



Rutland County Council

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Meeting: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

Date and Time: Thursday, 23 November 2017 at 7.00 pm

Venue: COUNCIL CHAMBER, CATMOSE

Clerk to the Panel: Corporate Support 01572 720976
email: corporatesupport@rutland.gov.uk

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A G E N D A

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1) RECORD OF MEETING

To confirm the record of the meeting of the People (Children) Scrutiny Panel held on 07 September 2017 (previously circulated).

2) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Regulations, Members are invited to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have and the nature of those interests in respect of items on this Agenda and/or indicate if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to them.

3) PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

To receive any petitions, deputations and questions received from Members of the Public in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rule 217.

The total time allowed for this item shall be 30 minutes. Petitions, declarations and questions shall be dealt with in the order in which they are received. Questions may also be submitted at short notice by giving a written copy to the Committee Administrator 15 minutes before the start of the meeting.

The total time allowed for questions at short notice is 15 minutes out of the total

time of 30 minutes. Any petitions, deputations and questions that have been submitted with prior formal notice will take precedence over questions submitted at short notice. Any questions that are not considered within the time limit shall receive a written response after the meeting and be the subject of a report to the next meeting.

4) QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

To consider any questions with notice from Members received in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rules No 219 and No. 219A.

5) NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

To consider any Notices of Motion from Members submitted in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rule No 220.

6) CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE PANEL FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION

To consider any matter referred to the Panel for a decision in relation to call in of a decision in accordance with Procedure Rule 206.

SCRUTINY

Scrutiny provides the appropriate mechanism and forum for members to ask any questions which relate to this Scrutiny Panel's remit and items on this Agenda.

7) QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT 2017-18 5 min

To receive Report No. 193/2017 from the Chief Executive.
(Report circulated under separate cover)

8) QUARTER 2 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT 2017-18 5 min

To receive Report No. 191/2017 from the Director for Resources.
(Report circulated under separate cover)

9) FEES AND CHARGES 2018/19 5 min

To receive Report No. 213/2017 from the Director for Resources.
(Report circulated under separate cover)

- The above report is due to be presented at Cabinet on 19 December 2017.
- Scrutiny has requested this report so that it can review and comment on

proposals before the Cabinet meeting so as to inform the decision-making process.

- Scrutiny is asked to consider the report and provide feedback to the Portfolio Holder and Director.

- 10) NEXT STEPS 6 MONTHLY UPDATE - STORYBOARD** **35 min**
To receive Report No. 205/2017 from the Director for People.
(Pages 5 - 28)
- 11) LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2017** **20 min**
To receive Report No. 204/2017 from the Director for People.
(Pages 29 - 70)
- 12) LOCAL OFFER TO CARE LEAVERS 2017 - 2020** **15 min**
To receive Report No. 203/2017 from the Director for People.
(Pages 71 - 88)

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

The following items are for information only and will not be discussed in the meeting.

Feedback for the following reports can be sent to Rebecca Wilshire, Head of Children Social Care (rwilshire@rutland.gov.uk).

- 13) ANNUAL ADOPTION REPORT 2016-2017**
To receive Report No. 190/2017 from the Director for People.
(Pages 89 - 134)
- 14) AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017**
To receive Report No. 207/2017 from the Director for People.
(Pages 135 - 164)
- 15) CHILD PROTECTION ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017**
To receive Report No. 208/2017 from the Director for People.
(Pages 165 - 192)

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND TOPICS

- 16) SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2017/18 & REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN** **5 min**
To consider Scrutiny issues to review.
Copies of the Forward Plan will be available at the meeting.

17) ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

5 min

To receive any other items of urgent business which have been previously notified to the person presiding

18) DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

5 min

Scrutiny Budget Meeting:
Wednesday 24 January 2018 at 7pm (TBC)
Thursday 25 January 2018 at 7pm (TBC)

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TO: ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

Mr N Begy (Chairman)

Mr E Baines

Mr B Callaghan

Mr M Oxley

Mr K Bool

Mr J Dale

Mrs L Stephenson

TO: CO-OPTED MEMBERS OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

Mr A Menzies

Mrs L Youngman

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

23 November 2017

NEXT STEPS 6 MONTHLY UPATE – STORYBOARD

Report of the Director for People

Strategic Aim:	Reaching our Full Potential	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr R Foster, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People (Safeguarding)	
Contact Officer(s):	Tim O'Neill, Director for People and Deputy Chief Executive	01572 758402 toneill@rutland.gov.uk
	Rebecca Wilshire, Head of Children Social Care	01572 758258 rwilshire@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	N/A	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel:

1. Notes the content of the report
2. Comment and feedback on progress made

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of the report (Story Boards) is to demonstrate what we have done since our Ofsted inspection
- 1.2. The report is intended to give a one page profile for each of the 17 recommendations within the Ofsted report
- 1.3. Storyboards have been used which is in line with our Signs of Safety Methodology used within Children’s Services
- 1.4. Each story board cover 1)where we were, 2) what we have done, 3) what difference have we made and 4) what else we need to do
- 1.5. Six months on from Ofsted (publishing date), we want to demonstrate the work undertaken

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 Children Services, had their Ofsted Inspection in November 16, the findings and the report were published on 13 February 2017
- 2.2 The story boards evidence what has been done with regards to each of the 17 recommendations made by Ofsted
- 2.3 Each story board shows what we have done, the difference it has made and what else we need to do
- 2.4 The Ofsted Action Plan is almost complete and majority of the area met, we just need to continue to embed and monitor to ensure changes are sustained.
- 2.5 The 17 recommendations were:
 - 2.5.1 Ensure that senior leaders have access to comprehensive, high-quality performance management information in order to understand frontline practice and fully hold senior managers to account.
 - 2.5.2 Ensure that all staff receive regular good-quality supervision, with an appropriate balance of critical challenge, case direction and opportunities for reflection.
 - 2.5.3 Ensure that assessments and plans actively consider all risks to children, including emerging and new risks as circumstances for children change. Improve social workers' understanding of neglect and the impact on children.
 - 2.5.4 Improve the quality of assessments and plans across the service by ensuring that they are informed by children's wishes and feelings, involve the views of men and fathers, consider diversity and historical factors, which are specific to individual children's needs, and have explicit outcome-based actions.
 - 2.5.5 Ensure that personal education plans are completed for all children looked after, and that they include a thorough assessment of needs and set targets for improvement.
 - 2.5.6 Review and strengthen management and panel oversight of the fostering service to ensure that there is effective challenge of the quality of practice. In particular, ensure that foster carer assessments and investigations of allegations and concerns are thorough and robust, contain all relevant information and are completed in a timely way.
 - 2.5.7 Ensure that the corporate parenting board is effective in driving improvements and monitoring outcomes for children looked after and care leavers. Increase opportunities for children looked after and care leavers to participate in decision-making and service development and for their achievements to be celebrated.
 - 2.5.8 Improve social work practice by ensuring that social workers visit children regularly, in line with the children's plans or statutory guidance, and take

account of their feelings and wishes when making plans for the children. The frequency and quality of visits should be monitored by managers.

- 2.5.9 Increase the effectiveness of management oversight across the service, ensuring that the rationale for decisions and actions set is clear. Managers, child protection chairs and IROs in core groups, reviews and key meetings should actively challenge drift and delay, and support the progress of plans and the reduction of risk.
- 2.5.10 When children go missing, ensure that social workers and managers fully understand the risks and vulnerabilities of the young people and take appropriate action. Ensure that the information gathered during return-home interviews is used to reduce risk and inform individual planning and broader service needs.
- 2.5.11 Develop and implement a robust sufficiency strategy, which informs the provision of services and, in particular, the recruitment of foster carers, for children looked after now and in the future.
- 2.5.12 Review the service level agreement with the neighbouring local authority, which delivers adoption services on behalf of Rutland County Council. Ensure that services are sufficient and of good quality to meet all needs of children, families and adopters prior to and beyond the making of an adoption order.
- 2.5.13 Ensure that birth parents have access to support from someone independent of their child's social worker when adoption is being considered.
- 2.5.14 Ensure that all options for achieving permanence for children are given proper consideration, including, when appropriate, parallel planning and foster to adopt.
- 2.5.15 Improve the quality of information which children have access to, both now and in the future, such as child permanence reports and later-life letters. Ensure that all children in permanent placements receive life-story work.
- 2.5.16 Ensure that children have timely access to health services, including specialist provision.
- 2.5.17 Increase the extent to which workers consider the long-term arrangements when placing children looked after with foster carers, so that more are able to stay put when they become 18 years old.

3 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. Post Ofsted we have worked hard to ensure all areas identified and all recommendations have been fully explored and improved upon
- 3.2. We have worked hard to progress the service and we are proud of the achievements so far

- 3.3. All recommendations made by Ofsted have been completed and we are ensuring they are all embedded to ensure changes are sustained
- 3.4. We still have a number of areas to further develop and improve and all of these areas continue to be our focus
- 3.5. As Ofsted found, we continue to be confident that no children are being left at risk and we are confident that we are building a service which is based on practice being good

4 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 4.1 No Background Papers

5 APPENDICES

- 5.1 Appendix 1 - Six Monthly Update – Story Boards

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.

THE STORY SO FAR

STORY BOARDS: February – September 2017

Children's Services – Ofsted Action Plan 6 Month Update

6

Our Story Boards are intended to give a 'one page profile' of each recommendation of our journey to get to 'Good' or better since our Ofsted Inspection.

RCC had an inspection of their Children Services in November 2016; the report was published in February 2017, whereby 17 recommendations were made to enable RCC Childrens Services to get to 'Good'. These 17 recommendations were put into a Next Steps Action plan which took full effect from March 2017.

These Story Boards are intended to demonstrate progress made over the last 6 months and done in line with our Signs of Safety methodology and approach.

Each story board considers: a) where we were; b) what we have done c); what difference have we made; and d) what else do we need to do.

The following story boards cover the 17 recommendations outlined in the Ofsted Report, which are:

Recommendation 1 – Ensure that senior leaders have access to comprehensive, high-quality performance management information in order to understand frontline practice and fully hold senior managers to account.

Recommendation 2 - Ensure that all staff receive regular good-quality supervision, with an appropriate balance of critical challenge, case direction and opportunities for reflection.

Recommendation 3 - Ensure that assessments and plans actively consider all risks to children, including emerging and new risks as circumstances for children change. Improve social workers' understanding of neglect and the impact on children.

Recommendation 4 - Improve the quality of assessments and plans across the service by ensuring that they are informed by children's wishes and feelings, involve the views of men and fathers, consider diversity and historical factors, which are specific to individual children's needs, and have explicit outcome-based actions.

Recommendation 5 - Ensure that personal education plans are completed for all children looked after, and that they include a thorough assessment of needs and set targets for improvement.

Recommendation 6 - Review and strengthen management and panel oversight of the fostering service to ensure that there is effective challenge of the quality of practice. In particular, ensure that foster carer assessments and investigations of allegations and concerns are thorough and robust, contain all relevant information and are completed in a timely way.

Recommendation 7 – Ensure that the corporate parenting board is effective in driving improvements and monitoring outcomes for children looked after and care leavers. Increase opportunities for children looked after and care leavers to participate in decision-making and service development and for their achievements to be celebrated.

Recommendation 8 - Improve social work practice by ensuring that social workers visit children regularly, in line with the children's plans or statutory guidance, and take account of their feelings and wishes when making plans for the children. The frequency and quality of visits should be monitored by managers.

Recommendation 9 – Increase the effectiveness of management oversight across the service, ensuring that the rationale for decisions and actions set is clear. Managers, child protection chairs and IROs in core groups, reviews and key meetings should actively challenge drift and delay, and support the progress of plans and the reduction of risk.

Recommendation 10 – When children go missing, ensure that social workers and managers fully understand the risks and vulnerabilities of the young people and take appropriate action. Ensure that the information gathered during return-home interviews is used to reduce risk and inform individual planning and broader service needs

Recommendation 11 - Develop and implement a robust sufficiency strategy, which informs the provision of services and, in particular, the recruitment of foster carers, for children looked after now and in the future.

Recommendation 12 – Review the service level agreement with the neighbouring local authority, which delivers adoption services on behalf of Rutland County Council. Ensure that services are sufficient and of good quality to meet all needs of children, families and adopters prior to and beyond the making of an adoption order.

Recommendation 13 – Ensure that birth parents have access to support from someone independent of their child’s social worker when adoption is being considered.

Recommendation 14 - Ensure that all options for achieving permanence for children are given proper consideration, including, when appropriate, parallel planning and foster to adopt.

Recommendation 15 - Improve the quality of information which children have access to, both now and in the future, such as child permanence reports and later-life letters. Ensure that all children in permanent placements receive life-story work.

Recommendation 16 - Ensure that children have timely access to health services, including specialist provision.

Recommendation 17 – Increase the extent to which workers consider the long-term arrangements when placing children looked after with foster carers, so that more are able to stay put when they become 18 years old.

Recommendation 1: Ensure that senior leaders have access to comprehensive, high-quality performance management information in order to understand frontline practice and fully hold senior managers to account.

Where were we?

- Separate 'scorecards' for children's social care and Early Help produced in spreadsheets
- Several members of staff manually inputting data to Excel spreadsheets
- Data quality issues arising from manually processes and consequent limitations to data quality assurance
- Inconsistent provision of data to People Performance Board for Member oversight
- Little added value/interpretation of performance information presented at Corporate Parenting Board
- Strategic assessments – e.g. CLA Sufficiency Statement, JSNA – provide only basic, descriptive information

What have we done?

- Conducted Business Intelligence (BI) Service Review outlining plans for developing BI, including deletion one role post & creating two new roles
- Introduced new BI Tool for information dashboards (Tableau)
- Revised process of 'exception reporting' to support Member/Senior management oversight of performance management information
- Created 2pg summary of performance for Children's Social Care and for Early Help, supported by access to more detailed information, inc. interactive dashboards
- Re-configured LiquidLogic case management system to align closer to working practices
- Interactive dashboards created for Team/Service Managers
- Produced new CLA & CL Sufficiency Statement, incorporating financial data
- Instigated review of performance measures used by Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

What else do we need to do?

- Continue to reconfigure LiquidLogic & implement upgrades to maximise system use (ongoing)
- Implement interactive dashboards for children's social care for Team/Service Managers & Heads of Service, with twice-weekly updates (Oct 2017)
- All members of BI Team to have Tableau Desktop software (Oct 2017)
- Improve attendance at Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) – service manager to attend with BI Manager (Nov 2017)
- Complete implementation of BI service review and ensure new posts – BI Officer & System Support Officer – are appointed (Jan 2018)
- Implement EHCP module in LiquidLogic to shift the capture of information for SEND children from Word/PDFs to an electronic case management system (Jan 2018)
- Expand development of information dashboards on core business areas (ongoing)

What difference have we made?

- Increased automation of data provision for performance score-cards, with better quality assurance of data and improved data quality
- Reduced burden on Team Managers/Service Managers to provide/input performance data
- Monthly QA & Performance meetings for children's services are data-driven, with oversight of all data and exception/highlight report produced by BI Team
- New information dashboards used at Corporate Parenting Board
- Improved Member oversight of exception reports at People Performance Board
- Improved staff compliance with LiquidLogic case management system

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 2: Ensure that all staff receive regular good-quality supervision, with an appropriate balance of critical challenge, case direction and opportunities for reflection.

Where were we?

- Oversight was previously inconsistent and case discussions not always captured.
- Case supervision not always held in a timely manner
- Little focus on performance, development and wellbeing of individual workers
- There was a lack of healthy challenge and little time to reflect
- Delay and drift in decision making process apparent
- Lack of long term view and poor permanence planning for some children
- Lack of scrutiny of decision making for children from senior managers
- Professional curiosity and critical thinking not evidenced in supervision both for case supervision and worker supervision



What have we done?

- There is now a clear supervision policy for all workers in Children's Social Care
- Supervision has been split into 2:
 - 1:2:1 supervision for workers with the focus on wellbeing, development and personal performance
 - Group supervision held in each team with every child discussed at least once every 4 weeks
- Group supervision roll out workshop in children's conference, further workshop planned for Autumn 17
- TM attends every group supervision (held weekly), there is space for reflection within the group, actions are SMART and checked each time with manager's scrutiny and case direction
- TAs have had training on how to capture group supervision as it happens
- Group supervision commenced in PAPS March 17, RAIS April 17 and FACLS in July 17 (commenced within month of permanent TMs joining LA)
- Manager dashboard under development to give clear data on supervision for children, data now held in each SC team on 1:2:1 and case supervision to ensure discussion every 4 weeks



What else do we need to do?

- Embed Group supervision within FACLS and Early Help/SEND service
- Currently 1:2:1 support being offered to TMs for Group Supervision with a view to a workshop being held in September 17 for TMs
- Reviews – Q1 analysis followed by action planning; 6 month review of process in all SC teams due in September 2017; full review of RCC supervision process in Nov 17
- Group supervision template in LL to be created as pre-populating form to improve efficacy around time spent recording
- Manager dashboard to be rolled out to all Managers in Social Care
- Act on outcomes of PDPs and Health Check surveys



What difference have we made?

- Group supervision now embedded within RAIS and PAPS, and has commenced in FACLS
- TMs now know when 1:2:1 and case supervision held
- TAs attend allowing them to feel more equipped to support the team with phone calls and queries
- Provided opportunity for critical challenge and clear manager's direction for each child
- Drift/delay has significantly reduced and workers feeling more empowered to make decisions/recommendations for the families they work with
- Shared learning within supervision is becoming embedded and social workers learning from critical friend approach with healthy challenge present in meetings
- Supervision is recorded live onto Liquid Logic at time of session preventing delay and allowing for clear oversight/direction for workers
- 1:2:1 supervisions taking place regularly, allowing managers to effectively manage performance and team wellbeing

13

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 3: Ensure that assessments and plans actively consider all risks to children, including emerging and new risks as circumstances for children change. Improve social workers' understanding of neglect and the impact on children.

Where were we?

- Assessments had not been completed for a number of children within the past 12 months, some outstanding for more than 2 years
- No performance data to identify which children required an assessment
- No clear use of neglect toolkit with little evidence within assessments/recommendations that toolkit was part of decision making
- Signs of Safety not embedded within assessments
- Assessments lacked analysis and use of research



What have we done?

- Scrutinised data to ensure all children without an assessment in the past 12 months identified
- Assessments coming due are routinely opened and process to identified all those requiring assessments now in place
- Ongoing workshops to explore with staff the processes within RCC and to address issues of quality
- Specific assessment writing workshop with Royal Literacy Fund (RLF) arranged for 20.09.17
- Further RLF workshops on quality of analysis and recording planned
- Risk Assessment tool designed and available to front line practitioner to support practice
- Neglect toolkit training rolled out to all staff with workshops and 1:2:1 supporting use
- Recording guidance setting out expectations within assessments
- TMs actively comment on and monitor quality of assessments



What else do we need to do?

- Ensure that all children have an updated assessment every 6 months
- Performance data to be improved to negate need for manual list of when assessments last completed for each child
- Research in Practice permissions now identified, these will be used to give SWs info/research for use in assessments
- Put in place rolling in house training programme for assessments to ensure that SWs build on their knowledge
- Review the use and impact of the neglect tool on practice decisions



What difference have we made?

- SOS now used routinely in assessments
- All children identified as having no assessments within 1 year had assessments immediately opened and these are now all completed
- Assessments beginning to be completed on 6 monthly basis
- We can now identify who has had an assessment and when
- Quality of assessments has improved with clear direction and monitoring of QA from TMs
- Better analysis and recommendations from assessments with agreement from managers

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of assessments and plans across the service by ensuring that they are informed by children’s wishes and feelings, involve the views of men and fathers, consider diversity and historical factors, which are specific to individual children’s needs, and have explicit outcome-based actions.

Where were we?

- Fathers and other significant adults were not included in assessments
- Child’s voice not always clear in assessments, plans and recording
- SMART plans not present
- Progression of plans not where it should be, resulting in delay for some children
- Child in Need meetings/plans not completed in a timely way following referral
- Permanence assessments such as sibling assessment and CPRs not routinely completed
- Assessments not consistently analytical, clear with SOS analysis and recommendations
- Social Care Teams struggled to maintain relationships with family members – good focus on child but lack of focus on family as a whole, particularly in proceedings and when CLA



What have we done?

- Clear case summary for every child including a pen picture, the plan and the child’s voice
- All children open for more than 20 days have a Child in Need Meeting and a CIN Plan
- Workshops commenced regarding process to prevent delay with specific workshop on plan progression through SMART Planning
- Genogram workshop completed regarding minimum three generation and exploring all family systems
- Workshop – ‘whole family approach’ completed
- Further workshop more specific to fathers and paternal family written and planned for delivery in Autumn 17 (delay due to Cambs CC not being able to provide course)
- Workshop planned for social workers on writing assessments in an analytical way, writing court statements and case recording – provided by the Royal Literacy Fund
- LL Chronology training completed and further practitioner training planned for autumn
- SOS and danger statement training and workshop completed. Further explored in Group supervision on weekly basis



What else do we need to do?

- Planned training to go ahead and continued focus in group supervision, practice workshops and team meetings on whole family approach, providing challenge regarding inclusion of family members within assessments
- Rolling training programme for new workers to be finalised to ensure all have same level of training – to be developed from current workshops into induction training
- Further workshop planned regarding social difference for SWs but also for foster carers to enable them to also contribute to the child’s assessment
- Further embed permanence process and complete work on quality of assessments



What difference have we made?

- Assessment quality has improved, group supervision now includes danger statement for every child
- Genograms routinely completed in social care for every child with 3 generations and relational risk/strengths also recorded on genograms
- All significant adults within the life of a child considered within assessments
- Consideration of permanence for CLA now based on info regarding siblings/important adults via sibling assessment and CPR
- Family systems and diversity/social difference considered in group supervision for every child

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 5: Ensure that personal education plans are completed for all children looked after, and that they include a thorough assessment of needs and set targets for improvement.

Where were we?

- PEPs were being completed but process muddled
- Quality of PEPs, particularly goals and outcomes was poor
- PEPs not completed in timescale
- Participation of the child in their PEP was inconsistent
- Lack of scrutiny of PEPs from managers



What have we done?

- Monthly meeting between Head of Virtual School and Team Manager for Protection and Permanence Team to address issues of quality and other difficulties as they arise
- New process for PEPs created to ensure clarity and timeliness
- Virtual Head attends ARC/CLA Panel to provide feedback on performance, quality and address any unresolved issues; Virtual Head also involved in planning process for CLA who are in residential/special school
- PEPs tracked to ensure they are completed in timescale, and to ensure they are uploaded to Liquid Logic in a timely way
- All EHC Plans uploaded to Liquid Logic and consultation between education, SEND service and Social Care when EHC assessment/plan in place



What else do we need to do?

- 🔗 Ensure all PEPs are uploaded to Liquid Logic in a timely way
- Continued work on quality between Virtual Head and TM PAPS
- Deliver planned joint workshop between Social Care/SEND and Virtual Head for social workers
- Continue to work towards 100% of PEPs completed in timescale



What difference have we made?

- Quality is an improving picture
- Plans for children and young people are clearer, SMARTer and outcomes/goals agreed with all participating in the meeting
- Children and young people regularly attend their PEP and are part of the planning process, being encouraged to achieve and to aim for their goals
- Whilst attainment is not always meeting age expectations, strong evidence of progress for all our CLA
- Most reviews now held 3 times a year and most are held in timescale

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 6: Review and strengthen management and panel oversight of the fostering service to ensure that there is effective challenge of the quality of practice. In particular, ensure that foster carer assessments and investigations of allegations and concerns are thorough and robust, contain all relevant information and are completed in a timely way.

Where were we?

- Only acting TM in post in fostering
- Poor quality recording
- Records stored on paper, in electronic folders and on Liquid Logic
- Investigation of allegations/concerns for carers were not impartial and records of investigations poor
- Lack of service manager oversight
- Poor recruitment of foster carers – no new enquiries for 6 months
- Assessment of new recruits not timely or robust when enquiries were made
- No in-house training of new recruits and no clear recruitment strategy
- No formal permanence process and no forum for snr manager scrutiny
- Children not matched to placements, short or long term



What have we done?

- Permanent TM in post in fostering team with extensive permanence experience to provide robust oversight of assessments
- Paper files have ceased and all recording should now be added to Liquid Logic – work also nearly complete on getting assessments on to Liquid Logic to allow proper performance reporting
- ARC/CLA Panel set up with attendance from HoS, SM and TMs
- Permanence process including ADM ratification of all care plans created to ensure long term plans considered at early stage and that children in long term care are matched to their carers
- All children matched with carers even if not long term and retrospective work completed for those already placed
- Recruitment strategy to increase number of in-house foster carers
- Work with fostering Panel to ensure clear route of escalation to Service Manager and ADM
- Developed the LADO protocol & a dedicated LADO role within the Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Service to ensure that any allegations are investigated by an independent & not by their employer



What else do we need to do?

- Permanence process to be further embedded and DMT to sign off formal written process (likely to be by end of Sept 2017)
- Fostering sufficiency strategy to be signed off by DMT to ensure robust service moving forward with long term CLA with in-house carers wherever possible
- Evaluation process to be embedded with the Fostering Panel to ensure that changes in challenge and escalation route are successful
- Deliver LADO training to raise awareness of the role & procedures when allegations are made or concerns are raised regarding foster carers



What difference have we made?

- Assessments are better quality, Fostering Panel providing robust challenge on process and quality of assessments and reviews
- ADM now ratifies every care plan for children looked after
- Recording for FACL Service in one place on LL allowing for performance recording and clear audit trail
- Issues are escalated in timely way through regular meetings between Fostering Panel and Service Manager/Head of Service
- All areas of audit addressed in full
- New foster carer assessments are underway following successful recruitment campaign which is ongoing
- All CLA will be matched with long term carers by the end of Oct 2017

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 7: Ensure that the corporate parenting board is effective in driving improvements and monitoring outcomes for children looked after and care leavers. Increase opportunities for children looked after and care leavers to participate in decision-making and service development and for their achievements to be celebrated.

Where were we?

- Young people did not attend the CPB
- CPB was very process driven and not capturing the child voice
- Children looked after and care leavers were not fully participating in service developments
- CPB had a good cohort of professionals attending
- CPB is chaired by our Children's Portfolio holder
- The agenda and minutes were very formal
- Lack of progression of plans for children causing delay/drift at times
- We had a good feedback tool in place
- Pledges written by children looked after and care leavers



What have we done?

- We have written guidance and terms of references for the CPB to strengthen it
- We ensure a 'young person' friendly agenda is completed
- Young people are invited to attend although they choice not to
- Where no attendance their voice is captured and heard at the board
- We share young people achievements, some through video, some through pictures and some through one page profiles
- We have altered the agenda to make it flow
- We have introduces data section in the board which enables CPB to offer scrutiny around children looked after data
- We ensure any new policies and procedure are shared with children looked after and care leavers to ensure they input in the sider system
- We have also improved the scorecard around gather feedback and adhering to pledges
- Foster carer representation is now present



What else do we need to do?

- Continue to develop the board and encourage children, young people to attend
- Consider a young person CPB which then feeds in the professional one – this will give the young person experience of such meeting as well as them having influence e over the service
- Continue to gather feedback which can evidence our progress and evidence that as a LA/Service we are meeting the needs of every child looked after and every care leaver
- consider the role of our trained Advocates to support CLA voice



What difference have we made?

- Signs of safety is feature in CPB
- Children looked after and care leavers have a voice in the board even if they don't attend
- Managers have ensures the CPB relates to 'real' cases and sharing of personal stories makes our children be present (even when they are not)
- The board now offers scrutiny and challenges our work even further
- There feels a real sense of ownership
- Foster carers are more updated from the board due to representation
- Feedback Survey has been further developed to ensure we gather the right information

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 8: Improve social work practice by ensuring that social workers visit children regularly, in line with the children's plans or statutory guidance, and take account of their feelings and wishes when making plans for the children. The frequency and quality of visits should be monitored by managers.

Where were we?

- Visits to children were not being completed within statutory timescales
- Quality of visits variable, children's voice often missing from recording
- Visits lacked direction/purpose and life story work not completed
- Poor quality planning with children and their families, not focused on specific need or the wishes and feelings of the child
- Lack of progression of plans for children causing delay/drift at times



What have we done?

- Clear recording expectations setting out what must be included in a visit and what must be recorded
- All visits are now tracked using Liquid Logic with alerts going to Team Manager and worker if visits are becoming due
- Tracker of when last visit completed to aid planning/cover when worker not available
- Clear case summary recorded for every child giving a pen picture of the child/yp using Signs of Safety framework to explore what their current needs and plans are.
- Workshops completed on SMART Planning and on progressing plans for children
- Practice Workshops held fortnightly addressing themes identified in Audits and through group supervision such as genograms and chronologies
- Group supervision in place addressing progression of plan and work with children with a focus on the voice of the child
- RLF workshops planned for assessments, case recording and court statements



What else do we need to do?

- Finish performance work so performance team able to provide data on when last visit was completed and next visit due
- Recording Expectations to be reviewed/updated by Service Manager to further improve timescales and quality of recording and to ensure forms match Liquid Logic
- Continue Practice Workshops with workers from Social Care and Early Help
- Further work on Genograms to ensure every child has a 3 generational genogram
- Continue focus on quality of case recording and practice workshops
- Review and get agreement from children and parents with disabilities about the threshold for support, hold appropriate cases in Early help



What difference have we made?

- Signs of safety now used in all visits
- Visits now completed in statutory timescales unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Visit recording is much more consistent with the voice of the child always recorded
- SWs now much clearer on what a SMART plan should look like and how to progress planning for children
- Plans now consider the voice of the child
- TMs provide regular monitoring of quality of case notes, further QA work done when auditing
- Case summaries provide clear picture of the child, their wishes and their needs 'at a glance'
- Genograms are generally involving 3 generations and include relational lines
- Following RLF workshops minute taking has improved

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 9: Increase the effectiveness of management oversight across the service, ensuring that the rationale for decisions and actions set is clear. Managers, child protection chairs and IROs in core groups, reviews and key meetings should actively challenge drift and delay, and support the progress of plans and the reduction of risk.

Where were we?

- The children & families that we were working with did not receive the service that they needed & deserved.
- Communication was poor as were the relationships between many parents, Social Workers and their Managers due to decisions being made in isolation & participation being limited prior to the introduction of the Signs of Safety model in the first quarter of 2016.
- Many children's plans were drifting.
- Risk was managed but often prevented the plan from progressing due to the restrictions imposed.
- The options available to children were not fully explored at the earliest opportunity & were not actively challenged & reviewed. Practice was process driven.

What have we done?

- Undertaken regular case audits to ensure that there is evidence of management oversight & timely decision making.
- CSC Managers are providing regular 1:1 & group supervision which is reflective & solution focussed which ensures that decisions are made & actions are agreed
- Multi-agency ARC/CLA panel meetings are being held to enable managers to monitor complex & high risk cases. The options available are being explored, creativity is encouraged & additional resources are provided if needed. The SQAS are invited to attend as panel members where their role as a 'critical friend' is seen to be of value.
- Cases that have been escalated are monitored by SQAS & discussed with the Service Manager & Head of Service if there are ongoing concerns.
- Case Learning Reviews/ Serious Case Reviews has developed thinking & practice
- We know how the outcomes have been achieved as we have made clear decisions that can be evidenced – we have reviewed our previous decisions & have made changes that have had positive outcomes for children & their families.

What else do we need to do?

- Embrace & embed the learning from Serious Case Reviews & Case Learning Reviews.
- Use the Signs of Safety model/methodology throughout the Management & organisational structure which will enable us to formulate plans that are solution focussed & strengths based.
- Understand risk by recognising that it evolves & does not remain static – make timely & clear decisions & ensure that agreed actions are completed.
- Change direction when progress is not being made – review the options & share responsibility.
- Evidence how innovative practice & effective leadership can result in positive outcomes for the children & families that we work with.

What difference have we made?

- Children have plans that they are happier with & they feel that their 'Voices' are being heard. They understand the decisions that have been made & why which has enabled them to feel safe & to invest in their plan.
- Practice has become open, reflective & solution focussed, thus preventing professional paralysis (doubt & insecurity).
- Scrutiny & challenge is embraced & has resulted in a culture of learning being developed. Positive language has been embraced along with other healthy behaviour that has enabled Managers, Child Protection Chairs & IROs to understand each other's roles & responsibilities, but most importantly to recognise the benefits in regards to risk management & decision making.
- Improved the quality of children's lives now which will improve their future outcomes.

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 10: When children go missing, ensure that social workers and managers fully understand the risks and vulnerabilities of the young people and take appropriate action. Ensure that the information gathered during return-home interviews is used to reduce risk and inform individual planning and broader service needs.

Where were we?

- Children who went missing were generally receiving a missing from home interview but there was little coordination between the EH worker completing the interview and Children's Social Care
- No clear lead within Social Care for Missing and for CSE
- No tracker of those who go missing to identify any themes/issues that required escalation or further exploration
- Little awareness of national learning for missing and CSE
- Little engagement with multi-agency safeguarding hub



What have we done?

- Social Care TM appointed as Social Care lead for both missing and CSE
- Tracker now in place and regular reporting of figures made to LSCB and explored with the police
- Daily discussions with multi-agency safeguarding hub in respect of missing and CSE
- Exploitation working group held regularly involving local partners
- Social Care Lead attends JAG – local community response
- Closer working with the local academies
- SCR meetings with managers to explore national learning
- Quarterly meeting between RCC and YOS to identify early those at risk of going missing and or exploitation
- Return home interviews shared with TM/CP Chair/IRO
- Group supervision now embedded



What else do we need to do?

- Trigger plans to be reviewed and embedded for any child/yp known to go missing
- Further work with the Safeguarding Hub to develop training for staff, parents, carers
- Now local processes established, work to continue on wider (LLR) and regional Missing and CSE protocols
- Ensure CSE tool updated when work on this completed regionally, with training provided for staff



What difference have we made?

- Regular meetings between Missing from home interviewer and Social Care Lead
- Exploitation working group and JAG ensures there is a clear strategy and local partnership response to missing and exploitation
- Closer working with schools and clear guidance produced for schools, ensures any issues are identified and addressed much earlier and school understand their responsibilities
- Absent/missing episodes and emerging themes identified early and tracked
- Positive working relationship with police with trigger plans now in place for those missing
- Closer working relationship with YOS increasing referrals at early stage from RCC
- Return home interviews completed within timescale by someone independent of social care
- Concerns for those on CP Plan or CLA identified at an early stage
- All children considered in group supervision

21

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 11: Develop and implement a robust sufficiency strategy, which informs the provision of services and, in particular, the recruitment of foster carers, for children looked after now and in the future.

Where were we?

- No recruitment within 6 months leading to inspection
- Poor quality assessments and little challenge from Fostering Panel
- Long standing complaints linking to allegations made against carers that had not been presented to Panel
- Most new CLA moving to IFAs due to lack of in-house provision
- No clear strategy to address the requirements of Staying Put service and supported lodgings within RCC



What have we done?

- Fostering Sufficiency Strategy identified
- Recruitment Strategy identified and underway to increase in house carers including use of radio, social media, local paper and news magazine, stalls at local events and stalls in the town during fostering fortnight
- Training and assessment for new recruits identified
- Addressed and re-presented at Panel the three carers who had outstanding allegations against them
- Model of fees for foster carers explored and new strategy presented to senior leadership team
- Permanent TM recruited to continue strategy and provide consistent drive to progress and improve service
- Training and development for current carers evaluated and overhauled



What else do we need to do?

- Sufficiency statement and fees structure to be approved
- Continue roll out of training programme for carers and complete work on on-line training
- Evaluate training programme
- Evaluate recruitment strategy and plan for next year
- Continue work on supported lodgings
- Work with regional groups to ensure provision in house for UASC and hard to place children/YP



What difference have we made?

- Clear plan over next year to increase number of carers, improve take up of in-house placements and create staying put and supported lodgings capacity within the county
- New foster carers have begun training and assessment, with quarterly training now booked as new recruits continue to come forward
- Trial of supported lodgings completed
- All three complaints addressed and represented at Panel, all being re-approved with RCC at this time
- Service Manager and Team Manager working with wider (LLR) and regional groups to improve sufficiency with new recruits with focus on hard to place and UASC
- Sufficiency statement and new strategy regarding fees awaiting approval to improve outcomes for children and YP in area
- In-house training programme in place for all carers, with mandatory rolling programme and focus on specialist training where appropriate
- Online training in process of being made available to carers and RLF training programme on logs underway

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 12: Review the service level agreement with the neighbouring local authority, which delivers adoption services on behalf of Rutland County Council. Ensure that services are sufficient and of good quality to meet all needs of children, families and adopters prior to and beyond the making of an adoption order.

Where were we?

- Annual report included limited information about Rutland children with no focus on their needs
- Adoption placements not completed as quickly as should be
- Poor communication between Leicestershire and RCC
- Difficulties in progressing family finding/matching
- No concurrent (foster to adopt) placements made available for RCC children
- Lack of permanence planning causing delay



What have we done?

- SLA reviewed and updated
- Involvement with Regional group to explore new expectations for adoption assessment and family finding
- Regular challenge sessions set up with Leicestershire managers to address any issues arising in a timely way
- Regular meetings between TM in Rutland and managers in Leicestershire set up to improve communication
- New adoption tracker completed
- Annual report completed which focuses solely on Rutland children
- Permanence Advisory Group set up to provide scrutiny to long term plans prior to completion of Proceedings
- ADMs of Leicestershire and Rutland working together to ensure scrutiny of decision making and matching
- Meeting between SM and Head Judge of Cambridgeshire to explore adoption work moving to Cambs where Proceedings completed



What else do we need to do?

- Embed Permanence process including Advisory Group
- Evaluate regional work regarding new adoption agency
- Continue Managers meetings between RCC and Leicestershire to address issues as they arise
- Pursue Adoption work being completed in P'boro Court where Proceedings conducted



What difference have we made?

- As part of permanence work care plans reviewed for older children with adoption recommended where appropriate
- Care plans have full scrutiny prior to completion of Final evidence/care plan
- Recent adoptions completed in more timely manner, figures for past year are much improved
- Relationship between Leicestershire and Rutland managers much improved with issues being addressed in a more timely manner
- HoS and TM involved in regional work to ensure Rutland children have a voice
- All children awaiting adoption matched, placed or completed

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 13: Ensure that birth parents have access to support from someone independent of their child's social worker when adoption is being considered.

Where were we?

- Poor support provided to birth parents where adoption being considered as a care plan
- No IRO in post to provide oversight where adoption is the plan
- Lack of consideration of birth family when Children will become long term looked after



What have we done?

- New structure in Children's Social Care implemented
- Children in Care workers identified
- Focus on relationship based working within the authority
- Renewed focus on working with birth families for social workers
- Improved focus on life story work
- IRO appointed and in post who is able to provide additional oversight and relationship with parents
- Life Story work training provided to support work with birth parents



What else do we need to do?

- Continue focus on work with birth families through practice workshops and other training
- Work with children in care workers to ensure they prioritise work with birth families where adoption or long term foster care is the plan for their children



What difference have we made?

- IRO is able to provide additional oversight and relationship with parents
- Children in care workers have relationship with birth parents through supervision of contact, enables them to provide more positive support to birth parents
- Life Story work now completed in more timely manner and involves birth parents to support them through the adoption process
- Improved engagement with birth parents from social workers
- Children in Care workers have specific time available to focus on birth parents

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 14: Ensure that all options for achieving permanence for children are given proper consideration, including, when appropriate, parallel planning and foster to adopt.

Where were we?

- No formal permanence process in place
- Children often remaining in placements long term that were never formally matched and were not assessed as permanent placements
- Creative and parallel planning was missing prior to and during proceedings causing delay
- Foster to adopt placements were not available to Rutland children
- ADM ratification of care plans missing for most children in Proceedings/long term looked after



What have we done?

- Formal permanence process now in place including flowcharts
- Care planning discussed/agreed at Permanence Advisory Group – ratified by ADM
- Permanence planning meetings held when child/yp CLA for 3-4 months with ADM ratification due prior to completion of final evidence
- Workshop held to go through process of permanence and further more in depth workshops planned regarding care planning and parallel planning
- Work on adoption module in LL underway
- Meetings held on regular basis with Leicestershire and Rutland Adoption Service managers to address difficulties as they arise
- Matching process in place both for new placements and for long term placements
- ARC/CLA Panel in place to address care planning at an early stage to identify parallel plans
- Practice Consultant employed to complete work with individuals on permanence



What else do we need to do?

- Evaluate and review permanence process as it beds in
- Continue workshops with workers
- Practice Consultant to explore with individuals the quality of assessments such as CPRs, also supporting work on parallel care planning with Social Workers (Consultant is new in post)
- Continue work on Adoption module within LL



What difference have we made?

- Management scrutiny of care plans for looked after children, both long term looked after and those in Proceedings
- Parallel plans for children now completed at early stage with clear course through Proceedings and ratified care plans presented to the Court
- Creative planning for older children who have been long term looked after eg. SGO or Adoption
- Better outcomes for children being placed for adoption – timescales improving from Order to placement
- All placements now matched, long term matching/permanent foster placements are being completed

25

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 15: Improve the quality of information which children have access to, both now and in the future, such as child permanence reports and later-life letters. Ensure that all children in permanent placements receive life-story work.

Where were we?

- Life story work not completed consistently
- Life story work often completed outside of statutory timescales
- Participation of birth parents, foster carers and adopters was inconsistent
- Life story work only completed for adoptions rather than all CLA
- Contact and the relationship between children and their birth family was not being captured in writing or in photos



What have we done?

- All children looked after are now required to have a CPR and remedial permanence work is underway
- CPR quality is under review from TM in FACL and from Practice Consultant
- Life story training completed with social workers and at Children's Conference
- Adoption life story work completed in significantly more timely manner
- Contact workers now capturing relationship between child and birth parents through recording of sessions and photos
- Social Workers receiving support on how to complete later life letters
- Direct work and life story work underway with all long term looked after, including a one page profile of Children Looked After
- Adoption cases now regularly reviewed at ARC/CLA Panel to ensure actions completed
- ADM aware of what life story work is required/outstanding when care plans are sent for ratification



What else do we need to do?

- Continue current push regarding life story work to ensure this becomes a quality positive service provided by Rutland
- Continue teaching with workers regarding CPR quality, development of life story work with long term looked after
- Improve further the timeliness of life story work, moving from statutory expectations to best practice



What difference have we made?

- There is less delay for children where long term care/adoption is the care plan
- Later life letter quality has improved
- Life story books now completed in more timely manner
- Most are completed within statutory timescales
- Contact between children and their birth family is better documented with photos and conversation
- Contact workers feed into the life story book and later life letter
- Foster carers, adopters and birth family more often included in the process of completing the life story book and later life letter
- Children have good records of their life with their birth family

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 16: Ensure that children have timely access to health services, including specialist provision.

Where were we?

- CLA Health Assessments not always completed within timescale – both initial and review
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires not routinely completed (SDQs)
- Provision of health services, particularly Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), not always available in a timely way
- Foster carer 'surgeries' with CAMHS had ceased



What have we done?

- CAMHS surgeries recommenced for foster carers – one per month
- Work completed with health to improve timescales and contracts outside of LLR
- Tracker created to ensure there is clear TM review and senior manager scrutiny of health assessments – this tracker also includes SDQs
- TM attends regular CLA Strategic Health meetings to improve services
- Health professional regularly attends ARC/CLA Panel and Corporate Parenting Board
- Ongoing work with CAMHS and CCG to continue to improve outcomes for children
- Work with Health colleagues to ensure health needs met for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children entering the area
- Regular case level reports received from CAMHS so that the service can monitor the children waiting or in the CAMHS service and ensure appropriate and timely support is in place



What else do we need to do?

- Continue to work on the service provided by CAMHS, ensure working group set up and evaluate whether this is improving services
- Continue work on SDQs to ensure they are completed regularly for children who are long term looked after
- Work with foster carers further to ensure all health needs are met and that these are recorded e.g. Dental and optician appointments
- Continue work on recording immunisations in Liquid Logic



What difference have we made?

- Initial reviews always in timescales for children placed in Rutland or Leicestershire
- Improved timescales for children placed outside of LLR for Initial and Review health assessment
- Review health assessments in timescale for children placed in Rutland and Leicestershire
- SDQs now routinely completed with foster carers and social workers for long term looked after
- Foster carers feel able to have valuable conversations with CAMHS when they are worried about the children they are looking after
- No Children Looked After are waiting for services from specialist provision, with RCC and Health working together creatively to meet the needs of children in our care

27

[Back to index](#)

Recommendation 17: Increase the extent to which workers consider the long-term arrangements when placing children looked after with foster carers, so that more are able to stay put when they become 18 years old.

Where were we?

- Staying put service was only just developing
- Social Workers lacked understanding of Care Leaving service
- Needs Led Assessments not completed for 15 yrs 6 months onwards
- Social Workers not always proactively working with young people over 16 yrs
- There were good outcomes being achieved for care leaver
- Care leaving service considered good in our inspection



What have we done?

- All young people under 18 have social worker proactively working with them
- Most young people have a needs led assessment which is reviewed regularly
- Foster carer recruitment strategy in place to ensure staying put can be offered wherever appropriate
- Work underway to explore supported lodgings for those young people who do not want to consider staying put
- Pathway plans regularly reviewed for most young people
- Permanent TM appointed in Fostering, Adoption and Care Leavers Service to provide clear oversight for all young people over 18 and additional oversight for those young people aged 15 yrs 6 months to 18 yrs
- Permanence process in place to ensure children and young people have long term/permanent carers identified long before their 16th birthday
- Care leaver strategy, pledges and Local Offer completed
- Work has begun on implementing the Social Work Act 2017



What else do we need to do?

- Complete sign off of Care Leavers Local Offer
- Work with Participation Service to develop further the participation of care leavers in service development
- Complete work on Liquid Logic to ensure that pathway plans are authorised by a Team Manager
- Continue work with social workers to improve their knowledge of Care Leavers
- Complete work on implementing Social Work Act 2017 to extend all care leaver services to young adults aged 21 - 25



What difference have we made?

- The needs of young people are identified in a more timely manner through the needs led assessment process
- Clear oversight of Leaving Care service provided now permanent TM in post and FACL and PAPS TMs provide clear oversight for young people, ensuring planning is timely and staying put considered at an early stage
- Work completed with the transition team where young people also have SEND
- Commitment for children and young people is scrutinised by senior management and needs identified in good time to ensure decision making is not delayed
- Young people can now access the care leaver strategy and pledges, they will be able to access the local offer once it has been fully signed off

28

[Back to index](#)

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

23 November 2017

LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Report of the Director for People

Strategic Aim:	Creating a brighter future for all	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr D Wilby, Portfolio Holder for Lifelong Learning	
Contact Officer(s):	Tim O'Neill, Director for People and Deputy Chief Executive	01572 758402 toneill@rutland.gov.uk
	Gill Curtis Head of Learning and Skills	01572 758460 gcurtis@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	N/A	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Comments on the content of the Draft Learning and Skills Service Annual Report 2017.
2. Endorses the intentions within the Annual Report and the Education Improvement Plan 2017-18.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The education function of the local authority has changed in recent years and is now more focused on ensuring there are sufficient high quality school places available and acting as a champion of educational excellence for all. The school improvement function of the Learning and Skills Service is adjusting over time to reflect this change, with the increased expectation for the education sector itself undertaking direct school improvement activity within schools. However, all English local authorities have a series of statutory responsibilities for education which are set out in sections 13 and 13a of the Education Act 1996 and the Childcare Act 2006, and the Learning and Skills Service has a key role in ensuring these responsibilities are met.

- 1.2 This report aims to inform Children and Young Person's Scrutiny Panel of the evaluation of how well the Learning and Skills Service enables the local authority to meet its statutory education function through review against the Ofsted framework which measures effectiveness through the inspection of the Local Authority Arrangements for Supporting School Improvement (LAASSI)
- 1.3 The Learning and Skills Service Annual Review is one of a suite of documents which includes the Education Framework and Education Provider Prioritisation and Entitlement 2017-18 which, together, will contribute to the achievement of key theme 2 (Fair Society) of Rutland's Children, Young People & Families Plan 2016-2019 with particular impact on the intention to reduce the development and achievement gap at all key stages through championing children and young people to meet their full potential.

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The Learning and Skills Service has worked closely with the education sector over the past three years and this collaboration has contributed to the improvements noted in pupil performance and Ofsted outcomes. Whilst the role of the local authority in undertaking school improvement activity is changing, with more focus on sector-led improvement being delivered, the Learning and Skills Team still has a key responsibility for ensuring statutory responsibilities are met and that underperformance is recognised and challenged.
- 2.2 School effectiveness, as measured through Ofsted inspection and pupil performance outcomes, is a key driver within the Learning and Skills Service evaluation processes. However, it must be recognised that the local authority has restricted direct school improvement activity within the current education context of increasing school autonomy and sector-led and driven school improvement. This does not prevent the Learning and Skills Service from setting high expectations and challenging underperformance where this is identified, though where a local authority has concerns about standards or leadership in any academy within its area, the expectation is that these concerns should be brought to the attention of the Department for Education through the Regional Schools Commissioner.
- 2.3 The Education Framework 2017-20 sets out the context for maintaining the collaborative approach with schools and further increasing capacity within the education sector so that these strengths within Rutland schools can be built upon and provision for all children and young people continue to improve. The local authority still has an intrinsic role to play in the sector-led system and should be viewed as a partner within the sector, promoting autonomy whilst ensuring children and young people are able to access high quality education, not just in key academic subjects but through a broad, balanced curriculum.
- 2.4 The Learning and Skills Service Annual Review will be an annually produced document to measure the impact of the Education framework and to ensure that any declining trends or underperformance are recognised and that actions taken to address concerns are effective. The Review utilises the Ofsted school improvement inspection criteria as an external benchmark for evaluating how well the current arrangements for supporting school improvement in Rutland are working and whether they are having sufficient impact on improving standards, progress and attainment and the quality of provision in maintained schools and, where appropriate, other providers.

- 2.5 Through scrutiny of evidence gathered to support evaluation of the four key evaluation areas of focus, the Learning and Skills Service evaluates what is going well and where further improvement is needed in each area. These are summarised in the Education Improvement Plan 2017-18 which will inform the Learning and Skills Service key school improvement activity this academic year. Planned actions may be adjusted as more detailed performance data become available or when national or regional priorities are identified, where these relate to the Rutland context.
- 2.6 Performance data is evaluated and collated as it is released and will be held centrally to enable ready access and available on request. The data referred to in the summary document within the Learning and Skills Service Annual Review is not yet validated and has potential to change. Some performance data has not yet been released nationally and cannot, therefore, be reported on at this time. Updated evaluation of data will be included in revisions of the Annual Review when this data becomes available (some as late as February 2018). Until this time, the report remains in draft format.
- 2.7 The content is open to comment and amendment from stakeholders. The Learning and Skills Service Annual Review has been reviewed at the Education Performance Board on October 4th 2017 and at the Head Teacher and Local Authority Partnership meeting October 9th 2017.
- 2.8 This review document does not stand alone; the wider duties and activity of the Learning and Skills Service are reflected in the Education Framework 2017-20. The LaSSAR is aligned to strategic review and planning of the SEND and Inclusion Service and with Children's Social Care to ensure that the full needs of children and young people in Rutland schools are being met. The LaSSAR does not include detail of action plans for those services but takes account of, and supports, the actions being taken to secure service improvement.
- 2.9 The content of the Learning and Skills Service Annual Review is open to comment and amendment from stakeholders.
- 2.10 The Learning and Skills Service Annual Review 2016-17, along with the Education Improvement Plan 2017-18 have been discussed at the Education Performance Board on October 4th 2017 and at the Head Teacher and Local Authority Partnership meeting October 9th 2017.

3 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Local Authorities are subject to Ofsted Inspections of the Local Authority Arrangements for Supporting School Improvement and the four key areas of focus within this inspection are:
- i) Corporate leadership and strategic planning;
 - ii) Monitoring, challenge, intervention and support;
 - iii) Support and Challenge for leadership and management;
 - iv) Use of resources.
- 3.2 The Learning and Skills Service Annual Review and Education Improvement

Action Plan, alongside the Education Framework 2017-20, set out the strategic context through which the Learning and Skills Service will ensure statutory responsibilities are met and enable the Local Authority to be well placed for inspection or other external review.

4 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Learning and Skills Service has undertaken a thorough review of activities undertaken by the Local Authority to bring about improvement in the performance of schools and early years provision to date and evaluated sustained impact which is reported in the Learning and Skills Service Annual Review 2017.
- 4.2 The Learning and Skills Service Annual Review and associated documents will enable the Local Authority to maintain the successes from previous actions and continue to ensure effective working relationships with schools and providers leading to sustained education improvement.
- 4.3 The Local Authority will be well prepared for inspection and will have a clear evidence impact of impact on education effectiveness and outcomes for children and young people.

5 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1 Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel 7th September 2017 Report No: 164/2017 and appendices
 - 5.1.1 The Education Framework 2017-20
 - 5.1.2 RCC Education Provider Prioritisation and Entitlement 2017-18

6 APPENDICES

- 6.1 Appendix A - The Learning and Skills Service Annual Report 2017 and Education Improvement Plan 2017-18 – DRAFT VERSION

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.



Rutland
County Council

**Learning and Skills
Service
Annual Review
(LaSSAR)
2016-17**

Section	Pages
The Annual Report – process and rationale	3
The Rutland Population	5
Corporate leadership and strategic planning	9
Monitoring, challenge, intervention and support	16
Support and Challenge for leadership and management	22
Use of resources	25
Appendix A. Education Improvement Plan	27
Appendix B. Rutland Performance Summary	29

1. The Annual Report – Process and Rationale

- 1.1 Rutland’s children and young people are entitled to the best possible life chances that we can give them, at every stage from early years through to early adulthood and employment and this is a central expectation within Rutland County Council’s Corporate Plan 2017-20. The Rutland Children’s Trust, through a collaborative partnership approach, supports the development and improvement of services for children and young people which is articulated through the Rutland Children, Young People and Families Plan 2016-2019, and the intent to reduce the development and achievement gap at all key stages, and the championing children and young people to meet their full potential, is a key priority within this plan.
- 1.2 Local Authorities have a series of statutory responsibilities for education which are set out in sections 13 and 13a of the Education Act 1996 and the Childcare Act 2006. However, the education function of the local authority has changed in recent years and is now more focused on ensuring sufficient high quality school places and acting as a champion of educational excellence for all. Local authorities must discharge this duty alongside the context of increasing autonomy and accountability for schools alongside an expectation that improvement should be school led.
- 1.3 The local authority complies with the DfE Schools Causing Concern Guidance which clearly identifies the expectations for local authorities to utilise their powers of intervention to those schools maintained by the local authority which are underperforming; where an academy or free school is of concern to the local authority, this Guidance must be followed. The local authority works constructively with academies in Rutland and is supportive of those maintained schools who wish to convert. Local authority officers work in partnership with the DfE and the Regional Schools Commissioner to minimise the impact of the transition from maintained school to academy status.
- 1.4 Rutland County Council produces a Learning and Skills Service Annual Review (LaSSAR) which reflects Ofsted’s framework for the inspections of local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement. Internally, the LaSSAR acts as both a summary of the previous year’s actions to address previous priorities as well as acting as a blueprint for future plans. This document is established by reviewing and evaluating progress in, and impact of, a range of organisational activities.
- 1.5 The LaSSAR draws together a range of self-evaluation activities including internal and external review, data analysis, feedback and judgements and progress towards addressing local, regional and national priorities. This process enables the Learning and Skills Service to celebrate and build on from successes as well as to identify emerging issues and areas for improvement. It is a key management tool in highlighting and supporting continuous education improvement.
- 1.6 The LaSSAR reports on existing practice, and reflects the evaluation criteria identified of the Handbook for the inspection of local authority arrangements for supporting

school improvement (Sept 2015) in utilising a judgement-rich approach in the areas of:

- corporate leadership and strategic planning;
- monitoring, challenge intervention and support;
- support and challenge for leadership and management;
- use of resources.

- 1.7 Data referred to in this report relates to the academic year 2016/7 unless otherwise stated.
- 1.8 2017-18 areas for action/improvement are collated in the Annual Education Improvement Plan (AEIP) which is located at the end of this report. The AEIP expresses the key actions required for ensuring the service to schools is effective and leading to sustained educational improvements. The impact of the AEIP is monitored through Rutland County Council's Education Performance Board, performance reports to Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel and the Learning and Skills Service routine self-evaluation processes.

2 . The Rutland Context.

- 2.1 Rutland is located in the East Midlands region and is bordered by Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. It sits within the local enterprise partnership (LEP) of Greater Cambridgeshire Greater Peterborough. Rutland is a small rural county; 100% of the population live in 'rural towns' and villages or are dispersed (DEFRA – 2011 Rural-Urban Classification of Local Authorities & other geographies) over some 151.5 square miles (392.5 square km). Rutland has low levels of deprivation and is ranked 301 out of 326 local authorities, based on their 'rank of average score' in the indices of deprivation, where 1 is most deprived. Despite this ranking, small pockets of deprivation do exist within the county – but these are masked by the wider prosperity. The Level of Happiness in Rutland is high, with an average (mean) rating of 7.65/8.0 (ONS Wellbeing Analysis Reference Table 3: Happiness, 2015), which is 0.32 higher than the national average.
- 2.2 Although Rutland enjoys low rates of deprivation, there are nevertheless embedded pockets of relative deprivation within it. In particular, with reference to qualification levels (Census 2011), the wards of Greetham and Oakham North-west demonstrate significantly higher levels of residents with no qualifications than is apparent in other wards. The percentage for those with no qualifications and for those with a highest qualification of level 1 is also greater than in other levels for these wards. The main Rutland Adult Learning and Skills Service (RALSS) accommodation at Oakham Enterprise Park is close to and serves this area of deprivation.
- 2.3 Rutland has a total population of 38,046 (ONS – Lower Super Output Area Population Density, mid-2015) with a small proportion of ethnic minority groups. In 2011, 5.72% of Rutland's resident population declared non-white ethnicity, and 94.3% of the population identified themselves as "White British". This compares with a figure of 95.74% of the population who declared themselves "White British" in 2001 (ONS 2001 census – Ethnic Group (UV09)) and indicates that over the course of the last decade, the proportion of Rutland residents of "non-White" and "White, non-British" ethnic origin has increased. However, on both a regional and national basis, the proportion of non-white ethnic groups is substantially higher, at 24.18% and 29.17% respectively (ONS 2011 Census – KS201EW Ethnic Group).
- 2.4 From those people of non-White British origin, according to the ONS Census the greatest increase has been in the proportion of "White: Other White" residents, from 1.69% in 2001 to 2.1% in 2011, and "Asian or Asian British" residents, up from 0.40% to an estimated 1.9 % over the same period (sources as previously). Thus, the ethnic composition of the county can be seen to be gradually shifting over time. Early indications from the 2011 Census indicate that the ethnic minority population of the county has indeed increased.
- 2.5 The median gross weekly pay for residents both living and working in Rutland, in a full time job, is £490.90, compared with £501.70 for the East Midlands as a whole. In comparison, the average house price recorded in Rutland is significantly higher than that for the east midlands. In August 2016 the average house price in Rutland was £278, 310 compared to £175,610 across the region. When considering data collected

between 1997 and 2013, the ratio of median house price to median earnings, was 10.82 for Rutland – compared to 7.63 for England..

- 2.6 The table below provides an overview of key demographic and economic data as given in the DfE Greater Cambridgeshire Greater Peterborough Area Review which included the local authority areas of Rutland County Council, Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council (August 2017).

	Rutland	Cambridgeshire	Peterborough	Great Britain
Total Population (2016)	38,000	647,200	194,000	63,258,400
Population aged 16 to 64 by %	58.9%	63.8%	63.4%	63.3%
% with Post Level 4 qualifications	39.7%	45.5%	26.1%	37.1%
% qualified to Level 2	75.9%	78.2%	63.7%	73.6%
% of young people achieving 5 Grade A - C	71%	61%	48%	58%
Gross weekly pay of residents	£490.90	£576.00	£466.90	£540.00
Out of work benefit claimants	0.6%	0.7%	1.5%	1.9%
% of main benefit claimants	3.9%	5.4%	9.6%	8.6%

- 2.7 There are currently two MoD bases within Rutland, Kendrew Barracks and St Georges Barracks. The local authority works pro-actively with the MoD to reduce that the impact of transitions in and out of the county on children and young people as much as possible. A structured programme to support the regiment change at Kendrew barracks in the summer of 2017, which included focused visits and multi-agency approaches, was designed and delivered by the Council to minimise impact. Liaison with MoD Welfare Officers enables intelligence to be shared, particularly where they may be special educational needs or other additional needs so that appropriate education and welfare services can be offered. Families are offered further support through RCC's Early Intervention, SEND and Inclusion Service. Education and training for service personnel is provided in house by the arm, but wider training for adult dependants is delivered by Rutland Adult Learning and Skills Service (RALSS) which offers a range of subjects including functional skills and GCSEs. These are scheduled to be delivered on-site for both bases to overcome any potential transport issues and to encourage participation.
- 2.8 Within Rutland there are 17 primary schools located within our two towns and larger villages. Secondary schools are located in Oakham, Uppingham and Great Casterton and in county post-16 education is available in Oakham. Further opportunities for post 16-education exist in neighbouring counties – with Rutland students attending a range of establishments, including those in Melton Mowbray, Corby and Stamford. There are also three independent schools within Rutland – these are located in Oakham and Uppingham. Rutland County Council has been pro-active in reflecting the government drive for greater autonomy within the education sector and has supported the conversion of maintained schools to academy status. Originally, Single Academy Trusts (SATs) were set up but, over time, more schools are joining Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) which is bringing greater stability and consistency to the sector.

As of August 2017, all secondary provision in Rutland is within Academies and only six schools are maintained by the local authority:

Uppingham C of E Primary School

Great Casterton and Empingham C of E Primary Schools (Rutland Primary Partners Federation)

Oakham C of E Primary School (Federated with the Parks)

St Mary and St John C of E (VA) Primary School

Exton & Greetham C of E Primary School. This school has been issued with an Academy Order for 01/11/17 with the intention to join Rutland Learning Trust)

Academy Trust		Schools	Date/ Type of Conversion (Converter/ Sponsored)	
MAT	Brooke Hill Academy Trust	BROOKE HILL Primary	01/09/11	C
		EDITH WESTON Primary	01/02/16	S
MAT	Rutland and Districts Schools' Federation	CATMOSE College	01/04/11	C
		HARINGTON SCHOOL (Post 16 free school)		
		CATMOSE Primary	01/05/12	C
MAT	Rutland Learning Trust	LANGHAM C of E Primary	01/07/13	
		KETTON C of E Primary	01/10/14	C
		ST NICHOLAS (VA) C of E Primary	01/10/14	C
		WHISSENDINE C of E Primary	01/10/14	C
		<i>(EXTON & GREETHAM C of E Primary (VC) Academy Order for 01/11/17)</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>C</i>
MAT	Heighington Millfield	COTTESMORE Primary <i>(Sponsor Transfer to Rutland Learning Trust 01/01/18)</i>	01/10/16	S
MAT	St Gilbert of Sempringham Catholic Multi Academy Trust	ENGLISH MARTYRS Catholic Voluntary Primary	01/05/13	C
MAT	Discovery Schools Academy Trust	LEIGHFIELD Primary	01/04/13	C
MAT	Peterborough Diocese Education Trust	RYHALL C of E Primary (VC)	01/10/14	S
SAT	N/A	UPPINGHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE	01/04/11	C
SAT	N/A	CASTERTON COLLEGE	01/09/11	C

2.9 This trend of academisation will continue and therefore it is essential for Rutland's school improvement strategies to reflect the autonomy of the schools and to work

with the school leaders, including governors, to develop capacity for self-improvement within the education sector. Strong working partnerships have also been established with the Department for Education and the Regional Schools Commissioner's office in sharing intelligence about academies within Rutland and challenging these officers where concerns over the performance of an academy or multi academy trust may have been identified. This is central to RCC's Education Framework 2017-20 which recognises the role of the local authority in influencing and challenging practice as more children are being educated within the academy system as demonstrated in the table below:

DRAFT

School Phase	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Maintained primary	2123	1710	1073	670	656
Maintained secondary	0	0	0	0	0
Academy primary	436	989	1641	2150	2152
Academy secondary	2393	2434	2509	2481	2461

2.10 The LA maintains good contact with secondary providers and collates destination data to monitor potential NEET (not in education, employment or training figures). For 2017:

Total number in the Year 11 fixed cohort educated in Rutland and attending Casterton College, Catmose College, Uppingham County College and Wild's Lodge (independent special school): 480

Offer of Education or Training Conditional start by October: 478

Employment without Training to Level 2: 1

Unable to Contact – Known to have moved away: 1

3. Corporate leadership and strategic planning

Context

3.1 Rutland County Council Corporate Plan 2017-20 sets out the ambition for all children and young people to be able to access high quality education within settings where every individual matters equally and is encouraged to aim high and achieve their very best. The corporate and strategic leadership of education improvement in Rutland is effective as evidenced by the high levels of success within all spheres of the educational process when compared with statistical neighbours' performance and the regional and national averages.

3.2 Elected members and senior officers recognise the importance of raising aspiration and educational achievement, and securing this through good or better educational provision. Rutland Corporate Plan sets out the ambitions and priorities for all partners within Rutland and demonstrates the commitment of members to realise this vision by:

- investing in infrastructure and the provision of services;
- commissioning for outcomes based on our communities' needs;
- promoting community wellbeing and resilience;
- influencing, coordinating and supporting other organisations that contribute to the life of Rutland;
- making the best use of all of our resources.

The Portfolio Holder for Education is pro-active in his role and meets regularly with the Head of Learning and Skills Service to maintain an accurate understanding of education performance in the County and to hold the Learning and Skills Service to account. As a consequence, the Portfolio Holder acts effectively as a pro-active champion for the sustained success of children and young people educated in Rutland.

3.3 The education strategic vision for the authority is articulated through the Learning and Skills Service Education Framework 2017-2020 and is driven through the annual Education Improvement Plan. These documents are produced in consultation with early year's providers, head teachers and the RCC Education Performance Board to ensure engagement. Internally these have been reviewed by the People's Directorate Management Team and the Senior Management Team to provide challenge and rigour. It is through the successful implementation of the Education Framework that the annual education improvement priorities, identified through end of academic year scrutiny of performance data and wider contextual intelligence, will be achieved.

3.4 At the heart of the education framework for Rutland is a commitment to encourage successful autonomous schools and to promote the activity of these and wider partners, including Single and Multi-Academy Trusts and Teaching School Alliances, to secure:

- the best possible levels of attainment and progress;
- outstanding leadership including effective governance;
- safety, fairness and equity for all pupils and staff;

- value for money and the capacity for continuous improvement within a self-improving system.
- 3.5 The local authority delegates resources towards the education sector to secure a robust approach to system leadership and rigorous peer challenge and evaluation. A commissioned programme of professional development for maintained and academy school leaders and governors, starting in January 2018, will bring increased reliability, rigour and consistency to sector-led school improvement and strengthen the capacity of systems leaders to sustain and further extend the improvements made. The quality of teaching in Rutland schools will be improved through a commissioned programme commencing in the autumn term 2017. This supports the implementation of RCC SEND and Inclusion Strategy by utilising peer to peer expertise in adjusting classroom practice so that daily provision is more effective in meeting the additional needs of children in mainstream classrooms. The impact of these programmes will be monitored and evaluated through the Learning and Skills Service which will be held to account by the Education Performance Board.
- 3.6 Consultation to raise awareness of areas of strength and concern based on statistical evidence and the local authority's high quality knowledge and understanding of the context of the county and to subsequently agree our education priorities is undertaken through regular communication with all schools, early years settings and wider partners. This includes, although is not exclusive to the Schools Bulletin, Local Authority and Head Teacher Partnership Briefings, Education Performance Board meeting, Network Meetings, Schools Forum and RCC Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel.
- 3.7 The agreed priorities are then formalised within the Learning and Skills Service Annual Education Improvement Plan; this plan will also reflect the three regional priorities currently identified across the East Midlands:
- to improve outcomes for white British young people eligible for free school meals
 - to improve outcomes for Children Looked After and care leavers
 - to support children and young people at an early stage of learning English as an additional language
- The Education Improvement Plan will also identify actions to address priorities agreed with the Regional Schools Commissioner through the Sub-Regional Partnership Board in early autumn 2017 where these apply to the context of Rutland.
- 3.8 The local authority's accurate knowledge and understanding of the context of the county has been achieved through well-documented monitoring and evaluation of education performance. The nature of this activity takes account of the education profile of Rutland, with the majority of schools having academy status, and promotes the autonomy of schools. An overview of the performance of Rutland schools is maintained through an agreed and transparent process articulated through the Education Improvement Prioritisation and Entitlement document. The Learning and Skills Service meets at least three times per year to undertake a School Quality Assurance (SQA) desktop review of school effectiveness. At this meeting a range of

evidence is considered and a prioritisation agreement made about each primary and secondary maintained school or academy. Schools are informed of the resulting priority status, with opportunities offered to maintained schools and academies to discuss the basis of the outcome and to review further evidence as required. The prioritisation enables the local authority to understand where there is potential vulnerability and to work with maintained schools and offer support to academies to address issues swiftly.

- 3.9 All Early Years providers in the Private, Voluntary and Independent sector and in schools work in close partnership with the local authority Early Years' Service. Inspection outcomes are monitored and systematic review as outlined in the Education Improvement Prioritisation and Entitlement document is undertaken. Local authority support is targeted to early years providers in inverse proportion to success to ensure that resources are used effectively, with the aim for good practice within the sector to be shared and built upon.
- 3.10 Prioritisation is agreed using a 'best-fit' approach. No further action is taken until the school or setting has been notified of any concerns raised. The relevant Diocese Director of Education is also informed, where appropriate, of any concerns so that a co-ordinated approach to support and challenge can be assured. Rutland school prioritisation forms the basis of routine 'Keep in Touch' discussions with Regional Schools Commissioner's Officers and the Regional Ofsted team.
- 3.11 It is a statutory requirement that admissions into primary school at reception year and secondary school at year 7 in September each year are co-ordinated by the local authority. This means that parents of Rutland resident children apply to Rutland County Council for places. Applications for other year groups throughout the academic year, known as in-year admissions, are administered by the admission authority for the preferred school. Academies and voluntary aided schools are their own admission authority and in-year applications for these schools are therefore made directly to the school. Rutland County Council is currently admission authority for five primary schools in the county; this number will decrease as more schools convert to academy status. However the co-ordination function for admissions into primary school at reception year and secondary school at year 7 for all Rutland state-funded schools will be retained. The admissions team works in partnership with the Business Intelligence Team and Property Services to ensure there are sufficient school places available in Rutland and to monitor the available capacity within schools over the year.

Impact – what is working well?

- 3.12 The overall strategy within Rutland is successful as demonstrated by effective provision across the county and through all phases of education.
- 3.13 100% of Early Years providers in the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector were judged by Ofsted to be Good or Outstanding (July 2017). All but three schools were judged as good or better in their last inspection, with no schools are in an Ofsted category (July 2017).

- 3.14 Post 16 and adult provision is at least Good across the spectrum. This is maintained through 'early warning' mechanisms and the use of reliable and valid data systems to monitor the effectiveness of education providers and the overarching strategy.
- 3.15 Through the strategic monitoring of school effectiveness via the regular desk-top prioritisation exercise, the activity of local authority officers and the accountability held through the Education Performance Board, the Learning and Skills Service is able to accurately evaluate the education capacity within Rutland. This is reflected in the impact this is having on the standards achieved by the children and young people, the performance of different groups of pupils compared with national expectations and the overall performance of Rutland state-funded schools. The transparency of this approach, and the sharing of this data with all relevant parties within the educational arena, ensures that key strategic partners and stakeholders are regularly informed of successes and any potential vulnerabilities and a collaborative approach to addressing issues can be agreed. Maintained schools prioritised through School Quality Assurance process are carefully monitored and challenged through termly LA strategy meetings, where support is also brokered to support school improvement.
- 3.16 Where local authority monitoring strategies have identified concerns regarding performance in individual settings or schools, actions taken by the local authority have supported rapid improvement and contributed to improved school effectiveness as measured by:
- improving school effectiveness as reflected in school Ofsted inspection outcomes
 - improved outcomes in early years settings judged by Ofsted as Inadequate following the delivery of a package of tailored support
 - improved Key Stage 1 performance with outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics remaining above the national average in 2017
 - an improving trend in Key Stage 2 outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics combined from a very low starting point in 2013 to well above in 2017. Particular improvement is evident in Key Stage 2 mathematics in 2017
 - an improving picture in Key Stage 1-2 progress in all subjects, most particularly writing
 - indications in 2017 suggest that no school is at risk of being below floor standard at Key Stage 2 or 4
 - KS4 reported outcomes remain well above national averages and statistical neighbours
- 3.17 Through local authority championing of the increasing range of school to school support available, including that offered through Teaching School Alliances, Multi Academy Trusts, National Leaders of Education and nationally funded initiatives, there is an increasingly formalised approach to best practice being disseminated and embedded across the county and the increasing effectiveness of collaboration to drive school improvement. This has led to strengthening of leadership and management in less effective schools and the reduction in the number of schools deemed 'vulnerable' through Learning and Skills prioritisation evaluation.

- 3.18 The quality of decision making by the local authority, including effectiveness of its consultation with schools and other parties through Education Performance Board, Schools Forum, Networks and Head Teacher and Local Authority Partnership Briefings has enabled stake holders to have a clear and transparent understanding of how the local authority compares to both national averages, regional and statistical neighbours and to set higher expectations, particularly for progress and attainment.
- 3.19 The level of absence in state-funded primary and secondary schools is much lower in Rutland than the comparative figures for England and the East Midlands. Rutland is ranked first (lowest) for overall absence at primary and secondary and for persistent absentees at primary and is second lowest for persistent absentees for secondary (after Isles of Scilly).
- 3.20 At the time of the report being completed, there is only one permanently excluded Rutland pupil awaiting a school placement. This pupil is being home educated by a personal tutor and being supported by the Education Psychology service.
- 3.21 The Social Inclusion Development Officer makes twice yearly visits to monitor the work of electively home educated pupils in Rutland. At the time of the report, there is one EHE pupil, a KS2 child, who also attends two Home Educated Groups in Peterborough and Leicestershire where external tutors provide tuition to the group on a range of subjects from sports' coaching to scientific experiments.
- 3.22 Over the last 5 years an average of 95% of Rutland resident children have received an offer at their first preference primary school and an average of 91% of children have received an offer at their first preference secondary school. School capacity is monitored carefully, ensuring sufficiency of provision within the authority and identification of options to increase capacity where this is required.

Impact – What do we need to improve?

- 3.23 The Early Years team is currently working in close strategic partnership with all other authorities across the East Midlands on a research project to establish whether there are any linking factors for boys' relative underperformance in achieving the Early Learning Goal for Writing, looking at patterns of development for boys who achieve and those that don't. If the research identifies distinctive patterns, early identification and appropriate intervention will be promoted to narrow the performance gap. There are indications that whilst there has been an increase overall in the percentage of children achieving expected standards across the first 12 Early Learning Goals (a Good Level of Development) over time, the average point score, which measures the performance of children across all of the Early Learning Goals, has not seen a similar increase. Further interrogation of data is being undertaken to identify the patterns and causes behind this, but could indicate that fewer children are reaching higher than expected standards by the end of their reception year.

- 3.24 Whilst end of Key Stage 1 outcomes have been consistently above the national average, the proportion of pupils achieving at greater depth is below that seen nationally in writing and mathematics indicating that further challenge and support to schools for setting high expectations and adjusting curriculum delivery to set greater challenge to pupils is a priority for 2017-18.
- 3.25 Whilst there is a clear upward trend in 2017 Key Stage 2 pupil outcomes for primary aged pupils in Rutland schools, the high outcomes of some schools mask the continued under performance of others. For example, whilst local authority Key Stage 2 attainment at the expected standard was above the national average in all subjects in 2017, six primary schools were below the national standard in reading and writing and ten were below in mathematics.
- 3.26 Although there is much to be celebrated in the outcomes achieved by children and young people in Rutland schools, there is evidence that there are inconsistencies in the performance of some groups of pupils over time. Owing to the relatively small number of pupils in Rutland schools and approximately 400 pupils in Rutland schools in each school year, data for groups of pupils is aggregated over three or more years to help to identify where there are patterns or trends of underperformance of groups. Current analysis does not indicate a particular trend or pattern for boys and girls overall but does indicate that, for the data available at this time, that although generally boys and girls in Rutland perform better than their peers nationally, the performance gap between boys and girls is wider than seen nationally in some Key Stages or subjects. Girls mathematics also appears to be an area where there requires further challenge. Further interrogation of data, as it becomes available, will help to indicate further action required.
- 3.27 Currently there are limited options available for Post 16 education within the county, predominantly an academic route of Advanced Levels from a successful single provider. The academic route mirrored the government focus on increasing university participation and had, in this regard, been positive in that it increased numbers attending and gave some young people the opportunity to attend university when previously it would have been out of their reach. However, it is recognised that equal credence must be given to non-academic routes where these would be the best option for the young person.

Destinations are as given below for Year 11 school leavers (2016):

Type of Destination	Number
Employed / training towards NVQ2+	15
Employed for more than 20 hours - no training	3
Employed for less than 2- hours	1
Out of County - Further education	116
NEET	1
No information	4
Other	1
Out of County -School sixth form	100
Harrington sixth form Rutland	70
Total	311

Provisional data on key stage 4 (KS4) and key stage 5 (KS5) students' further education, employment and training destinations 2017: Release date: 25 January 2018 9:30am (confirmed)

- 3.28 The local authority is currently exploring the capacity and resource to deliver a sector led post-16 vocational route within Rutland through a partnership between Rutland County Council, Rutland Adult Learning and Skills Service (RALSS), Peterborough Regional College (PRC) and Rutland Secondary Academies. The partnership would be responsible for developing and implementing a county-wide provision aimed at meeting the needs of more young people within the 16-18 sector, including those with special educational needs and/ or disabilities. It is envisaged that this would develop and support the aspirations and skills enhancement of young people and encourage businesses and communities within Rutland to engage more robustly with education providers in securing well qualified young people to enhance the prosperity of the county.

Context

- 4.1 The Learning and Skills Service has developed a strategy to drive school improvement activity; the Education Framework 2017-2010 clearly defines the direction of travel for the service and its vision for the future. In order for the local authority to quantifiably report on the provision and check expectations and the drive for outstanding for all, the Learning and Skills Service regularly interrogates and uses performance data and management information to review the effectiveness of this strategy through the prioritisation process.
- 4.2 The local authority recognises that greater challenge to the education sector needs to come from within the sector and, through the commissioning of a professional development programme to promote effective peer review and challenge, is providing school leaders with effective tools and strategies to enable this to become embedded in practice and an integral contributor to sustaining high quality education throughout Rutland schools.
- 4.3 Historically, local authority tracking of school performance had not been used consistently to interrogate effectiveness and provide a clear picture of individual school and overall performance. However, improved data gathering and evaluation has been implemented so that the local authority now has an accurate understanding of strengths and potential vulnerabilities. The use of systematic and rigorous use of data to identify underperformance has been utilised effectively by the local authority and has ensured that vulnerable schools were swiftly identified and challenged. It is recognised that greater objectivity and transparency is now required to reflect the limited powers available to the local authority when reviewing the effectiveness of academies and free schools. The new methodology as identified in Education Provider Prioritisation and Entitlement seeks to redress this by informing schools and settings, on a regular basis, of the interpretation of their data and perceived performance of their institution and to explore any issues relating to effectiveness.
- 4.4 In 2014 the steep fall in Key Stage 2 results and the less effective leadership evident in some primary schools resulted in the Learning and Skills Service predicting that seven out of the eighteen (39%) primary/special schools would be judged as less than good in their next inspection and no schools would be judged as outstanding. By July 2017, this had been challenged and addressed and all but three schools were judged good or better and none inadequate. Seven primary schools are due to be inspected in the 2017-18 academic year; current data and knowledge of these schools suggest that there is some vulnerability within the sector but that the overall trend of improvement is being maintained. Where a school remains a concern, this has been shared with school leaders, including governors, and action taken by the local authority including informing the Regional Ofsted Team and the DfE through the regular 'keeping in touch' discussions.
- 4.5 Challenge to early years providers and settings, maintained schools and academies and further education providers, as identified within the Education Provider

Prioritisation and Entitlement documentation, has been agreed with input from Early Years providers and school and college leaders. This articulates the local authority plans for education improvement and makes transparent the support and intervention the local authority will provide. The local authority is mindful that national and regional priorities and local need can change over short time frames, and the plan and review processes enable flexibility of approach to reflect revised priorities and ensure resources are targeted most effectively.

- 4.6 Whilst Rutland enjoys a period of predominantly good or outstanding settings and schools, in terms of the small number of weak or underperforming schools, the Learning and Skills Service would not hesitate to promptly and effectively deploy formal powers of intervention. The rationale and process is explained to schools, settings and other multi agency partners through the Education Provider Prioritisation and Entitlement process. The commissioning of a peer review and challenge programme for Rutland schools is highly recommended for those schools which have been identified as potentially vulnerable through the prioritisation methodology; this programme will contribute to monitoring the effectiveness of these schools and developing effective school to school support to ensure at least good school effectiveness.
- 4.7 All Early Years providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are entitled to an offer of 'core support' from the Early Years Team. This includes an annual visit to each early years setting, Private, Voluntary or Independent provider, school and childminder, access to three EYFS networks, Lead Early Years Providers training day and a programme of training. Remote support is available as appropriate. A full programme of support is also available for Newly Qualified Teachers and practitioners, through Rutland Teaching Alliance, and support for the implementation and moderation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is offered. Additionally, early years providers with a Requires Improvement or Inadequate Ofsted inspection outcome are able to access a package of tailored support to meet their individual needs and to bring about swift improvement.
- 4.8 Whilst 2016 on-entry to Reception Year data indicated that, in some schools, children were entering at below age related expectations, there is recognition by the local authority that further peer moderation in 2017 will add rigour to on entry assessment. This will include moderation processes and improved transition arrangements between the pre-school and the reception class.
- 4.9 As the move to sector-led quality improvement for all providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage is established, a working partnership between the local authority, Leading Early Years Practitioners, the Early Years Specialist Leader of Education (SLE), the Rutland Teaching School and Visions Children's Centre highlights areas for future development. A process of partnership working ensures that any future developments are co-ordinated; for example a joint project developed between all partners to support the transitions into and out of Reception classes in Rutland schools included some of the following actions:

- The building of relationships across the sector, through activities to further develop assessment across the EYFS and the moderation of assessment judgements.
 - A model to evaluate and test whether a joint practice model of CPD used across the range of Early Years providers could improve pedagogy, the quality of standards and provision.
 - Supporting processes and providing funded time for feeder and receiving Early Years Providers to share information.
- 4.10 The Children and Families Act 2014 requires every local authority in England to appoint an officer employed by the authority to make sure that its duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its children looked after (CLA) by the authority is properly discharged. That officer is referred to as the Head of the Virtual School; this function sits within the Learning and Skills Service. The Virtual School Head undertakes the monitoring and evaluating the performance of all children looked after by Rutland, wherever they live or are educated. The Head of the Virtual School Head is also responsible for managing pupil premium funding for the children they look after and for allocating it to schools as well as managing the early years' pupil premium and for allocating the premium to the early years' providers that educate CLA who are taking up the free early education entitlement for 3- or 4-year-olds.
- 4.11 Rutland County council has an established continual professional development process in operation to ensure that staff are kept up to date with changes to educational policy and practice and adhere to and promote latest statutory processes and government guidelines. This enables the team to remain focused on monitoring and challenge that is recognised as making a difference nationally and that we focus not only on local but also on the national education agenda. A key document for all staff in this endeavour is the annual Professional Development Review (PDR). Longer and/or qualification based programmes are highlighted alongside any other job related updates. In addition, all staff are encouraged to engage with relevant research and training related to their responsibilities. Staff from the Learning and Skills Service take a lead role in a range of regional and national forum and attend regional and national training. The knowledge gained is cascaded to the rest of the team and ensures our practice reflects national expectations and guidelines.

Impact – What is working well?

- 4.12 Outcomes and overall performance of education settings is routinely and systematically scrutinised by the Learning and Skills Service and the necessary challenge and, where appropriate a tailored programme of support, is offered to early years' providers and schools to swiftly address issues is identified. The proactive promotion of peer support, with systems leaders and teaching schools providing professional development and guidance, is central to building capacity within the education sector

- 4.13 Pupil performance outcomes are monitored, measured and compared at school, regional and national levels and underperformance is challenged, which has contributed to improvements from previous years.
- 4.14 As part of the wider Learning and Skills monitoring process, results are shared and challenged at the Education Performance Board and, using the Education Provider Prioritisation criteria, the appropriate support is determined and available to early years providers and schools.
- 4.15 From a very low starting point in 2013, when Key Stage 2 outcomes were significantly below that attained nationally, impact can be seen of the effectiveness of local authority challenge of underperforming schools. As such, an improving picture in 2017 Key Stage 2 with outcomes now well above the national picture and our regional neighbours; in 2017, Rutland was identified as one of the ten Local Authorities that has made significant improvement in the proportion achieving the expected level in reading, writing and maths.
- 4.16 Key Stage 4 GCSE results for 2017 indicate that the local authority has maintained success rates significantly higher than national averages as well against neighbours within the East Midlands region. Key Stage 5 results as reported by schools are in line with national averages.
- 4.17 Routine support and challenge activity by the Learning and Skills Service Education Officer is undertaken in maintained schools to address any indication of underperformance, including supporting these schools to build meaningful school improvement networks with others.
- 4.18 Long term improvement in school performance has been achieved. The Learning and Skills Service officers challenged all less than effective leadership and raised governor awareness of their strategic responsibility in schools where underperformance was evident. There has been a high turnover in leadership with seven Rutland schools appointing new headteachers in September 2015.
- 4.19 Strategic overview and challenge through the establishment of the Education Performance Board has provided further level of monitoring and challenge to education performance and in identifying key areas for improvement. As a consequence, the local authority now knows schools' strengths and development areas well and appropriate actions are undertaken to address any underperformance and to develop greater professional partnership and collaborative approaches to school improvement.
- 4.20 School Quality Assurance Meetings have been established; local authority officers from the Learning and Skills Service and the SEND and Inclusion Service share information and ensure a joined up approach to brokering school support through a transparent policy of school prioritisation.
- 4.21 Partnered local authority and school reviews have taken place in those maintained schools (and requested by some academies) that cause concern, and progress in addressing issues is monitored through local authority Strategy Meetings held at the schools at which school leaders and governors are held to account for the impact of

school improvement activity. Where school to school support has been brokered, the leadership team from this school is also invited so that they can contribute to review and be held to account for their activity.

- 4.22 There is evidence of good impact of the greater challenge of schools in bringing about sustained school improvement. As a result, schools that had been at risk of an inadequate judgement in inspection avoided an Ofsted category.
- 4.23 All but three schools were judged as good or better in their last inspection and there are no schools judged inadequate by Ofsted or identified, as per the DfE guidance for schools causing concern, in receipt of a Performance and Standards Warning Notice or in scope for enforced academisation.

Impact – What we need to improve?

- 4.24 Whilst most schools are performing well, the Learning and Skills Service is seeking to further embed excellence in education and the drive to outstanding by continuing to challenge known cross-authority issues in relation the underperformance of some groups which include boys and girls depending on subject area and school phase, those more able pupils and those pupils with Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities. Children Looked After, those with English as an Additional Language and those children in receipt of Service Premium also remain priority groups. Often the numbers of any of these pupils in any year group may be small, which makes comparison with national data less reliable; however, it cannot be ignored that, over time, patterns of performance for these groups is not consistently as good as would be expected.
- 4.25 The Learning and Skills Service will continue to monitor and challenge schools in relation to the performance of groups of pupils so that all groups perform to an equally high standard compared with their peers nationally, most particularly higher achievers. Where Rutland performance is already higher than national, we aim for all schools to set expectations for all pupils to aspire to in order that they achieve the highest possible outcomes
- 4.26 The challenge to the small number of schools who are deemed as a high priority will be maintained through the setting of high expectations for all providers and routine monitoring and evaluation to identify where performance is improving or to signal where impact of actions are failing to be effective. The Learning and Skills Service will work with the DfE and the Regional Schools Commissioner when these schools have academy status.
- 4.27 A more formalised approach to sustained school improvement will be developed, to include the monitoring and challenge role, through a local authority commissioned programme to embed effective sector-led school improvement with peer review that is rigorous and driving forward required improvement.
- 4.28 The monitoring and challenge activity within the sector led improvement model will be further strengthened through the support for the development of systems leadership within the authority to include the identification of potential National

Leaders of Governance (NLGs) in Rutland to ensure that Governing Boards are offering effective challenge to school leaders and engaging in the local drive for further improvements in education. A programme of Governor training has been developed by the local authority, in partnership with teaching school alliances, multi academy trusts and diocesan education boards, to strengthen leadership capacity of Governing Boards

- 4.29 The Learning and Skills Service will continue to systematically utilise agreed protocols to ensure that the local authority has an accurate understanding of the quality of provision of each provision setting and school where education takes place.
- 4.30 Where underperformance of groups has been identified within a setting or school, this will be challenged; support programmes will be brokered or commissioned where significant trends across Rutland are identified.
- 4.31 The Learning and Skills Service will continue to work in partnership with the wider Children's Services work force to scrutinise and implement agreed policies and protocols in relation to other groups including:
- All children with special educational needs and/ or disabilities within Rutland state-funded schools
 - Any child or young person who is being home educated
 - Any child or young person who has been permanently excluded

5. Support and Challenge for leadership and management

Context

- 5.1 The Learning and Skills Service strategy for supporting and challenging school leaders and governors is specified within Education Provider Prioritisation and Entitlement 2017-18 which ensures there is a consistent and transparent approach.
- 5.2 Where concerns are identified in a maintained school, a formal local authority Strategy Meeting will be instigated with Head Teacher and Chair of Governing Board setting out evidence of concern. At those meetings, school leaders need to demonstrate that robust improvement plans have been completed and that planned actions will be rigorously monitored through in-school and external scrutiny arrangements. Further meetings will be arranged as required. A Learning and Skills officer will attend Full Governing Board meeting as an observer; an external review of governance may be requested. If school cannot demonstrate swift and effective action and impact, the LA will work with the Regional Schools Commissioners' office, as stipulated in the DfE Schools Causing Concern Guidance, and utilise intervention powers where this will improve leadership and standards. Where concerns are identified with Academies, actions as identified within the Education Provider Prioritisation and Entitlement and the DfE Schools Causing Concern Guidance will be instigated.
- 5.3 The LA is commissioning a significant programme of professional development for senior and middle leaders and governors in relation to accurate self-evaluation and continuous improvement through peer review and challenge. This will build further confidence and consistency in effective and challenging peer evaluation, and will build wider school leadership capacity within individual establishments and across clusters of maintained schools and academies. The development of a robust sector led model in Rutland will see the sector responsible for school improvement, with schools working in partnership with each other and other educational establishments, so that the education sector can be effective in challenging itself and demonstrating its own ability to be self-sustaining and self-improving.
- 5.4 The role of the local and regional teaching schools is being promoted through the actions of the local authority, and the partnership approach between Rutland Teaching Alliance and the local authority is ensuring that further capacity is being developed within the county. This approach also recognises that a partnership approach with wider teaching schools can contribute to, and augment, the offer available within the county; cross boundary partnerships with other teaching schools in the region are supported through commissioned programmes and utilisation of national funding opportunities. Teaching Schools are essential in building leadership capacity within Rutland and the close working partnership between Rutland Teaching School Alliance and the local authority is key to further developing robust and confident leadership at all levels in Rutland schools through identifying and supporting potential leaders through Specialist Leaders of Education and Local and National Leaders of Governance programmes.

- 5.5 It is recognised that effective Governance is key to sustained school improvement. Training for Governors to enable them to offer support and challenge the school's senior leadership team had been commissioned through Leicestershire Governor Services. The training programme had been held predominantly in Leicestershire and following a review of the governor take up, this has been changed for the academic year 2017-18 to be a RCC/ Teaching School Alliance partnership programme of governor training designed, through governor consultation, to more accurately reflect need. In addition, where maintained schools are identified as vulnerable, members of the Learning and Skills Service may attend governing board meetings to provide an increased level of challenge and model good practice.
- 5.6 The local authority builds strong working relationships with educational leaders through the Rutland Education Performance Board which ensures that effective leadership is promoted and supported. The overriding aim of the Performance Board is to provide robust monitoring and review of the performance and progress of improvement of education providers including Early Years settings, schools and adult learning provision. The recent revision of the Terms of Reference for the Education Performance Board reflects the increasing autonomy within the sector, but also the requirement of the sector to hold the local authority to account for the impact of school improvement activity

Impact – What is working well?

- 5.7 The local authority's relationship with senior and middle leaders across its early years settings and schools enables improving school to school support particularly for those schools identified as vulnerable.
- 5.8 The precision with which support or intervention is identified enables rapid action with local authority maintained schools and early interaction with academies as described in the Education Provider Prioritisation and Entitlement
- 5.9 Over recent years local authority arrangements have increasingly promoted self-reliance across the education sector. As a result of these actions, the number of schools requiring high levels of local authority support has reduced significantly. The Learning and Skills Service has implemented processes to promote school to school support and peer reviews which will now be formalised through a commissioned programme of external support for peer challenge and evaluation to ensure that this process remains robust.
- 5.10 The local authority is pro-active in the arrangements for promoting self-reliance and using systems, including school to school resources, and fully supports the move towards a more autonomous, sector-led, school improvement system which has been driven by the Government's expansion of academies and free schools. The local authority is therefore actively promoting robust and sustainable school-to-school support and challenge.
- 5.11 The local authority has supported senior leaders in maintained schools to develop effective management and governance through brokerage / commissioning of school to school support which enables best practice to be embedded across the County.

Impact – What do we need to improve?

- 5.12 The Learning and Skills Service will continue to maintain high level monitoring and evaluation of provision as identified in Education Provider Prioritisation and Entitlement. The prompt application of statutory powers will be applied where appropriate to ensure that any school identified as having potential to be a school causing concern is challenged and swift and appropriate actions taken.
- 5.13 Effective systems leadership is essential for the sustained success of a sector-led school improvement model, and the promotion for further development of systems leaders will be supported through commissioned or brokered school improvement activity. Programmes for the development of leadership at all levels will be included in local authority commissioned activity with the intention to build capacity within Rutland schools, for Rutland schools.
- 5.14 The role of governors is key in driving school improvement and the designation of National Leaders of Governors within Rutland will ensure that there is robust leadership capacity to enable sector led school improvement. Programmes of training will be offered to support all Governors to undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively, to hold their school leaders to account and to be well-prepared for external scrutiny, including by Ofsted

Context

- 6.1 When the school funding reforms were implemented in 2013/14, local flexibility reduced in terms of the number of formula factors allowed to be used and the datasets allowed for the remaining factors; having the same lump sum value for all schools although this has since changed to allow for different lump sums to be set for secondary and primary schools, and the removal of in-year budget changes for changing circumstances. This was to reflect central governments drive to move to a national funding formula.
- 6.2 The national funding formula has been implemented for Early Years from 2017/18 and has resulted in a reduction in funding for these settings in Rutland. The national funding formula is scheduled to be implemented in 2018/19 for schools. Whilst the impact to individual schools is not known, the impact on EYFS settings is potentially harmful with some struggling to maintain operating costs. The national funding formula for schools will see a soft implementation for 2018/19 and 2019/20 which means that local authorities will receive funding based on a national formula allocating funding to each individual school, but will have the ability to reallocate funding at a local level to limit large fluctuations. This could potentially impact certain schools, namely small schools. The lump sum is the important factor (funds the fixed costs of operating a school), which will help identify an acceptable number on roll to be financially viable whilst still achieving good outcomes for pupils.
- 6.3 Rurality and a sparse population in some areas of Rutland are important considerations in education provision and are reflected in the number of small rural schools and settings. As a result some primary schools have mixed age classes and some schools are developing arrangements to collaborate formally, through Federation or within local Multi Academy Trusts, and share leadership and management, teaching and learning approaches as well as administrative functions to make the most of the funding available. School improvement outcomes need to be effective to secure the future success of the school; education outcomes cannot be compromised.
- 6.4 The council has a statutory duty to provide free school transport for eligible pupils of compulsory school age (5-16 years) and extended to include children aged 4 years. Transport is also provided for children with special educational needs – often resulting in long distance journeys to educational establishments out of county and requiring passenger transport assistants to support those children with a higher level of needs. Within Rutland growing demand on these services is being experienced; however, there are a limited number of bus and taxi operators within the area – making it hard to procure the service provisions required. In addition, there is currently only one establishment offering post 16 education facilities in Rutland – meaning a large proportion of students travel out of county. The Learning and Skills Service has engaged with the County Council Transport Strategy Team to identify solutions to preventing transport from becoming a barrier to learning and will continue to support this through partnership working across the teams.
- 6.5 The base budget for the service in 2017/18 non-Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is £471,900 of which £237,400 is the current budget for direct performance management of schools through the work of the learning and skills team representing good value for money. The remainder is ring fenced for depreciation.

Impact – What is working well?

- 6.6 Support and resources are targeted effectively and appropriately and impact monitored. The Learning and Skills Service has oversight of all schools and works strategically with maintained schools currently below good; key partners such as teaching schools are utilised to address key priorities for the Rutland. Schools and early years' settings receive a range of light touch through to intensive support dependent upon need. The schools are identified through detailed analysis and evaluation combined with local intelligence and regularly reviewed to ensure resources are accurately utilised.
- 6.7 Authority wide priorities are identified by data analysis and addressed through the corporate business plan. Additional support is brokered for schools through signposting of services and resources to address identified concerns. Regular monitoring and reviewing of progress and priorities enables resources to be targeted to need ensuring best value is achieved.
- 6.8 The local authority regularly reviews maintained schools' budgets and challenges schools as necessary in line with the monitoring/intervention policy and the carry forward policy via the Schools Forum network. To ensure transparency, work is undertaken to ensure that head teachers understand resourcing decisions. When major changes are taking place such as the current school funding reforms and the SEND reforms, widespread consultation takes place not only with Head teachers but also with governors, Schools Forum and elected members. The outcomes of such consultation are then communicated via the termly Head Teacher and Local Authority Partnership briefings.

Impact – What do we need to improve?

- 6.9 Whilst the local authority is promoting teaching schools and multi-academy trusts as providers of support, further implementation of signposting mechanism are required to enable maintained schools to purchase from a wider market of excellent providers.
- 6.10 A programme of Governor training is being developed; this will include training to strengthen the role of the Governors in the financial management of maintained schools and academies. The regular attendance of local authority finance team at the Head Teacher and Local Authority Partnership Meetings will enable clarity and transparency in the financial position of the local authority and the implications on schools funding to be clarified and understood
- 6.11 A Schools Forum Working Party is to be set up to deliver options to providers so that the local authority can assure sufficiency of childcare places at a time where funding reductions are being made within the early years block which limits the amount that the local authority can pay providers.
- 6.12 To help deliver cost effective school transport provisions, Rutland County Council is currently reviewing post 16 education transport provisions, ensuring school transport policies are adhered to as per the guidelines set out in our home to school travel and transport policy and looking at alternative procurement and delivery options to ensure there are sufficient transport provisions to meet current and future needs. The Learning

and Skills Service works closely with the Transport Strategy Team to review policy and provide information regarding education facilities.

Learning and Skills Annual Review (LaSAR)

**Appendix A. Education Improvement Plan
2017 -18**

APPENDIX B. Education Improvement Plan 2017-18

Priority One – Improve outcomes for all groups of children and young people so that they are achieving their best possible standards, taking account of their starting points.				
Issue	Actions	(Milestones)	Dates	Lead
Although improving, inconsistency in attainment in EYFS, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two has not been fully addressed.	Scrutinise EYFS, KS1, KS2 and KS4 pupil performance data to determine areas of underperformance including that of Groups.	Underperforming schools informed of LA expectations.	Oct 17	SuH/SaH
Inconsistency in pupil progress from KS1 to KS2 not in line with expected performance.	Identify underperforming schools and discuss issues with Head and Governors.	Discussions undertaken and concerns clarified	Nov 17	SuH/SaH
Inconsistency in performance over time of identified groups of pupils	Recommend / broker school to school support systems including training needs and delivery through teaching schools alliances and multi academy trusts	Appropriate support systems identified	Dec '17	SuH/SaH
Masking of underperforming schools when comparing Rutland performance as a whole	Promote SEND and inclusion strategy; support implementation within schools through 'Inclusion Begins in the Classroom', a Learning and Skills Service commissioned programme	Evidence of greater inclusion of pupils (SEND) within mainstream education.	Oct 17- Oct 18	GC
	Scrutinise 2017/18 data to identify improved outcomes and where underperformance remains a concern.	Implement protocols with regional schools commissioner as identified within DfES SCC guidance	Sept 18	GC
A small number of schools who continue to be identified as a high priority for the LA through routine monitoring and evaluation.	Review and update prioritisation protocols and agree with school leaders at Head teacher partnership briefings	Agreement achieved and protocol(s) implemented.	Sept 17	GC
	Systematically utilise agreed protocols to ensure that the local authority has an accurate understanding of the quality of provision of each provision	High priority schools are identified and informed	Oct 17	SuH
	Continue to challenge those high priority schools identified taking account of protocol for maintained schools and for academies	Actions agreed within the protocol undertaken.	Dec 17	GC
	Prompt application of statutory powers where appropriate as identified with the Education Provider	Implement protocols with regional schools commissioner as identified within DfES SCC guidance	Mar 18	GC

Priority 2 – Widen opportunities for young people post 16 so that there are improved opportunities for access to vocational education and apprenticeships

Issue	Actions	(Milestones)	Dates	Lead
Limited opportunities for vocational and business related education within Rutland within current post-16 arrangements.	Support schools to deliver robust targeted and inspiring information advice and guidance. Develop and deliver local information sessions for parents/ carers and students to augment school offer.	Information advice and guidance delivery support agreed and offered to schools Parent/ carers attending IAG sessions	Dec 17 – July 18	RS
	Undertake business survey with SME; identify the skills required by the economy and compare with local offer to young people by offering a curriculum Identify potential for offering wider curriculum options to reflect need	Gap analysis completed and prioritised Work with schools to fill gaps via RALSS and school; delivery agreements published for consultation	Nov 17 May 18	RS RS
	Undertake promotion activity to raise awareness and understanding amongst young people and their parent/ carers about the options for vocational education to develop skills and acquire qualifications required to secure jobs with good prospects	Increase noted in number of post-16 students opting to remain within Rutland through vocational programmes of training or apprenticeships	Jan 18 - Sept 19	RS/ RALSS
	Seek to obtain funding for wider vocational option in county	Funding obtained and options appraisal instigated	Jul18	RS

Priority 3 – Strengthen the capacity of systems leadership within the Local Authority in order to secure a robust sector led school improvement model

Issue	Actions	(Milestones)	Dates	Lead
Inconsistency in the systematic approach to peer challenge and evaluation	Develop a more formalised approach to collaborative working between schools, which promotes a robust approach to peer review and support, through a commissioned programme to embed effective sector-led school improvement	Monitoring and evaluation of programme provides evidence of impact of programme on school to school review and challenge	Jan 18 –Dec 18	GC
	Build on the LA and Rutland Teaching School Alliance partnership to promote effective deployment of systems leaders within LA brokering of support	Systems leaders, to include wider representation of specialist leaders of education, deployed and effective in school improvement	Jan 18 –Dec 18	GS
Governance is not consistently demonstrating sufficient challenge and rigour.	Training need analysis and CPD programme developed and delivered locally	Governing Boards are offering effective challenge to school leaders.	Sept 17 - Apr 18	SuH
	Regional National Leaders of Governance engaged to work with Rutland Governing Bodies to develop skills	Governors are capable of and encouraged to apply to become a National Leader of Governance.	Jul 18	GC

Learning and Skills Annual Review (LaSAR)

Appendix B. Rutland Performance Summary
2017

APPENDIX B. Rutland Performance Summary 2017

Appendix A provides a summary of the key performance outcomes for children and young people in Rutland schools; further detail is available on request. The data reported at this time is unvalidated and liable to change therefore, until validated data is received, this must be treated with caution.

The Learning and Skills Service, whilst taking in to account the potential for change, scrutinises early data as soon as it becomes available so that actions to address any potential concerns can be planned for and implemented swiftly. These plans can be adjusted to reflect patterns or trends identified through further data release

Updated data will be added to this report as it is received and this summary will be revised to take account of any additional or amended information. The Education Improvement Plan 2017-18 may also be revised.

Data release dates:

Report providing provisional data on the outcomes of reviews of the marking of 2017 phonics and key stage 1 (KS1) national curriculum tests: Release date: 28 September 2017 9:30am (confirmed)

Report providing provisional data on the outcomes of reviews of the marking of 2017 key stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum tests: Release date: 2 November 2017 9:30am (confirmed)

A statistical first release (SFR) providing revised information on the achievements of young people at the end of key stage 4 (Revised GCSE and equivalent) results in England: Release date: 25 January 2018 9:30am (confirmed)

A level and other 16 to 18 results: 2017 Release date: 25 January 2018 9:30am (confirmed)

Performance at each phase/ Key Stage

Early Years – end of Foundation Stage Foundation Stage Profile

Early years' performance is measured at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) by the Good Level of Development (GLD) and the Average Point Score (APS). The Good Level of Development measures a child's attainment across the first 12 Early Learning Goals. Average Point Score measures the performance of an individual child across all 17 Early Learning Goals.

- 76% of children in Rutland schools achieved a Good Level of Development compared to that of emerging national of 71% and as such Rutland performance remains above national average. Additionally there is an increase from 2016 in the average point score achieved.
- This indicates a return to rising trend in GLD from 2013 (57.3%) following slight decline in 2016 (71.6%).
- The improved outcomes for Rutland from 2016-17 (+4%) are greater than seen nationally (+2%)
- There are also indications that whilst there has been an increase overall in the percentage in GLD, the average point score has not seen a similar increase.
- At this time, data to measure a child's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is not gathered nationally, therefore there is no nationally recognised progress data in the EYFS.

Key Stage 1 – Year One Phonics Screening

Phonic performance is measured through the percentage of children who achieve the phonics screening threshold.

- Phonics outcome in 2017 remain above national but there is a slight decline in a previously rising trend and the positive gap above national has decreased.

Key Stage 1 – end of Key Stage 1 SATs

Key stage one performance in reading, writing and mathematics is measured through teacher assessment at the end of Year Two.

- Rutland has been consistently above national average for a number of years in all subjects although the gap between the local authority and national Key Stage 1 outcomes for reading, writing and maths combined has narrowed to only 3% above national in 2017.
- The percentage of children in Rutland schools achieving expected Key Stage 1 standards in reading has dropped by 1% against a national average increase of 2%
- The percentage of children in Rutland schools achieving expected Key Stage 1 standards in writing has increased by 2% against a national average increase of 3%
- The percentage of children in Rutland schools achieving expected Key Stage 1 standards in mathematics is the same as in 2016 against a national average increase of 2%

Key Stage 2 – end of Key Stage 2 SATs

Key stage two performance for writing is measured through teacher assessment at the end of year 6 whilst reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling as well as mathematics is measured by standard assessment tests (SATs). The expected standard is a scaled score of 100

or above. A high score is a score of 110 or above. The average scaled score is calculated as the mean scaled score of all eligible pupils who were given a scaled score.

- The 2017 Rutland average for combined Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing and Mathematics attainment at expected standard at 67% is higher than the national average of 61.0%.
- Improvement from 2016 in combined Reading, Writing and Mathematics attainment is at a rate higher than that seen nationally, with the percentage of children in Rutland schools 14% higher than in 2016 compared with 8% improvement nationally
- The percentage of children in Rutland schools achieving expected Key Stage 2 standards in reading has increased by 5% which is in line with a national average increase of 5%
- The percentage of children in Rutland schools achieving expected Key Stage 2 standards in writing has increased by 6% against a national average increase of 2%
- The percentage of children in Rutland schools achieving expected Key Stage 2 standards in mathematics has increased by 10% against a national average increase of 5%
- Rutland has been identified as one of the top 10 places with a significant improvement in the proportion achieving expected standard in reading, writing and maths along with Swindon, Blackpool, Dorset, Cheshire East, Hammersmith and Fulham, Middlesbrough, Shropshire, Hartlepool and Calderdale (<https://educationdatalab.org.uk/>)
- Whilst progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 shows a slight improvement in 2017 the average progress score, in all subjects, is only broadly average compared to the national average.

Key Stage 4 – GCSEs and equivalent

Key Stage 4 is measured through GCSE examination, the Attainment 8 score, the Progress 8 score and the English Baccalaureate (EBacc)

Changes to GCSE grading in English and mathematics from A to G have been made, replacing letters with numbers from 9 to 1 (Grade 4 is deemed as a grade C equivalent with Grade 5 graded as a 'strong' C).

- An average of 57.1% of students in Rutland schools attained GCSE Grade 5 or above in English and Maths which is well above the national average of 42.2%
- Rutland is one of only 14 local authorities where at least half of all pupils attained a 'strong pass'; nationally

Attainment 8 measures the achievement of a pupil across 8 qualifications including:

- maths (double weighted) and English (double weighted, if both English language and English literature are entered);
- 3 qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measure (science subjects, computer science, history, geography, and languages)
- 3 further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects)
- Attainment 8 at 52.1 for Rutland schools, is well above the national score of 46 nationally
- Nationally, the average Attainment 8 score per pupil has decreased in comparison to 2016 but this change is as expected when the 2017 point score scale to the 2016 data is applied. However, there has been a much less decrease in Rutland scores than seen nationally, with the gap in performance between Rutland schools and national increasing positively from +6.7 to +7.9.

The headline EBacc attainment measure in 2017 is the percentage of pupils in a school gaining a grade 5 or above in English and maths, and a grade C or above in other subjects.

- 23.7% of students in Rutland achieved the EBacc in 2017 compared with 21.1% nationally

Progress 8 is a new measure of the progress students make between the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 based on performance in eight qualifications. Progress 8 is a relative measure, calculated each year on the basis of the actual results of all of the pupils taking exams at the end of Key Stage 4 that year.

- Rutland schools' Progress 8 score of 0.32 compares very favourably with the national score of -0.0

Key Stage 5 – A-levels

This is measured by Advanced level examination attainment.

- Indication from school feedback is that Rutland performance is broadly in line with national averages.
- Further detail to be added when data released

Performance of Groups

There is evidence of year on year variability in Rutland when comparing the percentage performance of groups which is linked in some way to small pupil numbers. This means that whilst there is no one particular trend or pattern of performance compared to national, analysis of Rutland performance data over time suggests that there are groups of pupils who do not consistently perform as well as we would expect and this remains a key area of concern for the Learning and Skills Service. Further summary of data will be included as this becomes available for all key stages and characteristics of pupils.

Higher Attaining Pupils

- KS1 outcomes, at the expected standard, have been consistently above the national average. However, the percentage of pupils achieving a greater depth is below that seen nationally in writing and mathematics.
- For KS2 the sharper increase seen at the expected standard was not replicated in Rutland's outcomes for those pupils attaining above the expected standard and as such Rutland was 53rd out of the 173 Local Authorities in this area.
- Awaiting data for KS4

Gender

- There are no distinct patterns of underperformance by either gender in 2017
- At KS1, boys and girls perform higher than nationally overall for expected standard; both genders underperform at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. Girls also fail to reach expected standard in mathematics
- At KS2, boys and girls perform higher than nationally overall for expected standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling, reading, writing and mathematics and attain higher scores in all areas other than writing where although boys working at greater depth is higher than boys nationally, girls working at greater depth in writing are below. Girls match the national average for girls achieving a higher score in maths.

Children and Young People with Education Health and Care Plans/ Statements of Special Educational Need or in receipt of Special Educational Need School Support

- National data and relative comparisons are limited because data is not shown where this applies to small numbers of pupils in a local authority in order to protect confidentiality. The data for pupils with SEN is currently being analysed as national results are received.
- Data has been collected through Rutland schools; early indications are an overall improving picture in Early Years Foundation Stage profile outcomes for Early Years pupils with SEN
- There appears an improving trend in the percentage of SEN pupils achieving the phonic threshold, with outcomes in line with national SEN figures, but below those for all pupils.
- Indicative outcomes for those pupils with SEN, for Key Stage 1 in 2017, show a steep improvement from that attained in 2016.
- Outcomes for SEN pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen in 2017.
- Awaiting data for KS4

Disadvantaged Pupils

- Rutland has relatively small number of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals or have been in receipt of free school meals in the previous 6 years (ever-6) which limits the value of percentage comparisons; however performance of FSM children over time suggests that the gap between FSM pupils and all other pupils' is not closing as rapidly as we would expect.
- In 2016 Rutland had a relatively large gap for children in early years (7 months) compared to national (4.3 months), but a relatively small gap for secondary pupils (8 months) compared to national (19.3 months).
- Where 2017 data sets for pupils in receipt of free school meals are available, indications are that improvements in Rutland have been noted in early years from 2016.
- The gap between FSM pupils and all pupils in Rutland for Phonics is wider than seen nationally
- The gap between FSM pupils and all pupils in Rutland for Key Stage 1 reading and writing is narrower than seen nationally but wider for Key Stage 1 mathematics
- Awaiting data for Key Stages 2 and 4

Children Looked After

- Whilst 2017 outcomes appear disappointing, the very small numbers of pupils looked after in Rutland make validity of such data statistically incomparable when comparing attainment of CLA because percentage data and numbers of pupils taking end of Key Stage tests and examinations can vary significantly year on year.
- However over time only around 50% of CLA achieve the expected standard in Early Years and Key Stage 1. At later phases, attainment is lower.
- School based internal pupil tracking indicates that progress for CLA is at least expected both over the year and over time

Service Children and Other Vulnerable Groups

- Awaiting data

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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

23 November 2017

LOCAL OFFER TO CARE LEAVERS 2017 - 2020

Report of the Director for People

Strategic Aim:	Safeguarding	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr R Foster, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People (Safeguarding)	
Contact Officer(s):	Tim O'Neill, Director for People and Deputy Chief Executive	01572 758402 toneill@rutland.gov.uk
	Rebecca Wilshire , Head of Children Social Care	01572 758258 rwilshire@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	N/A	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel:

1. Comments and provides feedback on the Local Offer to Care Leavers attached at Appendix 1.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. The term “Care Leavers” is used to describe those children and young people who fall within scope of local authority duties set out in sections 23A and 24D of the Children Act 1989.
- 1.2. The new **Children and Social Worker Act 2017** places a duty on the local authority to publish a **Local Offer for Care Leavers** providing information about services which the local authority offers that may assist Care Leavers in, or in preparing for, adulthood and independent living. This includes services relating to health and wellbeing; relationships; education and training; employment; accommodation and participation in society.
- 1.3. This policy is intended to give an overview of Rutland’s offer to Care Leavers.

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1. The **Children and Social Work Bill** seeks to combine a commitment to protect the most vulnerable in society with the “ambition to ensure that disadvantaged children have the brightest possible future”. The Bill has been heard in the House of Lords and will be debated in the House of Commons in October 2017. A subsequent strategy entitled **Keep on Caring – Supporting Young People from Care to Independence** published in July 2016 sets out a plan for the delivery of a ‘step change’ in services for children in and leaving care.
- 2.2. At the same time the House of Commons’ Education Committee published its inquiry into the **Mental Health and well-being of looked-after children 2015/16**.
- 2.3. The **Children and Social Work Act 2017** received Royal Assent on 27th April 2017. The Act aims to:
 - 2.3.1 Improve support for children looked after in England and Wales especially for those leaving care;
 - 2.3.2 Enable better learning about effective approaches to child protection and care in England;
 - 2.3.3 Establish a new regulatory body for the social work profession in England.
- 2.4. **Current Position:**

Rutland underwent their Single Inspection Framework in November 2016 which was published in February 2017. **The graded judgement about the experience and progress of Care Leavers was that it was good.**

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 In accordance with Chapter 1, Section 2 (6) of the Children and Social Care Work Act 2017 there has been consultation with relevant persons. This Local Offer has been shared with our current care leavers via their personal advisors and feedback has been gathered and changes made in accordance to any feedback. Our care Leavers felt the local offer is an accurate reflection of the support available to them in Rutland and all spoke of being happy with the offer to them and future care leavers.

4 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Rutland has been judged by Ofsted as ‘Good’, with regards to our work and support to Care Leavers.
- 4.2 We are very proud of all our Care Leavers and their achievements and would like to thank them for their ongoing support and influence they offer us as a council. We know there are things we can still do better and intend to work on these areas further as part of our local offer.

- 4.3 With our local offer alongside our promise (Pledges) to Care Leavers we are confident that as a council, and in partnership with our partners and our Care Leavers and those young people looked after, we will enhance our service further and ensure all our Care Leavers have the best start possible into adulthood.
- 4.4 As a council we want to make sure also our Care Leavers can access a range of services to meet their needs including financial support, access to health, education training and employment, personal advisers, effective pathway planning, appropriate housing including supported accommodation if this is assessed as being a need and mental health and counselling services as required.
- 4.5 We ask Scrutiny to comment and provide feedback on the offer outlined in the policy before Cabinet approval.

5 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1 No background paperwork

6 APPENDICES

- 6.1 Appendix 1 - Local Offer to Care Leavers 17-2020
- 6.2 Appendix 2 - Local Offer to Care Leavers Poster

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.

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Our Local Offer to Care Leavers 2017 – 2020



Version & Policy Number	Version 1
Guardian	Rebecca Wilshire Head of Service
Date Produced	July 2017
Next Review Date	April 2020

1. Introduction
2. Legislation
3. Current Position in Rutland
4. Status of Care Leavers
5. Our Local Offer
6. Our Pledges to our Care Leavers
7. Our Care Leavers' voice
8. Conclusions
9. Recommendations
10. Appendices

1. Introduction:

The term “Care Leavers” is used to describe those children and young people who fall within scope of local authority duties set out in sections 23A and 24D of the Children Act 1989.

The new **Children and Social Worker Act 2017** places a duty on the local authority to publish a **Local Offer for Care Leavers** providing information about services which the local authority offers that may assist Care Leavers in, or in preparing for, adulthood and independent living. This includes services relating to health and wellbeing; relationships; education and training; employment; accommodation and participation in society.

This policy is intended to give an overview of Rutland’s offer to Care Leavers.

2. Legislation:

The **Children and Social Work Bill** seeks to combine a commitment to protect the most vulnerable in society with the “ambition to ensure that disadvantaged children have the brightest possible future”. The Bill has been heard in the House of Lords and will be debated in the House of Commons in October 2017. A subsequent strategy entitled **Keep on Caring – Supporting Young People from Care to Independence** published in July 2016 sets out a plan for the delivery of a ‘step change’ in services for children in and leaving care.

At the same time the House of Commons Education Committee published its inquiry into the **Mental Health and well-being of looked-after children 2015/16**.

The **Children and Social Work Act 2017** received Royal Assent on 27th April 2017. The Act aims to:

- Improve support for children looked after in England and Wales especially for those leaving care;
- Enable better learning about effective approaches to child protection and care in England;
- Establish a new regulatory body for the social work profession in England.

3. Current Position:

Rutland underwent their Single Inspection Framework in November 2016 which was published in February 2017. **The graded judgement about the experience and progress of Care Leavers was that it was good.**

Ofsted considered

- Local authority staff make strenuous efforts to maintain frequent contact with all its Care Leavers, and have remained in touch with all of them for the past two years.
- Care Leavers are safe and none are judged to be at risk of harm.
- All current Care Leavers reside in suitable and safe accommodation, either with former foster carers or independently.
- Local authority prioritises the accommodation needs of Care Leavers.
- Care Leavers successful make the transition to independent living and there have been no tenancy breakdown for Care Leavers in the last two years.

4. Status of Care Leavers:

Sections 23B and 23C of the 1989 Act impose duties on local authorities to provide assistance and support to relevant children and former relevant children (namely, children who were formally looked after by a local authority).

- **Eligible child** is a child aged 16 and 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who is still being looked after. The local authority will for all 'eligible' young people undertaken an assessment of the young person's needs and prepare a pathway plan with them. The assessment is defined as determining whether any services offered by the local authority may help to meet the young person's needs and what advice and support would be appropriate for the responsible authority to provide.
- **Relevant child** is a child aged 16 and 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who has left care. This also includes young people who were detained (e.g. in a youth offending institution or hospital) when they turned 16, but who were looked after immediately before being detained. The local authority will for all 'relevant' young people undertake an assessment of the young person's needs and prepare a pathway plan with them. The assessment is defined as determining whether any services offered by the local authority may help to meet the young person's needs, and what advice and support would be appropriate for the responsible authority to provide.
- **Former relevant child** is a young person over 18 who was previously 'eligible' or 'relevant'. Councils support this group until aged 21, or up to 25, if they are in education or training. Where a former relevant child seeks support or advice regardless of pursuing education they must be offered a personal advisor who remains involved until such time as the young person is 25 or the young person advises the local authority that a personal advisor is no longer required.

The former relevant young person will have an updated assessment of their needs and a pathway plan outlining support as assessed.

- **Former relevant child pursuing education** is any former relevant child whose case was closed for any reason. If we are informed that they are planning to continue education or training they can ask the council to assess whether they can get any support. Any help would last until their 25th birthday.
- **Qualifying child** is any young person under 21 (or 25 if in education or training) who stops being looked after or accommodated in a variety of other settings, or being privately fostered, after the age of 16. This also includes young people who are under a special guardianship order. We will offer the same assessment process, support and advice to qualifying children in Rutland to enable the right support to be offered.

5. The Local Offer

The local offer for Care Leavers is a combination of statutory entitlements i.e. what the law says must be given and what Rutland and its partners can give over and above its local duty.

The Children and Social Work Bill wants local authorities to consult on and publish details of their Local Offer to Care Leavers setting out areas such as education, health, employment and accommodation.

5.1. Our Pledges

Our Pledges are our (the Council) promise to Children Looked After and Care Leavers. Our young people have fully contributed to the Pledges and they are based on their voice and what they want from us as their corporate parent.

The pledges have been adjusted to meet the council's commitment following the new Act.

Our Pledges:

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are happy and have good Health and Well Being

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are safe and have stable accommodation (including staying out options)

Children Looked After and Care Leavers achieve their potential and have access to good education, training and/or employment

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are listened to and participate in society

Children Looked After and Care Leavers build positive relationships

Young People are prepared to become independent and successful adults

Our local offer is as follows:

5.2. Personal Advisers

Currently all local authorities must appoint a personal advisor for Care Leavers until they are 21 or until they are 25 if they are in education or training.

Once the Children and Social Work Bill is legislated the right to a personal adviser will be extended to the age of 25.

In Rutland personal advisors' caseloads are on average 15 and we work hard to ensure young people have a consistent advisor.

Our personal advisors sit within the Fostering, Adoption and Care Leaver Service to ensure there is access to support, knowledge and advice as it is needed.

5.3. Assessment

All our care leavers will have a needs led assessment which will fully consider their needs including information, advice and guidance around the suitability of their choice of further/higher education or training. Care Leavers will also have a pathway plan which will support their needs and outline the local authority's duty to support and assist as assessed. Pathway plans will be overseen by managers and regularly evaluated as part of our internal audit process.

5.4. Health assessment

All our Care Leavers will have a leaving care health assessment and have information about their health to support them into adulthood.

5.5. Accommodation

Following assessment, care leavers in Rutland are considered priority; we will work with housing to locate appropriate housing based on the young person's needs including access to supported accommodation to continue to prepare them for independence. This means that the Local Authority should

- a. provide accommodation that meets the needs of the care leaver, particularly considering any health needs or needs arising from disability
- b. be satisfied that the landlord is safe and of good character
- c. take into account the care leaver's wishes and feelings and their education, training or employment needs

The Children and Families Act 2004 introduced Staying Put to allow young people to stay with their foster families until the age of 21. Where this is an option, Staying Put is high on our agenda to ensure that young people can access Staying Put options and Rutland will consider this when placing children in care from the earliest stages. Where this is not an option we will work closely with housing to ensure appropriate options are accessed.

Supported lodgings will be accessed and provided when the assessment identifies this as a need; whilst Rutland do not have their own supported lodgings provisions we would and do purchase such provision to ensure the needs of young people are met.

5.6. Advocacy Support

Care Leavers are able to seek support from the Independent Advocacy Service offered by the Rutland Youth Service. Care Leavers are able to access the service directly or through their personal adviser. Advocates support Care Leavers in getting their voice heard and speak up about things they may be unhappy about or wish to change.

5.7. Mentoring Service

Care Leavers are able to access one to one mentoring support via the Youth Service to help them work through any personal difficulties they may be experiencing. Mentors typically support young people with a range of issues including personal relationships, confidence building, being safe online and managing emotions. Young people can self-refer to the service or ask their personal adviser to refer them. A mentor will typically support a young person for up to 12 weeks.

5.8. Education and Careers Support

The Youth Education and Careers Service supports Care Leavers to find suitable education, training and employment opportunities and can work one to one with young people to achieve their identified goals. Support on offer typically includes the Five Steps to Success programme - Steps include skills and interests audit; how to search for jobs/courses; CV writing/completing application forms, preparation for interviews; and action planning/goal setting. The Service also offers drop in appointments for general careers advice and works around the needs of the young person. Young people can drop into Jules House to seek support or ask to be referred by their personal adviser.

5.9. Sexual Health Information Service

Care Leavers are able to access confidential support and advice regarding sexual health through the Jules House Service and dedicated advice phone number. The Service offers 'C' card registration and along with a number of other local providers is able to distribute condoms in a safe and confidential environment, it also offers confidential pregnancy testing and information/advice around relationships and contraception choices.

5.10. SUSO (Speak Up, Speak Out)

SUSO is our Children in Care Council (CiCC). Care Leavers are invited to attend and contribute to enable them to have a voice and also to support the development of services, policies and procedures for children looked after, sharing their experiences to allow us to continually improve our service.

5.11. Corporate Parenting Board

Our Care Leavers are invited to our Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) where they can influence practice and policy and have a voice. This is open to all our Care Leavers and Children Looked After (age appropriate). Where there is no attendance, their voice is captured through our Pledges and feedback surveys which is gathered and shared at the CPB.

5.12. Education and Employment:

The Government's [Keep on Caring Strategy](#) sees the local help and support that Care Leavers receive from their local authority as being critical to whether Care Leavers make the transition from care to independence successfully. One of the key outcomes of the strategy is to improve access to education, employment and training.

Our virtual head teacher attends our Corporate Parenting Board and has oversight of all our children looked after and care leavers to ensure we measure attainment.

There is access to performance data which is reviewed regularly with regards to young people accessing education, training and/or employment.

5.13. Mental Health

Care Leavers are able to access free, confidential Mental Health and Wellbeing advice and support through a variety of service providers.

Rutland County Council Early Help Youth team offers a range of support and information services as note above including 1 to 1 mentoring to support young people up to age 19 with personal and social development.

Rutland has a **specialist emotional health and wellbeing practitioner** who covers Melton and Rutland who works with our schools and our young people to deliver support on emotional health and well-being issues. While in Rutland the specialist emotional health and wellbeing practitioner works closely with the youth services team at Jules House. 1 Cold Overton Road, Oakham, LE15 6NT, Telephone on 01572 758301

ChatHealth – 'ChatHealth' is a messaging service for young people to get confidential advice about health related issues. It is for young people attending school or living across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) aged 11-19 years. **07520615387**, Care Leavers up to the age of 19 can also access this service

Healthforteens – Healthforteens is a website providing information and advice for young people and web chats on a variety of health topics – e.g., ways to deal with peer pressure and 'ways to manage sadness' <https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/>

Kooth - Kooth delivers online counselling, advice and support across LLR: <https://kooth.com/> It delivers 1 to 1 counselling and live and off line advice forums. This can be accessed on your mobile, tablet or desktop.

'Let's Talk-Wellbeing' – provides psychological assessment and treatment for mild to moderate common mental health problems offering a range of approaches including one to one appointments, group workshops, self-help books, leaflets, online and telephone support. This is available to young people aged 16 and over who are registered with a GP and self-referral is available you can call **0115 8760157** or visit <https://www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/leicestershire-county-and-rutland-service->

For any kind of support Care Leavers will have a personal advisor who can sign post them to ensure that the right support is accessed.

5.14. Transitions and Adult Social Care Support for Care Leavers who have Special Educational Needs.

Rutland County Council can carry out an assessment for an adult who appears to have a need for care and support. The aim of an assessment is to find out what your care and support needs are, to help understand your situation and get the right kind of care and support when needed. It is also a way to recognise and build on strengths, and look at what adults want to achieve in their day to day life.

To find out about having an assessment please contact the Adult Duty Desk on 01572 758341 or email adultduty@rutland.gov.uk or visit our website at <https://www.rutland.gov.uk/>

Transition Planning for Disabled Young People

Until the age of 18, the care of children with long-term health conditions is the responsibility of child health and social care services. From 18, they are usually the responsibility of adult services. Between the ages of 16 and 18, the child will start a "transition" of the services affecting:

- **health and social care**
- **mental health**
- **education**
- **financial benefits for the young person and their family**
- **work**
- **housing**

Planning for this transition should begin when a child is in Year 9 at school (13 or 14 years old) at the latest. Transition should be an ongoing process rather than a single event and should be tailored to suit the child's needs.

The local authority may also combine a transition assessment with any other assessment being carried out (provided everyone agrees). For example, if a hospital is carrying out an assessment the local authority can carry it out jointly with them. Transition assessments could also potentially become part of a young person's **education, health and care plan**.

Assessing needs

If a child, young carer or an adult caring for a child (a 'child's carer') is likely to have needs when they, or the child they care for, turn 18, the local authority must **assess them** if it considers there is a 'significant benefit' to the individual. The local authority has a duty to do this even if the person hasn't asked to be assessed or already receives any other services. This will help the young person to understand whether they (and their carer, where relevant) are likely to be eligible for care and support when they turn 18 and what might be available to them.

When either a child or a young carer approaches their 18th birthday they may ask their local authority for an assessment. A parent or carer may also ask for an assessment as the child they are caring for approaches 18 because the child's situation will potentially be changing dramatically which means that the carer's needs may change too. This right applies to everyone, whether or not they are currently receiving services.

The assessment should provide advice and information about what can be done to meet or reduce the person's needs as well as what they can do to stay well and

prevent or delay the development of needs. It will help you or the person you care for to plan ahead. There is no set age that you have to be assessed at as the best time to plan the move to adult services will be different for each person.

As a care leaver, all other support service as outlined here remains available and your personal advisor will support you to ensure all the support is coordinated.

6. Care leavers success and what they tell us:

From Ofsted report 2016:

Care Leavers feel positive about themselves. A key reason for this is the care and attention given to them by the leaving care worker who attends their parents' evenings and award ceremonies.

These young people feel that the interest and care demonstrated helps them to aspire to future success.

From Care Leavers 2016

I feel supported by my care leaver worker; she is always there to support me

My care leaver worker has supported me with so many things, including graduating from university

I have had a good experience of care, my journey did not start well but this has changed and is going well now

I have felt fully supported in preparing for adulthood

7. Conclusions

Rutland has been judged by Ofsted as 'Good', with regards to our work and support to Care Leavers.

We are very proud of all our Care Leavers and their achievements and would like to thank them for their ongoing support and influence they offer us as a council. We know there are things we can still do better and intend to work on these areas further as part of our local offer.

With our local offer alongside our promise (Pledges) to Care Leavers we are confident that as a council and in partnership with our partners and our Care Leavers and those young people looked after we will enhance our service further and ensure that all our Care Leavers have the best start possible into adulthood.

As a council we want to make sure also that our Care Leavers can access a range of services to meet their needs including financial support, access to health, education training and employment, personal advisers, effective pathway planning, appropriate housing including supported accommodation if this is assessed as being a need and mental health and counselling service as required.

8. Recommendations

- Our offer will be published on our website to ensure all information regarding 'Our Local Offer to Care Leavers' is in one place and accessible to care leavers, their families and our partners.
- Posters and Leaflets offering support and information will be devised which will go to all our young people looked after in preparation for becoming a Care Leaver as well as all current Care Leavers.
- Ensure all Care Leavers, including those who have already left the service, are aware they can access a Personal Advisor up to the age of 25 if they wish.
- We will ensure our Care Leavers are included and consulted in our quarterly survey which will go to all children looked after and Care Leavers to obtain feedback on how we as a local authority are doing.
- Continue work on Fostering sufficiency to consider Staying Put and providing sufficient resources to expand on this in Rutland.
- Begin working on a strategy to develop local supported lodgings locally to provide the 'next step' accommodation to bridge the gap from foster care to independent living.
- We will ensure there is a clear policy for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children nearing their 18th birthday to support them to claim asylum.
- There is a clear and transparent regarding the service offered to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who have exhausted their appeal rights in respect of asylum claims post 18 years.
- We will extend the invitation to attend part of the Corporate Parenting Board to allow Care Leavers to provide valuable feedback on their journey through care and into independence.

Our Local Offer to Care Leavers POSTER:



The Local Offer to
Care Leavers 2017.d

Rutland Local Offer to Care Leavers LEAFLET

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Rutland's Local Offer To Care Leavers

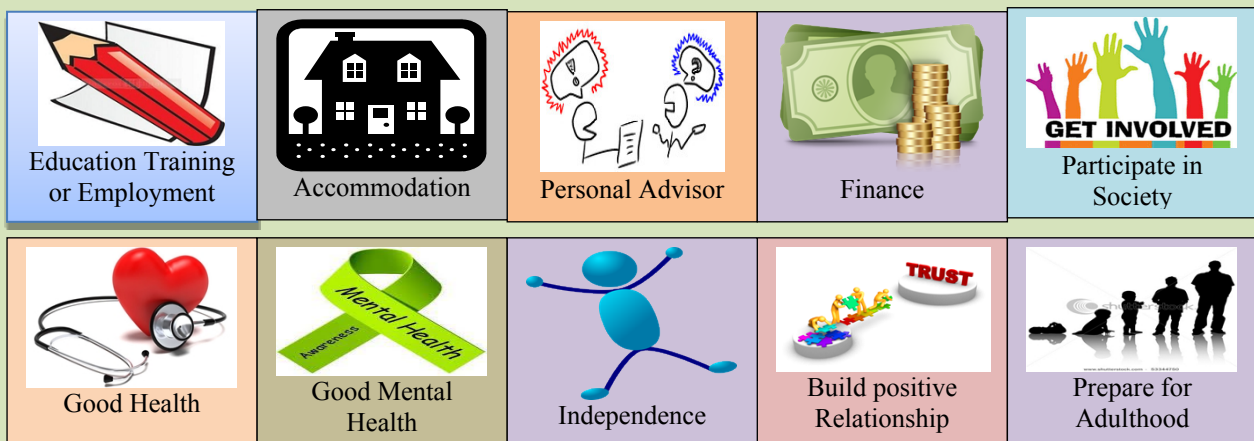


The Local Offer to Care Leavers:

Outlined here are our services to our Care Leavers, which will assist them in or in preparing for adulthood and independent living.

We will provide information, guidance and support on services which can be accessed locally as well as in the area in which they reside.

This includes:



Visit our website at www.rutland.gov.uk/my-services/health-and-family/childrens-social-care/leaving-care/

Or you can email us on Fostering@rutland.gov.uk or call us on 01572 722577 and we will happily talk to you about the support on offer to ensure you have all that is needed as a Care Leaver.



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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

23 November 2017

ANNUAL ADOPTION REPORT 2016-2017

Report of the Director for People

Strategic Aim:	Reaching our Full Potential	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr R Foster, Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding Children and Young People	
Contact Officer(s):	Dr Tim O'Neill, Director for People and Deputy Chief Executive	01572 758402 toneill@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	N/A	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel:

1. Notes the content of the report

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. This is our Annual Activity Report 2016/17 with regards to Adoption.
- 1.2. This annual report provides information relating to adoptions in Leicestershire and Rutland during the period from April 2016 to March 2017.
- 1.3. We have below drawn information from the annual report which specifically relates to Rutland.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. As a small authority, it is not effective for the children we serve to provide an in-house adoption service for Rutland and as such we have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Leicestershire County Council's Adoption Agency.
- 2.2. Attached to this document is the report for the Leicestershire and Rutland Adoption Service (LRAS) which has been signed off in Leicestershire. The report includes data for Rutland children but does not provide a picture solely for Rutland Adoption to show our performance, processes, or what we are

achieving and where we need to improve. Therefore we have noted information specifically for Rutland below.

3. PERFORMANCE

3.1. The information from LRAS evidences that we are performing better than the England 3 year average in every performance measure, including the average time between:

- a) A child entering care and moving in with their adopters;
- b) The average time between a Placement Order being made by the court and deciding on a match to adopters;
- c) Children who wait less than 16 months to move in with their adopted family;
- d) Adopters waiting less time before being matched after approval.

3.2. The first three measures are particularly specific to Rutland. The measures are:

- a) Performance measure 31a- Leicestershire Adoption Agency's average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is 517 days. The England average is 558. However for Rutland the average for 2016/17 was 388 days which **significantly exceeds** the England average.
- b) Performance measure 31b - The average time between Leicestershire receiving court authority to place a child and Leicestershire Adoption Agency deciding upon a match to an adoptive family is 195 days. The England average is 226 days. Rutland's average for 2016/17 was 81 days, **significantly better** than the England average.
- c) Performance measure 31c - Children who wait less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with their adopted family currently stands at 68%. This is significantly better than the England 3 year average of 55%. Rutland's children were all moved to their prospective adopters less than 16 months after becoming looked after so Rutland stands at 100%
- d) The fourth measure 31d, relating to adopters being matched after approval is not applicable to Rutland as all potential/approved adopters are considered to be Leicestershire adopters.

4. PROCESS CHANGES

4.1. Previously LRAS would take sole responsibility for Agency Decision Maker (ADM) ratification of adoptions which included agreement that a child should be placed for adoption, the approval of adopters and the match between the child and adopters. This changed within the reporting year with the Rutland ADM (the Head of Children's Social Care) working in partnership with the Leicestershire to ensure that all decisions involving Rutland children are

ratified by Rutland County Council. In practice, the Leicestershire ADM will ratify decision making for the Panel, but decisions relating to the plan for Rutland children and the match between Adopters and the child will be further ratified by the Rutland ADM. To support this, there has been an undertaking from the Leicestershire ADM that all decisions will be ratified and sent to the Rutland ADM within 5 working days to prevent delay in placing children with their prospective adopters.

- 4.2. Further process difficulties were identified when the new Head of Children's Social Care came into post in September 2016 and as such there are regular meetings between managers from the LRAS assessment and family finding teams and from Rutland County Council to ensure that issues can be resolved, processes can be adapted to make them as efficient as possible and review of the needs of each child are completed regularly and in a timely way to prevent delay. These meetings are working well and have been productive in improving the service offered to Rutland children.

5. PERMANENCE TEAM AT LRAS

- 5.1. The role of the Permanence Team within LRAS is to undertake all family finding for children who need permanence via the adoption route. They also family find for adopters post approval and support adopters through the placing and support children through to the Adoption Order. This work also includes family finding for long term fostered children.
- 5.2. In addition to day to day operations, the team is very committed to ongoing developmental projects such as:
 - a) Life Appreciation Days
 - b) Permanence planning of children in long term foster care
 - c) Further embedding of the Signs of Safety methodology in their practice.
 - d) Increased involvement in the completion of sibling together or apart assessments
 - e) The use of Theraplay and Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy principles to ensure that the Permanence Team can appropriately support adopters to understand the needs of our children and parent them therapeutically.
 - f) The introduction of an Adoption Support Worker who will offer regular contact with adopters post the final order for three years, to ensure the adoption support plan remains appropriate and to help adopters implement their training and link with support networks.
- 5.3. These services are available to Rutland children in the same way as for children in Leicestershire. Life appreciation days are now completed for every child from Rutland placed for adoption prior to placement and sibling assessments are also routinely considered and completed if appropriate, exploring what is best for each individual child as well as for the sibling group.

6. PERMANENCE PROCESS

- 6.1. Permanence within Rutland has not always followed a formal route; whilst the ADM always agreed the care plan for adoption, consideration of permanence was not routine for every child who became looked after.
- 6.2. Whilst creating a formal permanence process remains an ongoing piece of work, by the end of 2016/17 the embedding of the At Risk of Care/Child Looked After Panel was complete; the purpose of the Panel was and is to review the care plans for every child moving through Care and Proceedings to ensure all options are properly considered and to parallel plan for adoption wherever appropriate.
- 6.3. We also now have a Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Manager who is permanent in post; she attends the meeting and provides an independent view from the perspective of the child which is central to good decision making and robust planning. This allows for management scrutiny at every level, with multi-agency decision making as Health and Education colleagues attend.

7. EAST MIDLANDS ADOPTION CONSORTIUM (EMAC)

- 7.1. Rutland Children's Social Care continues to be a member of EMAC. Central government is keen to see the success of such arrangements and so we have made a commitment to this group of 9 local authorities and 3 Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAA). It is particularly vital that Rutland engage with this process because we are a small authority and we have been part of the Regionalisation Adoption Agency Programme which encourages good practice that is child centred and embedded in the future vision. To this end, the team manager for the Fostering, Adoption and Care Leaver Service continues to engage and contribute to RAA work stream programs and will be working with the Service Manager to make changes to align current practice to best practice identified within permanence and adoption.

8. THE REGIONALISATION OF ADOPTION

- 8.1. As noted in the Business Case for Establishing the RAA (Regional Adoption Agency) Pilot in LLLR (Leicester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Rutland),
- 8.2. "It is a core proposition of the Department of Education's Regionalization Program that adoption services need to be delivered at greater scale through the creation of a single pool of children and adopters within each region". However, the East Midlands region covers an area of considerable size, and is very diverse, and services still need to be accessible to children and adopters within a reasonable distance. .. Learning from the development of the EMRAA (East Midland Regional Adoption Agency) project to date, and from other projects, indicates that there is a need to align services across local authorities prior to integration... Based on the outputs of the operational work streams, the Project Team will prepare a service description and a project plan for each of the following deliverables:
 - a) Adopter Assessment
 - b) Home finding and Matching
 - c) Childrens Permanence Teams

The project team will provide regular updates to the sub regional Project Governance Board (PGB) regarding progress against the project plan.”

- 8.3. Rutland is actively participating in the regional discussions about adoption, what the service might look like and how this will improve outcomes for our children. Currently it looks likely that the adoption service will cover Lincolnshire, Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Authorities, but the regional work continues.

9. OFSTED INSPECTION

- 9.1. The Leicestershire and Rutland Adoption Service (LRAS) was rated as Requires Improvement to be good by Ofsted in November 2016, and requires improvement for the adoption service. Ofsted raised concerns about Adoption in Rutland stating in the summary “*Adoption is considered as a permanence option for all children who cannot return home, but it is not achieved as quickly as it could be. Post-adoption support is poor. Life-story work is not undertaken consistently to enable children and young people to understand their histories or experiences.*” There are further references to a lack of consideration of all permanence options for children who have entered Care in Rutland.

10. PERMANENCE

- 10.1. Since the Ofsted report Rutland has been working hard to address the concerns raised, with a focus on clear permanence planning at a much earlier stage. By the end of 2016/17 process (as described in the permanence section) was laid down to ensure that all appropriate care plan options now run parallel to planning for children to return to their parents when children are looked after. This will ensure a timely decision at conclusion of Proceedings. This also forms part of a wider piece of work with our longer term Children Looked After whose need for permanence was also being considered with a view to a plan for adoption if appropriate.
- 10.2. It is also observed that LRAS did not routinely seek permission to send out the referral for adoption at an early stage, meaning finding potential matched adopters took much longer after the Court agreed the care plan of adoption. This is an area we are working on now to ensure families are sought at the earliest stage.

11. POST ADOPTION SUPPORT

- 11.1. Of Leicestershire and Rutland Adoption Service, the Ofsted inspection during November 2016 identified that assessments of prospective adopters were of a good quality and our matches between adopters and children were timely and appropriate.
- 11.2. LRAS had already completed a self-assessment and had identified that the Post Adoption Support offer needed to be more robust and Ofsted echoed this finding.

- 11.3. In response to this a child care support worker has been appointed who provides practical and emotional support to adopters in the early stages of a child being placed, further support phone calls at 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, 24 months, 30 months and 36 months.
- 11.4. LRAS also provides Post Adoption support through their social workers and applications to the Adoption Support Fund and sponsor a range of events to encourage adopters to talk to one another, share experiences and offer advice. A Christmas party was held for adopters and their children in December 2016. The team received positive responses to this and further events are planned for 2017/2018 including the development of a quarterly newsletter. In addition to this, the Agency will be contributing to a website to ensure that the Adoption Support Offer is accessible to all.

12. LIFE STORY WORK

- 12.1. The expectation is that every child who is placed for adoption will receive an age appropriate life story book setting out their life and how they came to be adopted, to help children to understand why they are with a new forever family, what happened with mummy and daddy and what they were like as babies/young children.
- 12.2. Social Workers also provide a later life letter to a child, which is to be held until they are teenagers, starting to question who they are and how they fit within their world, the community and society. The later life letter gives a full and frank account of why they came to be adopted, as well as giving more detailed information about their birth parents.
- 12.3. Both pieces of work are vital for children who have been adopted, to enable them to develop emotional resilience, self-esteem and a positive identity as they become young adults. Rutland's approach to life story work was highlighted to be inconsistent and needed to change.
- 12.4. We have now developed our supervised contact service to have two full time Child in Care workers who are able to document the children's lives through contact with their birth parents and to complete the life story book in timescale (2 weeks after the adoption order is made). This in turn allows the social workers to focus their time on the later life letter to ensure that is also ready on time and of sufficient quality.
- 12.5. Further to this, we run fortnightly practice workshops where issues such as life story work and the purpose for the children are covered, with reflective discussion then feeding into group supervision about the child. Quality began to improve prior to the end of March 2017 and the work on this continues to progress.

13. OVERSIGHT OF SERVICE

- 13.1. Prior to Ofsted the Fostering and Adoption service did not have a permanent manager for a long period causing the team to lose focus and drive. Following Ofsted we diverted an experienced team manager to the team to provide some much needed support and guidance and we appointed a

permanent team manager who is very experienced in permanence work. This has allowed for the positive communication between the LRAS and Rutland which is supported by a permanent Service Manager who came into post in February 2017 and by the new Head of Children's Social Care, who came into post just prior to the Ofsted inspection.

- 13.2. The permanent Team Manager is Shirley Bowron, who is line managed by Kate Dexter, Service Manager for Children's Social Care. Rebecca Wilshire, the Head of Children's Social Care, oversees the service and ensures robust scrutiny of services provided.

14. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1. Within 2016/17 Rutland has achieved timely outcomes for the children in our care when compared with the England 3 year average.
- 14.2. However, as Ofsted rightly observed, with the small number of children we look after, decisions and planning could be timelier.
- 14.3. There has been a great deal of work completed over the past few months, particularly with the arrival of the new Head of Social Care, with improved working relationship between Rutland and LRAS further driving forward progress within the service.
- 14.4. The work on permanence within Rutland is not yet complete, but there is now clear oversight and scrutiny of care plans and of decision making which means that decisions and planning take place at an earlier stage, all options for permanence as considered and the ADM is aware of and in agreement with care plans for children.
- 14.5. Further to this, the ongoing training and development of staff enables better quality assessments on which to base decisions, with life story work now a high priority within the authority.
- 14.6. One area not mentioned within the LRAS report is the need for foster to adopt placements, particularly for new born babies, as this can prevent the need to ever move a baby to a second or subsequent placement. Whilst foster to adopt placements require skilled adopters who can also understand that they may only be able to foster a child for a short period, research has shown the significant benefits of foster to adopt placements.
- 14.7. Rutland plans to explore this further with LRAS and other LAs if need be to ensure we have the capacity to offer a foster to adopt placement if this is the best plan for a child.
- 14.8. With the regional work being undertaken around adoption, we will hope to move towards a more collaborative approach during 2017/18 and see outcomes for our children improve even further.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1. Whilst much has been achieved, there is still a lot to do to ensure that good

practice and positive, timely outcomes are achieved for children within Rutland. The recommended next steps are:

- a) Complete and embed more detailed life story work training with all workers in Children's Social Care
- b) Embed the Permanence Process within Rutland so all care planning decisions for long term care of a child are made 2 months prior to the outcome of Proceedings
- c) Retrospective permanence planning for children who have remained Looked After to ensure this is the right care plan and they are with the right carers
- d) Work with LRAS to continue to provide appropriate Post Adoption Support
- e) Continue the work with the Regional group exploring good practice and the need for a regional adoption agency
- f) Continue to work on timescales for placement for adoption when this is the care plan for a child
- g) Explore concurrent (foster to adopt) placements for Rutland children where appropriate
- h) Work with LRAS regarding foster to adopt placements, commissioning from local LAs if we know a concurrent placement may be needed
- i) Work with LRAS to ensure referrals for adoption go out at the earliest stage, seeking permission from the court to send out a redacted referral even before the placement order is granted.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1. No Background Papers

17. APPENDICES

17.1. Appendix A Fostering Service Statement of Purpose

17.2. Appendix B Leicestershire and Rutland Annual Adoption Report

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.



Rutland Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2017-18



Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Aims Objectives and Principles of the Fostering Service.....	2
3. Status and Constitution	4
4. Structure of the Service.....	5
5. The Work of the Fostering Service.....	6
6. Supporting the Fostering Service.....	10
7. Foster Carers' Charter	12
8. The Process of Recruiting and Approving Foster Carers	17
9. Rutland Foster Panel	18
10. Complaints.....	18
11. Allegations Made Against foster carers	19
12. Equality and Diversity	19
13. Advocacy and Children's Rights.....	20
14. Ofsted	20
15. Our Contact Details	20
16. Appendices.....	21

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Purpose sets out the aims, objectives, principals and values of Rutland Fostering Service. It describes how the aims and objectives will be met in partnership with children, young people, their families, carers and partner agencies.
- 1.2 In doing so it sets out how the Service meets the requirement of Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011 together with Regulations relevant to the placement of children in foster care, such as the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (the 2011 Regulations), which form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of fostering services
- 1.3 The Fostering Service is part of the Children and Young People's Service and its primary role is to recruit, assess, train and support in-house foster carers.
- 1.4 This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated regularly. It is available to staff, foster carers, children and young people, other professionals and the public upon request.

2. Aims, Objectives and Principles of the Fostering Service

2.1 The aims of the Rutland County Council Fostering Service are to:

- 2.1.1 Provide high quality and safe care within a family setting for local children and young people who are unable to live within their own families that would be good enough for our own children.
- 2.1.2 Provide a range of foster carers able to meet the emotional, physical, cultural, and religious, diversity and ethnicity needs of all the children in care looked after by Rutland County Council.
- 2.1.3 Rutland County Council delivers its Fostering Service through a dedicated Fostering, Adoption and Care Leaver Team, managed by a Team Manager covering the county. The Team supports carers for children placed in foster care, private fostering, with Connected People and Special Guardians.
- 2.1.4 Rutland County Council adoption work is commissioned and undertaken by Leicestershire County Council, however, we retain responsibility for our children.
- 2.1.5 This Statement of Purpose relates to the Fostering element of the service.

2.2 The main service objectives are to:

- 2.2.1 Place children and young people in local foster placements where relationships with family, friends and community are maintained and continuity of education, health and cultural links and activities is ensured. In instances where it is not possible to achieve this within the Council's Foster Placements an appropriate placement outside the resources of the County Council will be sought.
- a) Maintain a sufficient number of foster care placements in relation to the location, numbers, needs, age range and characteristics of the looked after population and review this annually.
 - b) Recruit foster carers who are trained and supported in providing safe care to children who live with them.
 - c) Where possible a safe family member or friend will be the preferred placement choice.
 - d) Provide a safe and nurturing foster placement with every effort made to achieve good outcomes for the children in public care within set timescales and to agreed standards.
 - e) Where possible to ensure that children meet with their prospective foster carers prior to placement and where this is not possible receive a foster carer profile.
 - f) Provide for sibling groups to be placed together when this is in their best interests. We will ensure that a sibling assessment is carried out in all cases.
 - g) Respect and promote the child's heritage, culture, diversity and identity.
 - h) Promote contact between the child and their family consistent with the care plan.
 - i) Achieve permanence (forever family) for all children who are unable to safely return to their families and promote Staying Put for those children who are secure within their foster placement.
 - j) Ensure openness and partnership working between all those involved and concerned with the child's welfare.
 - k) Involve young people and foster carers in developing services and building their feedback into service development.

2.3 Principles and Standards of Care

- 2.3.1 Rutland's Fostering Service undertakes to ensure that its practices comply with the Fostering Service Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards 2011.
- 2.3.2 Rutland's policies with regard to Recruitment, Assessment, Approval, Training, Management and Support of foster carers reflect the expectations set out in the Code of Practice (1999).
- 2.3.3 Rutland Fostering Service adheres to the principles of the Children Act 1989, that the welfare of the child is paramount.
- 2.3.4 Rutland Fostering Service has procedures in place to minimise the opportunities for the abuse and exploitation of children. These include a complaints procedure for carers and children, an equal opportunities monitoring service for children looked after and a safe care policy.
- 2.3.5 Rutland Fostering Service has an Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure foster carers and children looked after are treated equally and fairly, regardless of their colour, race, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, gender, disability, marital status, sexuality, age, appearance and any other unjustified reason.
- 2.3.6 Rutland Fostering Service undertakes to respect confidentiality and only provide full relevant information to those who need to know.
- 2.3.7 Rutland Fostering Service undertakes to ensure that children looked after are enabled and encouraged to fulfil their potential in every aspect of their lives. Children are listened to and encouraged to be involved in decision making about them.
- 2.3.8 Rutland Fostering Service undertakes to safeguard and promote the health of children looked after and ensure they receive appropriate medical care and that they are protected from illness, infection and injury.
- 2.3.9 Rutland Fostering Service has full membership of the Fostering Network and Coram BAAF (British Association of Adoption and Fostering).
- 2.3.10 Fostering allowances are in line with the recommended national minimum allowances and the Fostering Network

3. Status and Constitution

- 3.1 Rutland County Council is an approved fostering service provider and will be inspected under the Care Standards Act 2000.
- 3.2 Decision making and approval of foster carer registrations (Regulation 28) are delegated to the Agency Decision Maker, Children's Services.
- 3.3 A Fostering Panel has been established in accordance with Regulation 24. This is managed on behalf of Rutland County Council by Mountfields House Services Ltd.
- 3.4 Where Rutland County Council needs to use any other fostering agency for the provision of placements, these agencies must be approved and accredited under the East Midlands Fostering Consortium arrangements. No child is placed in these circumstances without the approval of the Head of Service, Children's Social Care.
- 3.5 Legislation and policy framework

Rutland County Council's Fostering Service aims to meet the requirements of:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- The National Minimum Standards 2011
- The Children Act 1989 guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services 2011
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The Child (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- The Disability and Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Carers (CWDC) 2007

Alongside national legislation, Rutland County Council's Fostering Service also has clear operational policies and guidelines to ensure consistent and high quality standards of service delivery.

4. Structure of the Service

The fostering team are located at Rutland County Council, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP. The team manages the recruitment, assessment, approval, support and placement process which enables children in Rutland to be placed in a range of fostering settings.

Rutland Fostering Adoption & Care Leaver Team May 2017

Rebecca Wilshire - Head of Children's Social Care

Kate Dexter - 01572 720952 - Service Manager – Children Social Care

Fostering, Adoption and Care Leaver Team	
Team Manager	Shirley Bowran – 01572 758859
Supervising Social Worker (SSW)	Sarah Nichols – 01572 758864
Supervising Social Worker (SSW)	Rachel Smith – 01572 758482
Family Worker to CIC	Amanda King – 01572 720993
Family Worker to CIC	Karen Clarke – 01572 758284
Personal Advisor to Care Leavers	Joy Donlan- 01572 758357
Personal Advisor to Care Leavers	Stephanie Berry
Team Assistant	David Bannister - 01572 758855

Rebecca Wilshire, Head of Service - Agency Decision Maker (ADM)

Fostering Panel	
Graham Lloyd – Panel Chair	Jane Greenhalgh – Vice Chair/Administrator
Rob Hinxman – Panel Member	Ruth Archer – Panel Member
Albert Blake – Panel Member	Jade Riley – Panel Member
Jo Wiseman – Panel Member	Gary Mash – Panel Member

5. Work of the Fostering Service

Rutland County Council's Vision is:

"That every child gets the right support at the right time"

"Specific to Fostering:

"That every child receives the level of care that would be good enough for our own child or young person"

"That local children have access to local families"

5.1 The strategic outcomes that the Council commits to are:

- a) Young people are healthy and safe
- b) Children and young people develop to their potential in their early years and are ready for school
- c) Children and young people learn and achieve
- d) Children and young people are ready for adult life
- e) The expectations for all children looked after are enshrined within these outcomes
- f) We will champion the importance of aspiration
- g) We will promote self-esteem, self-belief, and resilience in all children
- h) We will encourage all children to be the best they can be
- i) We will use resources to focus on outcomes, life chances and opportunities
- j) We will work jointly with foster carers to help promote these objectives
Rutland aims to provide sufficient local placements to enable placement choice and enable children, where appropriate to remain in their own communities
- k) Rutland delivers Staying Put opportunities to enable young people to remain in their placements post 18.
- l) The training, induction and development of new foster carers are in line with the requirements of Standard 20 (National Minimal Standards (NMS)) and carers are expected to meet the training, support and development standards within 12 months of approval.

5.2 Health of Children Looked After

5.2.1 The Fostering Service recognises that the health of Children Looked After is a key priority and, in many cases, those children may not have experienced good health prior to coming into care. This can include missed health appointments, missed immunisations and specific health problems that require specialised support.

5.2.2 All children and young people are registered with GPs, dentists and opticians. Children and young people placed in foster care have an initial health assessment carried out by a designated GP and an annual review by the same GP. Medical forms recommended by the British Association for Fostering and Adoption (Coram BAAF) are used to record and complete both the initial and annual review.

- 5.2.3 The health needs of children and young people are regularly monitored through the children looked after review process. We continue to support the role of a specialist CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) post to support foster carers in dealing with mental health issues.
- 5.2.4 Foster carers complete a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for all children between the ages of four and sixteen years of age. This ensures that all Children Looked After have access to professional support for any emotional difficulties they may have. The results of the SDQ's are monitored & shared with health colleagues prior to health reviews.
- 5.2.5 The Children Looked After (CLA) nurse attends regular CLA panel meetings to track health progress and also attends Fostering Support Groups to share new information and developments and offer advice where appropriate.
- 5.2.6 Part of the training programme for foster carers focuses on promoting a healthy lifestyle, good diet and exercise. All mainstream foster carers must undertake first aid training as part of their mandatory post approval training. Foster carers have training sessions as required on promoting the health of children in public care.

5.3 Education of Children Looked After

- 5.3.1 The Fostering Service promotes the educational attainment of children placed with foster carers. Each child in public care has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) and, where appropriate, a leaving care Pathway Plan. Foster carers are expected to involve themselves in assisting children in placement to achieve satisfactory attendance, assist with homework and participate in parent/teacher events.
- 5.3.2 All Foster carers are encouraged to register with their local Children's Centre and to take up the services as part of the County's Early Help available to all children.
- 5.3.3 All children looked after are able to access the 15 hours early entitlement at the age of 2 years to access suitable nursery provision. This provision is set to increase to 30 hours per week in September 2017.
- 5.3.4 All young people are supported to attend school and efforts are made to maintain children in their existing schools. Foster carers who transport children to out of catchment schools have their transport expenses reimbursed.
- 5.3.5 All children looked after have an entitlement to the pupil premium. This is further enhanced by the Council and the nature of the provision is monitored by the PEP process.
- 5.3.6 Foster carers are aware that it is unacceptable to take children and young people out of school for family holidays.
- 5.3.7 There is a designated teacher in every Rutland school with responsibilities for liaison, educational monitoring and pastoral care for children who are in public

care. There is a Social Inclusion Development Officer within Rutland County Council whose role is to ensure effective liaison with schools and to promote educational attainment and attendance of children in public care.

- 5.3.8 The children in public care education service is overseen by a virtual head-teacher who works in partnership with schools, carers and other organisations to improve the educational attainment of children in public care.
- 5.3.9 Children looked after in key stage 2, 3 & 4 receive additional tailored tuition support.
- 5.3.10 Training and guidance is available to carers to ensure they have a comprehensive understanding of the educational needs of children in care and the resources available to help meet those needs.
- 5.3.11 The opportunity for children and young people to succeed in hobbies or sports is seen as an important element of the fostering task and is supported through fostering allowance payments.
- 5.3.12 The Children in Care Council (CiCC) continues to develop Speak up Speak out (SUSO). They have supported the development of the children looked after pledges which outlines the Council's promise. Foster carers are asked to support and encourage children and young people to partake to offer us the challenge and scrutiny around the service delivery.
- 5.3.13 On an individual case basis foster carers will also have a role in helping young people acquire skills for independence by opening their own bank accounts. Carers promote a positive attitude by encouraging the use of savings accounts and pocket money for managing finances.

5.4 Safeguarding Children in Foster Care

- 5.4.1 The Fostering Service makes every effort to ensure that children are looked after by carers who care for them and keep them safe. Any concerns about foster carer practice or allegations of abuse are treated seriously and investigated under the LRSCB Child Protection Procedures.
- 5.4.2 Allegations against foster carers are investigated using an established procedure by our Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The Fostering Service funds each fostering household's membership of the Fostering Network which brings the benefit of legal protection insurance and access to support and advice from their staff, including free legal advice and counselling service.
- 5.4.3 All placements have detailed risk assessments in place as requested. These are reviewed at regular intervals following a change in the child's or carer's circumstances.
- 5.4.4 Rutland's Fostering Service placement policy is that children have their own bedroom and this is the basis on which all placements are made. In circumstances where a child/young person may be considered to share a bedroom with a sibling, the risk assessment procedure must be followed.

- 5.4.5 The assessment of carers includes checking employment and accommodation history. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and local authority checks are completed on everyone aged over sixteen years of age living in the household. A range of personal and professional referees are also contacted and visited.
- 5.4.6 Safe Caring is an important part of foster carer training and all carers complete a Safe Caring Handbook with the support of their Supervising Social Worker. The Safer Caring Handbook contains information including house rules, how everyone in the house communicates with each other, routine and personal safety.
- 5.4.7 The foster carers' home is also assessed to ensure that it is safe for children to live in. Assessments that are completed include comprehensive Health & Safety checks, pet assessments and fire safety plan.
- 5.4.8 All foster carers have a Professional Development Plan that identifies development needs to improve knowledge and skills, reviews the carer's performance in the fostering role against key tasks and explores the changing service needs and their implications for the carer and fostering service.
- 5.4.9 All foster carers attend mandatory training on how to provide the best care for children. This includes first aid training, safeguarding, attachment and recording. There is a full training programme available for the year 2017/18. Foster carers are required to attend the Foster Carers Support Group a minimum of three times annually.
- 5.4.10 All foster carers have an allocated Supervising Social Worker who will complete a minimum monthly supervision with them to look at their practice and offer support. An unannounced visit to the foster home is made at least once each year by the Supervising Social Worker. In addition, the Team Manager completes annual review visits.
- 5.4.11 A matching policy is in place to ensure that effective matching of children to placements is undertaken to improve placement stability for children and young people. The service recognises that children's wellbeing is best met by high quality care in a stable placement where they can form positive relationships with their care givers and have a full understanding of their life story. Every effort is made to minimise moves and to work with the children and carers to consistently maintain a stable placement.
- 5.4.12 Children's care plans are reviewed every three months through the Statutory Review Process for Children Looked After. Children also have mechanisms to ensure their wishes and feelings inform their care plan. All children are given information about how to report abuse and carers are prepared in how to manage disclosure and prevent allegation arising in the placement. In addition children and young people have access to an independent advocacy service.
- 5.4.13 Rutland County Council provides an independent advocacy service to children and young people in public care through a register of advocates whose skills are appropriately matched.

5.4.14 As part of the assessment process, prospective foster carers have a health assessment. If there are on-going medical issues, a full medical assessment is undertaken. All carers are required to update their health assessment every five years. Foster carers who offer respite care to disabled children are, if necessary, offered specialist training to meet the needs of individual children.

5.5 Staying Put

5.5.1 The law changed under the Children and Families Act 2014 to place a duty on local authorities to support care leavers who wished to stay with their former foster carers (staying put arrangements) until the age of 21.

5.5.2 Foster carers who are willing for their foster children to stay with them beyond the age of 18 are encouraged to do so under the Staying Put scheme. This gives the opportunity for young people to be prepared for the transition into independence from the stable base of their long term Foster Placement.

6. Supporting the Fostering Service

The work of the Fostering Service is delivered through a number of key relationships and support:

6.1 Fostering Team Manager

The Team Manager holds operational responsibility for the service. They provide direct supervision to the supervising social worker and other members of staff in the team and management oversight of the team. The Team Manager ensures that performance indicators are met. These include ensuring timescales are met for staff and foster carer supervision and foster carer reviews. The Team Manager completes an annual review visit to the foster carers. The Team Manager attends Regional Framework meetings and provides oversight of the Independent Foster Placements commissioned by Rutland.

The Management group looks to continuously improve standards of care informed by inspections, audits, new legislation and guidance and evaluates the effectiveness of service delivery.

6.2 Supervising Social Worker

The role of the supervising social worker is to provide support and supervision to the foster carer. They also assist with practical difficulties and the provision of equipment. They are a crucial link between the carer and the child's social worker. There is a supervision policy for foster carers. Supervision takes place monthly and includes a focus on personal development.

Although most support visits will be prearranged, the supervising social worker has a duty to undertake at least one unannounced visit per year. They are also responsible for undertaking the annual review of approval which incorporates the carers' views and those of any birth children and fostered children. The review also includes reports from social workers and the supervising social worker who will identify strengths and future learning needs. Following completion of the review the foster carer is issued with a statement of re-approval.

6.3 Child's Social Worker

The child's social worker is responsible for the overall management of the child's care plan. They have a statutory duty to visit the child within one week of placement and thereafter at a minimum of six weekly intervals until a child is confirmed as being in their permanent placement by which time a 3-monthly visiting pattern may be appropriate. In some circumstances the visiting pattern will be more frequent particularly in the early stages of a placement or when there are particular difficulties.

6.4 Foster Carer Support Groups

Foster carers are required to attend a minimum of three foster carer support groups annually. Meetings take place bi-monthly. These are attended by members of the Fostering Team and the CLA nurse. Different professionals attend to provide information and support development.

All foster carers receive a handbook which details local policy, information about fostering terms and conditions and guidance the about requirements concerning care and control of children and other procedures. The handbook is regularly updated and reviewed and amended information is sent to foster carers.

There are plans to develop a buddy system to foster carers.

6.5 Family support worker

The Family Support Workers supervise contact for children with their parents and other family members where a referral has been made by the children's social worker as part of the child's care plan. They work alongside the child's social worker to support life story work with looked after children and are able to support children and carers in placement where necessary.

6.6 Out of Hours Service - Emergency Duty Team (EDT)

The service provides a team of social workers who are available outside office hours to offer emergency support to service users and the public. The EDT can offer telephone advice and has access to placement information and emergency placements with foster carers. The EDT workers will pick up and address any safeguarding issues for the child which may arise out of hours.

6.7 Training

The Fostering Service ensures that foster carers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care to meet the needs of each child placed in their care. Training of foster carers is a significant aspect of the service and is provided both pre and post approval. There is an annual training programme in place that foster carers are expected to attend.

Training is primarily provided in-house and reflects changing practice, local experience and the national fostering agenda as well as through the local early years' service and Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

The development of access to online training for foster carers is in progress.

Each foster carer has a Personal Development Plan (PDP) where training and development is recorded. This is monitored to ensure it is linked to meeting the TSD competencies and the foster carers on going professional development.

Each foster carer has an allocated supervising social worker who provides monthly supervision and ongoing support. Foster carers are provided with the contact details for the team to ensure that they are able to access immediate support as required.

6.8 Other information/ Support for foster carers

6.8.1 Foster Carers Handbook: The Fostering Service provides all carers with a fostering handbook that gives factual information to carers about the service, roles and responsibilities. The handbook also provides information on procedures and safer caring.

6.8.2 Foster Carer Agreement: Outlines expectations of the working relationship between foster carers and the Authority.

6.8.3 Scales of Foster Care Allowance booklet: gives information about financial matters including allowances, fees any additional payments and age related pocket money.

6.8.4 Guide to complaints and compliments: Outlining procedures to making a complaint or compliment.

6.8.5 Personal Development Plan: All foster carers must complete this portfolio on approval and this is supported and monitored by the allocated Supervising Social Worker.

6.8.6 Information leaflets: The fostering service will regularly provide foster carers with information leaflets and emails relating to safe care, training and local events.

7. Foster Carers' Charter

Foster Carers' Charter as outlined by the Fostering Network for 2017 outlines what foster carers can expect from the fostering service:

7.1 Roles and commitment

The Fostering Service's role:

The Fostering Service aims to provide stable and first rate foster care for children who are valued, supported and encouraged to grow and develop as individuals. To achieve this aim, we recruit, train and approve foster carers and deliver ongoing support to them, in order to give them the skills and confidence they need to develop meaningful relationships with the children and young people they care for and provide stable and loving homes while they are part of the foster family.

The foster carer's role:

Foster carers are at the heart of the foster care service. We are assessed, trained and supported to look after children and young people by developing meaningful relationships in a family environment, providing them with stability, care, love and an opportunity to grow and develop and to reach their potential.

Our relationships with other members of the team around the child are based on mutual trust and respect. This charter explains what we expect from each other.

7.2 Fostering Service's commitment

You can expect from us:

1. Working in equal partnership
2. To be seen as a valued member of the team around the child
3. Information
4. Clarity about decisions
5. Support to increase foster carer confidence and resilience
6. Ongoing learning and development
7. Fair treatment
8. Communication and consultation.

7.3 Foster carers' commitment

You can expect from us:

1. Working in equal partnership
2. Respect for the child and the members of the team around the child
3. Information
4. Learning, development and support
5. Communication and consultation.

7.4 What foster carers can expect from the Fostering Service

7.4.1 Working in partnership - We recognise that foster carers have skills and expertise and make the biggest difference to the everyday lives of children in care.

We will:

- Value your skills and expertise equally to those of other professionals
- Recognise that you are the people who live with children every day and know them best
- Include you in all meetings that affect you and the children you care for
- Ensure that our Fostering Service will meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance
- Treat you without discrimination and respect you as a colleague

- Respect confidentiality.

7.4.2 Information - We know that information is vital in order for foster carers to provide care that meets the child's need.

We will:

- Give you the information you need in order to care safely for the child
- Provide this information in writing prior to placement, or as soon as possible in the case of emergency placements
- Ensure that there is a placement plan drawn up in discussion with you and agreed with you in advance of placements, or as soon as possible in the case of emergency placements
- Provide you with information on all financial matters including tax, allowances and additional entitlements
- Provide you with full details of all relevant departmental policies and procedures.

7.4.3 Clarity about decisions - We recognise that in order for children to live a full family life foster carers must be able to make decisions regarding the children they foster.

We will:

- Ensure that, wherever possible, you are able to make everyday decisions that mean that your fostered child is not treated differently to their peers and can feel part of your family
- Provide clarity about any decision you cannot take at the outset so that everyone understands who is responsible for what.

7.4.4 Support - We recognise that fostering is an isolating and challenging task and appropriate and timely support makes all the difference to the fostering family and to the child in your care.

We will:

- Respond positively to requests for additional support
- Provide you with monthly supervision and weekly phone contact
- Give you honest and open feedback
- Provide you with access to 24 hour support from people with fostering expertise
- Pay you allowances, expenses and fees in a timely manner
- Pay fees that reflect the task
- Ensure that there is a local group, recognised by the Fostering Service, where you and your family can find support and share experiences with other fostering families.

7.4.5 Learning and development - We believe that foster carers must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout their fostering career. This will ensure they have the skills and knowledge they need, and allow them to develop their practice in order that they can help transform the lives of the children they foster.

We will:

- Provide you and your family with appropriate and relevant training by trainers who understand the fostering task
- Enable you to develop meaningful relationships with the children in your care and the fellow members of the team around the child
- Provide you with other development opportunities which make the best use of your skills and expertise, such as mentoring or providing training or support.

7.4.6 Fair treatment - We recognise that foster carers have a right to be treated fairly, no matter what the circumstances.

We will:

- Consult with you before changing terms and conditions
- Ensure openness in all of our discussions and communications with you
- Ensure that you are treated with respect, kept informed and provided with emotional support should you be subject to an allegation
- Provide a framework for dealing with allegations and adhere to our agreed timescale
- Ensure that you know the arrangements for the payment of fees and allowances in the event that you are not able to foster while the subject of an allegation.

7.4.7 Communication and consultation - We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will:

- Facilitate regular communication between you, councillors and the Director of Children's Services
- Ensure that we consult with you in a meaningful way on matters that affect you
- Give you timely feedback from consultations.

7.5 What Fostering Services can expect from foster carers

7.5.1 Working in partnership - We will demonstrate a high standard of care and conduct.

We will:

- Demonstrate our expertise and make use of our skills to the best of our ability
- Provide children with a positive experience of family life
- Attend meetings about the children and young people we care for
- Work with the agencies involved with the child such as school, health and religious establishments
- Show a willingness to work with birth parents, wider family and people significant in a child's life
- Meet the standards set out in fostering regulations and guidance and follow departmental policies and procedures
- Respect confidentiality.

7.5.2 Respect for the child - Every child and young person should be respected as an individual and be supported in meeting their needs and achieving their aspirations and potential.

We will:

- Develop a meaningful relationship with the child: understand their needs, support their growth, and become an advocate and champion for them
- Respect and promote a child's religious, linguistic and cultural heritage
- Afford the same level of protection and care to a child as we would our own child in accordance with the national minimum standards
- Ensure the child has the right to make decisions regarding their own lives, as appropriate to their age and understanding.

7.5.3 Information - We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship and we will aim to build a meaningful and collaborative relationship with our supervising social worker.

We will:

- Inform our supervising social worker about changes in our household
- Inform our supervising social worker about any difficulties that arise for us.

7.5.4 Learning, development and support - We must be enabled to access learning and development opportunities throughout our fostering career. This will ensure we have the skills and knowledge we need, and allow us to develop our practice in order that we can help transform the lives of the children we foster.

We will:

- Be willing and able to develop our skills throughout our fostering career
- Attend relevant training
- Take up opportunities offered to us
- Let you know if we are unable to attend
- Attend and contribute to support groups.

7.5.5 Communication and consultation - We believe that open and honest dialogue is the key to a good relationship.

We will:

- Respond to local consultations and discussion in order to inform the development of the service
- Meet with councillors, service managers and others in order to promote dialogue and a good working relationship
- Support the children in our care to do the same.

8. The Process of Recruiting and Approving Foster Carers

8.1 Rutland Fostering Service has a recruitment strategy which is based on the needs of Children Looked After. The recruitment strategy is reviewed annually to reflect the placements required. The current recruitment strategy is aimed at increasing the diversity of our carers.

8.2 Foster carers are recruited and assessed in line with Rutland guidance based on the National Minimum Standards, Fostering Regulations, Code of Practice (1999) and Children Act 1989 Guidance (Volume 3).

8.3 The recruitment of carers is currently managed and effected from within the Fostering Service.

Recruitment involves:

- Newspaper advertisements
- Holding drop in sessions at County establishments
- Radio adverts and interviews
- Distribution of posters
- Word of mouth through existing carers
- Rutland County Council website

Participation in a range of County wide events

Targeted activity within specific communities in the County

Enquiries are received through the Fostering team where information is taken from prospective applicants. Further information is made available to all interested applicants.

8.4 Procedure for Recruiting, Approving and Training Carers

Applicants contact the Fostering Team.
Contact is recorded and an information pack sent out.
Applicants are invited to request a visit or informal discussion with the Assessing Social Worker.
A visit is arranged, if requested, when all the family members are present. The purpose of this visit is an initial screening and to provide more information. Applicants are advised to complete an Application form if they would like to proceed.
Applicants attend an introductory training course prior to assessment. The course takes place over 3 days. The course is based on The Fostering Networks 'The Skills to Foster' programme.
The purpose of the course is to provide prospective carers with an insight into all aspects of fostering and it also contributes towards their final assessment, if they wish to proceed and are deemed suitable.
Criminal records checks of all the residents of the household over 16 are undertaken including proof of identity.
Prospective carers provide two personal referees and one family referee all of whom are visited by the Assessor.
Employers are contacted when an applicant works directly with children. Schools of carers' children and Health Visitors are also contacted.
An individual/household assessment is undertaken - British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering Form F.
The Rutland Fostering Panel makes a recommendation, which is ratified by the Agency Decision Maker.

Every foster carer is required to sign a Foster Carer Agreement (regulation 28 (5) – (5b)) and in addition a placement agreement (regulation 34) containing all the information the local authority considers is necessary to care for an individual child.

9. Rutland Foster Panel

The Rutland Foster panel operates under the terms of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review.

The Foster Panel considers recommendations for the approval and status of foster carers; plans for long term fostering; the matching of children to long-term placements; Connected Person assessments and many other significant matters relating to the assessment and review of the Service's carers.

There are currently eight members of the Rutland fostering panel

The panel has an annual review day with the fostering team which includes the appraisal of the Panel Chair.

The panel has access to medical and legal advisers should this be required.

10. Complaints

- 10.1 The Directorate has a statutory complaints service, the detail of which is contained in the guide for staff “Handling comments, compliments & complaints”. It is a three stage process

Stage 1 - Informal or problem solving

Stage 2 - Formal stage at which an independent investigating officer is appointed

Stage 3 - A formal review by a panel of independent members, chaired by an independent individual.

- 10.2 Staff must ensure that all carers know who to complain to.
- 10.3 Complainants have the right to involve a friend or an advocate.
- 10.4 The Named Manager monitors all complaints and liaises with the complaints officer and Rutland and Leicestershire Safeguarding Children’s board (LSCB) Business Manager. The information is available to authorised persons only. All foster carers have access to support and information through the complaints procedure at any time throughout the investigation. Support can also be accessed through membership of the Fostering network, the cost of which will be met by the agency.

11. Allegations Made Against Foster Carers

- 11.1 There are times when allegations may be made against foster carers. Rutland Fostering Service recognises that this can be a very unsettling experience for foster carers. In England, the legal framework for investigating allegations against foster carers is set out in the Children Act 1989, Section 47 which places a duty on local authorities to investigate and make inquiries into the circumstances of children considered to be at risk of ‘significant harm’. All allegations will be managed by the LADO (Local Authority Designate Officer).
- 11.2 The National Minimum Standards for Fostering 2 sets out how foster carers should be treated and supported during investigations into allegations. This includes the provision of independent support, emotional support, information and advice about the process and, if needed, mediation between the foster carer and fostering service.

12. Equality and Diversity

- 12.1 The Rutland Fostering Service works to the Rutland County Council’s Equality and Diversity Policy which is available on the Council’s website. All policies and procedures are subject to an impact assessment.
- 12.2 The Rutland Fostering Service will treat all service users fairly, openly and with respect throughout the fostering approval process. Applicants wishing to

be approved as foster carers will be considered irrespective of ethnicity, religion, belief, gender, sexual orientation or disability providing the fostering service considers they can safely meet the needs of children throughout their childhood and into independence. The minimum age for applying to be a foster carer is 21 years old.

- 12.3 Every attempt will be made to find a placement which meets a child or young person's emotional and developmental needs taking into consideration their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender and disability. A matching process is in place to ensure that children looked after are placed with foster carers who are able to provide them with the specific care that they require.

13. Advocacy and Children's Rights

- 13.1 Rutland County Council have access to advocacy services through the Early Help Service within the Youth Service of our Early Help and Intervention Service based at Jules House.
- 13.2 The Children's Commissioner has a legal duty to promote and protect the rights of all children in England.
- 13.3 The Children's Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Office of the Children's Commissioner, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT. Tel 02077838330

Children's Freephone number; 0800 528 0731

14. Ofsted

- 14.1 Ofsted is the independent inspectorate for all social care services in England. It is responsible for monitoring, regulating and inspecting fostering services under the provisions of the Care Standards Act, 2000.

Questions or complaints

For information and advice about Ofsted Online please telephone the contact centre on 0300 123 1231 open 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday

Alternatively, you can email
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Or you can write to this address:
Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester
M1 2WD

15. Our Contact Details

Rutland Fostering Service
Rutland County Council
Catmose
Oakham
Rutland
LE15 6HP

Telephone: 01572 720942
Email: fostering@rutland.gov.uk

16. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Children Social Care Structure Chart



CSC Staff Structure
May 2017 incl phone n

Appendix 2 - Fostering Carer's Charter



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Appendix 3 - Fostering Panel Profiles

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Leicestershire & Rutland Adoption Agency Annual Report 2016 – 2017



Introduction

Leicestershire County Council is responsible for a Local Authority Adoption Agency. It undertakes statutory and regulated responsibilities relating to adoption and has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Rutland County Council.

This report is therefore issued by the Leicestershire & Rutland Adoption Agency.

Under the 2011 National Minimum Standards 25.6 all Adoption Agencies are required to provide one six month and one annual report to the Executive¹ regarding the activity and work of the Adoption Agency and Adoption Panel.

This report is the annual statutory report to 31st March 2017.

Executive Summary

The Adoption Agency implemented a recruitment freeze in April 2015 which was subsequently lifted in April 2016, based on the number of children with adoption plans and the number of available carers. The Agency continued to respond to spontaneous enquiries and as a result 73 potential adopter households attend 5 open evenings between May 2016 and 31st March 2017.

In relation to Leicestershire's performance, the Adoption Agency continues to provide a good service to children and adopters within our service. The scorecard helps the Agency to benchmark against national performance. A summary of this performance is listed below:

- Performance measure A1- Leicestershire Adoption Agency's average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is 517 days. The England average is 558. This is a positive position for Leicestershire Adoption Agency
- Performance measure A2- The average time between Leicestershire receiving court authority to place a child and Leicestershire Adoption Agency deciding upon a match to an adoptive family is 195 days. The England average is 226 days
- Performance measure A3- Children who wait less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with their adopted family currently stands at 68%. This is significantly better than the England 3 year average of 55%.
- Measurements against 'Adopters' indicate that Leicestershire adopters wait for less time than the England average before being matched after approval (68% compared to 73%)

¹ The Executive in Leicestershire is the Lead Member and Scrutiny Members

Consistently, across all indicators, Leicestershire present as performing better than the three year average for England.

Leicestershire is in line with the England average for placing children over 5 years old, however there has been an increase in the number of older children coming through to ADM and there needs to be a specific recruitment campaign for adopters who would consider matches with older children and sibling groups. The Adoption Agency is also working the Specialist Adoption Agency Service (SAMS) and the Regionalisation of Adoption to trial matching of harder to place children across the region. Summary of adoption activity is provided below:

- 25 Adoption Orders were finalised for children in this period. All 25 were Leicestershire children, including 1 interagency match
- 10 Adopters were approved in this period. All are white British
- 31 children have been placed with their prospective adopters during this period (28 Leicestershire children and 3 Rutland)
- 21 children were adopted by Leicestershire County Council approved adopters, 7 Leicestershire Children and 3 Rutland children via the inter-agency process
- 5 sibling groups placed – 4 sets of 2 sibling groups, 1 set of 3 sibling group

At the 31st March 2016 there were 37 children awaiting an adoption placement. The Adoption Agency estimates that 70 new adopters will be needed to undertake good matching for this number of children, as well as provide families for children with more complex needs. This is an ambitious target.

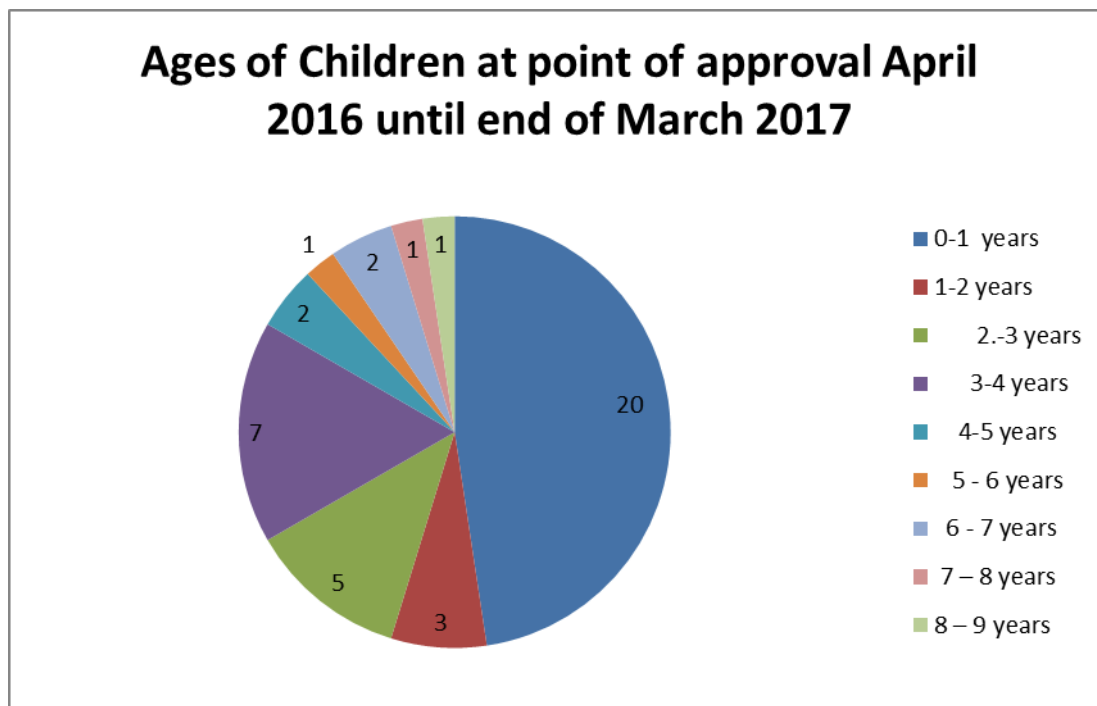
Year to 31st March 2016 relating to Adoption Plans

Eleven adoption panels were held during this period and 42 children were presented to the Agency Decision Maker for an adoption plan. Of the 42 children considered by the Agency Decision Maker, 90% met the National Minimum Standard timescale of coming to panel within two months of adoption being agreed as the plan. Those outside the timescale are due to deferment for technical reasons acceptable under the regulations. The requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 were fully met.

At the point of approval for adoption, most of the children were under the age of 1 years of age. 7 children were over the age of 4 years.

10 adopters were approved in this period. All are white British.

Chart 1 – Ages of children at point of approval for adoption



Year to 31st March 2016 relating to Children Placed and Adopted

31 children have been placed with their adopters during this period (28 Leicestershire Children & 3 Rutland Children). 21 children were placed with prospective adopters assessed and supported by Leicestershire and Rutland Adoption Agency.

Local authorities can decide to place a child with an adoptive family that was assessed and approved by a different adoption agency (this can be another local authority or a voluntary adoption agency (VAA)). In these cases, the agency will charge a fee to cover the costs of recruiting, assessing and approving the adopters. 7 Leicestershire children & 3 Rutland children were matched and placed through inter-agency adoption in this period.

25 Adoption orders were finalised for children in this period, giving full parental responsibility for a child to the approved adopters, made on their application to the court. These were all Leicestershire children. 24 children were adopted by Leicestershire County Council approved adopters, 1 via the inter-agency process.

Finding a home for siblings is difficult because of the inherent complexities of their needs and the skill required to meet the siblings' different needs. Often one of the siblings is significantly older. Nationally, there is a shortage of prospective adopters for 'harder to place' children and there are small numbers of prospective homes for large numbers of sibling groups across the country. During 2016-17 Leicestershire and Rutland Adoption Agency placed 5 sibling groups- 4 sets of 2, 1 set of 3.

Year to 31st March 2016 relating to Adoption Approvals

To be approved as an adopter, the prospective adopter attends training and works with a social worker to determine whether he or she is suitable to become an adoptive parent. This assessment and relevant checks (police, health and references) are presented to an adoption panel, which makes a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) as to whether the prospective adopter is suitable to adopt a child. Once this process has been completed and the ADM reaches a positive decision, the applicant is approved as an adopter.

During the period 2016-17, 10 adopter households were approved. 2 completed within the six month timescale. 4 households asked for a break before continuing to Stage 2 & 3; for the other 4 the Adoption Agency asked for a break before continuing to stage 2. This is considered good practice in order to resolve underlying issues and support the applicants in making this very important and life changing decision.

Recruiting new adopters was 'frozen' until April 2017, aligned to national patterns and trends relating to the Courts decisions relating to permanency plans. Ofsted's feedback, following the inspection in November 2016, is that this pause in recruiting did not impact on the children waiting for adoption. The Adoption Agency has used inter-agency adoption well during this period to ensure that children and prospective adopters are well matched to one another's' needs and circumstances.

10 sets of adopters approved in this period are White/British.

The recruiting of adopters is reviewed quarterly to ensure that we remain clear about the needs of our children and that we recruit to these needs. To this purpose, the

Adoption Agency uses the pre-proceedings and adoption tracker to determine demand, as well as national and comparator authority data, patterns and trends.

The requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 were fully met for all assessments.

Year to 31st March 2016 relating to Quality of Reports

60 Child Permanence Reports (CPRs) were considered by the Agency Decision Maker to agree adoption plans for children. Adoption plans were agreed for 42 children during this period. There were occasions when further information was required and therefore a child's plan had to be considered on more than 1 occasion. This accounts for the difference between the number of child permanence reports considered and numbers of decisions made. In addition, some CPRs have been read more than once because required amendments have been completed and returned before family finding can commence. The quality of the reports was variable as advised by the Agency Decision Maker. Practice sessions for childcare social workers to improve the quality of the reports are to be repeated during 2017-18 and work with SAMS and the Regional Adoption Agency Project Team (RAAPT) will help the Adoption Agency embed best practice across the service. Furthermore, a team manager's quality assurance tool has been introduced, the impact of which will be determined in the next reporting period.

33 Prospective Adopters Reports (approvals and matched) were presented to the Adoption Panel during this period. Panel felt they were all good and raised only minor issues.

Year to 31st March 2016 relating to Children Waiting for Adoption

At the 31st March 2017 there were 18 children awaiting an adoption placement.

Family finding is being actively pursued with placements being sought via the National Adoption Register, the local East Midlands Adoption Consortium and Link Maker. The Adoption Agency is also participating in a regional pilot with SAMS and the RAAPT pilot to determine the merits of closer working and cross agency matching.

At the point of an ADM decision being given to agree a care plan of adoption, children are profiled by members of the Permanence Team and are then, if appropriate, an anonymous profile is placed on *Link Maker* (an electronic tool that joins-up children's social care across the UK to increase placement choice for children, and to improve use of data and collaboration between local authorities and providers).

The full profile of the child is released at the point that a Placement Order is granted by the Court. The Adoption Agency always seek to place with Leicestershire adopters initially; if this is not successful a search within the East Midlands Consortium is progressed with a national search only being completed if no suitable adopters are identified after this point. Leicestershire is clear that matches between children and adopters should be based on the adopters' ability to meet the needs of the child and is a child centred and child led process. We have been successful in matching and have not needed to participate in national exchange days or adoption activity days.

In this period we successfully matched 3 children referred by Rutland County Council.

On 31st March 2017 we had 7 adopter applicants in stage one and a further 6 in stage two of the assessment process.

3 children were placed under *Foster for Adoption* protocols; a sibling group of 2 and a single child (Fostering for Adoption places a child or children with approved adopters who are also approved as foster carers. During the fostering stage of the placement the courts are deciding what is in the child's best interests but the local council have already decided that adoption is the right plan). Another child was placed under Regulation 24 of the 2010 Care Planning Regulations with their elder full sibling and adopters.

Year to 31st March 2016 relating to Adoption Disruptions

There has been 1 adoption disruption during this period. In this case, the child returned to the care of the local authority.

Year to 31st March 2016 relating to Post Adoption Support

Pre and post adoption support is provided in a number of ways within Leicestershire for a number of reasons, such as to help our adopters parent in a way that takes into consideration the trauma their children have suffered or the impact that that care has had on their child's health and development.

The adoption social worker offers support up to three years post adoption order, especially in cases where adoption breakdown or disruption is a threat. After this 3 year period, locality led support is available to families at risk of adoption breakdown – this includes active intervention, signposting to support networks and providers, respite and, accommodation of the child or children in the most extreme cases.

Some adopted children and their families require specialist counselling and therapy to help them make sense of their experiences and losses. To 31st March 2017, the Adoption Agency drew down £366,544 from the Adoption Support Fund to pay for direct interventions with adoptees and their families in Leicestershire. This is a

decrease in the amount that was applied for in the previous financial year as that was in excess of £400,000, but reflects the funding cap that came into effect during this period.

Some of the most complex cases may be co-worked by other social work or early help team with support from the Post Adoption Support Worker depending on the level and complexity of need. In such cases an assessment will be conducted and an application may be made for appropriate therapeutic services through the Adoption Support Fund.

Birth Parents are routinely offered support prior to the adoption of their children to help them understand why adoption has been chosen as the appropriate plan for their child and to help them contribute to that care planning. This support is offered through a leaflet provided at the point of ADM ratifying a care plan of adoption. Such requests are presented to *Placement and Additional Resource Panel* where an application for an independent support person will be presented by this service. Similarly, if a birth parent or birth family requires counselling to help them deal with the loss of their child, the Permanence Team will complete an assessment and present the recommendation for support to the *Placement and Additional Resource Panel*.

Post Adoption Support still requires further work and was identified as an area that required improvement in the Ofsted inspection in November 2017. In direct response to this a Child Care Support worker has been appointed. This worker makes a placement visit 6 weeks after the point of placing and will provide a series of visits to ensure that adopters feel supported in nurturing their relationships with their children. Telephone contact will also be made with adopters at 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, 24 months, 30 months and 36 months. The Adoption support plan will be routinely reviewed throughout this period to ensure that it remains appropriate and relevant to the needs of the child and supports adopters to meet those needs.

Birth Records Counselling has maintained a steady waiting list and has been well-managed within the service during this period.

Intermediary services where adopted children are supported to find and meet their birth parents are not carried out in house in Leicestershire. Some initial advice may be given but as with other local authorities, the Adoption Agency signposts adoptees who request this service to third sector agencies.

The demand for Post Adoption Support continues to grow, with specific demand increasing for older children.

The Adoption Agency is working with business partners to improve on-line information to encourage families to self-help and to attend adoption support groups, and to make use of the Virtual School where schools require advice and support. In addition to this, the Agency has introduced a Newsletter to help adopted families feel connected and to make 'reaching out' easier. The newsletter will highlight adoption events sponsored by the Adoption Agency, to encourage sharing and support amongst families who have experience and knowledge.

About the Permanence Team

The role of the Permanence Team is to undertake all family finding for children who need permanence via the adoption route. They also family find for adopters post approval and support adopters through the placing and supporting children through to Adoption Order. This work also includes family finding for long term fostered children.

In addition to day to day operations, the team is very committed to ongoing developmental projects such as:

- Life Appreciation Days
- Permanence planning of children in long term foster care
- Further embedding of the Signs of Safety methodology in their practice.
- Increased involvement in the completion of *sibling together or apart* assessments
- The use of *Theraplay* and *Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy* principles to ensure that the Permanence Team can appropriately support adopters to understand the needs of our children and parent them therapeutically.
- The introduction of an Adoption Support Worker who will offer regular contact with adopters post the final order for three years, to ensure the adoption support plan remains appropriate and to help adopters implement their training and link with support networks.

Adoption Panel

Adoption panels operate to meet the needs of children looked after by the Local Authority, their birth parents or guardians and those who may wish to adopt a child. Panels therefore, perform an important role in assisting the Adoption Agency to reach the best possible decision in respect of whether a child should be placed for adoption; the suitability of prospective adopters or the termination of approval of a prospective adopter; and whether a child should be placed for adoption with a specific prospective adopter/s.

The Adoption Agency's Panel members come with a variety of skills and experiences, and make recommendations after thoughtful scrutiny of relevant paperwork and lengthy discussions with social workers coming to panel. The Panels operate with transparency and have the best interest of the child at the core of all decisions.

The Adoption Agency has 11 independent adoption panel members consisting of 2 males and 9 females and 3 female social workers. All are White British, with the exception of 1 male and 1 female who are British Asian.

There is one panel chair and one vice chair.

There is one panel advisor who delivers advice to both the adoption and fostering panels. This arrangement is under review, based on demand. Meetings between panel chair, the panel advisor and the service manager take place every 4 months.

11 Adoption panels were held during this reporting period.

There has been a decrease of 7 panel members since 2016 as members have left for varying reasons. Panel member's annual reviews are completed by the panel advisor and panel chair.

Rutland Arrangements

We continue to provide adoption services for Rutland County Council under a Service Level Agreement. The Service Level Agreement has been reviewed and agreed from April 2017.

During the reporting period, 8 Rutland children were matched with adopters by this agency.

The Assistant Manager meets with the Rutland County Council nominated officer to review performance.

Statement by the Agency Decision Maker, Helen Gronhaug

"The ADM role has now been in place as a stand-alone post since August 2014. The past year has seen changes in terms of line manager reporting and governance. Since March 2016, the ADM reported to a Head of Service which was initially independent of line management of locality and adoption services. ADM has subsequently been managed by the Assistant Director. This has provided greater clarity in terms of accountability and governance of the ADM decision making, particularly in relation to ensuring the effectiveness of the ADM's quality assurance function. Working with the Head of Service for Field work has supported and strengthened the tracking of individual cases in ensuring follow through of work required by ADM. The ADM now has now joined the escalation meetings held between the Assistant Director and IRO service. This provides a structure for

ensuring individual case related issues and thematic areas are shared with senior management so that required actions are tracked and followed through. The effectiveness of the ADM role in providing positive challenge and quality assurance was recognised within the Ofsted Inspection 2016.

The independent position of the ADM allows for a valuable opportunity to gain an overview of children's care planning and outcomes through oversight of adoption and fostering panels; children's adoption plans as well as foster carer reviews. This allows for the identification of practice and policy themes. This has led to ADM being involved in further practice development (Permanence Practice summit and SGO task and finish group). Since March 2016, ADM sits as a Permanence Panel member which enhances the overview of children's permanence planning across the authority. ADM's quarterly reporting has yet to be established as an integral part of Permanence Panel reporting. A review of Permanence Panel work from March 2016 until July 2017 will be presented to SMT along with an overview of the thematic areas drawn from ADM business. It is intended that this will form part of the department's action planning in relation to permanence as an identified priority area for improvement.

Key issues identified during this period have included some slippage of practice in terms of active twin tracking once a Pack A has been requested. This has led to a delay in adoption medicals being booked. The agency's compliance with adoption regulations required this to be addressed to ensure that adoption medical advisor's reports were available in time for ADM to consider the proposed adoption plan. A practice standard has been introduced to address this.

ADM continues to provide detailed quality assurance feedback for individual CPRs presented at the point of an adoption plan decision. Further presentations to provide feedback on areas for further development to improve quality of CPRs have been delivered by ADM and Assistant Service Manager for Adoption to locality service managers and team managers. There is a need to strengthen the quality assurance function provided by team managers in order to reduce the level of detail of feedback given by ADM. Further work to improve the quality of CPRs through workshops within localities has been identified.

Care planning of sibling groups remains an area for development to ensure issues of "Together or Apart" are considered at the outset of a child's journey. It has been identified that a practice standard is needed to provide guidance on how and when to make an informed decision about completing a formal sibling assessment. This should ensure that information gathering is purposeful from the start of care planning and provides a robust evidence base for decision making.

Analysis has been completed of the children who have been presented for adoption between January-May 2017. This highlighted a much greater proportion of children being put forward for adoption from Locality 3 compared to other localities (14 out of

20 families presented). In reviewing the request for Pack As, this has shown a similar pattern. Further analysis is needed to understand the reasons for this difference between localities.

There is further work needed to ensure matching reports evidence the strengths and vulnerabilities within the match being proposed. Support planning is an area for improvement to ensure all that is known about the child and adopters' needs are reflected in a support plan. There is a need to be as explicit as possible about of the impact of the children's health development and lived experience (acknowledging the impact of neglect and trauma) on short and long term needs and thus what capacity is implied for the adopters.

In terms of Panel functioning, there is a need to ensure their quality assurance function is more robustly carried out. For example, there have been 3 occasions when evidence of adopters' reviews has not been available to Panel but the importance of the adopters' review process in ensuring adopters remain suitable to adopt has not been recognised. A further match has been delayed because work to explore the possibility of a child being placed with an already adopted sibling has not been completed before presenting a match to Panel.

It has been recognised that Adoption Panel has not had access to a legal advisor for some time. This has been raised with Legal Services to ensure Panel papers are scrutinised and there is legal oversight on all cases presented to Panel, even if a legal advisor is unable to routinely attend.

Achieving adoption plans for children who might be considered harder to place, specifically older children or children with disabilities is an area identified for improvement. It is hoped that the work of SAMS will assist our practice in this area."

East Midlands Adoption Consortium (EMAC)

The Adoption Agency of Leicestershire and Rutland continues to be a member of EMAC. Central government is keen to see the success of such arrangements and so we have made a commitment to this group of 9 local authorities and 3 Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAA) since coming into post last August.

The Adoption Agency has been part of the Regionalisation Adoption Agency Programme and has been pro-active in ensuring that good practice that is child centred is embedded in the future vision. To the end, practice leads continue to engage and contribute to RAA work stream programs and will be making changes to align current practice to best practice identified in these work streams.

The Regionalisation of Adoption

"It is a core proposition of the Department of Education's Regionalization Program that adoption services need to be delivered at greater scale through the creation of a

single pool of children and adopters within each region. However, the East Midlands region covers an area of considerable size, and is very diverse, and services still need to be accessible to children and adopters within a reasonable distance. ... Learning from the development of the EMRAA project to date, and from other projects, indicates that there is a need to align services across local authorities prior to integration... Based on the outputs of the operational work streams, the Project Team will prepare a service description and a project plan for each of the following deliverables:

- Adopter Assessment
- Home finding and Matching
- Childrens Permanence Teams

The project team will provide regular updates to the sub regional PGB regarding progress against the project plan.”

Business Case for Establishing the RAA Pilot in LLLR,
Prepared by the RAAPT

The Adoption Agency has not yet received agreement to integrate with services across Lincolnshire, Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, but remain committed to contributing to the planning processes and making the best end decision for children of Leicestershire.

OFSTED Inspection

The Ofsted inspection during November 2016 identified that the Adoption Agency is 'good' with assessments of prospective adopters and our matches between adopters and children were timely and appropriate.

The Agency had already completed a self-assessment and had identified that our Post Adoption Support offer needed to be more robust and Ofsted echoed this finding.

In response to this we have appointed a child care support worker who provides practical and emotional support to adopters in the early stages of a child being placed, further support phone calls at 6 months, 12 months, 18 months 24 months, 30 months and 36 months.

We also provide Post Adoption support through our social workers and applications to the Adoption Support Fund and sponsor a range of events to encourage adopters to talk to one another, share experiences and offer advice. A Christmas party was held for adopters and their children in December 2016. The team received positive responses to this and further events are planned for 2017/2018 including the development of a quarterly newsletter. In addition to this, the Agency will be

contributing to a website to ensure that the Adoption Support Offer is accessible to all.

Officers in charge

The modernisation of the adoption team has been very successful, and, in line with the changes to adoption assessment, the two stage process has been in place since July 2013 and is proving successful.

The service is overseen by an Assistant Service Manager, Michelle Robinson, who supports the Service Manager, Joss Longman, who is responsible for the full Fostering and Adoption integrated Service. These officers report directly to the Head of Service, Nicci Collins, and the Assistant Director Sharon Cooke.

Statement of Purpose

The Statement of purpose was reviewed and uploaded to the public facing Leicestershire County Council Website in January 2016 and will be reviewed annually.

Key message from Assistant Service Manager, Michelle Robinson

“Adoption has been a key part of the Government Agenda since 2012 and has seen significant change.

There is a significant drive to increase the amount of children who are able to achieve early permanency via fostering to adopt. This is an implicit feature of our assessment and training programme to ensure that all adopters are fully informed of the risks and benefits of offering such placements. We routinely ensure that adopters have the opportunity to hear from others who have offered this type of placement within their training.

Leicestershire continues to work pro-actively with other Local Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies within the Regionalisation of Adoption Agencies process as Leicestershire remains committed to the needs of our children and ensuring that they continue to receive a high quality service.”

Michelle Robinson

Assistant Service Manager – Permanency

July 2017

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

23 November 2017

AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

Report of the Director for People

Strategic Aim:	Reaching our Full Potential	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr R Foster, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People (Safeguarding)	
Contact Officer(s):	Tim O'Neill, Director for People and Deputy Chief Executive	01572 758402 toneill@rutland.gov.uk
	Rebecca Wilshire, Head of Children Social Care	01572 758258 rwilshire@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	N/A	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel:

1. Notes the content of the report

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. This is our Annual Activity Report 2016/17 with regards to Audit Activity
- 1.2. This annual report provides a summary and analysis of audits completed during the period from April 2016 to March 2017
- 1.3. This is the first year we have produced an Audit Activity report and will continue to do this on an Annual basis to evidence progress

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 Children Services, undertaken monthly audits of case files, these are selected randomly and all audits are undertaken alongside the practitioner.
- 2.2 Audits are selected to cover cases where Children are looked after, subject to

Child protection, Child in Need cases, Children with disabilities and those access support within early help services.

- 2.3 Audits each month are collated and taken to a monthly Quality Assurance and Performance Meeting, where all Childrens Services Managers and Service Managers attend chaired by Head of Early Help and Head of Children Social Care.
- 2.4 Audits each month are reviewed and we consider themes and areas of concern, from this information we deliver practice workshops to address the areas which require improvement.
- 2.5 Within this audit report there is evidence of improvement from Quarter 1 and 2 which showed more areas of concern than Quarter 3 and 4 (pre and post Ofsted) which evidences improvement of case work, case files and practice.
- 2.6 Within the report Each Quarter has been broken down based on audit findings.
- 2.7 The report gives an overview of 'area of strength' and 'areas for development' for each quarter.
- 2.8 The report includes audits undertaken as part of the Ofsted Inspection, thematic audits and our monthly audits which are undertaken across children's services.
- 2.9 Each quarter we can see an improving picture forming.

3 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. The activity report for Audits attached is to offer oversight of audit findings and this is taken to improve practice
- 3.2. Within the report we have made a number of further recommendations and areas for focus to continue to improve our service and the service which our children and families receive.

4 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 4.1 No Background Papers

5 APPENDICES

- 5.1 Appendix 1 - Audit Annual Report 2016-2017

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.



Rutland County Council

Children's Services Quality Assurance Case Audit Annual Report April 2016 – March 2017

Author:	Joanne Tyler Tracy Holliday
Approved by:	Rebecca Wilshire Bernadette Caffrey
Date:	17 th August 2017

1. Introduction

- This annual report provides a summary and analysis of audits completed during the period from April 2016 to March 2017
- Audit work undertaken falls within the scope of the 'Quality Assurance and Performance Framework'
- During this period, there has needed to be some flexibility in the schedule and themes of the audits completed, to reflect our actions taken from the learning from practice and to inform our preparation for the Ofsted Single Inspection Framework
- Rutland's Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers took place from 14th November 2016 to 6th December, and the case file audits completed for the inspection during this period are documented in this report
- In addition to scheduled auditing in Early Help and Children's Social Care, Early Help have also carried out quality checks of external Early Help Assessments and thematic audits of the child's voice in case files – these reports are included in the appendix 1 at the end of this document
- Service user feedback has also been obtained and a summary of this can be found in appendix 2
- Outside of the audit programme a series of audits will have been undertaken as the need arose, for example safeguarding check of all CWD cases in April 2016 and auditing of cases for the LSCB multiagency quarterly audit process

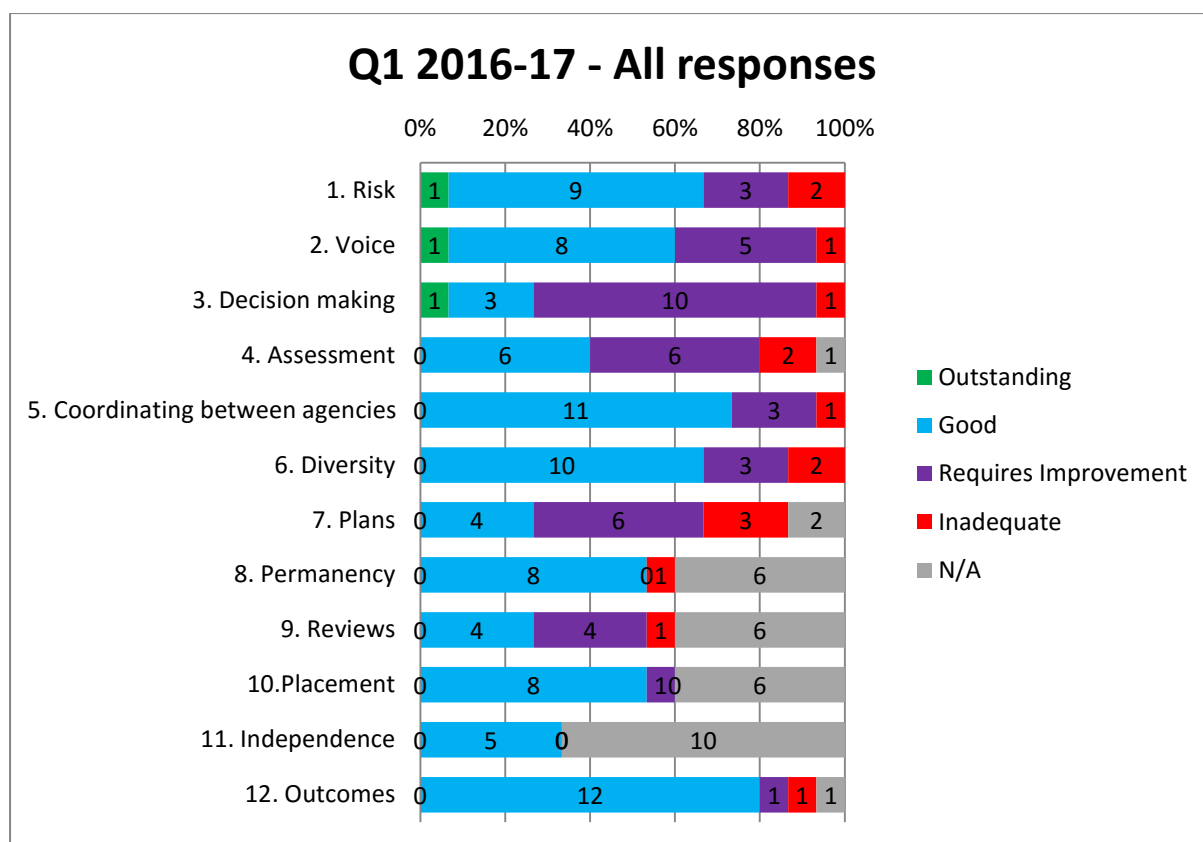
Table 1: Shows number of cases audited during the period April 2016-March 2017

Period	No. of audits completed	No. of audits moderated
Q1 April 16 – June 2016	15	4
Q2 - July 16 – September 2016	40*	3
<i>August 2016 - All CP cases were audited – 30 cases* (included above)</i>		
October 16	No audits completed due to inspection preparation	
November-December 2016	Ofsted auditing of 10 case files	
(Q4) January 17 – March 17	21	0

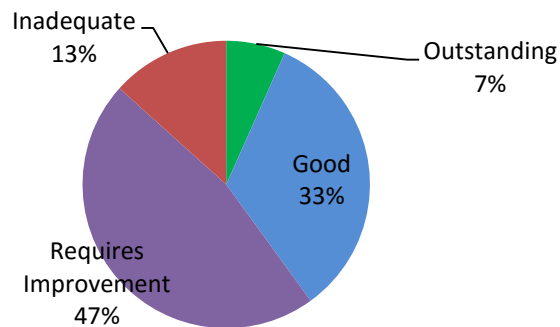
SUMMARY OF AUDITS - Q1 2016-17

Analysis Q1:

- 15 audits were completed in Q1 2016-17
- 6 of those audits were moderated
- Of the 15 audits completed, 1 was Outstanding, 5 were Good, 7 were Requires Improvement and 2 were Inadequate
- Areas of strength were:
 - Identification of risk
 - Coordination between agencies
 - Quality of placements
 - Outcomes
 - Permanency
- Areas for development:
 - Children, YP and families being involved including voice of the child
 - Decision making being timely and effective
 - Quality of assessments
 - Quality of plans
 - Children & YP benefiting from regular reviews



Overall Judgements - Q1 16-17

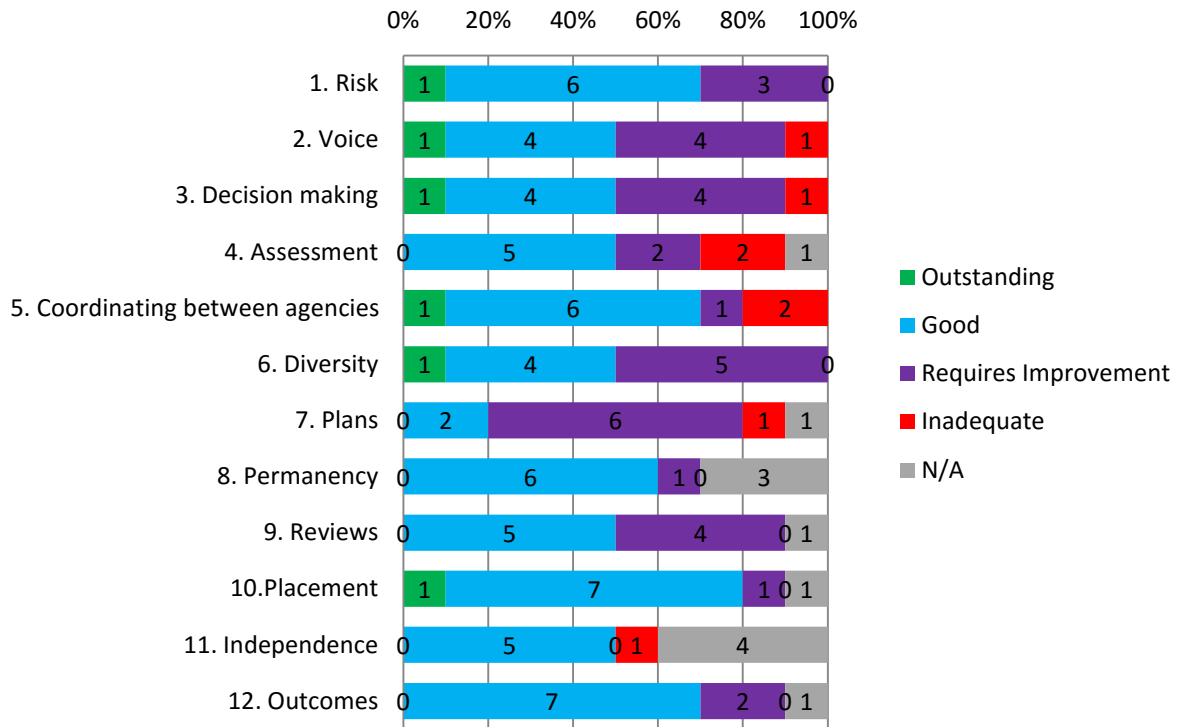


SUMMARY OF AUDITS – Q2 2016-17

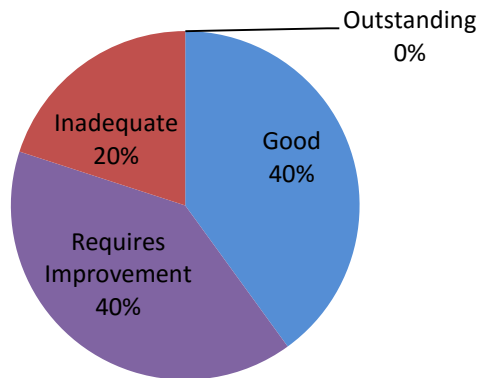
Analysis Q2:

- In total 40 case file audits were completed in Q2 2016-17
- This figure includes a thematic audit of all 30 Child Protection cases in August 2016 (*see further detail and analysis below*)
- Of the 10 'scheduled' audits completed, 4 were Good, 4 were Requires Improvement and 2 were Inadequate
 - 3 of those audits were moderated
- From the 10 audits; areas of strength were:
 - Identification of risk
 - Coordination between agencies
 - Quality of placements
 - Outcomes
 - Permanency
 - Preparation for independence
- Areas for development:
 - Children, YP and families being involved including voice of the child
 - Decision making being timely and effective
 - Quality of assessments
 - Quality of plans
 - Children & YP benefiting from regular reviews

All responses



Overall Judgements - Q2 16-17



August 2016 – Thematic Audit of Child Protection

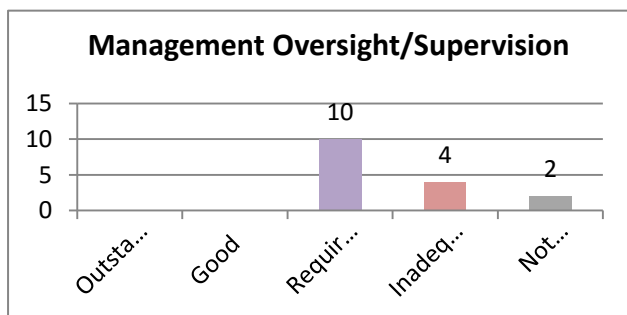
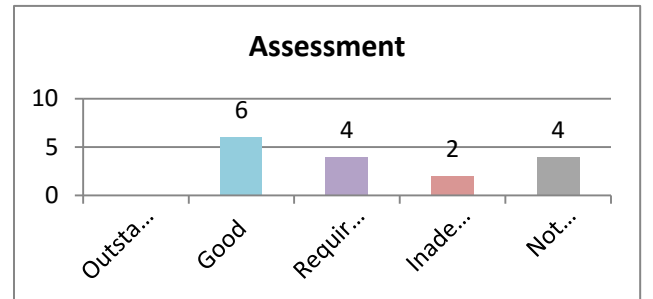
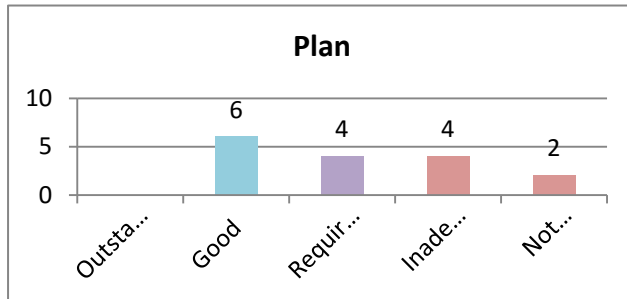
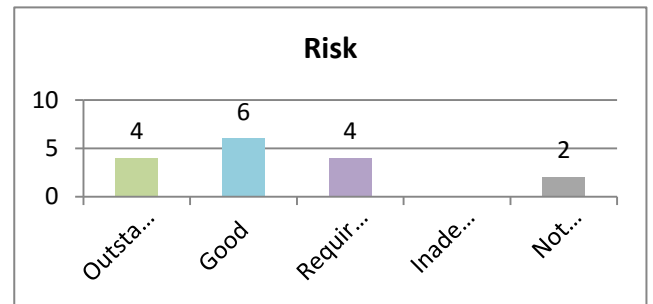
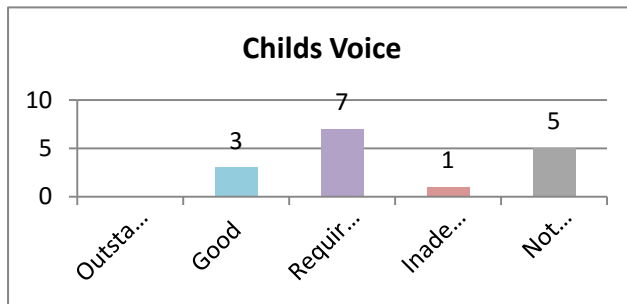
August Child Protection audits were recorded on a thematic audit tool, looking at:

- Child's voice
- Risk
- Assessment

- Plan
- Management Oversight

Type	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Not recorded
Childs Voice		3	7	1	5
Risk	4	6	4		2
Assessment		6	4	2	4
Plan		6	4	4	2
Management Oversight/ Supervision			10	4	2

	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
OVERALL JUDGEMENT	0	7	17	6



Analysis of Child Protection case file audit:

- Visits to take place in line with recommendations in the CP plan and recorded on the child's file
- Children seen alone and bedrooms also seen
- Supervisions to take place routinely

- Stronger and more consistent management oversight
- SMART plans addressing all risks
- Child’s voice to be clear and evidenced in the child’s file – including wishes and feelings
- Stronger analysis
- Chronologies and genograms to be kept up to date
- Monitoring for disguised compliance
- Use Signs of Safety
- Core groups held, on time and recorded
- Ensure effective information sharing, particularly with health
- Ensure effective joint working – Early Help/Social Care
- Ensure current risk isn’t looked at in isolation – consideration should also be given to historical information on the child’s file

November 2017 - Ofsted Inspection – Case Audit Overview Report (Quarter 3)

1. Introduction

- Ten cases were selected for audit for the November 2016 Ofsted (Single Inspection Framework) of Children’s Services in Rutland County Council.
- Each of the ten audits provides an evaluation of case strengths and areas for improvement, and this report brings these together into a number of key themes.
- The audit report provides case examples drawn from the ten audits to illustrate the thematic findings.
- Each of the ten audits is graded overall (across outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate), and within each audit twelve key practice areas are judged individually across the same four point scale.
- The ten cases were audited by senior practitioners and team managers within Rutland children’s services, and each of them moderated by a different senior or team manager.

Profile of the cases audited:

Cases by age	No. of cases
Under 1 year	1
Age 1 to 5	2
Age 6 – 9	2
Age 10 – 14	2
Age 15 and over	3
TOTAL	10

Table 1 – Age summary of audited cases

Cases by type	No. of cases
Early Help	0
Child Protection	2
Child in Need	2
Looked After Child	3

Adoption and Permanence	1
Care Leaver	2
TOTAL	10

Table 2 – Type of case audits

Table 3 below shows a summary of the judgement for each of the 12 sections of the 10 case audits undertaken for inspection.

- Out of all the section judgements made (n=120), 3% were inadequate, 51% Requires Improvement, 42% were Good (4% were ‘not applicable’).
- For the overall judgement, six were Requires Improvement and four were Good.

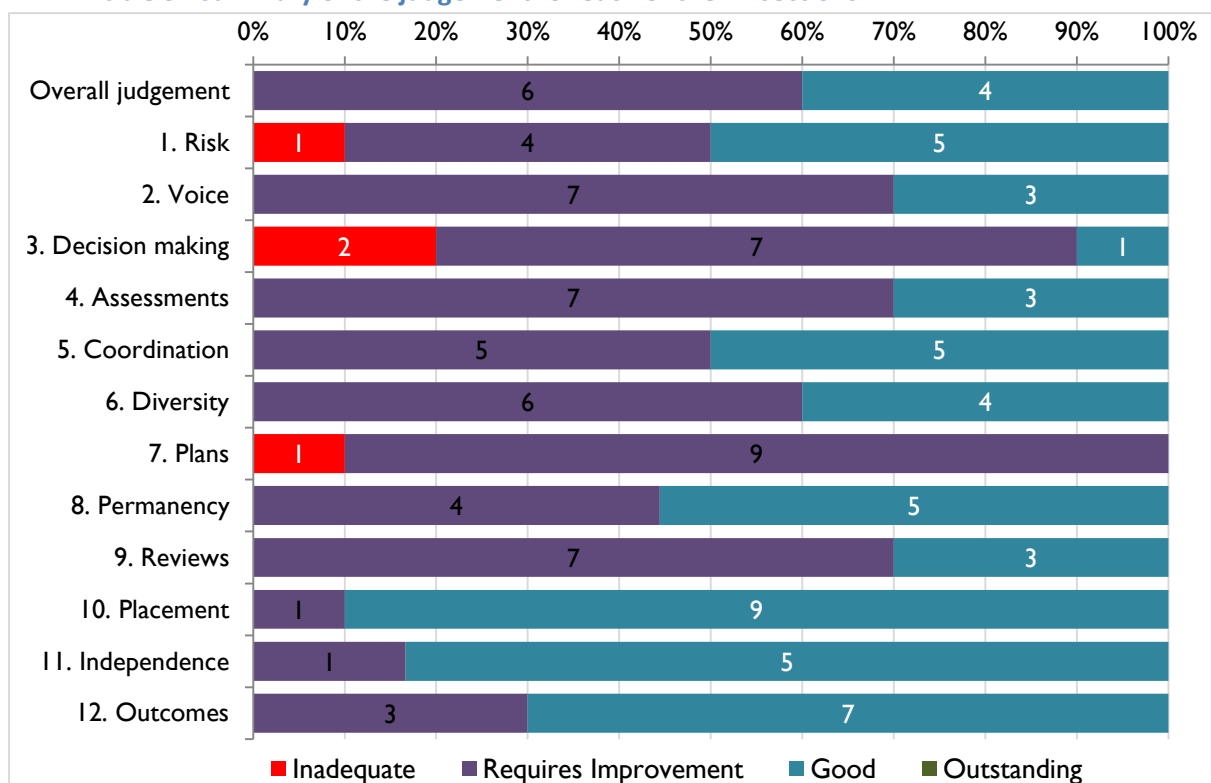
Across all areas, the best judgements were against the following sections:

- ‘Placements’ received the best scores, with 9 out of 10 case audits judged as Good and 1 as Requires Improvement.
- ‘Independence’ where 5 out of 6 judgements were Good and 1 Requires Improvement (4 were ‘not applicable’).
- ‘Outcomes’ where 7 out of 10 were judged Good and 3 Requires Improvement.

The sections which scored less well in the judgements were:

- ‘Decision Making’ which was judged as Inadequate in 2 case audits, Requires Improvement in 7 and Good in 1.
- ‘Plans’ was the only section which did not receive a Good judgement on any audited case; 9 were judged Requires Improvement and 1 was Inadequate.

Table 3 - summary of the judgement for each of the 12 sections



2. Feedback from parents/carers and partner organisations

- As part of this process, feedback from parents, carers and partner organisations was sought and this was generally positive.
- 9 out of 11 parents/carers responding said that the worker took their views into account sometimes or always, with 2 saying that they never did.
- Feedback was also positive in relation to the worker making it clear what they were worried about and what they thought needed changing (8 stated that they did this and 2 that they did not)
- In relation to whether they thought the worker had helped them and their family (8 said yes and 3 no).
- During the process, 6 parents said that they were told what they could do if they were unhappy with the service and 4 stated they were not told.

3. Conclusions, key learning and next steps

In summary, the audits produced the following learning and next steps for Rutland County Council's children's services:

- The children are safe and outcomes for them and their families are consistently positive and demonstrating progress.
- Relationships between Social Workers/practitioners and families are strong, well established and valued.
- The quality of audit work undertaken by senior and team managers is variable – a particular focus on evaluative inquiry is required to drive further improvement in this area.
- Management oversight and clear decision making, especially in complex cases is improving, however there remains inconsistency.
- Case recording often lacks rigour, and there are missed opportunities to champion best practice where it is evident.
- There is an opportunity for the service to use Signs of Safety as a more effective, routine reflective practice tool
- Although the voice of the child is often evident within casefiles, it is much less common for there to be a 'golden thread' connecting the child's voice to action and progress within the child's life
- SMART plans are not routine and well-established but it has featured in recent all-service training and development
- Evidence of good practice leading to better outcomes could be better connected to the child's journey within the case file.

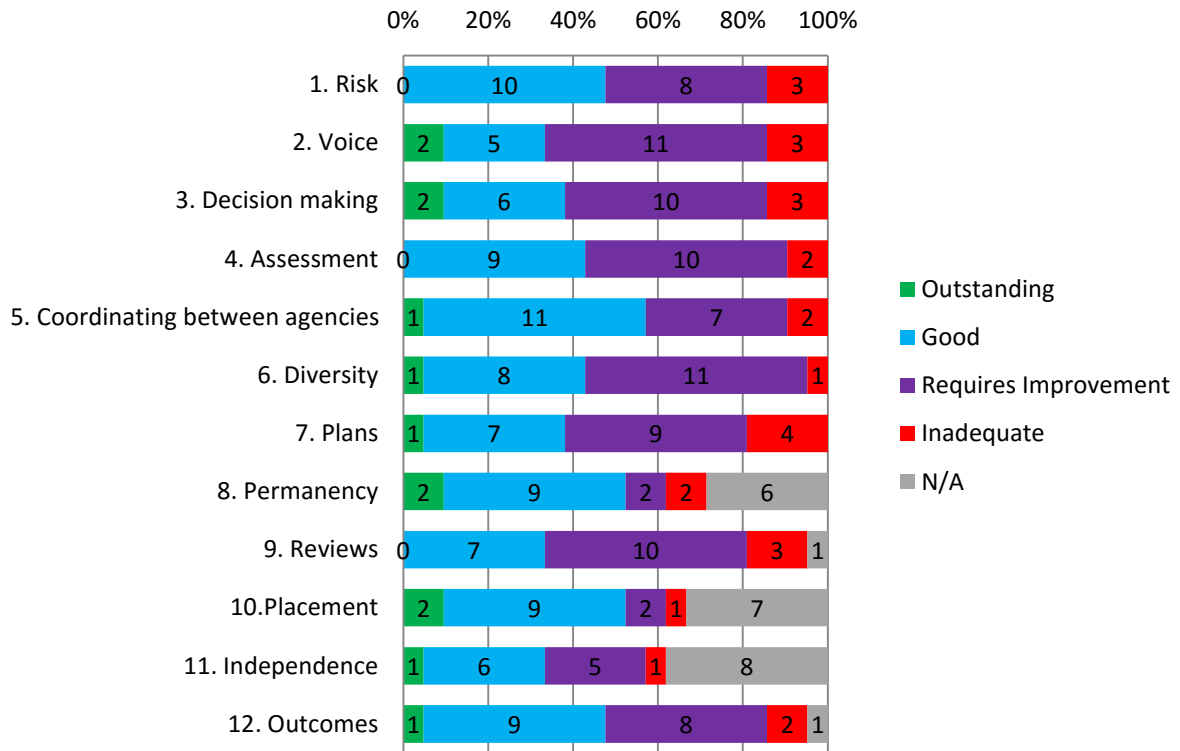
SUMMARY OF AUDITS – Q4 2016-17

Post Ofsted, we have continued with our scheduled auditing but focusing on all categories each month – Early Help, Child in Need-Children with Disabilities, Child in Need, Child Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

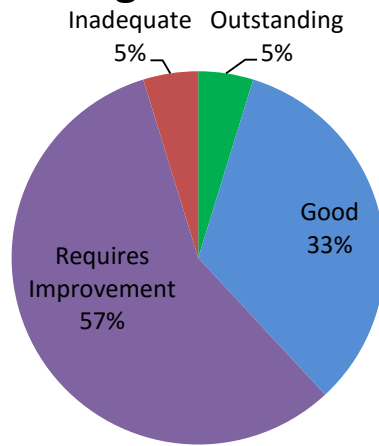
Analysis Q4:

- 21 case file audits were completed in Q4 2016-17
- Of the 21 audited completed, 1 (5%) was Outstanding, 7 (33%) were Good, 12 (57%) were Requires Improvement and 1 (5%) was Inadequate
- From the 21 audits; areas of strength were:
 - Quality of placements
 - Permanency
- The following areas saw audits where practice was identified as being Outstanding:
 - Children, YP and families being involved including voice of the child
 - Decision making being timely and effective
 - Coordination between agencies
 - Consideration and impact of diversity
 - Quality of plans
 - Permanency planning
 - Quality of placement
 - Preparation for independence
 - Outcomes
- Areas for development were:
 - Children, YP and families being involved including voice of the child
 - Decision making being timely and effective
 - Consideration and impact of diversity
 - Quality of assessments
 - Quality of plans
 - Children & YP benefiting from regular reviews

All responses



Overall Judgements - Q4 16-17



Annual Audit Report - Summary, Conclusion and Next Steps

Summary

Audit findings for this annual report period are evidencing some good practice which is encouraging; however we are still seeing variability as we move through the year.

Consistent areas of strength have been identified as coordination between agencies, preparation for independence and permanency planning.

During this reporting period we have been preparing for the Ofsted Single Inspection Framework and in preparation for this our auditing has needed to be flexible and responsive to the themes required. Following the inspection, our 'Next Steps' action plan clearly sets out any actions required along with timescales.

During the first half of the annual period we had a transient workforce with all of the managers as well as a considerable number of practitioners in children's social care being interim. Over the last 6 months we have moved from interim to having all permanent managers in children's social care which is reflective of the changes that we are now seeing with a stable management team in early help and children's social care.

Contributory factors as follows:

- Practice has improved as the Signs and Safety model becomes further embedded, which is evidence based and a solution focussed approach that identifies and builds upon strengths. The voice of the child, parents, family, carers and professionals is being captured during the assessment process and is informing the intervention required in many cases which in turn improves the outcomes for our service users and reduces the need for prolonged intervention.
- Management oversight is now evident and has improved following the introduction of monthly multi-agency panels that have provided the opportunity to discuss complex and concerning cases which in turn has led to clear and timely decision making. The panel chair actively encourages creativity, participation and transparency which is healthy in regards to motivating staff and providing a service that 'fits' the needs of our service users.
- Reflective supervision has provided an opportunity for critical thinking and appropriate challenge. In the last quarter there has been a shift from auditors completing desk top audits to completing the audit with the practitioner which has received some positive feedback from staff. Case auditors have endeavoured to work with practitioners to gather and analyse the findings and have actively encouraged them to judge their own work which has been a positive learning experience for them as opposed to feeling 'done to'. When actions have been identified they are understood and completed in a timely manner thus creating a level of accountability, removing resistance to change and further drift.
- From conversations held with staff and feedback from service users, it is possible to say that morale has improved as a result of the learning and accountability culture and has created a healthier environment, relationships and outcomes for our service users. Practitioners are able to see the benefits when they invest their time to engage, empower through partnership working, use evidence based practice that manages risk whilst building upon the strengths and are happy to 'showcase' their work through their case recording. This is encouraging as a lot of good work

was previously completed but not captured by workers who did not fully appreciate the importance of recording.

Conclusion

In general the case audits now give the reader a good insight into the child's world, assessments show their journey and plans have evolved in line with the individual child's needs. The learning and accountability culture adopted in Rutland has provided workers with the resources and support to enable them to embrace the changes that needed to be made to practice and in regards to processes which can be a challenge. Themes have been identified from the case audits which have been used constructively to develop learning workshops as well as identifying specific tasks for the worker and manager.

Next Steps

The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance service will continue to work closely with Children's Services to ensure that there is independent scrutiny and challenge from a 'critical friend'. The service will continue to undertake regular case auditing as we believe it is an integral part of the learning and development process.

Our Ofsted 'Next Steps' plan includes actions which are realistic and achievable addressing areas for further development such as training programmes to include workshops for staff, opportunities for joint working, further embedding Signs of Safety in all areas of our work with children and families, and strengthening management oversight, supervision and case recording.

Services for children with special educational needs and disabilities moved into Early Help services during the latter part of the reporting period and will now fall under the Quality Assurance and Performance Framework to include bi-monthly audits of EHC Plans.

We will continue to involve children, parents, extended family, carers and other professionals in the process as we believe that it is important for them to tell us about their experiences so that we can learn and improve.

We will 'showcase best practice' and will ensure that actions are completed in a timely manner when concerns are identified. We will endeavour to understand the difficulties experienced by workers, whether that be technical or other as we realise that it can be detrimental to our service users and their relationships with professionals.

We will continue to work to remove any barriers and resolve any difficulties to achieve positive outcomes for children and their families. Following our Ofsted Single Inspection Framework inspection we will continue to review and monitor actions against our 'Next Steps' plan that relate to Quality Assurance and Performance. This will be to ensure management oversight and supervision continues to play a critical role in all practice, we continue to strengthen our practice across children's services, the Signs of Safety approach is embedded in all work with children, young people and families, and that we continue to support our workforce to work to a consistently high standard, achieving the best outcomes for children, young people and families which are achieved in a timely way.

Appendix 1 – Quality Checks of EHA and Thematic Audit of Voice of the Child

Name of Auditor: Beatriz Perez Moreno, Early Help Co-ordinator.

Date of Audit: 16/08/2016

The purpose of this exercise was to select 10 random cases from the Early Help Tracker trying to find evidence of how the voice of the child is taken into consideration when creating a plan and the support that has been offered to the whole family. The cases selected are currently open to the Targeted Intervention Team (please note that these cases represent cases supported via: single agency, internal and external TAF and joint working with social care).

The results are based on evidence found on recordings from LIQUIDLOGIC (as per data found on 16/08/2016) for cases currently open, concentrating in the last 6 months work completed with the family.

	Gender	Age	Present at TAF	Evidence of the voice of the child in the plan	Evidence of 1:1 work completed with this child	Evidence of child seen / Observations made (Family visits, activities)
1.	Male	9	No information recorded on the system	No information recorded on the system	No information recorded on the system	✓
2.	Male	14	X	✓	✓	✓
3.	Male	2	✓	X	✓	✓
4.	Male	7	Joint working	X	X	✓
5.	Male	15	Joint working	X	✓	✓
6.	Female	10	Single agency	X	✓	✓
7.	Female	5	No information recorded on the system	No information recorded on the system	No information recorded on the system	No information recorded on the system
8.	Female	9	1 st TAF cancelled by the family	1 st TAF cancelled by the family	X	✓
9.	Female	10	X	✓	✓	✓
10.	Female	9	X	X	X	✓

Findings

Present at TAF	Evidence of the voice of the child in the plan	Evidence of 1:1 work completed with this child	Evidence of child seen / Observations made (Family visits, activities)
10%	20%	50%	90%

Observations:

Case 1

There is evidence that there have been TAF meeting and direct work started with the family based on case notes made on supervision on the 03/06/2016. However there is no record on the system of TAF meetings or direct work with the children.

Case 2

It has been noted that they have been two TAF meeting on record since the case started. This child's views were taken by the worker before the first TAF meeting and his views has been clear represented at the meeting and recorded. This child chose to attend another event on the school on the day of the meeting and there is evidence in the case notes that the lead of the case gathered his views about how things are progressing in a following home visit (recorded on case notes).

Case 3

This child is only 2 years old and has a disability who affects his communication skills and development. It has been noted that the lead has been using observation of his behaviour, feedback from practitioners (joint visit with SEN Team), activities (colouring) to engage the child and try to understand how life is for this child.

Case 5

This case is joint working with social care at CP level therefore there are not TAF meetings. There is evidence that the TIP worker has spoken or observed the children during visits. No evidence can be found of 1:1 work completed with this child; however, it is not clear if the role of the TIP (Changing lives) is more to support the adults in the family regarding Domestic Violence and Alcohol misuse and the impact that this is having on the children.

Case 5

This case is joint working with social care. The TIP worker is supporting the young person offering mentoring sessions. There is no evidence of that the case has had a review meeting.

Case 6

This is a very good example of working with children of different ages and how to get their individual views even if both children were present during the sessions. However, there is not a plan in place recorded.

Case 7

No evidence of involvement logged on the system, therefore unable to score.

Case 8

There is evidence that the worker has made efforts to arrange a first TAF meeting as this case was allocated to her 5 weeks ago but family cancel the meeting. Therefore unable to find evidence of children attendance to TAF meetings or their voice being taking into account when action planning.

Case 9

This child was not present at the TAF meetings however there is evidence that his views are being represented and shared. There is evidence that this child has been seen with their family and on her own and different resources have been used to get their views (i.e. My book of worries).

Case 10

This child hasn't attended a TAF meeting and her views are always represented by school and/or parents. No evidence of direct work with the child. However, case notes (i.e. supervision 28/06/16) clearly states that the lead is worried about the fact that this child does not want to be part of direct work with her due to have numerous professional involved previously. Despite the child not being directly involved with the lead of the case it is felt that the lead has a good understanding of how life is for this child.

Recommendations:

- ✓ It is not clear for some cases if case work is up to date on the system as it seems to be gaps on the information recorded.
- ✓ It is felt that most children are not actually attending TAF meetings. However, some cases evidenced the reason behind this (i.e. child chooses not to attend). There will be times that it is not appropriate for a child/young person or they may choose not to attend their TAF meeting. However, I would recommend that if a child doesn't attend a TAF meeting is clear **stated the reasons why and who is representing their views** and these are taken into account when action planning.
- ✓ It has been noted that when a TIP offers support to a child open to social care (joint working) not always the work completed by the TIP is taken into account on action planning or assessments completed by the allocated social worker.

Name of Auditor: Beatriz Perez Moreno, Early Help Co-ordinator.

Date of Audit: 11/04/2017 (7 month period August 16 – February 17)

The purpose of this exercise was to select 10 random cases from the Early Help Tracker trying to find evidence of how the voice of the child is taken into consideration when creating a plan and the support that has been offered to the whole family. The cases selected are currently open to the Targeted Intervention Team (please note that these cases represent cases supported via: single agency, internal and external TAF and joint working with social care.

The results are based on evidence found on recordings from LIQUIDLOGIC (as per data found on 11/04/2017) for cases currently open, concentrating in the last 6 months work completed with the family.

	Gender	Age	Present at TAF	Evidence of the voice of the child in the plan	Evidence of 1:1 work completed with this child	Evidence of child seen / Observations made (Family visits, activities)
1.	Male	2	✓	✓	x	✓
2.	Male	9	x	x	✓	✓
3.	Female	14	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.	Female	11	x	✓	✓	✓
5.	Male	11	x	✓	✓	✓
6.	Male	11	✓	✓	x	✓
7.	Male	11	x	✓	✓	✓
8.	Male	15	x	✓	✓	✓
9.	Female	6	x	x	✓	✓
10.	Male	4	Joint working	No TAF plan	x	✓

	Present at TAF	Evidence of the voice of the child in the plan	Evidence of 1:1 work completed with this child	Evidence of child seen / Observations made (Family visits, activities)
Current	33%	78%	70%	100%
(August 2016)	10%	20%	50%	90%

Findings

Observations:

Case 1

The child was only one year old when the case started. There is no evidence of direct work done with the child but there are observations made of his behaviour in groups and home visits. These observations include comments about his behaviour and interactions with his family. The child is mentioned on every plan, including progress and observations made during activities. It is felt that despite of the child’s age and the fact that he just started talking there is a good understanding by the lead of the case of he feels and how life is for this child. This became apparent when during a

significant change on this child's live, the lead and the mother work on how the child is expressing how he feels about it by changing his behaviour and pushing boundaries with his mother.

Case 2

There is evidence of direct work with the child; however it is unclear how this has influenced the TAF plan or next steps decided to support the family.

Case 3

There are separate examples of 1:1 work completed with this young person: one page profile, life road map, wishes and feelings. She also attends TAF meeting and feedback about services put in place as part of the plan and how it is helping her.

Case 4

Different examples of 1:1 work completed with this young person: change balloons, three houses. She didn't attend the TAF meeting recorded on the system but it was clear that the lead worker was representing her views and wishes as this were taking into account when action planning.

Case 5

The child does not attend TAF meeting, however it is clear that the worker meets the child prior meetings to gain his wishes and she shows their work at the meeting to ensure that everyone get to know his wishes and feelings. There is evidence of 1:1 done with the child using different tools as well as the worker created her own to engage the young person. Example of Three houses used with Xbox pictures.

Case 6

There is evidence that the child attended the last TAF meetings and his views were recorded and influence the plan. There is no evidence of 1:1 work completed with the child. There is evidence of the child being talk to during visits but no evidence of the child being seen on his own.

Case 7

The child does not attend TAF meeting however the lead of the case meets the child normally a week before the TAF meeting to get his views. There is also evidence that his views are being shared at the TAF. The worker also asks for consent to read his views at the TAF meeting after every 1:1 session which is considered as good practice.

Case 8

The child does not attend TAF meeting however the lead of the case meets the child normally before the TAF meeting to get his views and there is evidence that his views and wishes are taking into account when planning. There is evidence of 1:1 work done using the Three Houses and his views are shared at the TAF meeting.

Case 9

Record of 1:1 work and visit the child at school, however there is no evidence on the TAF plan and record of the meeting of her wishes and feelings being considered when planning or either mention under child's opinion/view(s) were is stated "Children not in attendance at the meeting but have all

been seen recently to gain their wishes and feelings". Also the case summary explains that the child is open to EH but direct work is carried out with siblings.

Case 10

Joint working case (CIN) case notes on LCS portal.

The case was allocated to the Targeted Intervention Practitioner on the 09/02/2017 for joint working with social care. However, it has been two visits where children were seen and spoke to however there has not been any recent work as family has missed appointment and no responded to phone calls trying to arrange following appointments.

Recommendations:

- Use of toggle bottom in Liquid logic to make it clear when completing an Early Help Assessment, TAF meeting notes and/or closure what parts what statements/actions/views belong to each particular child.
- When completing direct work or 1:1 work with the child to ensure that a case note is completed on the child file explaining the purpose of the work, analysis of the findings and what the worker is going to do with the information.
- Case notes, TAF notes and documents to be saved in all children that the case is open to and information is relevant.

Early Help Assessment Audit Report August 2016

Background

In December 2015 the Early Intervention model moved from the Common Assessment Framework to an Early Help Assessment (EHA) process. Early Help Assessments have since been completed by internal practitioners as well as partners.

As part of our quality assurance framework 2-3 externally led EHAs are audited on a monthly basis by Early Help Coordinators, looking in depth at the quality of the assessment including the voice of the child and smart planning etc. This process aims to identify areas for improvement in the quality of EHAs received from external partners and to inform the team areas in which partners require further support and training.

Progress since first Audit in May 2016

The first audit process was undertaken in May 2016 and analysed cases from Feb-April 2016 period. A number of areas for improvement were identified (see previous report) and since this time school support days have been delivered for, Cottesmore Millfield Academy and Casterton College Rutland. Early Help Coordinators attended the schools to provide feedback on the assessments and training to help improve practice. This included providing advice on undertaking good assessments including case history, ensuring a holistic coverage of needs, how to chair a team around the family (TAF) meeting, the role of a lead practitioner, good case record keeping and tools to engage children in the assessment process e.g. 3 houses.

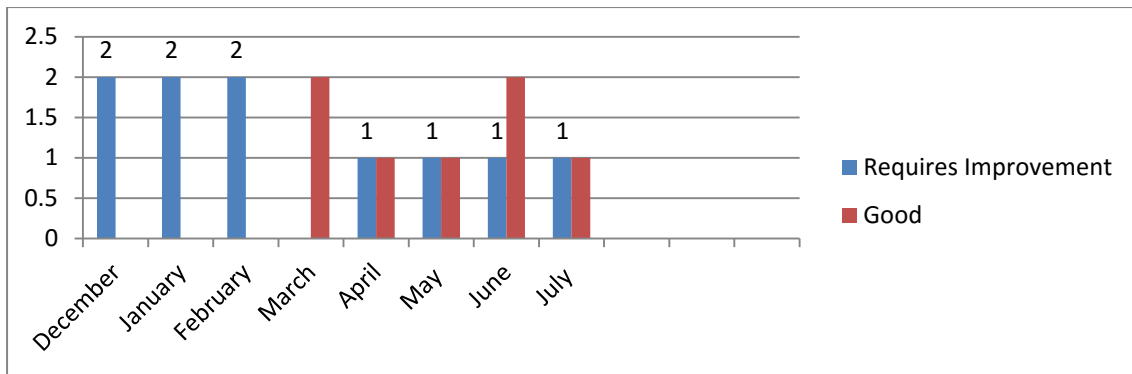
In both cases the feedback was well received by staff who felt more confident as a result. Ketton School have since made arrangements for an Early Help Coordinator to visit the school in September 2016.

Audit Period 2 Report: May- July 2016

A total of seven assessments were audited between May and August 2016, two in May, three in June and two in July. Of the assessments received five were completed by school staff, while the remaining two were completed by Health Visitors.

Findings

Out of the seven audited cases three were scored as 'Good' and four as 'Requires Improvement'. Those audited as good cases, demonstrates the confidence in practitioners since the changes in the Early Help Assessment process. We are seeing more 'good' assessed audits from partners than at the start of the process.



Auditors found that:

- Assessments are being completed with an increased level of confidence.
- Assessments are being completed with more detail than earlier assessments received.
- In most cases the family's view is included through the assessment, however further 'voice of child' training would ensure that the child's voice is specifically heard.
- In those graded 'good' it is clear that the assessment has been completed with the family.
- There were no cases of unsafe practise identified and in no cases no children were at immediate risk.

The common areas for development were:

- Ensuring the assessment is completed in full with all family details included.
- Plans are to be child focussed rather than the parent's needs being at the centre of the assessment.
- Voice of child to be included in assessment.
- In complete or misunderstanding of rating risk with the threshold document.
- A lack of understanding of what support is available to those families they are referring, both by RCC and across other early help services.

Summary

The chart above clearly demonstrates the improved quality of those assessments being received by external referrers. The confidence from practitioners is not only felt by those assessments being received but also in the discussions at the Early Help front door.

There remain common themes for improvement that have continued from the last audit summary. For example ensuring that the voice of child is captured and the lack of understanding or in some cases incomplete risk rating. Following some identified inconsistencies in both referrals and in the effectiveness of joint working, Early Help and Social Care practitioners will work together to support our Police colleagues with some specific training. The support will focus on the understanding of assessing risk for children where DV is a factor and ensuring the appropriate thresholds are being applied in such cases.

In addition a proposed multi- agency Early Help conference to be held later this year by Early Help Coordinators will cover the key areas for development identified through the audit process, as well as areas for development of the new Early Help process itself.

It is however felt that external practitioners are benefiting from the front door and school support days, where quality support and guidance is being provided and tailor made support is available. Evidence suggests that the support is helping practitioners to produce better quality assessments for families.

Next Steps/Actions

- Deliver joint training with Social Care to police colleagues focussing on risk associated with domestic abuse.
- Early Help Coordinators to arrange a multi-agency Early Help conference for late 2016 to include all development areas in both May summary and August.
- Early Help Coordinators recommend that internal referrals/step down assessments are included in subsequent audits as it is felt that the quality of these are varied.
- The Audit tool to be adapted to include, referring service, date of audit received and section for appropriateness for referral.
- Further audits to be completed, 2/3 per month, where available.
- The EHA guidance notes will be reviewed by EH coordinators in line with feedback from internal staff following a peer supervision session, to be held in September.

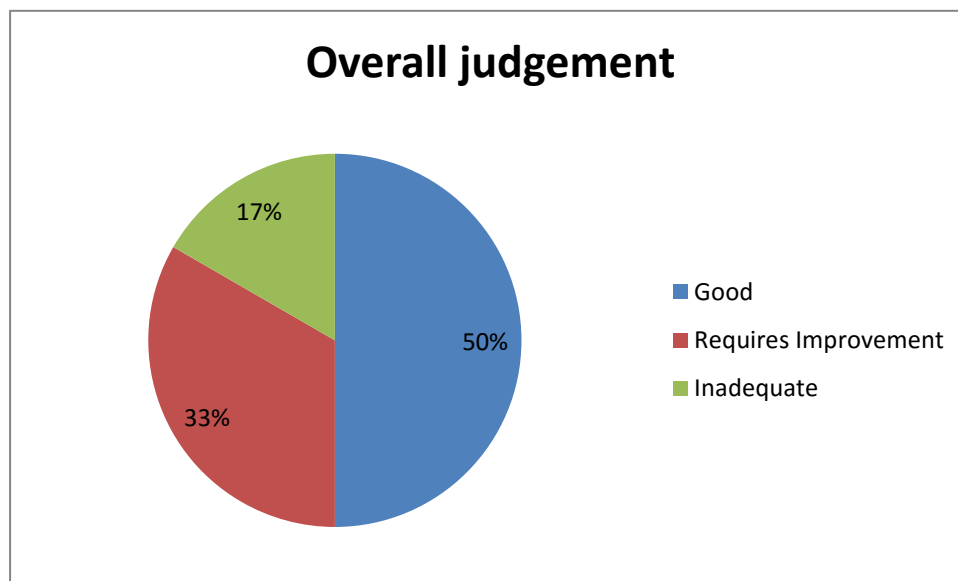
Early Help Assessment Audit Report November 2016

Audit Period 3 Report: August - October 2016

A total of six assessments were audited between August and October 2016, no completed Early Help Assessments were received during August. From the six assessment audited, two are step downs completed by social care, one was completed by Homestart, one was completed by a health visitor and the other two were completed by Education (primary schools)

Findings

Out of the six audited cases three were scored as 'Good' and two as 'Requires Improvement' and one as "Inadequate"



Those audited as good cases, demonstrates the confidence of practitioners since the changes in the Early Help Assessment process. We are seeing more 'good' assessed audits from partners now than at the start of the process.

Auditors found that:

- Despite some of the assessments not including the views of the child and/or parent it was clear that the professionals contributing to the assessment knew the children well.
- Assessments are being completed with more detail than earlier assessments received.
- In those graded 'good' it is clear that the assessment has been completed with the family.
- There were no cases of unsafe practice identified and in no cases were any children at immediate risk of harm.

The common areas for practice development are:

- Wrong paperwork/assessment completed, therefore the case was graded as Inadequate. It has been noted that EH co-ordinators met with the practitioner and delivered training and shared resources necessary to complete appropriate assessment in the future.
- Voice of the child not included on the assessment. Since then resources has been shared with the practitioners to enable them to better gain the views of younger children (My Life, Having my say booklet shared with partners).
- The need for better goal statements. This has been taken into account as one of the subjects for future multi agency training sessions delivered by EH Co-ordinators.
- Step down internal referrals need to contain more information about the specific piece of work and intervention that it is expected Early Help will deliver, as well as, ensure that appropriate consent is gained in writing.

Summary

It is felt that external practitioners are benefiting from the support via our integrated front door and the school support days, where quality assurance and guidance is being provided and tailor made support is available. Evidence suggests that the support is helping practitioners to produce better quality assessments for families.

More work needs to be done to ensure the step down procedure is followed and internal referrals completed by social workers as part of the step down include the voice of the child and their families, as well as, specific information about the support required by Early Help.

Next Steps/Actions

- Early Help Co-ordinators to arrange a multi-agency Early Help conference for January/February 2017 to include the above and previous findings from the audits i.e. goal statements, the voice of the child, etc. BMP/HSS/LH
- The Audit tool to be adapted to include, information on referring service, date of audit received and section for appropriateness of referral and application of threshold. BMP/JT
- Review of the Step Up and down procedure to ensure that reflect changes recently made, including paperwork, consent and Liquidlogic transfer process. BMP

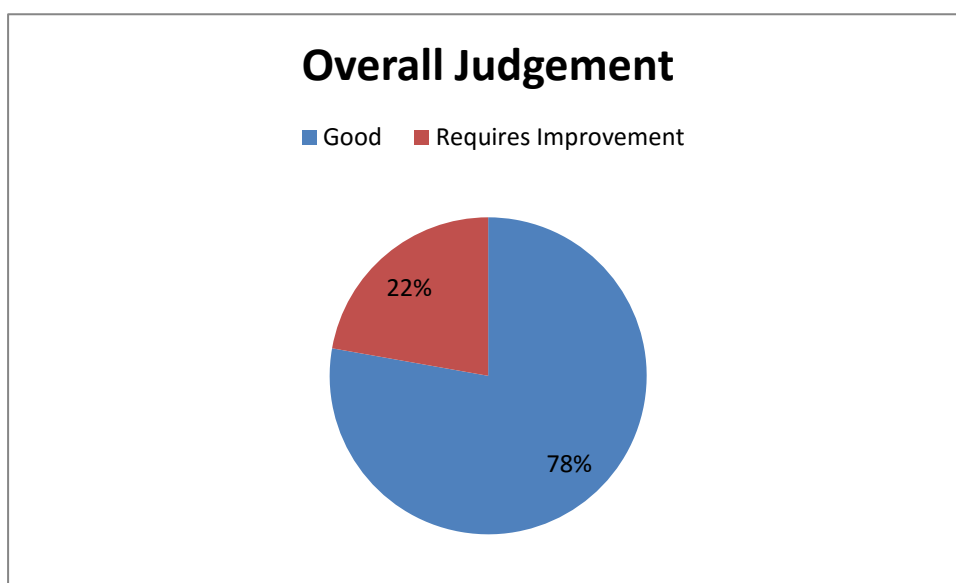
Early Help Assessment Audit Report February 2017

Audit Period Report: November 2016 – January 2017

A total of nine assessments were audited between November 2016 to January 2017. From the nine assessments audited, one was completed by a health visitor, another was completed by an Early Years setting (nursery) and the remainder (seven) were completed by Education.

Findings

Out of the nine audited cases seven were scored as 'Good' and two as 'Requires Improvement'.



The number of cases audited as 'good', demonstrate the increased confidence of practitioners since the changes in the Early Help Assessment process. We are seeing more 'good' assessed audits from partners now than at the start of the process and during this period no EHA audited was judged as Inadequate.

Auditors found that:

- In four of the nine assessments audited details of the children or adults eg Ethnicity, Religion and Language were left blank.
- Only two of the assessments reviewed include details of other practitioners working with the family and that their contributions have been taken into account when completing the assessment.
- All audit bar one showed that practitioners are clearly applying the principles of Signs of Wellbeing.
- It has been noted that wellbeing statements and goal statements are completed but this is not always reflected or included in the family/young person/child wishes and views.

The common areas for practice development are:

- Voice of the child is normally included on assessments; however it is not clearly part of the mapping or planning.
- The need for better goal statements. This has been taken into account as one of the subjects for future multi agency training sessions delivered by EH Co-ordinators.

Summary

It is felt that external practitioners are benefiting from the support via our integrated front door and the school support days. Quality assurance and guidance is being provided and tailor made support is available. Evidence suggests that the support is helping practitioners to produce better quality assessments for families.

Next Steps/Actions

- Early Help Co-ordinators to arrange a multi-agency Early Help workshop/consultation. Planned for 20th June 2017 and will include Voice of the child and how to reflect it in assessment, goal statements and wellbeing statement.
- Unsure of what happens after there is a recommendation/action agreed when an audit is completed. BPM/LH/HSS to discuss the possibility of logging outcome of actions on the audit record or create a record of actions/recommendations to ensure that these are followed up and completed.

APPENDIX 2 - Parent/Carer Feedback					
Q1: Do you think the worker took the views of you and your family into account?	Q2: Do you think your worker made it clear to you about what he/she was worried about and what they thought needed to change?	Q3: Do you feel your worker has helped you and your family?	Q4: During the process, were you told what you could do if you were unhappy with the service?	Q5: Was there anything your worker did really well or anybody who you think was particularly helpful?	Q6. Do you have any suggestions of how Children and Young People's Service can do things better in the future for yourself and/or other families?
Always	Yes	Yes	Yes	Workers saved our lives	Everyone works in the same way that our workers did
Always	Yes	In some cases - yes, some others, no	No (but wasn't necessary)	Changing Lives staff	For SH to help other families how she helped our family
Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Aiming High staff	Communication with education could be improved and EHCP prioritisation
Always	Yes	Yes	Yes	Worker linked with young person and work done was of great benefit to mum too	More mentors available in the service. More raising awareness of CSE/Grooming, in schools
Always	Yes	Yes	Yes	Really very helpful, supportive and reassuring	Let people know that SC can have a positive impact and not always a negative experience
Always	Yes	Yes	Yes	Worker went above and beyond – developed good relations with other LA which was needed due to the nature of	RCC been very supportive.

				the work involved.	
Always	Yes	Yes	Not sure	SW good with the children – rapport. Made them comfortable.	No
Sometimes	Yes	No	No	No	Too adult focused. Lack of child focus.
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Reward/Star Charts	-
Sometimes	Yes	-	No	Worker been very helpful	Quicker access to relevant services when needed (Mental health)

-END-

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

23 November 2017

CHILD PROTECTION ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

Report of the Director for People

Strategic Aim:	Safeguarding	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr R Foster, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People (Safeguarding)	
Contact Officer(s):	Tim O'Neill, Director for People and Deputy Chief Executive	01572 758402 toneill@rutland.gov.uk
	Rebecca Wilshire, Head of Children Social Care	01572 758258 rwilshire@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	N/A	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel:

1. Notes the contents of the Child Protection Annual Report 2016-2017

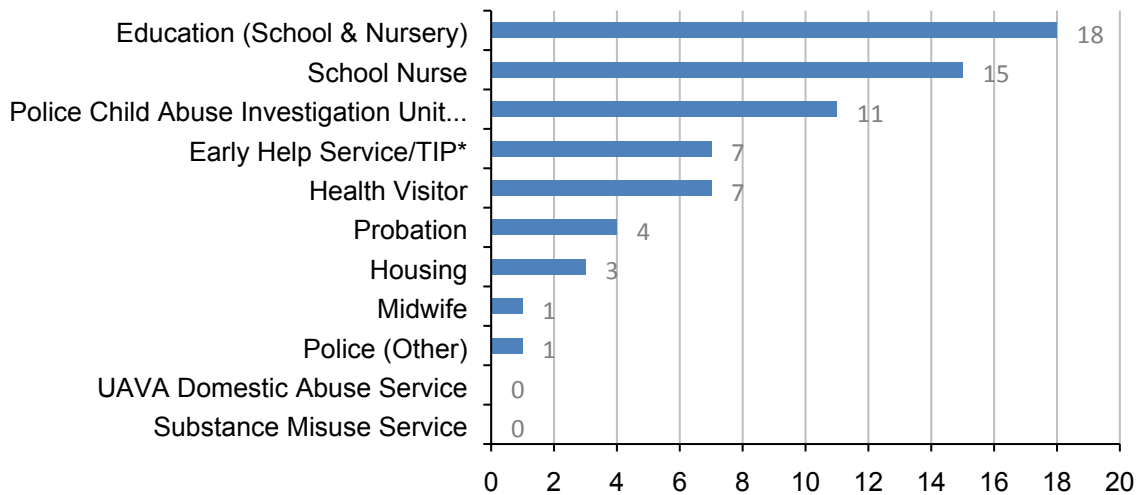
1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT (MANDATORY)

- 1.1. This is our Annual Activity Report 2016/17 with regards to Child Protection Activity
- 1.2. The report will outline statutory responsibilities as well as aims and objectives for 2017/18
- 1.3. The report will offer oversight of Rutland data with regards to Children subject to Child Protection
- 1.4. The report also highlights the journey and improvement of our safeguarding services

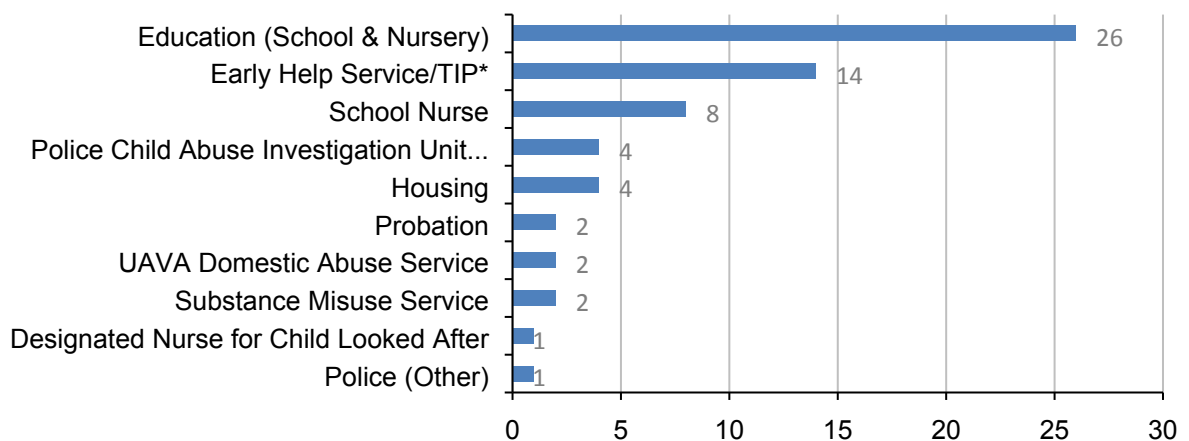
2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS (MANDATORY) (YOU CAN CHANGE THIS HEADER IF REQUIRED TO REFLECT SPECIFIC TOPICS IN THE REPORT)

- 2.1. The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service (SQAS) organises and chairs Initial Child Protection Conferences and Child Protection Review Conferences.

- 2.2. Initial Child Protection Conferences, are in relation to referrals and s47 enquiries.
- 2.3. Where the local authority identified there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, it will carry out an assessment under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 to determine if it needs to take steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children.
- 2.4. Nationally there was a 7.6% increase in s47 enquiries over 2015-2016. Last year 103 referrals in Rutland resulted in a section 47 multi-agency strategy discussion.
- 2.5. If concerns are substantiated from a s47, and the child is judged to be at continuing risk of harm then an Initial Child Protection Conference is convened within 15 working days. Nationally this increase was 2.3% in 2015-2016. 33 of the section 47 multi-agency strategy discussions in Rutland resulted in a request for an Initial Child Protection Conference.
- 2.6. During this period there have been 65 individual children subject to Child Protections Plans from 33 families including 2 unborn babies.
- 2.7. The rate per 10.000 children subject to a Child Protection Plan has consistently been below the national average of 43.1%
- 2.8. 5 Initial Child Protection Conferences were held which resulted in the threshold not being met for 6 children (1 unborn baby).
- 2.9. 2 Review Child Protection Conferences were no longer required as 2 siblings became Looked After and 2 other siblings went to live in their father's care following positive viability assessments.
- 2.10. On the 31st March 2017 there were 20 children who were subject of a Child Protection Plan.
- 2.11. There have been no serious incidents notifications submitted to Ofsted, and no serious case reviews have been completed during this period.
- 2.12. There has been poor attendance from the Probation Service and the Specialist Substance Misuse Service and the Specialist Domestic Abuse Service, despite both being commissioned by the Local Authority.
- 2.13. Initial Conference attendance:



2.14. Review Child Protection Conference attendance



2.15. Of the 53 Child Protection Conferences 20 involved domestic abuse being a risk factor.

2.16. Adherence to statutory timescales around the Conference process are monitored monthly and reviewed by Senior Managers. Performance data is used to ensure practice and capacity issues are addressed in a timely manner.

2.17. The SQAS has worked hard to maintain the performance targets set within the National Framework over the last twelve months.

2.18. The first half of this financial year saw a number of staff pressures in the service including interim cover and a drive to permanent recruitment.

2.19. An Ofsted Inspection was undertaken over four weeks from the 14th November to the 7th December 2017 which concluded that Rutland Children's Services requires improvement to be good. The Inspectors identified that the Child Protection Chairs were not consistently challenging poor-quality assessments and plans or delays in improving outcomes for children. A small number of cases were seen in which children were taken off plans too soon, before changes and improvements were sustained. These children became subject to repeat plans because of the same

risks and concerns that had been identified previously. The lack of contingency planning and consideration of pre-proceedings work means that some children experience drift and delay in securing improved outcomes". We are confident that the areas of improvement noted in the Ofsted report have been addressed and the SQAS Team have a clear footprint on children's files and offer the challenge as needed.

3 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. The activity report for child protection is attached is to offer oversight into the position of our child protection services
- 3.2. Within the report we have made a number of further recommendations and areas for focus to continue to improve our service
- 3.3. The service continues to develop and go from strength to strength

4 UPATE ON SOME OF OUR PROGRESS SINCE APRIL 2017:

- 4.1. We have set up a Domestic Abuse internal Working Group to explore the issues and challenges we have, this is enabling us to challenge partners around practice
- 4.2. We are now in attendance at the DVA (Domestic Violence and Abuse) Executive Group and Operations Group
- 4.3. We working with partners more productive and offering challenge where needed to improve attendance and whilst this is positive in some area like Turning Point we still have work to do with Domestic Abuse
- 4.4. Our Data is being collated in a more meaningful manner which informs our work and practice
- 4.5. Audits undertaken are demonstrating better outcomes for children and families and more timely responses
- 4.6. Signs of safety is fully embed in conference
- 4.7. Actions out lined in the report are am in place we just need to see them embedded for longer
- 4.8. We are planning a 'Mocksted' (mock Inspection in December) to review progress and assess our position against all annual reports recommendations

5 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1 There are no additional background papers to the report

6 APPENDICES

- 6.1 Child Protection Annual Report 2016-2017

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.

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Rutland
County Council

**Child Protection
Annual Report-
2016-2017**

Contents

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Conference Model
3.0	Conference Attendance
4.0	Child Protection Plans
5.0	Quality Assurance
6.0	Performance
7.0	Staffing
8.0	Number of Children Subject of Child Protection Plans
9.0	Abuse Categories for Children Subject of a Child Protection Plan
10.0	Profile of Children Subject of a Child Protection Plan
11.0	Child Protection Cases Reviewed Within Timescale
12.0	Children Becoming Subject of a Child Protection Plan for a Second or Subsequent Time
13.0	Duration of a Child Protection Plan
14.0	Feedback from Conference Participants
15.0	Social Work Practice
16.0	Organisational Culture
17.0	Leadership
18.0	Consistency
19.0	Key Plan 2017 - 2018

1. Introduction

'Protection is best achieved by building on the existing strengths of the child's living environment, rather than expecting miracles from isolated and spasmodic interventions'

1.1. Child Protection Messages from Research (1995)

During this reporting period of April 2016 to March 2017 'Signs of Safety' which is a solution focussed and strengths based approach to casework was introduced in Rutland and is continuing to be embedded. There is evidence to suggest that improvements have been made since the Ofsted Inspection was undertaken during the third quarter when some 'signs' of good practice were acknowledged although it was difficult to measure given the short time that had passed since the training had been completed. It is important to note that whilst Signs of Safety is a methodology that consists of many useful tools and skills, it needs to be an approach that is valued and embedded within the whole organisation to be as effective as it can be. This report will outline the changes that have been made during this period, the challenges, learning and improvements that are still needed to be made.

1.2. History of Child Protection Conference

The Child Protection Conference came into being in the UK in the 1970s following the death of Maria Colwell. Originally, its purpose was for professionals to meet to share information and it assumed a traditional business meeting methodology well suited to this purpose. Since the introduction of the Children Act 1989 Child Protection Conferences have become an event that aims to lead to partnership working between professionals and family members and parents are routinely invited to attend following section 47 enquiries. Its purpose is:

- To bring together and analyse, in an inter-agency setting, the information that has been obtained about the child's developmental needs and the parents' or carers capacity to respond to these needs to ensure the child's safety and promote the child's health and development, within the context of their wider family and environment;
- To consider the evidence presented to the conference and taking into account the child's present situation and information about his or her family

- history and present and past family functioning, make judgements about the likelihood of the child suffering significant harm in the future and decide whether the child is continuing to, or is likely to, suffer significant harm; and
- To decide what future action is required in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child, including the child becoming the subject of a child protection plan, what the planned developmental outcomes are for the child and how best to intervene to achieve these.

Working Together to Safeguard Children. A guide for inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2010) p161

The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service (SQAS) organises and Chairs Initial Child Protection Conferences and Child Protection Review Conferences.

No serious incidents notifications have been submitted to Ofsted, and no serious case reviews have been completed during this period.

More children in the UK are in need of help or protection. There have been various hypothesis and discussions analysing the national increase. The National Audit Office produced “Children in need of help or protection” in October 2016 and stated [Rutland figures added in parenthesis for context]:

More children need help or protection for several reasons. High profile cases, such as Baby P and Daniel Pelka, can lead to more people reporting concerns to local authorities. There are also more children. Between 2010 and 2014, the number of children aged 17-years-old in England increased by 5% or 550,000.[For Rutland the ONS Mid-Year Estimates of Population were that there were 653 17year olds in 2012 and 609 in 2016 – a reduction of 6.7%.]

In 2014-15, the most common risk to a child’s welfare was domestic violence (flagged in 48% of assessments) and mental health concerns (about the child or other family members – 33% of assessments). [In Rutland just over a quarter of all assessments identified ‘concerns about mental health of parent/carer’ (27%) and ‘concerns about the child’s parent/carer being the subject of domestic violence’ (25%), as being the most common risk factors.]

Published statistics show that the number of domestic abuse cases and mental health problems are growing.

The government and local authorities are becoming more aware of threats to children's welfare including radicalisation, child sexual exploitation or gang culture. These threats are still relatively rare. For example, child sexual exploitation was identified in just 3% of assessments [3.1% for Rutland]. Local authorities told us, however, that they expect to see more cases in future as their awareness of child sexual exploitation and other risks grow.

Some of these trends can be seen in this report i.e. domestic abuse. The data has been analysed to enable us to gain a better understanding of the issue and how key agencies are responding to it. I have made some observations and recommendations at the end of the report which I am hoping will enable us to improve our response as a local authority and as an organisation who commissions services as it is important that we evidence that public spending is effective and efficient as in 'value for money'. We need to ensure that children do not remain subjects of Child Protection Plans for prolonged periods by providing interventions that are effective which means being holistic in approach.

2. Conference Model

The Signs of Safety model was introduced in Rutland during in September 2016 following a role out of multi-agency training. The Signs of Safety model is a solution focused child protection casework model which was chosen to replace the traditional model to improve participation for families and therefore maximise opportunity for participation for children and young people.

The assessment and planning form with danger on the left and safety on the right, forms the basic structure for the Strengthening Families Framework.

Firstly, the methodology enables information to be shared in such a way that it is 'sifted' and organised to help participants attach risk value/meaning to each piece of information and ultimately the whole picture. Secondly, the process of the meeting and its impact on participants is attended to so that the key tension of the conference – between professional concerns about child safety and family fears of child removal – is eased as much as it can be through a structure which is family

friendly and respectful on the one hand; and rigorous about identifying and addressing danger to children on the other.

3. Conference Attendance

Children over the age of 11 years are invited to attend their conference. Each child's individual needs are considered and a plan of support is formulated. During this period very few children have attended their conference. Children were not routinely offered the support from an Independent Advocate as this service was limited to one person who had many other responsibilities. The child's views were therefore presented by the parents and Social Worker, however this was very limited and did not capture their 'lived' experience and what they felt about the professionals' concerns. It was unclear if some children were aware that they were the subjects of Child Protection Plans and there was little evidence of them being involved in the formulation of 'their' Child Protection Plan.

A critical element of the Child Protection Conference Chair role is monitoring individual cases to identify and challenge issues of drift, delay or poor practice. On behalf of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board the Conference Chairs do this for all the partner agencies who contribute to Child Protection Conferences. Partner agencies attendance at child protection conferences has been a concern, particularly the Police which is due to an increased numbers of Child Protection Conferences being held across the three areas that they serve. There has also been poor attendance from the Probation Service and the Specialist Substance Misuse Service and the Specialist Domestic Abuse Service, despite both being commissioned by the Local Authority. Adult Services, Learning Disability Teams and the Mental Health Service have not been as involved as they should have been, particularly with families who have a multitude of complex needs and difficulties.

Some Child Protection Conferences have not been quorate and have needed to be rescheduled. The Chair ensures that a plan is in place in the interim period which is formulated with the child (*if present*), parents and professionals in attendance. It can be understandably distressing for families when this happens and there is concern that professionals may not have understood the importance of the multi-agency approach and their individual responsibilities in regards to safeguarding children.

53 Child Protection Conferences were held during this period:

18 Initial Child Protection Conferences were held. Statutory agency attendance is recorded and monitored by SQAS and is shown in Figure 1, below.

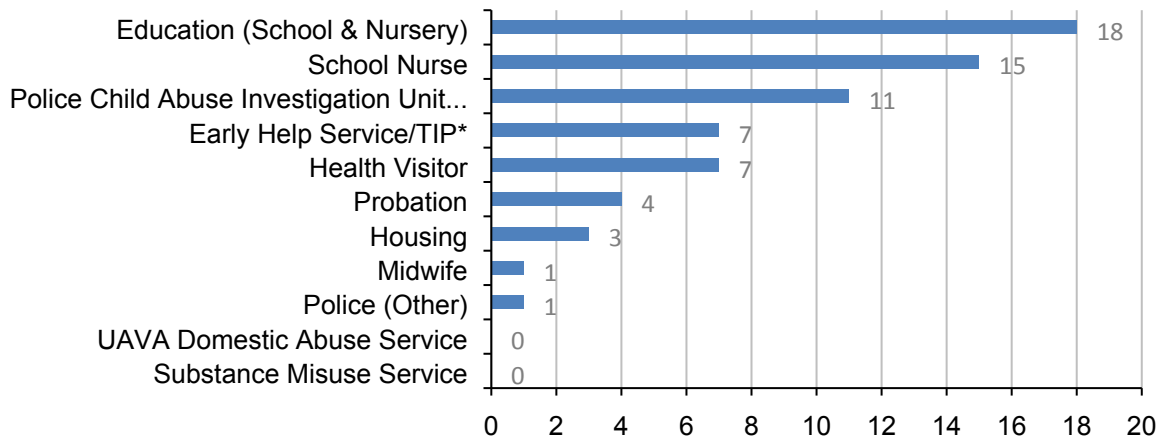


Figure 1 – Attendance at Initial Child Protection Conferences by agency* TIP = Targeted Intervention Practitioner

(Following referral to Children’s Social Care and assessments being completed identification of risk factors is essential to ensure that key agencies are invited to attend the Child Protection Conferences – it is the Social Workers responsibility to complete the invitation form and the agencies responsibility to respond and to clarify their involvement).

33 Review Child Protection Conferences were held. Statutory agency attendance is recorded and monitored by SQAS and is shown in Figure 2, below.

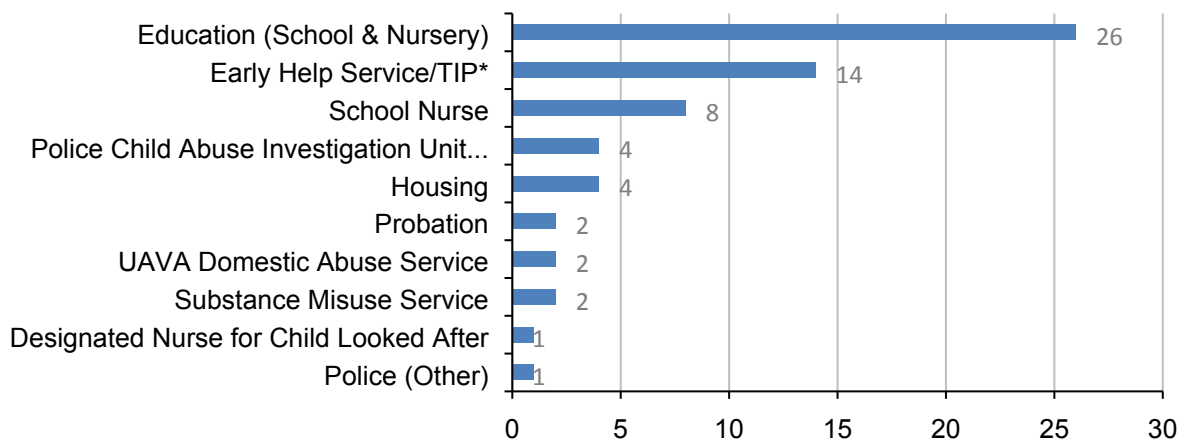


Figure 2 – Attendance at Review Child Protection Conferences by agency

Of the 53 Child Protection Conferences 20 (38%) involved domestic abuse being a risk factor. Despite this there was a very low attendance by the Police and the

Specialist Domestic Abuse Service UAVA (United Against Violence and Abuse) which is concerning as the majority have been assessed as being high risk and were discussed at the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which assesses and manages the risk by formulating a plan of coordinated support and protection. It is important for the two processes run in parallel to make best use of resources and to ensure that children are appropriately safeguarded. When a MARAC has been held before a Child Protection Conference the assessment of risk is known, however the plan of intervention has not always been shared and this has been an ongoing concern.

Statutory agency reports are recorded and monitored by SQAS. Partner agencies are required to share their reports with the family prior to them sending them to SQAS 2 days before an Initial Child Protection Conference and 3 days before a Review Child Protection Conference. For the majority of the Conferences this has not been achieved. The consequences of this are that the family have not had sufficient time to prepare which can result in them becoming distressed and challenging during the Conference. It also makes the Conferences long in duration as the Chair ensures that the family have read the reports before the Conference begins and time is often spent correcting the information provided which could have been done beforehand. This is particularly concerning when children attend their Conference and witness their parents in conflict with professionals who have developed positive relationships with them.

Children's Social Care is required to provide a report for the Initial Child Protection Conferences that often contains information collated from the parents and key professionals. The Social Worker has the responsibility to undertake the assessment and the report which also evidences the management oversight. The required timescale for the report to be shared with the family and SQAS is 1 working day. The child's 'voice' and lived experience has not been consistently captured as well as it could be. Very often the majority of the information relates to the parents and their difficulties. The reports have lacked in analysis and there is little reference to research and evidence of Signs of Safety being used.

Social Workers are required to complete Genograms which identify significant family members and family friends who can become involved to provide support and safeguarding which is known to be effective and reduce the need for long periods of professional intervention. Given that the aim of the Child Protection

Conference is to safeguard the child(ren) it is important to develop the child's network of support which should be primarily made up from family members, family friends and key professionals – in that order as professionals do not have the capacity to provide high levels of monitoring and it is better that children receive support from people who they have formed meaningful relationships with. It is no surprise that children do not talk openly about abuse to their teachers and health workers. Siblings are more likely to talk to each other and extended family when they are aware of their circumstances, hence the need for them to be invited to the 'child's' Conference. When this happens the plan is more effective and parents are able to be open following long periods of secrecy. Most importantly the length of Child Protection Plan is significantly reduced when extended family members have been identified and involved in the Child Protection Conferences and Core Group meetings who have the responsibility to progress the actions that are formulated at the Conference. The other benefit of early identification of extended family is for parallel planning and assessments which enables decisions to be made in a timely way and can prevent a child becoming Looked After. Very few Conferences have involved extended family despite them living in the area and being actively involved with the child(ren) and Family Group Conferences were not provided until the latter part of the year.

SQAS (Safeguarding Quality Assurance Service) were not capturing the qualitative data needed throughout the whole of this period which makes it difficult to evidence the impact that the service has made in regards to professionals working in a more open and inclusive way with children and their families. Some feedback has been collated and analysed during the 3rd and 4th quarter and which indicates that children and their families feel more comfortable and therefore feel more able to participate in Conferences now that the Signs of Safety model is being used. They describe 'getting it' and 'liking' the use of the boards which makes the risks visible and safety goals achievable when they are in agreement with the actions.

4. Child Protection Plans

The quality of Child Protection Plans has been strengthened as plans are formulated in partnership with the family during the Conference meeting which results in improved engagement and actions being realistic and achievable rather than families 'feeling done to'. The Plan is written in family-friendly language and contains SMART outcomes, clear measures of reduced risk and time-limited contingency plans. As

previously mentioned – there was no evidence of children being involved in the formulation and review of ‘their’ Child Protection Plan.

The Core Group have not been sufficiently effective in progressing the Child Protection Plans and this has been evident at subsequent Child Protection Review Conferences which has resulted in the child(ren) remaining the subject of a Child Protection Plan. The ‘outline’ Child Protection Plan is formulated at the Initial Child Protection Conference which should evolve as it is progressed. There have been indications that the Core Group have not referred to the Plan and considered the need to identify alternative services or take a different approach to work which has resulted in drift and children becoming Looked After who may have been able to be placed with extended family if they had been involved and assessed earlier.

5. Quality Assurance

The Signs of Safety Quality Assurance System is based on Signs of Safety organisational and practice theories of change – the essential elements of the practice that deliver outcomes and Signs of Safety fidelity – focussing attention on how workers practice and how organisations manage and lead learning consistent with Signs of Safety principles and practice.

The Signs of Safety Quality Assurance System encompasses:

- Collaborative case audit reflecting the Signs of Safety theories of change (*undertaken with the key worker*);
- Family feedback on practice and staff feedback on organisational fit and leadership reflecting Signs of Safety fidelity; and
- Core data for monitoring case trends and outcomes with a small set of key indicators that are already collected.

Each month 2 case files where a child is subject of a Child Protection Plan are audited. Audits focus on compliance with statutory visits, children’s wishes and feelings being clear, Core Group multi-agency attendance, quality and the progress of the Child Protection Plan. This is leading to earlier identification of drift and delay for children with an agreed escalation process to support the Social Workers to address the identified concerns. Where themes are identified Learning Workshops are developed and delivered.

Adherence to statutory timescales around the Conference process are monitored monthly and reviewed by Senior Managers. Performance data is used to ensure practice and capacity issues are addressed in a timely manner.

The SQAS has worked hard to maintain the performance targets set within the National Framework over the last twelve months. It has maintained the electronic diary system for Initial and Review conferences.

The first half of this financial year saw a number of staff pressures in the service including interim cover and a drive to permanent recruitment. An Ofsted Inspection was undertaken over four weeks from the 14th November to the 7th December 2017 which concluded that Rutland Children's Services requires improvement to be good. The Inspectors identified that the Child Protection Chairs were not consistently challenging poor-quality assessments and plans or delays in improving outcomes for children. A small number of cases were seen in which children were taken off plans too soon, before changes and improvements were sustained. These children became subject to repeat plans because of the same risks and concerns that had been identified previously. The lack of contingency planning and consideration of pre-proceedings work means that some children experience drift and delay in securing improved outcomes".

Following the Inspection SQAS developed an electronic record of all Practice Alerts that have been raised and further escalations when the issues have not been resolved. The information is shared with the Service Manager, each week and is analysed to identify any themes which results in learning workshops being developed and delivered for practitioners to attend along with specific case learning reviews for the case worker(s) and managers. SQAS also undertakes monthly audits of 2 cases that are randomly selected to ensure that child protection plans are being appropriately progressed.

There is evidence of quality assurance at every conference as information is being captured by the Chair. The data and themes are shared with senior managers at the performance meetings which are held regularly and result in clear actions being agreed to address any concerns. Good Practice is highlighted and feedback is provided. In addition to this, examples of good practice are shared to aid other workers in their development.

7. Staffing

During the first three quarters the SQAS (Safeguarding, Quality Assurance Service) was covered by an Interim Manager who had the responsibility to Chair Child Protection Conferences and approximately half of the Children Looked After Reviews. SQAS felt the benefits of having a permanent Manager/Conference Chair from January 2017 who has the responsibility to Chair Child Protection Conferences and some of the Child Looked After Reviews.

The SQAS Manager/Conference Chair is a qualified Social Worker, with many years post qualifying Children's Social Work and management experience. The Conference Chair has been in this role for a number of years and has brought their breadth of knowledge and experience to the service. The Conference Chair has monthly 1:1 supervisions with the Children's Social Care Head of Service. Peer support is available from neighbouring authorities which is accessed and monthly performance meetings are being held with Children's Social Care.

The Conference Chair is supported in their work by 1 full time Business Support Officer who arranges the Conferences and takes and circulates the records of Conference.

The average caseload during this period has been 23 children which is below the recommended number however the SQAS Manager was also responsible for over 20 CLA reviews along with LADO and other Quality Assurance tasks. That said, the Child Protection caseload was managed well with few Conferences going out of timescale during the early part of the year and none during the latter part following the appointment of the current SQAS Manager.

Current Staffing Structure of SQAS is:

Tracy Holliday – Safeguarding, Quality Assurance Service Manager including LADO

Peter Barron – Independent Reviewing Officer / Child Protection Chair

Sherrie Grant – Team Assistant

8. Number of Children Subject of Child Protection Plans

The number of children who have been discussed at Initial Child Protection Conferences due to concerns that they were at risk of significant harm has increased from 33 in 2015-16 to 41 in 2016-17 – an increase of 24%.

As mentioned previously some Plans drifted which resulted in children remaining the subjects of Child Protection Plans whilst new requests for Conferences were made and Child Protection Plans were created. Some of the children had been subjects of Child Protection Plans previously, some on more than on one occasion. Analysis of the data has shown that the Plan was ended early usually at the 1st Review Child Protection Conference which is generally not recommended as it is difficult to provide evidence of sustainability when positive change has been achieved. It also appears that the 'step-down' process to Child in Need and then to Early Help was not as robust as it needed to be as when professional support was reduced and withdrawn deterioration was evident. These findings support the need to involve extended family/friends to strengthen the network of support and monitoring. One would realistically expect families to experience difficulties as life invariably presents challenges. Some difficulties can be predicted if the family have complex needs and may therefore require professionals to 'step in and step-out' periodically. If the families find themselves on a cycle of assessment which is repeated on each occasion and does not factor their needs and history into the planning and access to resources they will find themselves caught up in the Child Protection process which can be emotionally and physically exhausting and can then lead to dis-engagement, disguised compliance, anger etc.

Initial Child Protection Conferences, in relation to referrals and s47 enquiries. A referral is defined as a request for services to be provided by children's social care and is in respect of a child who is not currently in need. In 2015-2016 there was a national 2.2% decrease in the number of referrals made. Children's Social Care received 369 referrals during 2015-16, with a slight decrease in 2017-17 to 360 referrals.

If the local authority identified there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, it will carry out an assessment under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 to determine if it needs to take steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children. Nationally there was a 7.6% increase in s47 enquiries over 2015-2016. In Rutland there were 100 referrals which resulted in a section 47 multi-agency strategy discussion in 2015/16, which increased by 49% to 149 in 2016/17.

If concerns are substantiated and the child is judged to be at continuing risk of harm then an Initial Child Protection Conference should be convened within 15 working

(MARAC). Across England, in March 2016 49.6% children assessed had Domestic Abuse identified as a factor.

In Rutland 37% Child Protection Conferences had Domestic Abuse identified as a factor. The category of Neglect has been used for the majority of these cases as there was a concern that the children were at risk of emotional/psychological and physical harm, particularly older male children who are more likely to intervene to protect the victim parent or a young child who was at risk of being harmed due to their level of dependency.

Brief analysis of the Rutland cases that have been assessed as being high risk in regards to domestic abuse has shown that the response during this period was reactive in nature and limited in impact. There were 20 victims that were referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) from April to March. The victims discussed had 35 children between them. 6 of the adult & child victims experienced repeated domestic abuse which continued to be assessed as being high risk during this period. 19 of the adult victims were offered specialist support from UAVA (United Against Violence and Abuse) which is an independently commissioned service for victims of domestic abuse. Despite the risk being identified as being high for the victim and any child in their care at the MARAC and at Child Protection Conferences the intervention has not been as coordinated and effective as it could be and should be. UAVA have not attended the majority of the Child Protection Conferences although domestic abuse had been identified as being the primary concern. When domestic abuse work was identified as an action that was formulated at the Child Protection Conference it invariably failed to evolve as it should and be progressed as UAVA did not attend the majority of the Core Group meetings and are not specific regarding the work that they are undertaking with the adult victim (*their client*).

The 'domestic abuse perpetrator programme' is based in Leicester and costs approximately £3,000 for each individual participant. It is not surprising to learn that none of the perpetrators have accessed the programme whilst there appears to be an expectation for them to fund this themselves. There has been no joint funding available which is disappointing as investment in public services to reduce domestic violence has been cost effective for the country as a whole, reducing the extent of lost economic output as well as the human and emotional costs. *The Cost of Domestic Violence* by Sylvia Walby published by Women and Equality Unit in 2004

is available at: <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/sociology/papers/walby-costdomesticviolence.pdf>

10. Profile of Children Subject of a Child Protection Plan

Last year there was an estimated 7,716 children and young people under the age of 18 years living in Rutland. This is 20% of the total population in the area.

In Rutland on 31st March 2017 there were very few children with a disability that were subject to Child Protection Plans. Children with a disability are at greater likelihood of experiencing significant harm than children who do not have a disability.

The age profile of children subject to Child Protection Plans is as follows, with just over two-thirds aged between 5 and 15 years:

unborn	2	3%	■ ■
under 1 yr	4	6%	■ ■ ■ ■
1 to 4 yrs	11	17%	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
5 to 9 yrs	23	35%	■ ■
10 to 15 yrs	22	34%	■ ■
16+ yrs	3	5%	■ ■ ■
Total	65	100%	

The gender profile of children subject to a Child Protection Plan in Rutland (excluding unborn) is 54% male: 46% female.

Ethnicity of children subject to Child Protection Plans Children and young people from minority ethnic groups living in Rutland:

- In primary schools is 6% (the national average is 17%)
- In secondary schools is 5% (the national average is 15%)
- The largest minority ethnic group of children and young people in the area attending state-funded primary and secondary schools in Rutland is White Other (2%)

89% children subject to Child Protection Plans in Rutland are White British. The categories are shown below:

Any other White background	5
Traveller of Irish Heritage	0
White Irish	0
White British	58
Any other ethnic group	0
Information not yet obtained	0
White and Black Caribbean	0
White and Black African	0
White and Asian	0
Any other Mixed background	0
Any other Black background	2
Caribbean	0
African	0

11. Child Protection Cases Reviewed Within Timescale

The percentage of children who were the subject of a Child Protection Plan over the last year who had reviews carried out within the required timescales was 98%, this is better than the national average of 2015-16 of 93.7%.

Review Conferences are always booked within timescales. The reason for the 2% (*1 conference*) that could not proceed in timescales during Q1 was not recorded. SQAS now record the reason for any delays or cancellations on the child's electronic file within the child protection section.

The Child Protection Conference Chair proceeds with conferences if they feel there is sufficient information available to make safe decisions, including there being a social work report for conference and a social worker in attendance who has worked with the family.

There were no children subject to a Child Protection Plan for 2 years throughout 2016-2017. This is better than national performance.

12. Children Becoming Subject of a Child Protection Plan for a Second or Subsequent Time

The number of children with a repeat Child Protection plan during this period was 7. One sibling group was subject of a Child Protection plan on 3 previous occasions, the first time being in 2007. The category was changed on three occasions however the primary factors and concerns remained the same – domestic abuse and parental substance misuse (maternal). The duration of the Child Protection plan varied on each occasion from 3 months to 18 months. The children were subject of child protection plans for over 3 years in total; however there was a period of 7 years when there was no statutory intervention. It is important to understand what was working well during this period and to identify the strengths. The children's ages are now 11 years, 8 years and 5 years. They continue to be subjects of Child Protection plans and parallel planning is in place.

Case audits have shown there was a common theme after the Child Protection plan had concluded of limited Social Care support and then early closure of the Child in Need plan. The restructure of the Children's Social Care teams and step-down process with the Early Help service should address this. The SQAS will complete a specific audit of the children subject to repeat Child Protection Plans in November 2017 to monitor improvements.

It is important for Children's Social Care to consider the history, particularly when children have been subject to a Child Protection plan for a second or subsequent time. Consideration needs to be given to the length of the plan, the intervention provided and engagement of the child, parents and extended family.

Over recent months we have seen the benefits of extended family being identified and involved at the earliest possible stage following concerns being raised as this enables them to understand the risks and to be part of the network of support and protection, which is less intrusive for the child and more sustainable long term.

13. Duration of a Child Protection Plan

24% of children's Child Protection Plans concluded between 6 and 12 months, which is the expected time for the majority of Child Protection Plans to reach conclusion. However, 12% concluded after being on a Child Protection Plan between 3 and 6 months. This figure is high and the SQAS has worked with colleagues to monitor and improve this as shown in the previous section there was a high number of repeat Child Protection Plans.

14. Feedback from Conference Participants

Prior to January 2017 feedback forms were posted to participants but few were returned. Post January 2017 feedback forms have been completed by the participants at the end of the conference. The majority of feedback has been positive in regards to the Signs of Safety model.

15. Social Work practice – ‘You Can’t Grow Roses in Concrete’ (*action research final report Nov 2014-March 2016 Eileen Munro, Andrew Turnell and Terry Murphy*)

Rutland previously mirrored the defensive, compliance-focussed culture that had been embedded in many other areas. It takes courage to break out of this mind-set, to undertake the substantial effort required to realign the organisation, and to develop an organisation that allows and supports workers to practice in a way that understands and accepts the complexity and uncertainty of risk decision making and management. Rutland has embraced this journey and has involved partner agencies to enable them to achieve this transformation together. Their destination is ahead and within reach.

16. Organisational culture

At the heart of the Signs of Safety framework are three principles that need to be embedded in the organisational culture in order for them to be fully demonstrated in work with families. The three principles address key challenges of the work:

1. **Working relationships are paramount.** Relationships must enable honest and respectful discussions of concerns and worries, draw on and honour everything positive, consider multiple perspectives, and always incorporate skilful use of authority. Research shows that, irrespective of the type of intervention, professionals see better outcomes when there is shared understanding of what needs to change, agreement on purpose and goals, and family members feel their worker understands them. Caseloads have been manageable and managers that have been in post during this period support these principles.
2. **Thinking critically and maintaining a stance of critical inquiry.** In order to minimise error, a culture of shared reflective practice and a willingness to admit you may be wrong are vital. Risk assessment is a core task and requires constant balancing of strengths and dangers to avoid the common errors of drifting into an overly ¹⁸⁹negative or positive view of the situation. A

crucial aim of the Signs of Safety is to improve assessment and decision making: it seeks to help workers move quickly and with confidence from information gathering to explicit analysis, judgement and then action. Slowly, but surely a major problem has been addressed which has enabled Rutland to move away from the defensive culture that removed far too many children because practitioners felt solely responsible for decisions and actions to make children safe. There is evidence of group and 1:1 supervision where critical thinking is actively encouraged and the ARC/CLA multi-agency panel ensures that the responsibility is shared in regards to any decisions that are made.

3. **Grounded in everyday experience.** Assessment and safety planning is always focussed on the everyday lived experience of the child. Service recipients and front line practitioners are the key arbiters of whether practice works or doesn't.

17. Leadership

The Signs of Safety organisational implementation framework prioritises the creation of a safe environment for workers through supportive leadership as well as clear participatory learning. This is fundamental to reducing defensive decision making as well as naïve assessments, such as those found in many child death reviews. It is fair to say that the former approach applied during the early part of this period. The leadership is risk savvy which has enabled them to be effective in addressing the pessimistic culture and to achieve a healthy balance. Managers at Rutland have been actively involved in the development and delivery of learning workshops rather than out sourcing training which has helped them and the front line workers to unpick cases and to change direction when needed.

18. Consistency

Signs of Safety was developed specifically for the statutory Child Protection end of children's services however it has been broadened out to include other agencies and the Early Help Service in Rutland which is very important as it ensures that families receive consistent approaches that they understand and invest in as the level of intervention either steps up or down.

19. Key Plan for 2017 – 2018

Actions	Who
Qualitative and quantitative data will be collated and analysed to evidences the child's 'lived experience'.	SQAS/Performance Team
Children's participation will improve and their voices will be heard.	Children's Social Care Independent Advocacy Service Partner agencies SQAS
Holistic approach to working with families – early involvement of fathers and extended family.	Children's Social Care Partner agencies SQAS
Signs of Safety will be embedded into practice and in the organisational culture. Risks will be balanced, accurately assessed and managed.	Children's Social Care/RCC Partner agencies SQAS
Assessments will contain good analysis, decision making responsibilities will be shared, plans will be smart, regularly reviewed and changed when required.	Children's Social Care Partner agencies SQAS
Child Protection Plans will be progressed by the family and key professionals who will be accountable for their individual action.	Partner agencies Family
Timely decisions will be made and legal advice will be sought when changes are not being achieved within the agreed timescale.	Core Group Children's Social Care
Investment of resources will be made to ensure the Child Protection Conferences and Plans for children at risk of harm are robust and result in effective intervention.	Statutory agencies Commissioned services Voluntary agencies
Specialist Services that are commissioned by the Local Authority will prioritise Child Protection cases and will work in partnership with other agencies. Attendance and contributions will be monitored.	SQAS Commissioners
Reports will be shared with the child and their family within the required timescales. Statutory Visits will be undertaken within the required timescale. Quality Assurance will be undertaken at each Child Protection Conference.	All professionals SQAS
Core Group Meetings will be held within the required timescales and will progress the actions in the Child Protection Plan.	Family Key professionals
Workers will continue to be provided with a learning environment, opportunities and time to develop their relationship with families and practice.	All agencies.
There will be evidence of Management oversight, timely decision making, effective plans that are formulated in collaboration with families and partner agencies, openness to scrutiny and challenge.	All agencies SQAS

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