance for children in care were being made on an individual basis and the VS was available to offer support if any challenges arose around access to school or remote access to learning, including suitable IT kit and internet access. A support line had been set up by the VS's educational psychologist with input from the clinical services team to provide a trauma-informed response and the Covid PEP process had been re-started. During the first week of lockdown, around 36% of the VS cohort were attending school in person. Conversations around attainment and progress were due to take place with schools during January and this was being reviewed on an individual basis. The previous year's figures were included in the report for information, but due to Covid there would be no direct correlation.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- The Chairwoman asked how unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) were assimilated into Post-16 support. Officers stated that most UASC arrived in the UK around the age of 16. There were currently 8 or 9 UASC of school age, with the majority receiving Post-16 support. Unfortunately, most 16-18 year old newly arrived UASC did not have the English language skills needed to access vocational courses so the focus was on developing their language skills to a level which would enable them to do so. Officers were happy with the support being provided with this by local colleges and also used Beats Learning English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) as this provision had the flexibility to accept young people at any point in the academic year. Officers worked closely with the Post-18 support team on the transition arrangements for all UASC and children in care to Post-18 support.
- Asked whether there was any difference between the services provided to accompanied asylum seeking children in the community and UASC. Officers stated that, in addition to the agencies involved with accompanied asylum seeking children, unaccompanied asylum seeking children also had all of the services for children in care, including a designated teacher. Officers also worked with the Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign which provided a valuable mechanism for ensuring that the information held by the Council was consistent with that provided by other agencies.
- The Chairwoman commented that the Sub-Committee was always concerned about the attainment of children and young people in care and asked whether

Covid was expected to impact negatively on their outcomes and life chances. The Head of the VS stated that it was difficult to assess the impact while the pandemic was still on-going. However, all Year 11 students in the last academic year been able to access their courses of choice. In addition, a number of VS students who experienced issues with anxiety had found the move to online learning had enabled them to flourish.

- Noted the potential impact of digital learning on social interactions skills. Officers acknowledged this concern, although much online learning was being delivered through Teams or Google Classroom and was still group-based working requiring social interaction skills. The Head of the VS stated that schools had learned a lot about the delivery of digital education during the first lockdown and were now well equipped to deliver learning through a combination of live lessons, tutorials, webinars and quizzes which also supported social engagement.
- The Chairwoman noted the importance of employability and life skills in addition to academic skills and asked whether there were any plans to address these within Post-16 provision. Officers stated that they were currently setting up an 'Aspirations Project' to look at the careers advice and guidance offer for all children from Key Stages 1 and 2 onwards. A new member of staff who had worked previously for Cambridge Regional College would be taking this forward, including looking at the services schools were currently buying in and the work being done through libraries. A grant funding application for this post had been unsuccessful so it was being funded on a fixed term basis until the summer through retained pupil premium funding. An app aimed at boosting children's skills sets and which would hopefully link to CV platforms was also being explored.
- Commented that there were significant differences in the learning offer from different schools. The Head of the VS stated that Department for Education guidance encouraged a blended approach to learning including both live learning and other formats as the most successful approach. However, should any foster carers have concerns about the education offer during lockdown they could raise this with the VS.
- Commented that they had spent two sessions with the Head of the VS and other key partners conducting quality assurance checks on PEPs and that they had been impressed by the professionalism and commitment of all involved. They had also looked at some of the VS's training webinars which were available to view on YouTube which they judged to be excellent.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the content of the report.
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officer.

#### 174. University experience for our Care Leavers in relation to the impact of Covid-19 and update on the Local Offer

The university experience of care leavers during lockdown contained a mixture of positive and negative experiences. Officers had been in regular contact with care leavers at university during this period and had also worked with universities to put support in place where appropriate. The report also set out the new approach being taken to the Local Offer for Care Leavers to support care leavers in their transition to independence. Examples were included of where the Council was providing levels of support above statutory requirements, including through a pilot mentoring scheme. During lockdown, rapid measures had been taken to ensure there was no breakdown in university placements due to digital poverty. Ensuring that care leavers were not digitally disadvantaged remained a priority and action to date included the re-purposing of un-used county council laptops.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- The Chairwoman welcomed the report, commenting that she was aware that a lot of work had gone into the Local Offer for the county's care leavers. She asked whether any steps were being taken to capture information on young people's experiences during Covid and to learn from these. Officers confirmed that they would be reflecting on how to capture that experience. The Assistant Director for Children and Safeguarding stated that information about the positive impacts of Personal Advisor interactions was being collected to inform a pre and post Covid comparison. Lots of feedback had been obtained which was being collated by officers and she would arrange for some examples to be included in the next Participation Report. **Action required**
- The Chairwoman asked about accommodation issues for students during the pandemic. Officers stated that many care leavers went to university at a slightly older age than their peers which meant they tended to have settled accommodation before starting their courses with relatively low numbers living in halls of residence. Universities had also generally recognised the needs of care leavers and overseas students who couldn't necessarily return home during lockdown and become more proactive in offering them support.
- Welcomed the provision of un-used county council laptops to those young people who needed them and asked whether these would need to be returned. Officers stated that an allocation of laptops and tablets had been received from the Department for Education which they believed had been provided on a loan basis. The re-purposed County Council laptops would be for the young people to keep, as would a number of other laptops which were purchased using grant funding.
- Welcomed news that there had not been an increase in the number of care leavers not in education, training or employment (NEET) during Covid.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the work being carried out to support our Care Leavers at University during Covid-19 and the innovative approach of the Local Offer for Care Leavers.

## 175. Health Update January 2021

The Sub-Committee received a report from Catherine York, the new Designated Nurse for Children in Care at Cambridgeshire Community Services (CCS) NHS Trust. John Peberdy, Service Director for Children and Young People's Health Services at CCS, was also in attendance. All parts of the Health Service had been impacted by Covid-19 and services remained under huge pressure, but there were robust systems in place to monitor performance. Meetings between health and social care practitioners representing the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough had been taking place since the start of the pandemic in order to consider the challenges being faced and to identify ways to embed national guidance into local practice. These meetings were continuing on a fortnightly basis.

Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) were a statutory requirement and as such 100% compliance was expected. However, some young people declined their assessments and additional challenges existed within the process which meant that a compliance rate of 95% would be considered acceptable by the CCS. During Covid, most IHAs and health reviews had been conducted virtually, but in cases where it was judged that a child or young person should be seen face to face this had been arranged. Feedback on the virtual health assessment process had been good with some young people choosing to engage with this process who had not previously done so. The Designated Nurse would carry out a quality audit of health assessments by the end of March 2021 which would cover both children placed within the county and those placed outside. Some issues had been identified in relation to access to dental services for children in care which had been raised with NHS England and Public Health England, but this was a national issue.

The Chairwoman thanked the Designated Nurse for her report. However, whilst recognising that she was still relatively new in post she wanted to make clear that the Sub-Committee had, in its monitoring role, expressed concerns about IHAs, health reviews and the provision of dental services prior to the Covid pandemic. The Service Director for Children and Young People's Health Services (CCS) stated that CCS was committed to addressing the timeliness of IHAs and that the planned audit would also be looking at the quality of assessments. This was an important piece of work and it would be brought back to the Sub-Committee. **Action required.** Work was continuing with the Social Care team to address issues around consent for assessments and performance was better in relation to children placed within the county, but the overall the performance should be better.

A Member expressed dismay that the post of Designated Nurse for Children in Care had been vacant for eight months and asked the new post holder about any areas of concern to her during the period the post was vacant. She further asked whether any additional reliance had been placed on foster carers to manage their children's health and dental needs whilst the post was vacant. The Designated Nurse explained that her role was strategic and that during the gap between appointees the role had been covered by the Head of Safeguarding at CCS, supported by the Children in Care Health

Care Team. This had ensured that day to day business had been managed appropriately and progressed. Since her appointment she had begun looking at IHA and health assessment review performance, and whilst this work had not stopped while no Designated Nurse was in post she acknowledged that it might not have progressed as would be wished. There was always a role for foster carers to play in managing the health needs of the children in their care, but this should not have increased when the Designated Nurse role was vacant.

The Assistant Director for Children and Safeguarding commented that the previous Designated Nurse had been excellent and the difference had been felt during the period the post was vacant, but the Head of Safeguarding at the CCS had stepped in to help bridge the gap and they were continuing to meet fortnightly at present. The Designated Nurse was a strategic role, with the needs of individual children being managed by their foster carers and social workers. IHAs and health review meetings were continuing to happen, even if not always within statutory timescales, and the new Designated Nurse was already working closely with the Heads of the Corporate Parenting and Fostering Services to move this work forward. She did not want there to be any misapprehension that individual children's needs were not being met in the period the Designated Nurse role had been vacant.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the content of this report.
- b) Raise any queries with the Lead Officers.

## 176. Corporate Parenting Scorecard

The Sub-Committee was advised that there had been a slight increase in the numbers of children in care in recent months, but that the overall trend remained downwards. Social worker caseloads were a little high and the new Head of the Corporate Parenting Service would be working with social care colleagues on this. Statutory visits were being delivered through a hybrid approach combining both virtual and physical visits as appropriate. Initially the data management system had not recognised virtual visits which had led to a drop in the number of visits recorded, but this information would be captured going forward. The new Regional Adoption Agency had gone live on 1 December 2020 so there would be a more tailored focus on adoption statistics in future reports.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Commented that the section of the scorecard referring to legal status was presented as blue text on a blue background. This made it difficult to read, particularly in hard copy. Officers undertook to revise this in the next report.  
**Action Required**
- Endorsed the use of the dashboard to condense a lot of information.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note and comment on the Corporate Parenting Scorecard.

## 177. Sub-Committee Workshop/ Training Plan

The Chairwoman commended the workshop on the Sub-Committee's new format and working practices which had taken place in January 2021 and welcomed the offer of an introductory meeting with the new Head of the Corporate Parenting Service for Sub-Committee members. **Action required.** Going forwards, the Heads of both the Corporate Parenting Service and the Fostering Service would work across the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Dates were being canvassed for an online Members' Seminar to brief councillors on the Council's progress with the Local Offer for care leavers and the work taking place to ensure that young people leaving care were able to access education, employment and training and appropriate accommodation.

It was hoped that an informal meeting between elected members of the Sub-Committee and members of the Children in Care Council could be arranged during the next few months. There was a strong wish for this to happen from both councillors and the young people and officers would pursue this outside of the meeting.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the Sub-Committee workshop and training plan.

## 178. Sub-Committee Agenda Plan

A Member asked that a regular report on health issues should be added to the agenda plan. The Assistant Director for Children and Safeguarding stated that a health-themed meeting would be included in the Sub-Committee's programme of work.

A Member commented that the minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting on 15 January 2020 stated that the Professional Lead for Psychology had recently left the Council to take up a new post. However, her understanding was that this was not the case and that the former post holder had not moved to another post. The Sub-Committee had not received any further reports on emotional and mental health issues relating to children in care and care leavers since that meeting. She understood that there had been a restructuring of the clinical services team and a number of resignations and that a consultation process was about to conclude. The Member expressed surprise that this issue had not been drawn to the Sub-Committee's attention and asked for a briefing note setting out the position. The Assistant Director of Children and Safeguarding stated that a lot of work had been taking place in relation to the review of clinical services. This was separate to the introduction of the Family Safeguarding Model which had taken place a year ago. A staff consultation on clinical service provision was currently taking place which was why it had not been reported to the Sub-Committee before now. She acknowledged that there were differences of opinion on the proposals, but believed that once the arrangements were embedded the service would

provide the necessary support. The biggest change would be the delivery of services by the Council rather than by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT). She undertook to ask the Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance to bring a report on this to the Sub-Committee's next meeting in June 2021. The Chairwoman asked that a briefing note should also be provided for Members in advance of that report. **Action required**

It was resolved to note the agenda plan.

The Chairwoman stated that it was reassuring to hear that the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's children in care and care leavers had been limited as far as possible, and that in some cases positive outcomes had been achieved from the Covid response.

(Chair)



## Action Log

### Summary

The Action Log is a list of all of the things that people have been asked to do at earlier meetings. It is included at each meeting so that members can check that everything is being done. It was last updated on 5 January 2021.

### Meeting on 9 September 2020

	Report title	Officer	Action	Update	Status
161.	Young People's Participation	Sika Smith	It would be helpful if the Participation Service could signpost carers to appropriate holiday events and activities around the county, such as swimming sessions or soft play areas.		
		Nicola Curley	The Chair stated that she would want to look at how District bodies such as Community Safety Partnership Boards and Housing Departments could be made aware of the needs of children in care and care leavers.		

### Meeting on 13 January 2021

	Report title	Officer	Action	Update	Status
174.	University experience for	Sika Smith	The Assistant Director for Children and Safeguarding stated that information about the positive impacts of social worker		

	Report title	Officer	Action	Update	Status
	care leavers and the Local Offer		interactions was being collected to inform a pre and post Covid comparison. Lots of feedback had been obtained which was being collated by officers and she would arrange for some examples to be included in the next Participation Report.		
175.	Health Update January 2021	Catherine York, Designated Nurse, CCS	The Service Director for Children and Young People's Health Services (CCS) stated that CCS was committed to addressing the timeliness of IHAs and that the planned audit would also be looking at the quality of assessments. This was an important piece of work and it would be brought back to the Sub-Committee.		
177.	Committee Workshop and Training Plan	Myra O'Farrell	To arrange an introductory meeting between Sub-Committee members and the new Head of the Corporate Parenting Service.		

## Participation Report

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 14 July 2021

From: Nicola Curley, Assistant Director Early Help and Children's Social Care

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: Sub-Committee members will be briefed on the activity of the Participation Service in relation to Children in Care.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of the report.
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officers.

Officer contact:

Name: Shalina Chandoo

Post: Quality Assurance Lead - Participation and Independent Visiting

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Member contact:

Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam

Role: Chair

Email: [Anna.Bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Anna.Bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## Summary

- 1.1 The Participation Team has adapted its virtual offer in line with changes in government restrictions and feedback from children and young people.
- 1.2 Virtual events and meetings have taken place where face to face was not possible. Both the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leaver Forum (CLF) have continued work on their projects throughout the pandemic.
- 1.3 The Summer programme for Children in Care (CiC) and dates of the annual CiC awards event and annual Virtual Art Exhibition have been shared.
- 1.4 The Young Recruiters initiative has been successful with young people actively involved in the recruitment of staff.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee has previously requested an update on the work of the Participation Service in relation to Children in Care at each meeting.
- 2.2 This report sets out the activities of the Participation Service over the last quarter and an update on the work of the Children in Care Council and Care Leaver Forum.

## 3. Main Issues

- 3.1 The Participation Team has continued to adapt its offer throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, in line with changing government restrictions and feedback from children and young people. Working with the Participation Team from Peterborough City Council has increased resilience, allowed us to share learning and has provided more opportunities for children and young people.
- 3.2 Since the start of the pandemic we have sent out newsletters with information and activities as well as updates on Participation events and opportunities to children in three age categories; 11 years and under, 12 to 17 years and 18 years plus.
- 3.3 Throughout the pandemic, the Participation Team has offered virtual events where restrictions have not allowed face to face activities. These have been refined in line with feedback from children and young people and as a result, numbers attending these sessions have increased significantly. Our offer will continue to incorporate virtual events after restrictions ease for children who are placed at a distance and those who prefer to engage with us virtually.
- 3.4 The Participation Team, in conjunction with the Peterborough Participation Team, has published a summer programme for Children in Care across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This includes face to face activities including a visit to a farm, ice-skating and laser tag as well as two virtual sessions designed by our Out of Area Group. In addition, our Care Leaver Forum is planning a team building and outdoor adventure day for Children in Care, which will include canoeing and kayaking, problem solving games, bushcraft skills and team building challenges.

- 3.5 The Participation Team has launched the annual Virtual Art Exhibition open to all children and young people with Children's Social Care involvement across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Themes for this year's exhibition were chosen by the two CiCCs and are Wellbeing & Mindfulness, Animals & Nature and Sports & Activities. The deadline for submissions is 15 August and the exhibition will premiere on YouTube on 31 August.
- 3.6 The Children in Care Council (CiCC) continued to meet regularly throughout the pandemic, largely on a virtual basis. Face to face meetings resumed in June 2021 and the venue and opportunity to meet in person again have been well-received by members of the CiCC.
- 3.7 The CiCC continues to be consulted by Children's Social Care to improve services for Children in Care. Recent consultations have included working with Designated Teachers on introduction booklets they can give to Children in Care and reviewing leaflets for children and young people from the Family Group Conference Service.
- 3.8 The CiCC recently met their counterparts from Peterborough to look at their Coming into Care Packs which include information, a 'getting to know you' game, and age specific items including journals, teddy bears and water bottles. The CiCC plan to refine the information provided in the Peterborough packs so they can be launched in Cambridgeshire.
- 3.9 The CiCC also plan to create goodbye cards for social workers to use when they will no longer be working with a child or young person. These were launched in Peterborough following feedback on the importance of 'good goodbyes' and were designed using artwork from the 2020 Virtual Art Exhibition. The CiCC plan to use artwork from this year's Virtual Art Exhibition as the basis for their own designs.
- 3.10 The Participation Team has been working with the Awards Planning Committee, made up of children and young people, to plan the annual awards event for Cambridgeshire Children in Care. The Awards Planning Committee have decided on a family fun day and picnic in August, with games, art activities and a raffle, where each Child in Care receives a certificate of achievement. Social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), teachers and foster carers have been asked to send in their nominations via an online form and the Children in Care Council plan to speak about their work at the event.
- 3.11 The Participation Team launched a Young Recruiters initiative earlier this year, to encourage more recruiting managers to involve young people in their recruitment panels, so that they can contribute their views and expertise to the selection of the best candidates. This has been extremely successful and young people have been involved in the recruitment of Student Social Workers, Social Work Team Managers, Independent Chairs and Family Group Conference Coordinators.
- 3.12 Training was arranged for all young people who have expressed an interest in becoming a young recruiter to equip them with the information and support they needed to carry out this role. 10 young people from CCC have been trained to date with further training dates being planned. Young people have told us they enjoy being part of recruitment, that it shows them their experience and views matter and helps them improve their own interview skills for the future.
- 3.13 The Care Leaver Forum (CLF) met regularly throughout the pandemic using virtual

platforms and have decided to continue to do so as they find online meetings effective.

- 3.14 The CLF has been involved in exploring the information on the Local Offer, in collaboration with the Specialist Personal Adviser, as the CCC and PCC Local Offers are due to be aligned in the future. Recently they have been comparing the information available for those looking to go into higher education, as well as those looking for employment and training. The group have come up with several ideas on how they can improve the advertising of the Local Offer and are exploring these options further. The CLF has also been exploring how Care Leavers can make the best use of their Setting Up Home Allowance, while accessing the best deals and offers available.
- 3.15 A group of Care Leavers have been planning a team building and outdoor adventure day for Children in Care using a grant secured from the Outlook Fund. The group have been meeting virtually for much of the project but have also met up in person to take part in a team building activity at a Cambridge Escape Room, where they developed team building and problem solving skills that they hope other young people will be able to develop during the outdoor adventure day. As part of the project, the Care Leavers will be completing an Introduction to Youth Work training session, where they can learn and develop skills related to working with young people. The outdoor adventure day will be a great opportunity for the Care Leavers to support on the delivery of the activities and team challenges, supported by the Participation Team, and see their event planning through to its completion.

## 4. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 4.1 A good quality of life for everyone  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 4.2 Thriving places for people to live  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 4.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children  
The report above sets out the implications for this priority in section 3.
- 4.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050  
There are no significant implications for this priority.

## 5. Significant Implications

- 5.1 Resource Implications  
N/A.
- 5.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications  
N/A.
- 5.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications  
N/A.
- 5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications  
N/A.

5.5 Engagement and Communications Implications  
N/A.

5.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement  
N/A.

5.7 Public Health Implications  
N/A.

## 6. Source documents

6.1 Source documents  
None.



## Report from Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 14 July 2021

From: Ricky Cooper, Assistant Director Fostering, Regional Adoption and Specialist Young People's Services

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: This report has been submitted on behalf of the Cambridgeshire Foster Carer Association

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of the report
- b) Raise any queries they have with the lead officers

Officer contact:  
Name: Fiona Van Den Hout  
Post: Head of Service Fostering and Supervised Contact  
Email: [Fiona.vandenhout@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Fiona.vandenhout@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 518397

Member contact:  
Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam  
Role: Chair  
Email: [Anna.Bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Anna.Bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## 1. Summary

This report is an overview of the role of the Foster Carers' Association and what work they have undertaken alongside the Fostering Service.

## 2. Main issues

2.1.1 A survey was shared with all foster carers and the responses will be used to inform improvements in support and development services.

2.1.2 Based on feedback previously received individually from foster carers, the service worked alongside both chairs to develop the following key questions which align to the overall service aims to improve the recruitment of carers who can provide safe and loving local homes for our children in care, the retention of foster carers and maximise the participation of foster carers in all the work that we do:

- Do you feel fully supported by the Fostering Service/Local Authority?
- What improvements or changes within the Fostering Service Department would assist you to reach your full potential in your role as a foster carer?
- As a foster Carer do you feel your thoughts, opinions and experiences are valued and taken into consideration when decisions/plans are being made for the child/young person in your care?
- What changes / strategies do you think would improve the lives of the young people in your care?
- Would you be willing/available to share your experiences/commitment to the young people in your care to others?
- There are a high percentage of children and young people; teenagers and those exhibiting challenging behaviour who are being placed with IFA's. In your opinion, what does the service need to do to encourage and empower in-house foster carers to be more confident and step out of their comfort zone to care for these young people?
- As a Foster Carer, if you had a magic wand what would your three wishes be that you would like to see the Fostering Service implement?
- Would you recommend other potential carers to join the LA in their fostering journey? Whether this be new carers or others transferring from an IFA
- Do you feel satisfied with the way that your Fostering Service works to retain and support its existing carers?
- Please select ALL relevant criteria from the list below, you may fall into two categories e.g. Foster and Adoptive Parent.

2.1.3 Feedback received has been invaluable in its challenge to the service and in identifying carers who wish to work alongside us for example on our training or mentorship scheme. Over the coming months we will continue to work in partnership with the Fostering Committee/ Association Chairs and our foster carers to address the comments received.

2.1.4 The service anticipates that some actions will be easily addressed whilst others we will work towards. Responsive and regular communication channels with our foster carers is a

priority and their voices are valued. Given this we will reissue the survey in February/March 2022 to measure the progress made.

2.5 Foster carer responses are detailed in Appendix 1.

### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone  
There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live  
There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

The entire report is aligned with this priority as the Fostering Service is responsible for delivering safe, secure and local foster homes for Cambridgeshire's Children in Care

3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050  
There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 4. Significant Implications

4.1 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.

4.2 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category

4.4 Engagement and Communications Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category

4.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement  
There are no significant implications within this category

4.6 Public Health Implications

### 5. Source documents

5.1 Not applicable



## Cambridgeshire Fostering Annual Report 2020/21

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 14 July 2021

From: Ricky Cooper, Assistant Director Fostering, Regional Adoption and Specialist Young People's Services

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: To provide the Corporate Parenting Sub Committee with an overview of key activity within the Fostering Services for the year 2020- 2021.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of the report
- b) Raise any queries they have with the lead officers

### Officer contact:

Name: Fiona Van Den Hout

Post: Head of Service Fostering and Supervised Contact

Email: [Fiona.vandenhout@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Fiona.vandenhout@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Tel: 01223 518397

### Member contact:

Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam

Role: Chair

Email: [Anna.Bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Anna.Bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 Each year the Fostering Service writes an annual report saying what has been happening. A copy of the report for 2020/21 is attached at Appendix 1.

## 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 require that the Fostering Services provides written reports on the management, outcomes, and financial aspects of the Local Authority's Fostering Service. This report provides an overview of activity from the last financial year, April 2020 to March 2021, and outlines the plans from the service for the forthcoming year, April 2021 to March 2022.
- 2.2 The purpose and content is fully detailed in the report at Appendix 1. An accessible version of this appendix is available on request from [Fiona.vandenhout@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Fiona.vandenhout@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

## 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 3.1 A good quality of life for everyone  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.2 Thriving places for people to live  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children  
  
The entire report is aligned with this priority as the Fostering Service is responsible delivering safe, secure and local foster homes for Cambridgeshire's Children in Care
- 3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050  
There are no significant implications for this priority.

## 4. Significant Implications

- 4.1 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.2 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category
- 4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category
- 4.4 Engagement and Communications Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category

#### 4.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category

#### 4.6 Public Health Implications

### 5. Source documents

#### 5.1 None



## Fostering Annual Report

### Cambridgeshire County Council

Period Covered	1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021
Date Completed	June 2021
Name / position of author	Head of Service Fiona Van Den Hout

#### Report Context

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 require that the Fostering Services provides written reports on the management, outcomes, and financial aspects of the Local Authority's Fostering Service. This report provides an overview of activity from the last financial year, April 2020 to March 2021, and outlines the plans from the service for the forthcoming year, April 2021 to March 2022.

#### Executive Summary

The delivery model for fostering services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has changed with the launch of the new Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fostering Service on 1 December 2020. The new service enables us to combine some activity which opens up the possibility for us to do more, such as training for foster carers but also to improve the quality of and build resilience in our fostering services.

The core roles and functions of our fostering services have remained separate, for example Cambridgeshire staff supervise Cambridgeshire foster carers, and Peterborough staff supervise Peterborough carers with carers being approved for one Local Authority depending on where they live. There is a combined recruitment and assessment function, the supervision and support function and a combined dedicated team that undertakes household reviews, training and audit ensuring that all work is underpinned by the National Minimum Standards.

During the year, the fostering service has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, and the detail of this is discussed below where relevant. The Adoption

and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 came into force on 24 April 2020, which provided easements to fostering regulations for fostering services, thereby changing the regulatory framework temporarily. Most of these easements ended on 25 September 2020.

**Key highlights:**

In this reporting period, the service recruited 25 new fostering households.

On 31 March 2021 there were a further 10 assessments in progress. This activity will carry over into 2021/22.

In this reporting period, 19 foster families resigned from fostering leaving an overall net gain of 6 households. The majority of the households who resigned told us that issues relating to the pandemic was the primary reason for resignation.

Five Foster Carer households transferred to an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) from Cambridgeshire.

On 31 March 2021, 51.2% of all children living in foster care were living with in-house foster families which was an improvement from the same time the previous year.

A comprehensive on-line and virtual training offer was available to carers in assessment and existing foster carers.

## Audits and inspections

Fostering service deep dive audit

**Our self-assessment:**

A deep dive of activity has been undertaken since the new service became live in December 2021. It is clear that there are some critical areas of improvement required that will enable the service to meet the strategic priorities as outlined in the Statement of Purpose.

The culture and practice of the service needs to focus more widely on improving the offer to Foster Carers so that they feel better equipped to offer family-based care to our most vulnerable children and young people.

	<p>Children entering care currently are presenting with more challenging behaviours and are often entering care later in life, resulting in Foster Carers needing to provide care to children and young people with more complex needs as a result of what they have experienced. In order to meet this need, the service needs to champion a “can do” attitude to the fostering task within the framework of offering high support and high challenge to our fostering community so that our Foster Carers achieve their full potential.</p> <p>In addition, recruitment activity needs to be more focused on recruiting foster carers that are able to care for this cohort of children and young people. Foster Carers need a team around them, and to feel part of the team around the child they are looking after, in order to successfully deliver on providing safe, secure and consistent care.</p> <p>Our Foster Carers resilience and ability to work through the ups and downs of the caring task will be celebrated and supported. Such an attitude will be held by the Fostering workforce and we will share an ethos of not giving up on young people that results in another change for them. This will be underpinned by a strong value base held by the Leaders and Managers of the service.</p> <p>Key areas of service improvement are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruiting more carers: improving sufficiency of local foster homes for local children and developing a strong pipeline of confident foster carers who meet the care needs of our children and young people in care.</li> <li>• Working with our current cohort of carers to enable them to care for our most vulnerable children and young people through extended offers of training, support, a clinical offer and the re-purposing of services.</li> <li>• Immediate Notice given by foster carers will be scrutinised and challenged. The service through Supervising Social Workers will manage Foster Carer’s expectations and identify how we can support carers more effectively and when they first ask for it.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By applying a consistent approach to the process of Household Reviews through the new dedicated Household Review and Practice Standards team, reviews will now be conducted independently with the offer of high support and high challenge at its centre.</li> <li>• There are insufficient foster carers able to care and provide short breaks to children and young people with disabilities. Recruitment in this area is weak and this is a critical area of improvement.</li> </ul>
Ofsted	<p>There were no Ofsted inspections in this period.</p> <p>Despite the restrictions of the pandemic, Cambridgeshire participated in a Partners in Practice Peer Review with colleagues from Essex in June 2020. The visit was positive, and included the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a thorough assessment of workload, resource and capacity – completed</li> <li>• Complete the review of the fee structure – completed</li> <li>• Mine the willingness of CCC foster carers to contribute to the development of the fostering service – in progress</li> <li>• Develop an analysis of carers' learning needs – in progress</li> <li>• Address the foster carer review process – completed</li> <li>• Look to streamline the matching of children into long-term fostering placements – completed</li> <li>• In the recruitment process review the plan to use alternatively qualified staff for the initial visit – in progress</li> <li>• Focus on developing the Fostering Panel – in progress</li> <li>• Ensure that Liquid Logic implementation meets the needs of the Fostering Service – in progress</li> <li>• Ensure that staff and foster carers are trained in appropriate cultural awareness and sensitivity to meet the needs of children in their care – ongoing</li> </ul>

Summary Fostering Households			
Number of Foster Carers (Year End)	Total: 227  Including 164 mainstream, 22 respite and short break.  41 Connected Carers	Percentage of children in care fostered in-house (Year End)	51.2%

## Carer Recruitment and Retention

*Comments on recruitment and retention strategy and performance:*

The 2020-21 Recruitment, Marketing and Communication strategy outlined the key aims and priorities for the fostering service in respect of increasing the diversity, skills and experience of the foster carers. The key priority was to ensure children and young adults in care are cared for in a loving, secure and stable family household.

Dedicated campaigns moved from a mixed media approach to predominantly online due to face-to-face events being cancelled because of the pandemic. Success was achieved over bank holidays when activity was increased to capitalise on this.

The headline figures are detailed in the table below.

Activity	Annual figure
Enquiries	329
Initial Visits	101
Application forms sent	79
Attended Skills to Foster	47
End of year assessments in progress (Form F commenced)	10
Approved	25
Number of resignations and de-registrations	19
Net gain	6

The conversion rate from enquiry to assessment was 10% with 52 assessments commencing in the reporting year.

For 2020-2021, the fostering service set aspirational targets to recruit 40 new fostering households. The target was not achieved but this does need to be viewed in the context of the pandemic which has been a challenge for Local Authority recruitment of foster carers nationally.

We know there is a need to recruit more carers for children aged 10 years and over, sibling groups and children with more complex needs and disabilities. We also know that we need to challenge ourselves and our carers to maximise utilisation of vacant beds to ensure that children and young people do not move to live in externally purchased provision at a distance from their support networks.

The engagement and retention of carers has been promoted through a variety of ways:

The Cambridgeshire Foster Carer Association (CFCA) continues to be well attended and they have taken a proactive approach in reaching out to other foster carers to offer support to them. A regular 'Zoom' drop-in was organised by the CFCA, attended by a range of new and established foster carers. Staff members including senior managers attended the meetings.

Payments and vouchers were given to foster carers and children in care, in lieu of social events which were not able to take place in person during Lockdowns, due to social distancing rules.

Foster carers received their vaccinations early in recognition of their critical role status and their value within the organisation.

Foster carers continue to be present at Council Corporate Parenting Committee to represent the views of the fostering households.

Regular newsletters were sent to all fostering households updating them about the service, government guidance around the pandemic and wider council news.

The work to standardise foster carer allowances was completed and the new system was implemented in September 2020. An additional 'thank you' payment was also given in recognition of the commitment and care our foster carers were providing during the pandemic.

## Core functions of the Fostering Service

The fostering service's aim is to provide a high-quality responsive child-centred service in relation to its core functions and to recruit new foster carers from within our diverse community. We prepare applicants through training to be able to manage with the range of issues that foster carers face when looking after children. The service assesses foster carer applicants i.e. Mainstream Foster Carers, Connected Persons Carers, LINK Carers, Supported Lodgings Carers and those who offer Private Fostering. The service undertakes comprehensive assessments and checks to ensure that prospective carers are suitable and able to carry out their role. We supervise, support and develop carer's skills and knowledge in order that they promote and achieve the highest standards of care, safeguarding and outcomes for children in care.

The types of Foster Care offered include; Short Term/Time Limited, long-term; parent and child; short breaks LINK care for children with disabilities; respite, emergency, supported lodgings and PACE.

PACE: The Local Authority has duty to provide accommodation to children and young people under the age of 18 years who have been arrested and charged in relation to a criminal offence. PACE stands for Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 which placed this duty. PACE transfers take place in order to limit the amount of time children and young people are required to spend in police custody with the young person being transferred to Local Authority accommodation overnight before being presented to court the following morning.

The service also supports young people to stay with their foster carers beyond the age of 18 years in a 'Staying Put' arrangement if this is considered the best plan for the young person. This is not regulated fostering activity, and the young person, having left care, in most cases will no longer have a social worker but will receive support from a Personal Advisor employed by the Local Authority.

## Safeguarding - allegations & standards of care

<b>Allegations against foster carers</b>	
The number of allegations against foster carers made by fostered children	7
The number of allegations against foster carers made by other sources	5
The number of children who have made allegations against their foster carers	7
The number of foster carers who have been subject to allegations	12
<b>Information about the categories of alleged abuse</b>	
Physical abuse	7
Sexual abuse	0
Neglect	1
Emotional abuse	4
<b>Information about the actions resulting from allegations against foster carers</b>	
How many referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) did you make?	0
How many referrals to the local authority child protection team were made?	10
How many Section 47 enquiries were made?	0
<b>Information about the outcome of investigations of allegations</b>	
Concern(s) resolved - no further action	4
Continued monitoring for an agreed period	1
Concern remained, referred to fostering panel to review foster carer approval	7
<b>Timescale for investigations</b>	
less than 21 working days	0
22-30 working days (4 - 6 weeks)	4
31-50 working days (6 - 10 weeks)	5
More than 50 working days (> 10 weeks)	3

Approximately 5% of foster carers were subject to allegations during the year. In the year, no carers resigned due to the allegations or were deregistered although there were investigations in progress at the end of the year where this is the anticipated outcome.

The new Household Review & Practice Standards team have been involved in completion of all investigations since 1 December 2020 and have provided independent scrutiny to the process. The learning from investigations is being incorporated into the service through regular thematic practice workshops as staff and Foster Carer development needs are identified.

### Complaints (not relating to children)

*Include complaints against the agency and carers not relating to care of a child.*

*Number received in period:*

7

Summary of any complaint and resolution/outcome:

COMPLAINANT TYPE	SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT	OUTCOME
Foster Carer	Foster carer has had problems with payments	Partially Upheld
Foster Carer	Foster Carer is upset at lack of support over several months.	Not Upheld
Foster Carer	Foster parent complaining about fostering payments being incorrect.	Upheld
Foster Carer	Foster carer complaining about lack of support.	Partially Upheld
Relative	Connected Persons Team were unhelpful with support to move.	Not Upheld
Relative	Inaccuracy of a viability assessment and related Court report	Not Upheld
Relative	Complaint process	Partially Upheld

Of the seven complaints made, one was fully upheld, three were partially upheld and three not upheld. There were two complaints relating to allowance payments which were upheld and partially upheld. A new financial payment system was introduced which caused initial teething problems, these have since been rectified.

Two of the complaints related to lack of support by the social worker however one of these was not upheld. The service always seeks to identify learning from the complaints to improve practice.

**Compliments:**

The following are a selection of the compliments received by the service.

**Compliments about our foster carers**

These young ladies wouldn't be achieving in this way without your support, so thanks to you too!

H said what an excellent carer you are for J. I hear he has been saying how he feels part of a proper family and he has made tremendous progress in your care. H said that you go above and beyond for J, including making family contact with his siblings very natural. It was really nice to hear this and therefore I just wanted to thank you for all you are doing.

"I just wanted to say a very big thank you to N & M who always made me feel welcome, allowed meetings to take place in the family home and provided refreshments. They always completed reports for the children including extensive health reports, they were excellent at advocating for the children's needs. It's been a pleasure working alongside them"

**Compliments about Fostering Social Workers:**

"We are incredibly lucky to have D as our supervising social worker who always helps us pick up the slack of any other professionals."

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for everything you've done to help me over the past few weeks. It's so much appreciated, and I will be making contact with the head of the service in due course to say how brilliant you've been."

I would just like to acknowledge what a fantastic job is done by A. Truly, I'm not sure if we would still be fostering without her support. She has such a caring approach, thinks outside the box and always has the welfare of both the children and ourselves right at the front of her practice. I know that I can rely on her. The last twelve months of the pandemic have been incredibly hard for fostering families, with many of the children struggling with their mental health. I am just so glad to have a Support Social Worker who genuinely cares and supports our family, often picking up the jobs that should be done by others and generally ensuring that everything needed is in place.

I wanted to pass on a compliment in relation to J and F who worked tirelessly today to find a placement for a young man, and showed great creativity, professionalism, and patience in a highly charged situation. They did not give up, and in the end their commitment resulted in a successful outcome.

**Young person about their foster carers:**

Reported by an IRO: 'H is so thankful for his foster carers about whom he said 'they transformed me into what I am now' and he is extremely grateful for them.'

## Carer training and other development opportunities provided:

The annual foster carer training programme was initially severely impacted by the Covid pandemic, as it relied on the traditional face to face delivery method. However, to bridge the gap, the training coordinators were able to identify online training opportunities from organisations such as the Open University and AIM to complement the electronic training providers (ME learning) which had already been commissioned. This ensured that foster carers could keep up to date with their learning whilst juggling the home schooling of children. The service acquired Zoom which allowed a range of courses to be offered virtually and was well received. The list of courses and attendance figures are below.

Session	Date	Time	Duration	Number of spaces	Spaces booked	Spaces waiting
Contact Workshop	26/05/2020	1:30pm	90	10	4	0
Contact Workshop	09/06/2020	6:00pm	90	10	7	0
Safer Caring - A New Approach	23/06/2020	10:00am	120	12	12	0
Building Attachments Part One - The Secure Base	30/06/2020	10:00am	180	12	11	0
Allegations and complaints: Understanding the Procedure	02/07/2020	10:00am	180	12	10	0
Fostertalk Tax	03/07/2020	10:00am	90	25	6	0
Allegations and complaints: Understanding the Procedure	09/07/2020	10:30am	180	12	10	0
Life Story Workshop	14/07/2020	10:00am	120	12	9	0

Play and Theraplay Ideas	16/07/2020	11:00am	120	12	6	0
Recording Workshop	17/07/2020	1:00pm	120	16	15	0
Play and Theraplay Ideas	23/07/2020	10:00am	120	12	3	0
First Aid for Fostering	12/09/2020	9:30am	360	12	12	2
First Aid for Fostering	15/09/2020	9:30am	360	12	10	4
TSD Workshop	22/09/2020	10:00am	120	16	10	0
Staying Put	29/09/2020	10:00am	120	16	7	0
Safer Caring	01/10/2020	10:00am	120	16	13	0
First Aid for Fostering	03/10/2020	9:30am	360	12	10	0
Supporting Children in Education (Primary)	07/10/2020	10:00am	120	16	9	0
TSD Workshop	08/10/2020	10:00am	120	16	5	0
Online Safety	14/10/2020	10:00am	150	16	14	0
First Aid for Fostering	15/10/2020	9:30am	360	12	11	6
Fostering and Drugs & Alcohol	19/10/2020	10:00am	150	18	8	0
Supporting your Child in Education (Secondary)	21/10/2020	10:00am	120	16	10	0

First Aid for Fostering	24/10/2020	9:30am	360	12	13	7
Building Attachments - The Secure Base	03/11/2020	10:00am	180	18	6	0
Reunification	19/11/2020	10:00am	240	16	7	0
Impact of Adult Substance Misuse on Children	23/11/2020	10:00am	150	18	9	0
Allegations and Complaints: Understanding the Procedure	24/11/2020	10:00am	180	16	12	0
Communicating with Children	03/12/2020	10:00am	180	16	7	0
Impact of Adult Substance Misuse on Children	11/01/2021	10:00am	150	18	7	0
Working together workshop	12/01/2021	10:00am	120	16	8	0
Working with Contact	15/01/2021	10:00am	270	16	12	0
First Aid for Fostering	16/01/2021	9:30am	360	12	16	9
Neglect the Bigger Picture	19/01/2021	10:00am	180	16	9	0
First Aid for Fostering	10/02/2021	9:30am	360	14	17	0
Impact of Abuse	11/02/2021	10:00am	180	16	0	0
Reunification	02/03/2021	10:00am	240	18	7	0

Supporting your Child in Education - secondary	04/03/2021	10:00am	120	18	5	0
Staying Put Workshop	16/03/2021	10:00am	120	16	12	0
Allegations and Complaints: Understanding the Proc	19/03/2021	10:00am	180	18	16	0
SEND Workshop for Foster Carers	23/03/2021	10:00am	120	20	19	0
Domestic Abuse	25/03/2021	10:00am	180	18	16	0

## E-Learning

722 virtual modules on the ME learning platform were completed between April 2020 and March 2021 with peaks in June 2020 and January 2021, with 98 modules being completed in June and 101 modules being completed in January 2021. In August 2020 the service commissioned the Foster Carer Training Hub, for additional e-learning. To date 242 modules have been completed, showing the value in online course provision. Given the good level of engagement, the service plans to continue a hybrid programme of virtual and face to face training courses.

## Carer consultation, engagement and support:

Support groups have operated for both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foster Carers separately throughout the year with some changes made to take account of social distancing rules.

Historically Cambridgeshire's support groups have run face to face on a geographical basis due to the size of the county (Huntingdon area, Cambridge area and Fenland area), during daytimes and evenings. These have continued throughout COVID through virtual meetings. These groups are organised and run by the Fostering Supervision and Support Team.

The support group for link carers has met quarterly and provides an opportunity for carers to share their experience and seek peer support.

Going forward, it is anticipated that a hybrid model of some face to face and some virtual support groups would be beneficial. Virtual support groups have reached some carers who previously struggled to attend.

All new carers are buddied with an approved foster carer prior to approval to offer peer support in the early stages of their fostering career and as needed.

Foster Carers were consulted on the review of fostering payments. This exercise was completed in September 2020.

### **Fostering Panel:**

The Cambridgeshire County Council Fostering Panel has continued to operate and consider foster carer's suitability of approval as foster carers and annual and post-allegation reviews of fostering households. It has also noted resignations of fostering households.

The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 were not utilised by the service in relation to panel activity apart from the following:

- Panels were held virtually via 'Teams.'

Richard Holland is the fostering panel chair. There has been no vice chair during this reporting period and 26 panels sat during the year.

Fiona Van Den Hout, Cambridgeshire Head of Service for Corporate Parenting and since December Head of Service for Fostering and Simon Green, Head of Provider Services & Change Management Adviser acted as Agency Decision Maker for the Fostering Panel.

Heads of Service Sam Nour, Samantha Howlett, Fiona Van Den Hout (until December 2020) and Myra O'Farrell (from December 2020) acted as the Local Authority's nominated officer for regulation 24 placements.

The Fostering Panel Adviser role was held by Despina Kaoura, Steve Crossman and Jenny Braddock.

Foster Panel receives medical advice from Dr Bowers.

Due to the pandemic the joint annual training for panel has not taken place. This is scheduled for September 2021.

A recruitment drive has increased the central list aimed to increase diversity and social worker representation.

### Staff Team

The management of the service was carried out by:

Lou Williams, Director of Children's Services

Nicola Curley, Assistant Director

Fiona Van Den Hout, Head of Service for Corporate Parenting

Kate Knight, Lead Corporate Parenting Manager, two service managers, and four team managers. An additional team manager was recruited and started in her post in January 2021.

On 1 December 2020 Fiona Van Den Hout became Head of Service for the fostering service in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The three service areas each had a service manager as follows with these arrangements continuing beyond the reporting year:

Supervision and Support: Despina Kaoura

Household Review & Practice Standards: Sue King

Recruitment and Assessment: Vacant, Anita Hewson was appointed with start date of 1 June 2021.

The structure for the service from 1 December 2020 changed following staff consultation, resulting in three Recruitment and Assessment teams, three Supervision and Support teams and one Household Review and Practice Standards team.

Alternatively qualified staff include Recruitment officers, Placement officers, a Training Lead and a Training Coordinator.

All staff receive monthly supervision and yearly appraisals which due to the pandemic took place in September last year.

Team consultation / engagement:

Team meetings for staff and managers are held monthly. During the period of the pandemic when staff have worked both at home and in offices, most teams have held weekly catch-up meetings to support staff wellbeing.

Fostering service staff have been consulted twice about the structure of the service.

The councils have provided corporate support opportunities for staff including monthly wellbeing sessions and weekly briefings called 'Covid Conversations.' Monthly staff surveys have been carried out to capture views on engagement and wellbeing.

## **CHILDREN IN CARE**

### **Consultation and participation**

Children in foster care give their views about the care they receive in their foster homes in a variety of ways. They are asked to contribute to the annual reviews of their foster carers, by completing a questionnaire. Children can also use the 'Mind of My Own' app to give their views and these are also sought by their Independent Reviewing Officer and in most cases their advocate.

All children and young people in care are given information about how to make a complaint about the care that they receive.

The participation team supports the Children in Care Council to provide feedback about specific subjects as requested by the wider service and areas of interest they also raise. Consequently, children and young people in care through the Children in Care Council sourced and provided welcome packs for children who come into care in an emergency.

The service will continue to identify opportunities to engage with the Children in Care Council and Participation Team as we are committed to hearing the voice of children in care as we shape and improve the service in the coming year.

Percentages of children in Local Authority foster carer compared with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA)

% of all children fostered living in IFA foster care at month end		% of all children fostered living in LA foster care at month end
	CCC	CCC
April 2020	49.2%	50.8%
May 2020	48.8%	51.2%
June 2020	48.5%	51.5%
July 2020	49.3%	50.7%
August 2020	48.4%	51.6%
September 2020	48.2%	51.8%
October 2020	48.8%	51.2%
November 2020	47.8%	52.2%
December 2020	49.4%	50.6%
January 2021	49.8%	50.2%
February 2021	49.2%	50.8%
March 2021	48.8%	51.2%

The percentage of children living in local authority foster care has remained broadly similar throughout the year. There have been challenges due to the pandemic as a greater number of fostering carers were on hold for periods due to a household

member shielding, being in a high-risk group or due to social isolating. Other foster carers took children outside of their terms of approval to ensure that the local authority foster homes were used where possible.

### **Private Fostering**

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to monitor the safety and wellbeing of children and young people living in Private Fostering arrangements. Private Fostering arrangements are made between parents or carers who have parental responsibility for that child and another individual in order that they can take on care of their child for a period of longer than twenty-eight days. This arrangement should be reported to the Local Authority for a safeguarding assessment and monitoring.

Cambridgeshire has an established private fostering process which has had success in identifying a high number of private fostering arrangements due to an effective communications strategy and through developing relationships with Language schools in Cambridge.

The pandemic reduced the numbers of children and young people attending Language schools, consequently the numbers of private fostering arrangements were lower than previous years, with 55 children living in private fostering arrangements during the year.

### **Development and Targets for 2021-22**

**Customer Service Timescale Targets set for 2021/2022:**

- All enquiries from prospective foster carers into the Recruitment Team will be responded to on the same day or the very next day (within 24hours)
- Initial Home visits to take place within 3 working days of receipt of enquiry
- Registrations of Interest (applications to foster) to be progressed within 5 days and allocated to an assessing social worker

**Foster Carer Recruitment Targets set for 2021/2022:**

- Mainstream new approvals:  
25 new households of which 7 are for children aged 12 years and over
- Link household new approvals:  
6 new households

**Assessment timescale targets set for 2021/2022:**

- Timeframe for completion of Form F (Home Study) assessments is 4 months
- Conversion from enquiry to application:  
21/22 - 15%  
22/23 - 20%

**Percentage of children living in in-house provision targets set for 2021/2022:**

- Year-end 44% of all children fostered are living in in house foster homes

**Other key areas for development:**

- A refreshed and revised recruitment campaign targeting the types of carers who can meet the needs of our children
- A revised website that is attractive to members of the public and encourages them to foster for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- Our fostering campaigns for 2021-2022 include: Thank you Campaign in July (children thank foster carers for the amazing things they do), 1,000 voices Campaign in September (raising the profile of foster caring), Sons and Daughter month in October (celebrating foster carers birth children and the contribution they make to fostering), Emergency Appeal in November (urgent call for action for foster carers), Christmas Wishes Campaign in December, New Year Campaign in January (calling for our partners involvement) and LGBTQ + week in March.
- Continue to learn from our foster carers and maintain a close working relationship with both foster carer committees – The Foster Carer Partnership.

- Involve our foster carers in all aspects of our service: in recruitment activity, training, mentorship of newly approved carers and providing peer support to approved carers.
- Provide training to prospective carers that equips them during the assessment process with the skills they need to care for the children we know we will need foster homes for.
- Explore the offer of diploma courses and foster carer mentorship qualifications.
- Implement an audit framework bringing the National Minimal Standards into sharper focus in all we do including Household Reviews.
- Develop our support offer to prospective and approved foster carers to increase their confidence and skills

<b>Signature</b>	[Redacted]
<b>Head of Service (Name)</b>	Fiona Van Den Hout
<b>Date</b>	2 July 2021

## Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report 2020-21

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 14 July 2021

From: Nicola Curley Assistant Director Early Help and Children's Social Care

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: This report is submitted to each formal and informal Corporate Parenting Sub Committee as part of the standing work programme item in relation to performance.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of the report, and
- b) Raise any questions with the lead officer

Officer contact:

Name: Olly Grant

Post: Independent Chair Service Manager

Email: [olly.grant@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:olly.grant@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Tel: 07787 837944

Member contact:

Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam

Post: Chair

Email: [anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## Summary

### 1.1 Key highlights of this report are:

- The number of children in care fell by 75 this year
- Timeliness of statutory Child in Care Reviews continues to be excellent
- There is improvement in the proportion of children in care who are settled in 'permanence' arrangements
- Most of the issues raised by Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) through the Case Alert protocol are about issues of accountability or record keeping

## 2. Background

1.1 The appointment of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is a legal requirement under Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act (2002). Amendments to statutory guidance in 2010 embedded the IRO role further within 'Care Planning Placement and Case Review' and 'The IRO Handbook'.

1.2 The IRO Handbook states: 'The manager should be responsible for the production of an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the corporate parenting panel. This report should identify good practice but should also highlight issues for further development, including where urgent action is needed.' (IRO Handbook 2010, page 48, paragraph 7.11.)

## 2. Main Issues

2.1 Profile of the population of children in care: There were 643 children in care at the end of March 2020.

2.2 Performance of the IRO Service: Each IRO works with approximately 60 children and young people; this caseload is considered to be moderate. Over 99% of Child in Care (CIC) Reviews were held within statutory timescales, a similar level to last year.

2.3 Voice of the child in care planning: This year Reviews have mostly taken place as virtual meetings due to the coronavirus restrictions. The greatest impact of the virtual nature of Reviews has been on the IRO's ability to elicit the views of some children, particularly those with disabilities, young children or those who use interpreters, where face to face conversations are significantly more effective. On the other hand, there were indications that for some young people participating via virtual platform was more comfortable than attending Reviews in person, and as such there were some who were more talkative and engaged in their Reviews when online. In total this year 55% of children over the age of 4 attended their CIC Reviews in person. This is the same proportion as the previous year, illustrating that the switch to virtual Reviews has not presented a significant barrier for children's participation overall.

2.4 Observations of the operational practice and performance with children and young people in care:

2.4.1 Permanence overview of all children in care 2020-21:

**53%** Permanence achieved / sufficiently prepared for leaving care

- 27%** Care planning is progressing as planned
- 20%** Action is needed to progress the care plan

2.4.2 IROs raised 506 escalations to social care managers to prompt them to address the specific issues of drift or delay highlighted. This number can reflect more than one alert raised on an individual case. This is fewer than over the previous year. One hypothesis for this is around the reduction in the number of children in care, as well as areas of improved practice.

2.4.3 The types of issues raised by IROs fell loosely into eight categories:

- 34%** Accountability and record keeping
- 22%** Planning for permanence
- 13%** Preparation for leaving care
- 11%** Safeguarding
- 10%** Child's holistic rights or needs
- 4%** Professional network / communication
- 3%** Funding decisions
- 3%** Child's legal status

## 2.5 Impact of the IRO Service:

2.5.1 The escalations raised by IROs elicit immediate management attention where there are issues causing drift or delay. Over the last year 77% of IRO Alerts are resolved as soon as they are received by the relevant social work Team Managers. This shows that, in the instances where social work practice has fallen below standard, the IRO has been instrumental in ensuring plans get back on track quickly.

2.5.2 Written feedback from young people about their IROs was generally very positive. The majority of young people said they always feel that their IRO listens to them, always feels their IRO is open and honest, and they always feel supported during their Reviews.

## 2.6 IRO Service Action Plan 2021-22:

Objective 1: Continue to strengthen the relationship between the IRO Service and the Children in Care Council (CiCC). The IRO Service Manager has also taken on an interim management role with the Participation service which will support the collaborative opportunities between the IROs and CiCC.

Objective 2: Continue to enhance the IROs 'footprint' on the child's record, evidencing the IRO's involvement and oversight of the case progression.

Objective 3: Review the format of consultation forms for children so that they can be completed quickly and easily via an online form as well as through paper consultation forms.

Objective 4: Strengthen the IRO oversight of pathway planning to support successful and timely moves to independence for young people leaving care.

Objective 5: Continue to support placement stability as this is key to the emotional wellbeing of children and young people. IROs will continue to conduct independent evaluations of

unplanned endings in foster placements (through 'Placement Breakdown Meetings') and will also undertake appreciative enquiries of what works well, so that all learning can be woven back into practice.

### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 3.1 A good quality of life for everyone  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.2 Thriving places for people to live  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children  
The report above sets out the implications for this priority.
- 3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050  
There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 4. Significant Implications

- 4.1 Resource Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.7 Public Health Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.

### 5. Source documents

- 5.1 Source documents  
None

# **Safeguarding and Quality Assurance**

## **IRO ANNUAL REPORT April 2020 to March 2021**

Olly Grant  
Independent Reviewing Service Manager  
Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

## **Executive Summary**

This Annual Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the IRO Services in Cambridgeshire as required by statutory guidance. This report covers the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Key highlights of this report are:

- The number of children in care fell by 75 this year (from 718 at the end of March 2020 to 643 at the end of March 2021).
- A total of 1,510 Child in Care Reviews were held this year.
- Timeliness of Reviews continues to be excellent.
- Feedback from children and families positively reflects the IROs' use of their skills to amplify the voice of the child in care planning.
- The IRO Escalation Protocol continues to be fully embedded across the service. IROs' use of Case Alerts and the Dispute Resolution Process continues to evidence the impact of their oversight of children's care plans.

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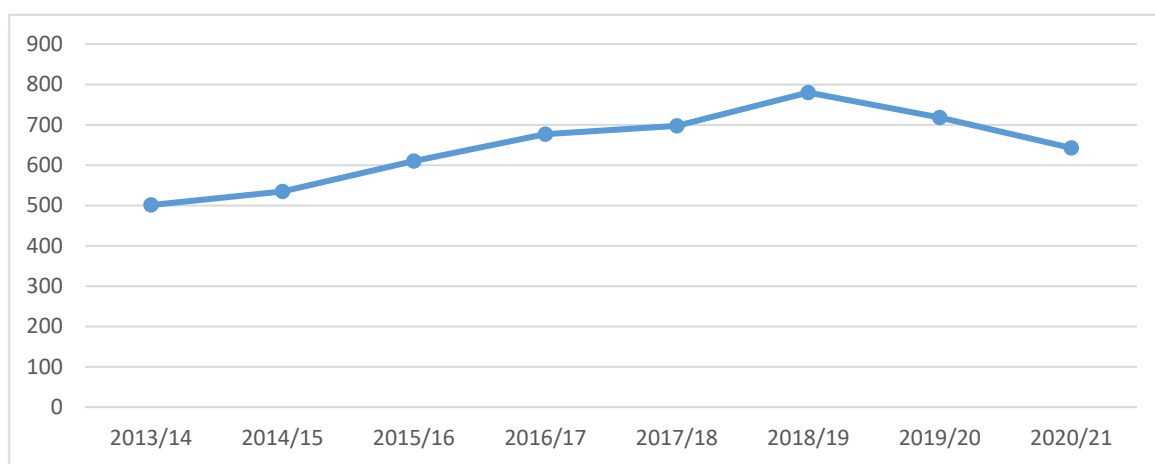
## **1.0 Purpose of the IRO Service**

- 1.1 The appointment of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is a legal requirement under Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act (2002). Amendments to statutory guidance in 2010 embedded the IRO role further within 'Care Planning Placement and Case Review' and 'The IRO Handbook'.
- 1.2 The IRO Handbook states: 'The manager should be responsible for the production of an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the corporate parenting panel. This report should identify good practice but should also highlight issues for further development, including where urgent action is needed.' (IRO Handbook 2010, page 48, paragraph 7.11.)
- 1.3 Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that every child who is looked after (in this report referred to as "in care") must have a Care Plan. The Care Plan must detail the long-term plan for the child's upbringing and the arrangements made to meet the child's day-to-day needs.
- 1.4 It is a core responsibility of the IRO to ensure that the local authority gives due consideration to any views expressed by the child within care planning. The IRO has a responsibility to monitor the local authority's performance of its functions in relation to the child's case.
- 1.6 The core mechanism for reviewing the child's care plan and ascertaining the child's wishes and feelings, is the child's 'Child in Care' (CIC) Review, which are held at statutory intervals; initially within 20 days of the child coming into care, then within three months later, and then at least once every six months after that until the child leaves care.

## **2.0 Profile of the population of children in care**

- 2.1 At the end of March 2021 there were 643 Cambridgeshire children in care. This compares to 718 at the end of March 2020 and represents a continued reduction since May 2019.

**Graph 1: Number of children in care**



- 2.2 Over the past 12 months 248 children ceased to be looked after.
- 2.3 34 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were looked after during 2020-21.
- 2.4 During the year 2 young people were remanded into local authority care and one person was supported in a secure accommodation unit.

## **3.0 Professional Profile of the IRO Service**

- 3.1 In Cambridgeshire the IRO Service sits within Safeguarding and Quality Assurance (SQA) and is accountable to the Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. SQA serves as a 'critical friend' to the organisation.

The wider functions of SQA include:

- The Child Protection Service: chairing conferences and quality assuring CP Plans.

- The LADO Service: managing allegations against staff and volunteers working with children.
- Customer Care: addressing customer feedback including complaints, from across People and Communities Directorate.
- Quality Assurance: carrying out audits and delivering workshops to support practice improvement as outlined in the QA framework.
- The clinical service: enhancing therapeutic abilities of carers and relational social work
- Principal Social Worker: championing best social work practice.

3.2 At the end of 2020 SQA was the subject of a formal consultation. This concluded in February 2021 with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough SQA services aligning into one joint service. This means that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough IROs and Child Protection Chairs have become one larger team, and the roles of IRO and CP Chair have merged to that of 'Independent Chair'. The role is therefore technically now 'dual' and can provide continuity for any child who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan and then becomes a child in care.

## **Staff Team**

- 3.2 The staffing establishment for the team is 9.8 IROs (full-time equivalent). One full-time post is fixed term to March 2022 and the remaining posts are permanent. Since December 2018 there has also been additional Agency IRO cover in place to help to manage the volume of work for the team.
- 3.3 The membership of the IRO team has been stable this year. Two permanent IROs left in summer 2020 (one of whom was part-time) and another moved on in March 2021. One IRO returned from extended maternity leave in September, and two new IROs have joined from other areas of Children's Social Care.
- 3.4 In terms of diversity, there is only one male member of staff and the rest of the IRO Team are female. The majority of the staff team identify as White British. Overall, the team do not reflect the gender balance and ethnic mix of the population of children in care in Cambridgeshire, though the recruitment selection process is not discriminatory and open to all. There are however a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds represented within the social work teams.

- 3.5 Attached to the IRO Service is a dedicated Business Support Team who are responsible for convening Reviews and distributing all Review reports to the attendees of Review meetings.
- 3.6 The IRO Service Manager has been in post since June 2017. Line management of IROs is shared with a second Service Manager who also co-manages the Peterborough Independent Chairs.

## **Staff Development and Support**

- 3.7 Each IRO has 1:1 supervision at least once every 8 weeks / every other calendar month with their line manager to reflect on performance, practice, development, and support, as well as access to informal supervision when needed. Since the beginning of the pandemic line managers have also been holding fortnightly informal group 'Keeping in Touch' virtual meetings to support with ongoing team communication and cohesion as everybody adjusted to working from home.
- 3.8 Monthly IRO Team Meetings have continued to be held over the past year, moving to a virtual platform rather than meeting in person. After a natural period of adjustment the Team Meetings have become almost as effective as previously, though the aim is to return to face to face when possible. Often visitors from other parts of the organisation are invited, which helps to maintain good working relationships and communication between the IROs and the wider professional network working Cambridgeshire's children in care.
- 3.9 In terms of training opportunities, the nature of the lockdown restrictions opened up the breadth of online learning events available for staff. As well as participation in national conferences such as that held by Social Work England in autumn 2020, staff have attended short courses and talks delivered by Making Research Count and the Office of the Children's Commissioner. Internally there have also been opportunities for embedding learning and skills for IROs, such as bespoke refresher training in Motivational Interviewing and specialist IRO workshops led by the Service Managers.
- 3.10 The Eastern Region IRO Managers group and IRO group are established within the region. Cambridgeshire's IRO Service Manager and two IROs are active members of the Eastern Region group. The regular regional meetings offer a space for rich discussion about the dilemmas and

challenges of the role, national trends, significant case law developments and learning from one another.

## **Workload demand**

- 3.11 The IRO Handbook recommends a caseload for each full-time equivalent IRO is between 50 and 70 children. This volume of cases should allow the IRO to fulfil all their statutory functions to the best of their ability. In Cambridgeshire an average caseload of 60 per full-time IRO has been maintained through the year.
- 3.12 Effective business support staff use established systems to support the IROs. This does not include the typing of minutes, which the IROs complete themselves. All IROs ensure that they distribute the decisions from CIC Review meetings to the responsible Team Manager within five working days of the review in accordance with the statutory guidance.
- 3.13 In Cambridgeshire the IRO service has responsibility for convening and chairing statutory Secure Accommodation Reviews for all children living in a secure setting. Each SAR is chaired by a member of the IRO team and another member of the IRO team acts as one of the members of the decision-making Panel at the SAR. The child's allocated IRO also attends the SAR as an observer. In 2020/21 one Cambridgeshire young person was placed in secure accommodation (compared to five in the previous year), therefore this area of work did not present a significant contribution to the workload of the IRO team this year.
- 3.14 The IRO service has responsibility for convening and chairing Placement Breakdown Meetings (PBM) when long-term 'matched' foster placements comes to an end. Over the past 12 months there have been 25 such 'placement breakdowns' (which is the same figure as for 2019-20). This has presented a significant increase in workload for IROs because as well as chairing the PBM the task involves in-depth preparation and the writing of a comprehensive report after the meeting.

## **4.0 Performance of the IRO Service**

- 4.1 A total of 1,510 Reviews were held in the year 2020-21.
- 4.2 In 2020-21 over 99% of CIC Reviews were held within statutory timescale, which is not significantly different from last year.
- 4.3 Since March 2020 all CIC Reviews have been held 'virtually' using Skype or Microsoft Teams. While this new method naturally took a little while for IROs and all participants to adjust to, generally the Reviews have continued to be effective despite the restrictions. Where there have been challenges this has been mostly in relation to technical obstacles.
- 4.4 It is important that IROs maintain a level of continuous oversight into the progress of the care planning for children that they work with. IROs are therefore required to record evidence of their monitoring through a record of their 'footprint' on the child's case. Twice yearly 'Footprint Audits' illustrated that there has been some improvement in this area over the year.
- 4.5 Monthly IRO Peer and Manager Audits of CIC Review Reports and annual direct observations of chairs continue this year. Feedback to IROs helps to focus on the strengths of their work and ensures there is a consistent and high standard of written and direct work the whole team.

## **5.0 Voice of the child in care planning**

- 5.1 There is an expectation nationally that children's views are sought in an age appropriate manner for their CIC Reviews. The greatest impact of the virtual nature of Reviews has been on the IRO's ability to elicit the views of some children, particularly those with disabilities, young children or those who use interpreters, where face to face conversations are significantly more effective. On the other hand, there were indications that for some young people participating via virtual platform was more comfortable than attending Reviews in person, and as such there were some who were more talkative and engaged in their Reviews when online. In total this year 55% of children over the age of 4 attended their CIC Reviews in person. This is the same proportion as the previous year, illustrating that the switch to virtual Reviews has not presented a significant barrier for children's participation overall.

- 5.2 As ever, not all children and young people wish to attend their Reviews; 32% conveyed their views via another person, through Mind of My Own or through a consultation document.
- 5.2 Due to the restrictions in place over the last year IROs have only been able to visit a small proportion of children in care. The slight lifting of restrictions towards the end of 2020 allowed visits to take place subject to individual COVID-19 visiting risk assessments between June and December 2020. This meant that overall, significantly fewer children were seen in person by their IRO over the past 12 months. While many IROs have been able to maintain or establish communication over the phone, text or videocall with young people, IROs are very much looking forward to being able to see children in person again to listen to their feelings and views.
- 5.3 NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service) provides advocates where they are requested by Cambridgeshire children in care. This year there was reduction in the number of advocates working with children in care by about 90%, which can be again be largely apportioned to the limitations of working remotely during the pandemic. Encouragingly the numbers of children accessing advocacy to support them in CIC Reviews now appear to be beginning to rise again.

## **6.0 Observations of the organisation's practice and performance with children in care**

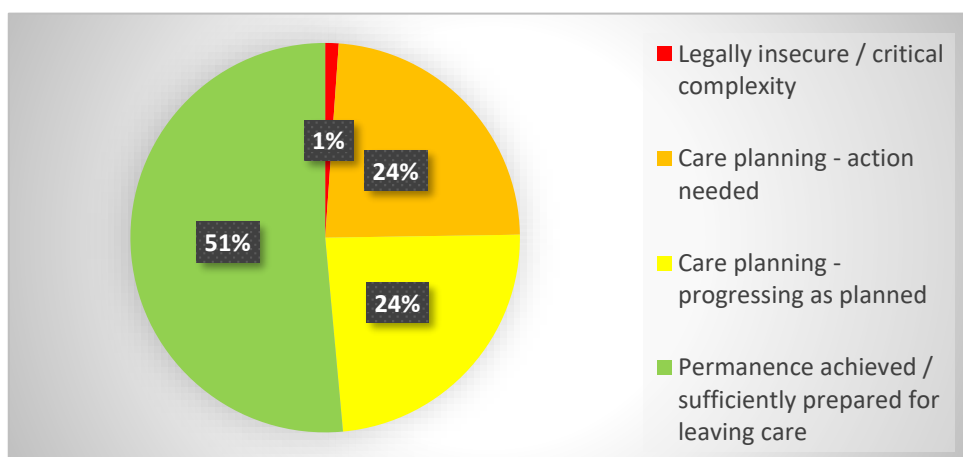
### **Permanence tracking**

- 6.1 The IRO Service is instrumental in the monitoring and tracking of permanence for children in care. The IRO Service manages a Central Permanence Tracker (CPT) which is updated regularly from the outcomes of Reviews and escalations. The CPT is used to track any patterns and themes that indicate obstacles to permanence for children and areas where there have been improvements.
- 6.2 All children in care are colour coded on the CPT in relation to how effectively their care plans are progressing towards 'permanence' (i.e., where the child can achieve relative physical and psychological stability; a sense of 'being settled'). For 16-17-year olds the CPT tracks the progress of their preparation for independence.

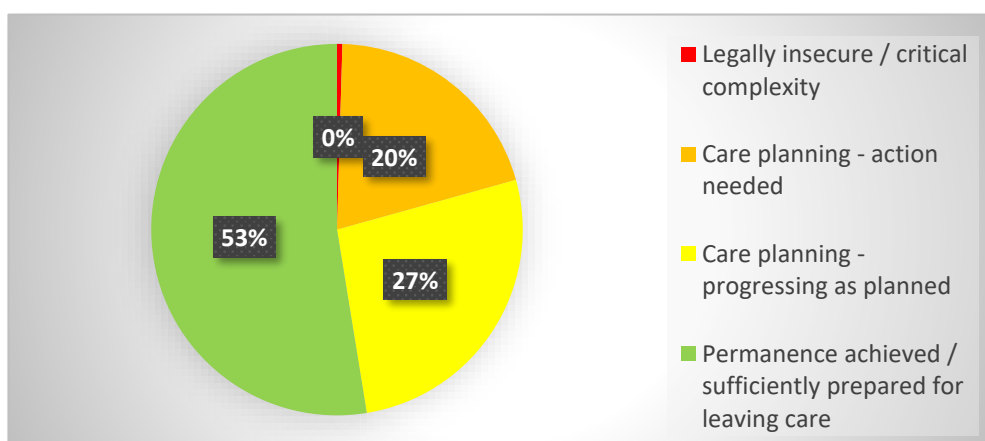
6.3 Over half of Cambridgeshire's children in care have an appropriate legal status and a well-matched, stable placement that they can remain in until independence (coded green). This does not include adoption, as adopted children are no longer in care and therefore are not part of the children in care cohort. Graphs 2 and 3 show that there has been a small degree of overall improvement over the last year in supporting children and young people to achieve permanence in a timely way, which is positive. The aim is for all children to be coded as either 'yellow' or 'green'.

6.4 However, these graphs also illustrate that there are still a significant proportion of children and young people who need specific action in order to progress towards permanence. These children are at risk of drift and instability within the care system and are therefore the subjects of close attention and often escalations from IROs.

6.5 **Graph 2: Permanence overview 2019-20**



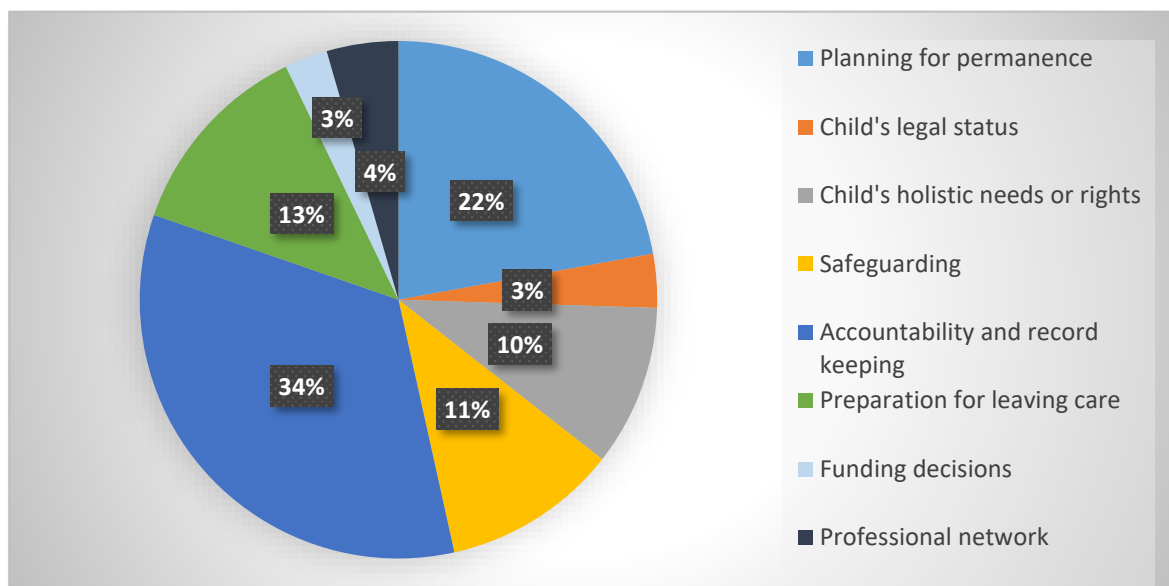
6.6 **Graph 3: Permanence overview 2020-21**



## IRO Escalations

- 6.7 A core function of the IRO role is to seek resolutions to delays or problems that arise within care planning. It is a statutory responsibility of the IRO Service to have a formal process in place to raise concerns and to ensure that this process is respected and prioritised by managers. In Cambridgeshire this is referred to as the Escalation Protocol.
- 6.8 Over the 12 months between April 2020 and March 2021 IROs raised 506 escalations to social care managers to prompt them to address the specific issues of drift or delay highlighted. This number can reflect more than one alert raised on an individual case. This is fewer than over the previous year. One hypothesis for this is around the reduction in the number of children in care, as well as areas of improved practice.
- 6.9 The types of issues raised by IROs fell loosely into eight categories, as can be seen in Graph 4.

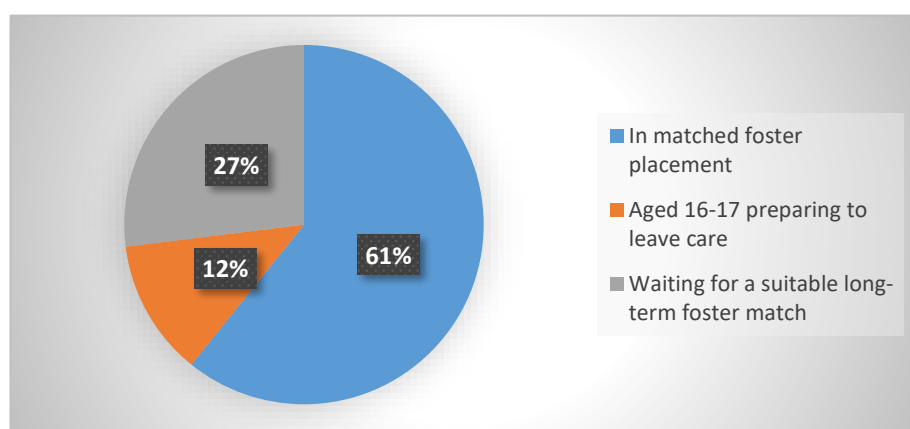
**Graph 4: Themes of IRO Escalations**



- 6.10 Graph 4 illustrates that most issues raised by IROs were concerned with accountability and record keeping. The Alerts in this category included insufficient evidence of management oversight on the child's file, delays in recording, and pre-CIC Review Reports not being prepared in time for the child's Review.

- 6.11 Almost a quarter of the issues escalated by IROs related to drift or delay in permanence planning. Within this category most of the Alerts concerned delays in decisions being made about whether an identified foster placement was determined as a suitable long-term match or not. For children this would mean an extended period of limbo before they could be confident that they could settle into a foster home that would commit to them until adulthood.
- 6.12 The permanence plan for almost all children with care orders is long-term foster care in a matched foster placement. At the end of March 2021 there were 408 children who were the subjects of Care Orders.

**Graph 5: Long-term matched foster placements**



- 6.13 Graph 5 shows that, of all the children with Care Orders, 248 (61%) were in matched placements and a further 50 (12%) were aged 16 or 17 and therefore would not at this age be matched long-term. The remaining 110 were waiting for suitable long-term foster families to be found for them.
- 6.14 The Corporate Parenting Service recognises that this is an area of practice that needs attention and have responded with a strategic review of the family finding matching procedures for children with permanence plans of long-term foster care.

## Placement breakdowns for children in long-term foster care

- 6.15 Both quantitative and qualitative data is collected by the IRO Service relating to sudden endings of foster placements that have been matched long term through PBMs.

- 6.16 Between April 2020 and March 2021 there were 25 long-term foster placements that broke down. Of those whose long-term foster placements ended most were boys, and 60% were aged 14 or over. Over half of the placements that ended had been matched for two years or less, which means that the Matching Assessment had been completed between 2018-2020. Three placements had been matched for less than 6 months.
- 6.17 Every six months the IRO Service provides an overview of data to the Service, which includes a summary of learning and recommendations made for future practice that have been established through the PBMs.

## **7.0 Impact of the IRO Service**

### **Impact for children**

- 7.1 Regular Reviews by IROs ensure that care plans are progressing for children, and that there is always a meaningful purpose for the child to remain in care. IROs maintain a consistent overview of case activity through ongoing monitoring. This includes scheduled monitoring points between Reviews and the use of specific monitoring forms, which provide the Social Work Team with a child-focussed short audit of progress against agreed actions set in CIC Reviews.
- 7.2 The escalations raised by IROs elicit immediate management attention where there are issues causing drift or delay. Over the last year 77% of IRO Alerts are resolved as soon as they are received by the relevant social work Team Managers. This shows that, in the instances where social work practice has fallen below standard, the IRO has been instrumental in ensuring plans get back on track quickly.
- 7.4 Of the 506 escalations raised over the year, 6 had to be escalated by the IRO to the Assistant Director using the formal Dispute Resolution Process (DRP). Overall, this was a significant reduction from 17 DRPs raised in 2020/21.
- 7.5 Significant issues raised within DRPs included:
- A 17-year old had a scheduled heart operation soon before his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, following which he was anticipated to need 3 months' recuperation. The IRO raised concern that his pathway plan had not

addressed this need, and that instead the proposed plan was for him to move out from his foster home at his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

- Following the IRO's escalation the social work team secured an extension of funding for his foster placement to enable the young person to recover from surgery effectively before moving on to supported accommodation.
- A little boy of nearly two years old was in a short-term foster placement while care proceedings were ongoing. The local authority's assessment of his mother's parenting capacity concluded that it would be unsafe for him to return to her care. The boy's IRO raised concerns on learning that the local authority's plan changed to one of reunification with his mother without a clear rationale as to how the risks identified would be mitigated.
  - The IRO's intervention in this case prompted the local authority to revisit their parenting assessment and carefully re-assess the areas of risk that had been identified.
- 12-year-old twins had been living in their matched foster placement for over five years and their carers wished to become special guardians for the children. The carers were concerned however that the impact of no longer receiving fostering allowance would affect the quality of life for the children and so they requested that the local authority consider exceptional financial support post Special Guardianship Order. The IRO was concerned at the length of time taken for the local authority to respond to the carers' request, and that the delay was impacting on the children's pursuit of permanence.
  - Once the IRO raised the DRP a swift decision was made by the Head of Service and the carers were given a response to their request. This enabled definitive decisions to be made about future plans for the twins.

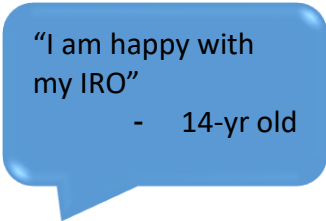
## **Impact for the organisation**

- 7.6 The IRO Service composes and circulates the Positive Practice and Escalation Report each month which summarises the themes of escalations and raises awareness of ongoing areas of practice concern. The report also includes observations of positive practice that have been appreciated by the IRO Service and Child Protection Chairs on behalf of children each month, thereby offering the wider organisation regular balanced feedback.

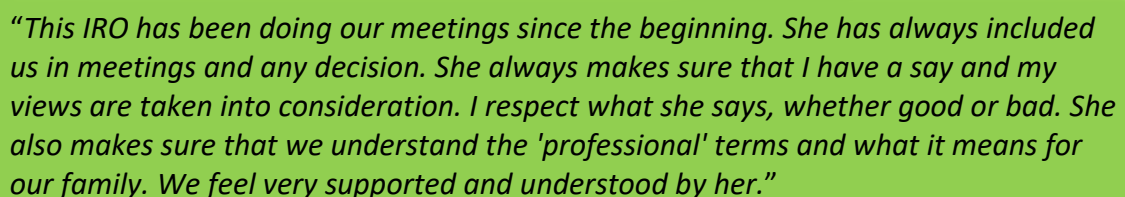
- 7.7 This year the IRO Service has delivered two Learning from Placement Breakdown reports along with a one-off, larger-scale study of the impact of placement breakdowns on young people. The findings from this work have been shared with the Corporate Parenting service and have been integrated into the review of procedures for care planning with children that are the subjects of care orders.
- 7.8 A small working group within the IRO Service reviewed the design of the Care Plan and CIC Review Report documents within the Liquid Logic system. IROs felt strongly that the reports generated needed to have more user-friendly language and layout to enable children and families to fully engage in and understand them. The draft versions by the IRO working group became the basis of wider consultations with relevant stakeholders before being incorporated into the system. The new forms have now been authorised and are due to be implemented in April 2021.

## **8.0 Feedback for the IRO Service**

- 8.1 After each Review, the IRO offers the opportunity to the young person, their parents, and professionals to complete and return a paper feedback form. For much of 2020 the response rate was low, and so in early 2021 the format of the feedback form was simplified. Since then the response rate has started to increase.
- 8.2 Written feedback from young people about their IROs was generally very positive. The majority of young people said they always feel that their IRO listens to them, always feels their IRO is open and honest, and they always feel supported during their Reviews.
- 8.3 Most parents who returned feedback forms generally expressed that they felt they were very included in their child's Review and felt that the IRO represented their views.



"I am happy with my IRO"  
- 14-yr old



*"This IRO has been doing our meetings since the beginning. She has always included us in meetings and any decision. She always makes sure that I have a say and my views are taken into consideration. I respect what she says, whether good or bad. She also makes sure that we understand the 'professional' terms and what it means for our family. We feel very supported and understood by her."*

*"I do feel that my son's views are listened to by IRO and always checks directly with my son, if she's got things right and understood his wishes."*

- 8.4 Older young people are encouraged to chair or co-chair their Reviews. This often takes the form of the IRO and the young person agreeing together how the agenda for the meeting will be managed and both of them taking a role in guiding the conversation within the meeting. The feedback from a foster carer illustrates how important this can be for young people as they develop their independence skills:

*"The IRO was child-centred throughout the meeting and G (the young person) was made to feel empowered to express her views. It was lovely to observe G being given opportunity to exercise her emerging independence in reviewing her care plan and making decisions about her future. This is very helpful for G's self-esteem and confidence. G felt listened to and valued."*

## **9.0 Review of the IRO Service Action Plan 2020/21**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Further strengthen the relationship between the IRO Service and Voices Matter (Cambridgeshire's Children in Care Council)	One IRO is the Link IRO from the IRO Service with Voices Matter. The Link IRO was able to meet once virtually with Voices Matter and there are plans to build the relationship further when in-person activities and meetings can take place again.
Evaluate the new ways of working that have been established in response to COVID-19 restrictions.	Following the collation of service user feedback and discussion amongst IROs about what works, the service are now drafting protocols for how Reviews should be conducted, and the level of flexibility that could be applied in relation to virtual interactions with children when the pandemic restrictions are lifted.

Further improve the feedback loop with respect to the comments received from children and young people after their Reviews.	It has been difficult to progress this while IROs have been having more limited face to face contact with children. However, requests for feedback are now via email rather than solely on paper, which has helped to elicit children's views.
Establish a routine for IROs to regularly meet with young people to co-audit their care plans and pathway plans.	After establishing this objective, it became clear that the format of the Care Plan needed to be reviewed in order for children to be able to fully engage in them. Now that the new forms are to be implemented and there are proposals for face to face visits to resume when restrictions lift IROs will be able to begin to introduce to children the idea of co-auditing their care plans.
To collate and analyse information gathered from Placement Breakdown Meetings for children in foster care. Findings can be incorporated into a bi-annual Report which can then inform further learning and development for Corporate Parenting.	This objective has been completed and two Learning from Placement Breakdowns reports have been completed and shared with Corporate Parenting this year.

## **10.0 IRO Service Action Plan 2021/22**

### **10.1 Objective 1**

Continue to strengthen the relationship between the IRO Service and the Children in Care Council (CiCC). The IRO Service Manager has also taken on an interim management role with the Participation service which will support the collaborative opportunities between the IROs and CiCC.

### **10.2 Objective 2**

Continue to enhance the IROs 'footprint' on the child's record, evidencing the IRO's involvement and oversight of the case progression.

### **10.3 Objective 3**

Review the format of consultation forms for children so that they can be completed quickly and easily via an online form as well as through paper consultation forms.

### **10.4 Objective 4**

Strengthen the IRO oversight of pathway planning to support successful and timely moves to independence for young people leaving care.

### **10.5 Objective 5**

Continue to support placement stability as this is key to the emotional wellbeing of children and young people. IROs will continue to conduct independent evaluations of unplanned endings in foster placements (through 'Placement Breakdown Meetings') and will also undertake appreciative enquiries of what works well, so that all learning can be woven back into practice.



## Clinical Services

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 14 July 2021

From: Alison Bennett, Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Quality Assurance

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: To brief Members on the clinical services offer available to children in care in Cambridgeshire, following the service being brought in house.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is invited to review and comment on the report

### Officer contact:

Name: Alison Bennett

Post: Assistant Director, Safeguarding & Quality Assurance

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### Member contact:

Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam

Post: Chair

Email: [anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report is to provide an update on the progress in setting up the clinical team and the offer available to children in care in Cambridgeshire, following the service being brought in house.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. The clinical support offered to children in care within Cambridgeshire was previously be delivered by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Trust (CPFT).
- 2.2. Careful consideration was given to the question of whether to renew the contract with CPFT to deliver these services on behalf of the local authority. The eventual decision was taken to develop an in-house service. The main reason was the view that in these particularly challenging and changing times, we wanted to retain the flexibility of being able to adapt the service should we need to.
- 2.3. The changes being proposed in Cambridgeshire required a formal consultation to take place. The consultation in Cambridgeshire ended on 14 January 2021, with a formal response published by the People and Communities Directorate.
- 2.4. During the period of review and consultation, clinical services for individual children and young people in care in Cambridgeshire continued to be delivered.

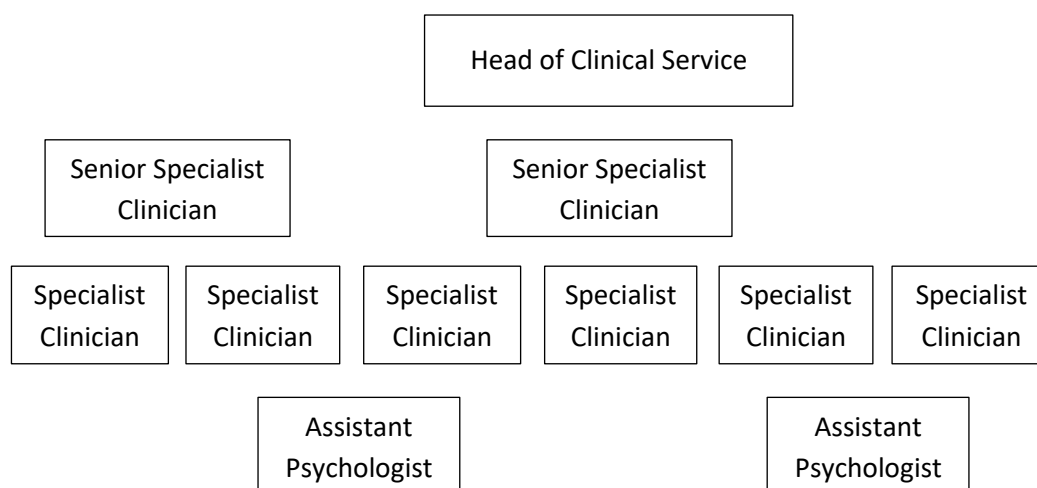
## 3. Main Issues

### Revised Clinical Offer

- 3.1. Since the consultation ended, the team has worked to develop an operating framework congruent with current evidence-based practice, governance, and recruitment of interim clinical staff to the vacant posts.
- 3.2. The primary function for the clinical team is to enhance relational social work practice, our carers' therapeutic abilities, and to improve outcomes for children who are in care.
- 3.3. Foster carers, including some of our most experienced carers, can struggle with managing challenging behaviour on a daily basis; it can be exhausting. One of the key aims of the revised clinical offer is therefore to increase the support that we can provide to our carers.
- 3.4. Our revised clinical offer includes an improved training offer to foster carers focusing on supporting children in their care who have attachment disorders and who are exhibiting challenging behaviour.
- 3.5. In addition, the clinical team will contribute expertise at all levels of the wider service structure, to ensure that adults and professionals with the most influence in a child's life, are informed by evidence-based models relevant to the emotional health and wellbeing of children who are in care.

- 3.6. They will also contribute to the assessment of children's emotional health and wellbeing to inform care planning. This involvement may also include supporting decisions about contact with birth family, placement suitability, safety planning, reunification planning, sibling assessments and a strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQs) .
- 3.7. The revised clinical service will also build on existing relationships with other mental/ emotional health and wellbeing services to ensure that more complex needs of children and young people are met.
- 3.8. Children and young people will continue to be signposted to appropriate services as needed.
- 3.9. The overall aim of the revised service is to improve placement stability and so reduce the need for out of county placements, minimising unnecessary disruptions and improving the child's care and family experience.

## Staffing



- 3.10. The new team structure consists of 9.6 full time equivalent (FTE) posts. The clinical lead is shared with Peterborough.
- 3.11. The new model of practice is different from the approach that the clinical service used to offer. We are very confident that this new approach will benefit children and young people in care and on the edge of care. The changes have, however, resulted in some resignations from the service. More positively, we have been able to recruit interim clinicians to support the service whilst we continue to recruit permanently. The current team have been able to work with all children and young people referred to the service, meaning that despite the move to the new model, no children or young people have experienced any delay in accessing the support they need.
- 3.12. The team will retain interim clinician support until the service is staffed permanently.

## 4. Inclusion Criteria

- 4.1. The service is open to any child in care or on the edge of care, the latter will more likely be adolescents. The following criteria will be applied, however, there will always be some flexibility.
- 4.2. Any child or young person who is or has experience of care, is at risk of placement breakdown, family placement breakdown or multiple placement breakdown.
- 4.3. Carers of children experiencing care to develop and support their therapeutic parenting skills and maintain placement stability.
- 4.4. Consultation to Social work teams and the network around the child where they are experiencing challenges supporting the child and carers.

## 5. Exclusion Criteria

- 5.1. Any child with a moderate to severe mental health need that meets the threshold for secondary mental health services.
- 5.2. Any child with mild to profound autism, learning disabilities or behaviour that challenges.
- 5.3. In such cases the Clinical team will review needs with the network to refer the child or young person to the appropriate mental health service.

## 6. Delivery

- 6.1. The Clinical Team will employ a developmental trauma informed framework to deliver support to the network and child.
- 6.2. Developmental trauma is an umbrella concept for a spectrum of specific difficulties, resulting from the impact on the brain development, due to early trauma. This complex spectrum of difficulties means that parenting and educating a child with developmental trauma is commonly challenging and fraught.
- 6.3. It is a complex, fluid spectrum which the child can move along as life and family stressors and protective factors change. Quite often the child will have secondary difficulties that require intervention as Care experienced children are commonly anxious, sad, show ADHD, disordered eating, self-harm and autistic traits (this list is not exhaustive.)
- 6.4. This spectrum of difficulties tends to ripple into the systems surrounding the child or young person. This is characterised by high levels of distress and emotional dysregulation in the child and network supporting the child.

## 7. Model

- 7.1. The delivery model focusses on therapeutic approaches that are relational, that build strong relationships around the child, increase family regulation, parental sensitivity, attunement, and attachment security to their primary carers, as well as stronger relationships between siblings, and wider family network.
- 7.2. Due to the spectrum of need within Developmental trauma, and how the impacts ripple out into the systems surrounding the child, there is no one approach which will be sufficient to meet the complexity of need.
- 7.3. Therefore, the model of care will be multi-modal, to meet this complexity of need.
- 7.4. The team will therefore consist of specialist clinicians that will offer Systemic Family Therapy, Dyadic informed Developmental Therapy (DDP), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, all of which seek to develop adaptive coping strategies, improve emotional dysregulation in the child and support therapeutic responses aligned to the child's needs from the professional network around their care.
- 7.5. The team will also offer Integrative and Person-Centred Therapy, Play Therapy, Mental Health Nursing Interventions – aligned to the stepped care approach for children and young people, psychoeducation as well as sensory integration work through an occupational therapist.
- 7.6. Early trauma can have a significant impact upon the development of the nervous system, which can then have lasting effects on sensory processing and attachments across the lifespan. Sensory integration helps the child or young person by exposing them to sensory stimulation in a structured, repetitive way. The theory behind it is that over time, the brain will adapt and allow the child to process and react to sensations more efficiently.

## 8. Conclusion

- 8.1. We are confident that the revised clinical offer to foster carers, children and young people within Cambridgeshire will contribute to stability of placements and support the emotional and wellbeing of children. Our next steps are to continue to recruit to current vacant posts as well as those currently covered by interim clinicians. Our operating procedures/framework has been shared with the wider service has been received positively.

## 9. Significant Implications

None identified

- 9.1. Resource Implications; N/A

- 9.2. Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications: N/A
- 9.3. Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications; N/A
- 9.4. Equality and Diversity Implications; N/A
- 9.5. Engagement and Communications Implications; N/A
- 9.6. Localism and Local Member Involvement; N/A
- 9.7. Public Health Implications; N/A

## 10. Source documents

- 10.1. Source Documents – None.

## Corporate Parenting Performance Report May 2021

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 14 July 2021

From: Nicola Curley Assistant Director Early Help and Children's Social Care

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: This report is submitted to each formal and informal Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee as part of the standing work programme item in relation to performance.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a. Note the content of the report
- b. Raise any questions with the lead officer

### Officer contact:

Name: Myra O'Farrell  
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### Member contact:

Name: Councillor Anna Bradnam  
Post: Chair  
Email: [anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report is presented to each formal and informal meeting of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee to update members on the numbers of children in care, care leavers and their placements.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Corporate Parenting Sub Committee in respect of the numbers of children and young people being looked after by the Council as of 31 May 2021 by providing a breakdown of the types of placements in which they are living. The report also provides information about the age, gender and ethnicity of those children and young people. Details are provided in Appendix 1.

## 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 As of 31 May 2021, there were 664 children in care they were in the following placements:
- 242 children were placed with in house foster carers providing placements for the Local Authority.
  - 212 children were in foster care and placed with independent fostering agencies (IFAs). The agencies work with the Local Authority on a contractual basis to provide foster placements.
  - 83 post 16 year olds were living on their own, with support (independent living) but still classed as Children in Care with an allocated social worker.
  - 16 children have a court order (Placement Order) that allows them to live with their prospective adoptive parents whilst they are awaiting a final adoption order.
  - 41 children were placed with family or friends' carers (connected person). These carers are formally assessed in the same way that our other in-house carers are assessed and are presented to the Fostering Panel for approval in the same way. They are paid the same level of allowances as other in house foster carers.
  - 9 children were living with their parents but considered as looked after children because they are subject to a full care orders, so the local authority still shares parental responsibility with the birth parent. Placements with parents are often made pending a plan for reunification with the parent and in some cases will result in an application for care orders to be discharged.
  - 54 children and young people (without disabilities) were placed in residential care which provides intensive support in a residential setting. These placements are most usually made when it is clear that foster care is not able to meet the child or young person's needs. Residential care is nearly always accessed by adolescents and only very rarely used for younger children.

### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 3.1 A good quality of life for everyone  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.2 Thriving places for people to live  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050  
There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 4. Significant Implications

- 4.1 Resource Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.7 Public Health Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.

## 5. Source documents

5.1 None

## 6. Appendices

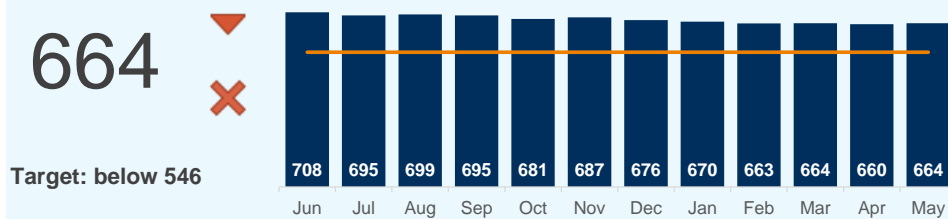
6.1 Appendix 1: Corporate Parenting Scorecard May 2021

An accessible version of the appendix is available on request from Myra.O'Farrell@peterborough.gov.uk or on 01733 864391.

# CCC Corporate Parenting Scorecard

### HEADLINE FIGURES

Number of children in care (CiC) on the last day of the month

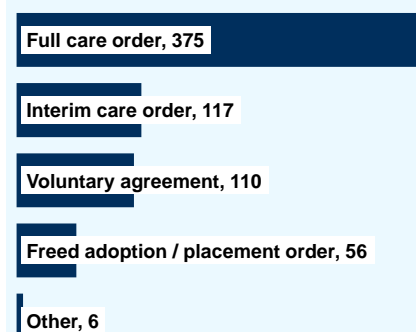


### Staffing

	Establishment	Average Caseload	Change*	Performance
Family Safeguarding Qualified social workers	45	18	▼	-
Children in Care Qualified social workers	24	22	▲	-
Leaving Care Personal Advisors	13	19	▲	-
Independent Reviewing Officers	12	60	▲	-

\*Change in average caseload is from January 2021 compared to November 2020.

### Legal status of children in care



### Length of time children have been in care



### Key

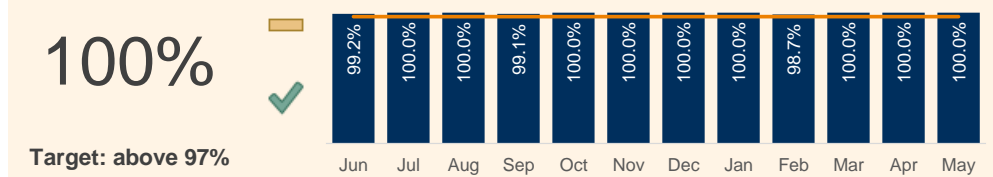
Change since previous month  
Performance against target

▲ Improved  
▼ Deteriorated  
▲ Strong  
▼ Poor

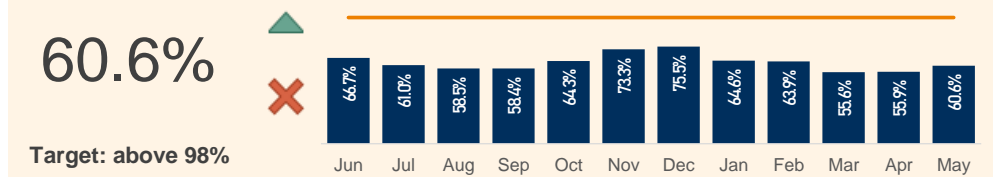
Stayed the same  
Acceptable

### SERVICE STANDARDS

% of CiC reviews which were held on time (year to date, and during each month)

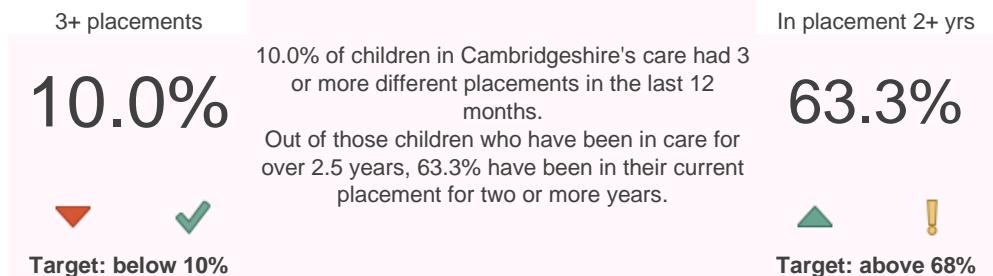


% of CiC statutory visits which were carried out on time (year to date, and during each month)

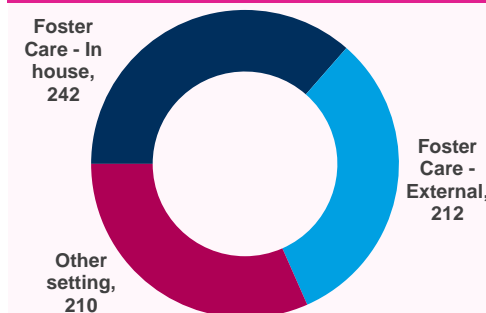


### PLACEMENTS

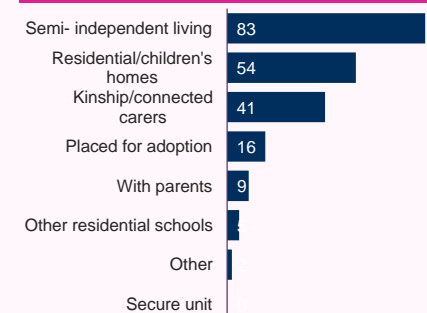
Placement stability



### Type of placement of children in care



### Other settings: breakdown



### EDUCATION

#### Children in care by age group

16+; 197

10 to 15; 275

5 to 9; 113

1 to 4; 61

Under 1; 30

#### % of school-aged children in care who have a PEP in place

98.5%

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) was in place for 393 children in Y1 - Y11, who were in the care of CCC and on the role of the virtual school at the end of the Autumn Term 2020.

#### % of school-aged children in care in good or outstanding schools

72.9%

72.9% of Cambridgeshire's children in care are taught in good or outstanding schools, as at the end of December 2020.

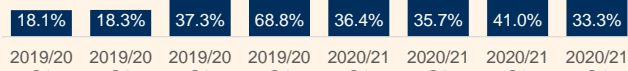
As of December 2020

### HEALTH - SERVICE STANDARDS

#### Children in care whose initial health assessment was completed on time (Year to date and by quarter)

36.8%

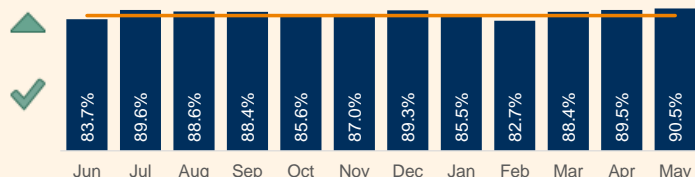
Target: above 95%



#### Children in care whose annual health assessment was completed on time

90.5%

Target: above 86%



#### Children in care whose annual dental examination was completed on time

30.5%

Target: above 82%



### MISSING

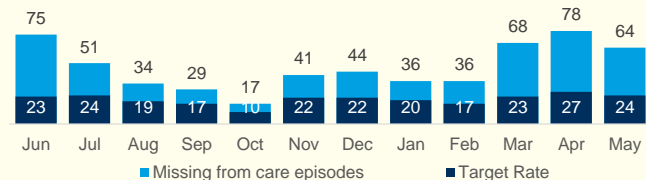
#### Children in care who go missing (with number of episodes)

24

Children

64

Episodes

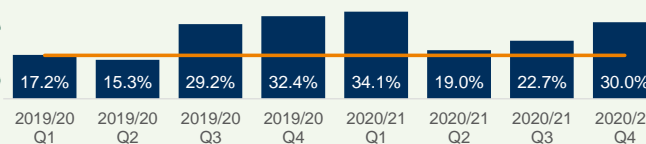


### ADOPTION

#### % of children leaving care who are adopted (Year to date and by quarter)

26.3%

Target: above 17%



#### Timeliness of adoption process

Time to placement

467

Target: below 430

For children adopted during the past 12 months, an average of 467 days passed between the child entering care and them moving into their adoptive placement. An average of 212.1 days passed between their placement order being granted and approval of a match with their adopters.

Time to match

212

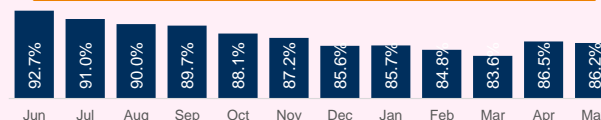
Target: below 185

### CARE LEAVERS

#### Care Leavers who have a pathway plan in place

86.2%

Target: above 95%



19 to 21 year old care leavers who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)

19 out of 49

19 to 21 year old care leavers who live in unsuitable accommodation

6 out of 49



## Health Data Update July 2021

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021

From: Designated Nurse Children in Care

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: For key decisions Democratic Services can provide this reference

Key decision: Yes / No (See Appendix 1 for Guidance)

Outcome: To improve health and well-being, and health outcomes for children in care by ensuring adequate assessment of health and suitable health provision, and addressing areas where there may be a lack of provision or improvements required.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a) Notes the content of the report
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officers

Officer contact:  
Name: Catherine York  
Post: Designated Nurse Children in Care  
Email: [catherineyork@nhs.net](mailto:catherineyork@nhs.net)

Member contact:  
Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam  
Post: Chair, Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee  
Email: [anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

# 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the performance of Initial Health Assessments, Review Health Assessments and the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire. The report provides an overview of the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) activities to ensure robust monitoring and quality assurance systems are in place to meet the health needs of Cambridgeshire's children in care.

# 2. Background

- 2.1 The COVID-19 pandemic had an unprecedented impact on the provision of health services, including the physical and mental health care provided to children in care. Throughout this time, the Designated Nurse and Doctor for Children in Care worked with commissioners and providers across social care and health to ensure the provision, quality and timeliness of the required health services including statutory health assessments and completion of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.

# 3. Main Issues

## 3.1 Initial and Review Health Assessments

In line with national guidance our providers moved to undertaking virtual health assessments, providing face-to-face clinic appointments for children and young people when clinically indicated, and referral(s) to other services continue to be made as appropriate. Feedback received from carers and young people indicates that the experience of having a virtual assessment was broadly welcomed, and the compliance rate for assessments was good.

Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) for those aged 0-3 years returned to face-to-face appointments from the end of April 2021, and from the beginning of June 2021 all IHAs returned to face-to-face appointments. Virtual IHAs remain an option if the agreed criteria are met, but it is believed that this will be for a small number of young people.

Initial Health Assessment performance rate requires improvement so partnership work to achieve this has commenced. The Designated Nurse met with the Heads of Service, and then the Designated Nurse and the Children in Care Team Lead joined the Safeguarding Team Manager's meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> May to discuss the issues and identify solutions. Partners are working collaboratively to make the necessary improvements which include improvement in timeliness of submission of the required referral and consent forms by social workers, and more timely and detailed reporting of data by the Children in Care Team Lead. Improvements in performance have commenced as detailed in the table below:

### 3.1.1 Initial Health Assessment Performance Data

Children and young people placed in Cambridgeshire				
Month	Number of children new to care	IHAs completed within 20 working days of coming into care		IHAs completed/booked for completion within 15 working days of receipt of referral and consent by the health team
March 2021	6	4		5
April 2021	12	8		12
May 2021	13	9		10
Children and young people placed outside of Cambridgeshire				
March 2021	0	0		0
April 2021	2	0		0
May 2021	3	2		2
Overall totals				
Number	36	23		29
Percentage	100%	64%	68%	80%
		Including declines	Excluding declines	Including declines
				84%
				Excluding declines

\*accessible format table available on request from [Catherine York](#)

### 3.1.2 Review Health Assessment (RHA) Performance Data

RHA performance was maintained throughout the last year, with performance being between **88 - 100% each month**.

Current provision continues to be via video consultation unless clinically indicated when a face-to-face consultation is undertaken. Occasionally a telephone consultation is being used at the request of the young person. For those who decline their consultation a questionnaire is provided which enables a Health Action Plan to be created (in line with the Pathway).

The recovery plan for RHAs is in place, with the service planning to offer a hybrid model, which will include face to face appointments and virtual appointments for those young people who prefer this option and who meet the agreed criteria which are based on the learning from the past 15 months; this will be monitored by the Lead Nurse and Designated Nurse, as will the quality of the assessments. The CICC are to be included in discussions and decisions about the future offer.

## 3.2 Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ)

The Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire, commonly known as the SDQ, is a short behavioural screening questionnaire. There are three versions of the SDQ: the parent/carer, the teacher, and the self-report scale (completed by 11-16 year olds), which provide the potential for triangulation of information about a child across the different versions. These questionnaires are used alongside health assessments to support the assessment of

emotional health and wellbeing. Scoring categories are: Low need (0-13), Some need (14-16) and High need (17-40).

The health team in Cambridgeshire undertake the SDQ process on behalf of Social Care. Pre COVID-19, the Questionnaires were given out at health assessments as this was found to provide a higher percentage of returns and provide a score reflective of the child's / young person's well-being at the time of the health assessment and therefore supporting the holistic assessment. Since the pandemic and commencement of virtual health assessments, the questionnaire is emailed to the carer around 3 weeks prior to the assessment with a request for the carer to complete the questionnaire and return to the health team before the health assessment; this process is the same for children/young people placed in and out of Cambridgeshire. This change in process has resulted in far fewer SDQs being completed, with 2020/21 having only a **27% completion rate**.

The lower SDQ return rate was discussed at the Partnership meeting, and it was agreed that the health team would notify social care within the Health Action Plan that the SDQ is outstanding, and that the Social Worker would follow this up with the carer and once completed, send the SDQ to the health team for scoring, recording and consideration to inform ongoing assessment and planning for the child/young person; unfortunately this saw only a small increase in the completion rate.

In order to ensure that a robust process that works across partner organisations is in place to support improved performance, a sub-group of the Health of Children in Care Partnership Group was formed and developed an SDQ Pathway. The Pathway which includes health, social care and education colleagues, was launched at the end of May 2021. Additionally, the Designated Nurse and the Children in Care Team Lead have a meeting scheduled to review performance, ensure the SDQ Pathway is adhered to, and ultimately improve the SDQ completion rate. Progress will be monitored monthly by the Designated Nurse, and then reviewed by the group in September as part of the pathway review.

## 4. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 4.1 A good quality of life for everyone
- 4.2 Thriving places for people to live
- 4.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

## 5. Significant Implications

- 5.1 Resource Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 5.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications N/A
- 5.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications N/A

- 5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications N/A
- 5.5 Engagement and Communications Implications N/A
- 5.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement N/A
- 5.7 Public Health Implications N/A

## 6. Source documents

- 6.1 None



## Update on Regional Adoption Agency (RAA)

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 14 July 2021

From: Head of the Regional Adoption Agency – Joanne Banks

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: For Members to be briefed on the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA).

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a. Note the content of the report, and
- b. Raise any questions with the lead officer

### Officer contact:

Name: Ricky Cooper  
Post: Assistant Director Fostering, RAA and Specialist Young People's Service  
Email: [ricky.cooper@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:ricky.cooper@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 699609

### Member contact:

Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam  
Post: Chair  
Email: [anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an outline of the structure of the Regional Adoption Agency and the progress around the staffing issues. There is also information on the work undertaken in the first six months since the Agency started on 1 December 2020.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Regional Adoption Agency

On the 1 December 2020 the Regional Adoption Agency for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough went live with Cambridgeshire being the host. Even though we may only be 6 months in there have been a lot of positive achievements that can be built on.

The aims of the service have continued to be:

- Have a key role in the early permanency planning agenda within both Peterborough in Cambridgeshire and be instrumental in the care planning for children who have a plan for adoption
- Recruit adopters who can meet the needs of the children with adoption plans (specifically older children, sibling groups and children with additional vulnerabilities)
- Offer high quality support to adopters, birth parents and carers and all parties involved with the child
- Ensure a culture of continuous challenge, innovation and improvement
- Provide an accessible service to all parties affected by adoption and special guardianship (adopters, adoptees, birth families, foster carers, guardians and children in their care)
- Develop a coherent and robust 'Local Offer' that provides the right support, at the right time to Adopters and Special Guardians

## 3. Main Issues

- 3.1 The current structure for the Regional Adoption Agency has continued in line with the proposals in the consultation where there are four distinct teams dedicated to delivering key focussed activity.

### Recruitment and Assessment:

- 3.2 This service area recruits, assesses and supports prospective adopters to meet the needs of children waiting in each authority in line with their developed recruitment and marketing plan. In addition, the service undertakes annual reviews as required, assesses and support parents or partners and family relatives who wish to adopt a child on a non-agency basis and foster carers who are seeking to adopt the child in their care. The team have three senior Practitioners and six Social Workers.
- 3.3 Having seen the success of the Recruitment Officer role in Fostering we have appointed successfully to a post in the Regional Adoption Agency. Lottie Ettling took up the post in April 2021 and takes a lead on the new enquiries whilst working with Tony Darnell, Communications Manager Fostering & Adoption, to develop promotional and marketing

material to enable a further increase in those coming forward to adopt, in particular for the harder to place children.

- 3.4 We have seen a consistent increase in enquires (155 enquiries in 6 months) and applications to adopt (24 in 6 months) leading to a high number of adopters in assessment (49 as of the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021). This gives us the opportunity to increase the number of children for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to be placed with adopters within the Regional Adoption Agency. The key moving forward is to understand the profile of the children needing adoptive parents so we can adapt the profile of the adopters being assessed.

### Family Finding

- 3.5 This part of the service continues to take the lead responsibility for all aspects of the linking and matching of children with adopters. The service also provides support and advice to the child's Social Worker about the adoption process, coordinates other family finding activities and crucially increasing the opportunities for children to be adopted who are older, have additional vulnerabilities or within sibling groups. Tracking children with a potential or actual adoption plan and reporting on adoption timescales against national and local indicators also takes place within this part of the service. They are tracking 111 children with 59 children having an active family finding plan for adoption. Over the 6 months they have supported the presentation of 24 children to be presented at Adoption and Permanence Panel that have been subsequently successfully matched with their adoptive parents.

### Adoption and Special Guardianship Support

- 3.6 This service area undertakes assessments of Adopter and Special Guardian support needs or commissions these if required, undertaking applications to the Adoption Support Fund for children. They also take lead responsibility for reviewing financial allowance provided to families to inform what future allowances should be provided. The core offer also includes: social events for children and young people, social/training events for adoptive parents, advice and signposting for adoptive families, independent support and advice to birth relatives, counselling and information to adopted adults post 18 years and independent support to birth parents including a letter box exchange service.

### Panel and Quality Assurance

- 3.7 This service area administers and supports Adoption Panels which recommend the approval of prospective adopters, matches between children and adopters and provides professional advice on best practice and regulations to the Agency Decision Makers within both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. The Agency Advisor plays a key role in maintaining a high standard of practice and performance through the quality assurance of all services areas within the Regional Adoption Agency. The panel have remained a very active part of the Regional Adoption Agency having had 14 panels sit in the first 6 months in which they have heard 13 Adopter Approval Applications and 17 applications to match children with their adoptive parents. There have been positive steps towards joining Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption Panels together. The Regional Adoption Agency currently has 3 Panel Chairs and 1 vice chair with a broad range of panel members that has supported the continued success in approving adopters and adoptive matches. There is an awareness of the need to recruit new members to panel and particular focus on

social workers. We are pleased that we have recruited one additional panel member who is planning to start to sit on panel in August 2021. Following the retirement of the Agency Advisor, Andy Cussell, attempts were made to recruit a permanent Agency Advisor. Unfortunately, we have been unsuccessful however the Acting Head of the Regional Adoption Agency is temporarily fulfilling this role whilst continued attempts are made to secure a permanent person into post.

## Management Team

- 3.8 We have now successfully recruited to all management posts within the Regional Adoption Agency with Ricky Cooper taking the Assistant Director post to develop the strategic vision. We have appointed an interim to the Head of the Regional Adoption on an acting up basis with Joanne Banks having recently moved into post on 10 June 2021. We have been successful in appointing a permanent Team Manager to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Team in which Kelly Johnson took up this post on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021. More recently we have also been able to appoint the Team Managers for the Recruitment and Assessment Team as well as the Family Finding Team on an acting up basis. Christine Clipston for the Recruitment and Assessment Team and Kat Heath for the Family Finding Team who will both take up these posts on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021. I would like to welcome all of the new Team Managers who will support the evolution and delivery of the Regional Adoption Agency.

## Performance

- 3.9 Over the past 6 months there have positive indicators with 155 enquiries to adopt and with minimal marketing so there is a sense that with targeted marketing we should see this increase. We have had 24 applications to be assessed as adoptive parents so we currently have 49 adopters being assessed. In conjunction with this the agency has successfully approved 16 applications to adopt at panel so there are positive indicators that the Regional Adoption Agency will continue to grow the pool of adoptive parents.
- 3.10 The family finding team are currently tracking 111 children with 59 having an active plan for adoption. 23 children have been placed in adoptive placements and 26 Adoption Orders were granted.
- 3.11 There has already been some initial evaluation of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough approaches to adoption who both have 'Good' services and joining together of practice and processes to work towards an outstanding service. The new management team will come together to develop a clear strategic vision and plan for the Regional Adoption Agency for the coming 6 months.

## 4. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 4.1 A good quality of life for everyone  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.2 Thriving places for people to live  
There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children  
There are no significant implications within this category.

4.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050  
There are no significant implications within this category.

## 5. Significant Implications

### 5.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 5.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 5.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 5.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 5.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

### 5.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

## 5. Source documents

It is a legal requirement for the following to be completed by the report author.

### 5.1 None



## Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Workshop and Training Plan 2021

Each committee at the County Council has its own training plan to help its members learn more about the business that the Committee covers. Each training session is listed and a record is kept of which members of the committee attend.

Subject	Desired learning outcome	Priority	Date	Responsibility	Format	Audience	Attendance	% of elected members attending
Member Induction Programme: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee	To brief new and returning Members and Substitute Members on the responsibilities of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee	High	Monday 12 July 12.00-2.00pm	Nicola Curley/ Myra O'Farrell	Teams meeting	Members and Substitute Members of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee		
Member Induction Programme: Safeguarding	To brief on Members on safeguarding issues.	High	TBA	Charlotte Black/ Lou Williams		All Members		

Members are asked to review the training sessions below which were requested previously by the Sub-Committee, confirm whether these are required and prioritise them if so:

1. Care leavers: A Members' Seminar to brief Members on the Council's Local Offer for young people leaving care and the activity within the service ensuring young people leaving care are accessing education employment and training and appropriate accommodation.
2. Children in Care returning to live with their birth families: The Specialist Support Service to deliver training on the work they do to reunify children with their birth families where it is safe to do so. This training will include an overview of interim research findings on the Council's activity in this area which has been commissioned through Cambridge University. Open to members of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee and subs.

## Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Agenda Plan

### Notes

The definition of a key decision is set out in the Council's Constitution in Part 2, Article 12.

\* indicates items expected to be recommended for determination by full Council.

+ indicates items expected to be confidential, which would exclude the press and public.

The following are standing agenda items which are considered at every Committee meeting:

- Minutes of previous meeting and Action Log
- Workshop and Training Plan
- Agenda Plan

### Summary

The agenda plan shows the dates and times of future meetings and what reports will be considered.

## Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Public Meeting

### Meeting Theme: Placement

Date: 14.07.21	Agenda item	Lead Officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda dispatch date
	1. Notification of the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee for 2021/22	Democratic Services	Not applicable	25/06/2021	06/07/2021
	2. Participation Report	S Chandoo/ Participation	Not applicable		
	3. Report from Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association	Foster Carers/ F van den Hout	Not applicable		

Date: 14.07.21	Agenda item	Lead Officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda dispatch date
	4. Annual Fostering Service Report and Annual Adoption report	F van den Hout	Not applicable		
	5. Independent Reviewing Officer's Annual Report 2020-21	O Grant	Not applicable		
	6. Clinical Services	A Bennett	Not applicable		
	7. Corporate Parenting Performance Report	M O'Farrell	Not applicable		
	8. Health Data Update	C York	Not applicable		
	9. Regional Adoption Agency Update	R Cooper	Not applicable		

Informal Meeting (Not open to the public)

Meeting Theme: Education

Date: 08.09.21	Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda dispatch date
	1. Update from Children in Care Council (CiCC)	Sika Smith/ Participation			n/a
	2. You Asked We Did	Sika Smith/ Participation			
	3. Case Study – Virtual School	Claire Hiorns			
	4. Members Issues	Members			
	5. Work Programme	Nicola Curley			
	6. Performance Report Circulated as a Briefing note. Any issues can be raised in the Members Issues section of the agenda.	Nicola Curley	Not applicable		

Date: 08.09.21	Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda dispatch date

## Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Public Meeting

### Meeting Theme: Education

Date: 17.11.21	Agenda item:	Lead Officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda dispatch date
	1. Participation Report	S Smith	Not applicable		08.11.21
	2. Report from Cambridgeshire Foster Carer's Association	Foster Carers' Association/ F van den Hout	Not applicable		
	3. Virtual School Report	C Hiorns	Not applicable		
	4. Annual Report to CYP Committee	N Curley/ M O'Farrell	Not applicable		
	5. Work Programme	N Curley	Not applicable		
	6. Corporate Parenting Scorecard	N Curley/ M O'Farrell	Not applicable		
	7. Health data report	C York	Not applicable		

## Informal Meeting (Not open to the public)

### Meeting Theme: Health

Date: 12.01.22	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda dispatch date
	1. Update from Children in Care Council (CiCC)	S Smith	Not applicable		
	2. You Asked We Did	S Smith	Not applicable		
	3. Case Study – Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire	C York	Not applicable		
	4. Members Issues	All Members	Not applicable		
	5. Performance Report Circulated as a Briefing note. Any issues can be raised in the Members Issues section of the agenda	N Curley/ M O'Farrell	Not applicable		

## Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Public Meeting

### Meeting Theme: Health

Date: 23.03.22	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda despatch date
	1. Participation Report	S Chandoo	Not applicable		15.03.22
	2. Report from Cambridgeshire Foster Carers' Association	Foster Carers/F van den Hout	Not applicable		
	3. Annual Health Report	C York	Not applicable		
	4. Work Programme	Nicola Curley	Not applicable		
	5. Corporate Parenting Scorecard	Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell	Not applicable		

### Informal Meeting (Not open to the public)

Meeting Theme: TBC

Date: 18.05.22		Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports	Agenda despatch date

