

# Rutland County Council

Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP

Telephone 01572 722577 Email: [governance@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:governance@rutland.gov.uk)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A meeting of the **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held via Zoom - <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/97894599669> on **Thursday, 21st April, 2022** commencing at 7.00 pm when it is hoped you will be able to attend.

Yours faithfully

**Mark Andrews**  
**Chief Executive**

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## **A G E N D A**

### **1) WELCOME AND APOLOGIES RECEIVED**

### **2) RECORD OF MEETING**

To confirm the record of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022.  
(Pages 5 - 8)

### **3) 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.

### **4) CHILDREN'S SERVICES: UPDATE**

To receive Report No. 80/2022 from Dawn Godfrey, Strategic Director for Children and Families and presented by Emma Sweeny, Head of Children's Social Care giving an update on Children's Services including the self-assessment and the OfSTED visit.  
(Pages 9 - 28)

**5) SEND SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND UPDATE**

To receive Report No. 77/2022 from Dawn Godfrey, Strategic Director for Children and Families giving an update on the SEND Service.  
(Pages 29 - 44)

**6) PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

To receive any petitions, deputations and questions received from Members of the Public in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rules 28 and 216.

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.

**7) QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS**

To consider any questions with notice from Members received in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rules No 218 and No. 218A.

**8) NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS**

To consider any Notices of Motion from Members submitted in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rule No 219.

**9) CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION**

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

**10) REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN AND ANNUAL WORK PLAN**

To consider the current Forward Plan and identify any relevant items for inclusion in the Draft Scrutiny Committee Annual Work Plan, or to request further information.

The Forward Plan is available on the website at:

<https://rutlandcounty.moderngov.co.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=133&RD=0>  
(Pages 45 - 46)

## 11) ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

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

## 12) DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

Future meeting dates will be confirmed at Annual Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022

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## TO: ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Name	
1.	Councillor P Ainsley (Chair)
2.	Councillor E Baines
3.	Councillor N Begy
4.	Councillor A Brown
5.	Councillor P Browne
6.	Councillor J Fox
7.	Councillor S Webb (Vice Chair)

### CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Name	Title
8. Andreas Menzies	Dioceses
9. Peter French	Dioceses
10. Irene Kearney-Rose	Parent Governor

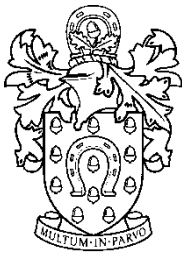
### PORTFOLIO HOLDER:

Name	Title
11. Councillor D Wilby	Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services

### OFFICERS:

Name	Title
12. Dawn Godfrey	Strategic Director of Children and Families
13. Emma Sweeny	Head of Children's Social Care
14. Bernadette Caffrey	Head of Early Intervention, SEND & Inclusion
15. Gill Curtis	Head of Learning and Skills
16. Jane Narey	Scrutiny Officer (Clerk)

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# Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP.

Telephone 01572 722577 Email: [governance@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:governance@rutland.gov.uk)

Minutes of the **MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held via Zoom on Thursday, 24th February, 2022 at 7.00 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillor P Ainsley (Chair)  
Councillor E Baines  
Councillor A Brown  
Councillor P Browne  
Councillor J Fox  
Councillor S Webb (Vice Chair)

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor N Begy

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER** Councillor D Wilby Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services

**PRESENT:**

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Dawn Godfrey Strategic Director of Children and Families  
Bernadette Caffrey Head of Early Intervention, SEND & Inclusion  
Jane Narey Scrutiny Officer (Clerk)

## **1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES RECEIVED**

Councillor Ainsley welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillor Begy.

## **2 RECORD OF MEETING**

The minutes of the meetings held on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

## **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared

## **4 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

No petitions, deputations or questions were received

## **5 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS**

No questions with notice from members were received

## 6 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No notices of motion from members were received

## 7 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION

No matters were received for call in

## 8 DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY HUBS AND THE EARLY HELP OFFER

Report No. 43/2022 was received from Bernadette Caffrey, Head of Early Intervention, SEND and Inclusion. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The report updated members on the national and local Family Hub Programme and noted opportunities and actions to develop this in Rutland.
- Officer time for the Family Hub Programme was not anticipated to be excessive but the collation of documentation and the engagement in key meetings would be required.
- A 'Project Manager' had been recruited to undertake this work and their sole focus would be on the development of the family hub.
- Development of a communication plan regarding communication with the public would be one of the first key priorities for the Project Manager.
- Once the feasibility study was completed, the next step would be thinking about the model and the consultation behind it.
- Work around the potential location of the Family Hub was ongoing and this would link in with Council's asset review.
- The Children's Centre had been suggested as a possible site but it had been assessed as too small and the site was already used to capacity.
- The Project Manager had made links with colleagues regarding the Local Plan but this development was still in the early stages so there was currently no definitive answer regarding possible locations.
- The delivery plan for the Family Hub would link in with the Rutland Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- The Strategic Director for Children and Families confirmed that the £40k funding was for the recruitment of the Project Manager on a 12-month fixed term contract.
- No future funding had been identified for the programme so everything was modelled on the basis of known available resources and developing a sustainable model for the future.

### RESOLVED

That the Scrutiny Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the development of a national and local Family Hub programme and **NOTED** the opportunities and actions to develop a Family Hub for Rutland.

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**The Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion left the meeting at 7.44 pm**

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## 9 DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY: UPDATE

Report No. 44/2022 was received from Dawn Godfrey, Strategic Director for Children's Services. During discussion, the following points were noted:

- The report raised awareness of the Local Authority's responsibilities and duties following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which came into force in October 2021. The report also presented the findings from the Local Strategic Needs Assessment and provided opportunity to review the subsequent Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- Councillors welcomed the fact that children would now be recognised as a 'victim' of domestic abuse. They stated that this recognition was long overdue and that it was a valuable step in the right direction.
- It was reported that Rutland had a lower number of domestic abuse cases compared to neighbouring authorities. This could be due to under reporting or 'hidden victims' that the Council were not aware of. Targeted campaigning within communities would help promote the reporting of domestic abuse issues.
- Victims of domestic abuse often moved away from the perpetrator which could result in the adult/child losing access to the schools, services and people they were used to within their local area. However, work was ongoing to change this moving forward. Consideration needed to be taken regarding any disruption to normal life when supporting children so work was being done regarding options to move the perpetrator rather than the victim(s).
- The Director confirmed that the locations of all 'safe accommodation' were confidential and that the police and support services had safeguarding plans in place should any issues arise.
- All Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Domestic Abuse Orders would be dealt with through the courts.
- The Safer Rutland Partnership Board and the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board provided the strategic leadership and governance for the work on domestic abuse in Rutland. The Vulnerability Executive provided the leadership across the whole of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR). Members included representatives from Leicestershire Police, the Police & Crime Commissioner, all three local authorities and health partners. The LLR Domestic Abuse Task and Finish Group collated, analysed and investigated the data and reported to the Vulnerability Executive.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Scrutiny Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the report which featured the outcomes of the needs assessment and gave regard to the new duties placed upon the local authority following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and **ENDORSED** the Domestic Abuse Strategy 21-24.

## **10 QUARTER THREE PERFORMANCE**

Report No. 33/2022 was received from Councillor David Wilby, Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The report provided a table showing the key performance indicators (KPIs) for Children's Services for consideration and comment by the committee.

- It was reported that the recorded underspend of £250k would be kept due to the variable and demand led nature of the budget i.e. if a large family required the Council's care, then the underspend would be significantly reduced.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Scrutiny Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the year-to-date performance information as at the end of quarter three (April – December) 2021-22.

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**Councillor Wilby and the Strategic Director of Children and Families left the meeting at 8.35 pm**

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## **11 REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN AND ANNUAL WORK PLAN**

Councillor Ainsley requested that the work plan be amended so that the agenda for the next meeting would have the SEND Service Update as the first agenda item, with the Children's Services Update as second and that the Provision of Speech and Language Services should be removed completely.

No other changes were requested.

## **12 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business

## **13 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, 21st April 2022 at 7.00 pm via Zoom.

### Agreed Agenda

1. SEND Service Update & Review (including performance and SENDIASS)
2. Children's Services: Update including Self-Assessment & Ofsted visit
3. Q4 KPI (January - March)

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**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.37 pm**

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**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

21 April 2022

**CHILDREN’S SERVICES UPDATE**

**Report of the Strategic Director for Children and Families**

Strategic Aim:	Building a Brighter Future	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	David Wilby, Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services	
Contact Officer(s):	Dawn Godfrey Strategic Director Children and Families	01572 758358 dgodfrey@rutland.gov.uk
	Emma Sweeny, Head of children’s Social Care	01572 758859 esweeny@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	NA	

**DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee:

1. Endorses the actions taken in response to the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted and offers comment on any areas where they feel progress is slower than expected.
2. Notes the next steps being taken and any areas of risk to progress.

**1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Committee on the progress being made in children’s social care and actions taken in response to the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted and our own quality assurance processes.
- 1.2 To update on next steps and future challenges and invite the Committee to share their views on any areas where they feel additional attention is required.

**2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 2.1 In January 2022 Ofsted undertook a focussed visit to look at children in care. The letter of findings was published on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 (Appendix B).
- 2.2 The findings were positive and highlighted a good experience for children and young people in our care. The young people that Ofsted met were positive about their

experiences and spoke positively about the care afforded to them.

- 2.3 Alongside the Ofsted visit we had already commissioned an independent agency to offer some quality assurance of our child protection and child in need process, assessments, and planning - the purpose of this was to ensure that we are maintaining progress in improving the children's services offer and ensuring children and families are receiving the right service.

### **3 OFSTED IMPROVEMENT**

- 3.1 The feedback from Ofsted was positive and gives the service a robust basis for further development. They highlighted that:

“The local authority has maintained a clear focus on protecting children and improving the quality of social work practice in Rutland. Senior leaders know their services well and have focused effectively on an improvement plan despite the challenges of the pandemic”.

- 3.2 Areas for improvement from the focussed visit were around the recording of data on missing episodes and we have taken swift action in relation to this and there is now a clear format for recording missing episodes on the liquid logic system and all staff have been trained in this.
- 3.3 There was also some challenge around recording participation of children and young people on case files and ensuring participation opportunities are offered at different times to young people. It was noted that participation is taking place but isn't always noted on case files. Again, immediate action has been taken to rectify this and to ensure the good work undertaken by the team is captured.
- 3.4 Within the Ofsted feedback it was noted the positive social work practice that has taken place with our young people and the value that is placed on their voice. This was positive progress in relation to the inspection of 2020.
- 3.5 Assessments and plans were found to be of good quality and life story work evident and embedded which again is significant progress from 2020.
- 3.6 The areas of progression and impact on children and young people is encouraging and gives the service momentum to strive towards better outcomes in our next inspection.

### **4 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES**

- 4.1 We had also commissioned an independent agency to undertake some quality assurance of our Child in Need and Child Protection work. This took place in February 2022.
- 4.2 Their findings were also largely positive although have highlighted areas for development and improvement.
- 4.3 The review looked at work undertaken at the front door of the service and the longer-term child protection and child in need team. The review highlighted that there was a good level of assessments taking place and that there were clear plans on all case files.

- 4.4 The reviewers also found that supervision was happening regularly but made some recommendations about the clear recording of this. Work has begun and is included in the development plan around supervision. We know that supervision is taking place but the effective recording of the discussions that take place is required, and this is being developed further.
- 4.5 There were some queries raised about the consistent application of threshold in relation to child protection concerns and appropriate escalation. The concern raised was that at times practitioners may be over optimistic in their approach and not be as professionally curious as they would be when offering challenge to the narrative of parents.
- 4.6 This is an area of development that we will take forward as we have a number of newly qualified workers who have trained and practiced within covid restrictions without the benefit of wider team support and reflection. We are now moving back to face-to-face training and more team members being in the office on a daily basis to offer appropriate peer challenge.
- 4.7 It is positive to note despite the concerns regarding over optimism we have not seen an increase in re-referral rates as we have continued to work with families and ensure that they have a service in place. We are working with social workers on developing professional curiosity and appropriate challenge.
- 4.8 Another issue raised for development was the way reports are written to children and ensuring that whilst writing in a child friendly manner, we are not minimising or softening the concerns. Service development days have been planned to reflect on this and this will be revisited throughout the year through the quality assurance process. Managers will also be mindful of the appropriateness of language and style when signing off assessments and plans through supervision.
- 4.9 Finally, the report highlighted the need to look at the plans and give measurable outcomes for families with dates. The reviewers felt that at times plans became a list of tasks rather than giving clear objectives and outcomes - again this is something to be addressed as part of our development plan.
- 4.10 Within this time, we also undertook quality assurance of our LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) function. This feedback highlighted some elements of process and data recording that could be improved but positively found that the decision making and outcomes were robust and accurate.
- 4.11 The main recommendation from the LADO audit that is being taken forward is the use of the Liquid Logic system to record LADO information which will enable better reporting capabilities in the future.
- 4.12 The overall summary of quality assurance work that has been undertaken and the Ofsted focussed visit has reassured us that we are making progress in our improvements with children's services and the service we are offering to children and families is of a good standard. We have created our service development plan to ensure that the pace of improvement is maintained pending our next inspection from Ofsted.

## **5 WORKFORCE**

- 5.1 An area to note of future risk is workforce stability. Historically we have struggled

with maintaining staff due to the ability of larger local authorities to offer higher pay, promotion opportunities and incentives. We are working hard to maintain our staffing cohort and are revising our workforce development strategy however there are external factors that impact on our ability to maintain staff.

- 5.2 The current cost of living is a challenge for everybody, social workers are being offered in excess of £50 an hour by agencies to work for them and neighbouring authorities have seen numbers of social workers leaving to take up these opportunities. While this has not yet happened for Rutland, we have seen some social workers leave to go to a neighbouring Local Authority who are offering much larger salaries and retention bonuses.
- 5.3 We are currently engaging in work with the East Midlands region to look at staff stability and to attempt to manage agency pressure which will help to mitigate some of this risk, however this will remain a key factor for us.
- 5.4 Our children and young people value stability of workforce and this is what is required to enable us to continue to make the improvements in our service. While we do offer very manageable caseloads and a positive working environment, external market pressures are likely to impact on us and our staffing cohort.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 This report is for information only.

## **7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 8 Not applicable.

## **9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 None currently - if we are unable to maintain our staffing cohort and need to use agency staffing this could have a significant cost implication.

## **10 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 10.1 None Identified

## **11 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed.

## **12 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 12.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed as it is not deemed relevant to this report.

## **13 COMMUNITY SAFETY**

- 13.1 None Identified

## **14 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 None identified

## **15 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 15.1 We have continued to make progress with our children's social care offer and ensured that children and families are offered the right support from our services.
- 15.2 While we have made progress there is still work to do in relation to embedding and consolidating the changes that have been made and ensuring that we continue to strive for excellence in practice.
- 15.3 We are unique in comparison to most Local Authorities where we have been able to limit our use of agency workers and have successfully recruited to our social work vacancies, although this is becoming more challenging.
- 15.4 An area of risk to note is the retention of staff in these challenging times and work is being undertaken within the region to look at staff pay and development. This will be reported on in the coming months and is something that will form the basis of planning next steps for our retention of staff.
- 15.5 There is an Independent Review of Children's Social Care due to be published in May and this may have implications for the way children's social care services are delivered in the future. It is likely that there will be new statutory duties and responsibilities', and these will have an impact on frontline practice.
- 15.6 It is recommended that the Committee endorses the current children services development plan and comment on any areas where they feel additional focus may be required.

## **16 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 16.1 There are no additional papers to the report

## **17 APPENDICES**

- 17.1 Appendix A – Children's services development plan.
- 17.2 Appendix B - Ofsted Letter

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

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## Rutland Children and Young People Development Plan 2022 - 2023

**Our vision is for all children and young people in Rutland to be happy, safe and successful. They will be supported and empowered to be the best they can be.**

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### Monitoring arrangements:

Progress of this development plan will be overseen by the Children's Services Improvement Board and the Directorate Management Team (DMT). These will be informed by service area updates and the plan will be regularly updated as a result. Individual service areas will monitor and progress specific actions for their area, which also feed into wider governance arrangements. Actions will only be signed off by DMT once satisfied that sufficient progress has been made and there is evidence this is sustained.

Our Children's Services Development Plan will support the delivery of our Children and Young People Plan (2022-2025) and we will address and track the actions against the 5 Priority Outcomes below.

Our 5 priorities are:

1. **Transition to adulthood:** To support the effective transition of vulnerable young people into adulthood and independent living, ensuring young people feel equipped with the necessary skills to live safe and successful lives.
2. **Emotional Health and Wellbeing:** To promote emotional resilience and ensure support is in place to recognise and respond early to children and young people; working with our community and specialist services to support local interventions.
3. **Protecting children at risk of harm:** Work with our partners to reduce risk at home and in the community.
4. **Tackling Domestic Abuse:** Work with our community to raise awareness of domestic abuse. To improve the services available locally for victims, including child victims, and their families in order to minimise the impact on family life.
5. **Children who become vulnerable in their education, including children with SEND:** We will work with partners, providers and families to ensure children receive their education entitlement and, work with other agencies to put in place additional support when children need it.

Version	1.1
Date created:	November 2021
Last reviewed:	February 2022

**KEY TO RAG RATING:**

<b>RED</b>	Timescale not being achieved
<b>AMBER</b>	Activity not yet commenced OR activity underway but risk of not achieving
<b>GREEN</b>	Activity underway and timescale being achieved OR Completed



Our Children's Services Development Plan will provide evidence we are making or have made steady progress in improving some of the areas of practice identified as requiring attention through our SEF. This includes robust processes for identifying risk and harm at the front door by effective information sharing with a wide range of agencies, strong management oversight and decision making, and ensuring children are matched according to their needs and achieving early permanency.

The updated Self Evaluation Form (SEF) dated October 2021 has outlined in detail what we know about the quality and impact of our practice across all service areas, identifying some key priority areas.

The development plan below will provide focus to the Service between November 2021 – March 2022 on areas of strength to build on, to ensure good practice becomes embedded. It is expected that the development plan will be monitored, updated and reviewed quarterly.

## CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Delivery Area	Development Action	Expected Outcome	Lead	Completion Date	RAG	Action we will take	How will we know we have achieved these outcomes?	Progress update
<b>Children in need of help and protection</b>								
<b>Information Sharing</b>  17	<p>Improve robustness of information gathering in understanding the child's needs early and at the first point of contact.</p> <p>There is evidence that we are continually reviewing risk when new information emerges, this includes convening a multi-agency strategy discussion on CIN cases to determine whether threshold for s.47 escalation has been reached.</p>	<p>Update, implement and embed local practice guidance to include information about mutually agreed expectations with police, health, education and other multi-agency partners around appropriate levels of participation and information sharing.</p> <p>Intelligence and background information on all adults who have access to the child/involved in parenting of the child to be routinely shared.</p>	HoS / Service Manager	March 2022	<b>Green</b>	Further strengthen front door by improving the quality of information sharing including from a wider range of agency liaison to improve quality of early multi-agency decision making; such as probation, adult mental health and IDVA.	<p>Bi-monthly dip sample of the quality of information sharing in Strategy Discussions – at least 90% of cases will be rated 'good' or better and 0% are rated inadequate.</p> <p>Monthly data reports to consistently show:</p> <p>100% of strategy discussions include police and health colleagues, consultation with housing and adult social care.</p> <p>An increase in the % of s47s that result in Initial Child Protection Conference.</p>	<p>Practice reviews and independent audit show a good level of information sharing.</p> <p>Strategy discussions include partners and partnership attendance at meetings is good.</p>
	Review the way assessments and plans are written when written to the child to ensure that the severity of the concerns is not lost in using child friendly terminology.	Assessments and plans are clear and risks clearly articulated. Plans and assessments are also accessible and understandable to all- particularly children and young people.	HoS/Service Manager	September 2022	<b>AMBER</b>	Development work within the service on how to write to children and young people while also articulating the severity of concerns.	<p>Plans and assessments will be read and understood by children and young people.</p> <p>Practice reviews will show assessments and plans are of good quality and have robust analysis.</p>	<p>Plans and assessments are clear- further work is required on how we write to the child and the language used.</p> <p>Work is planned at service development days to look at developing this skill.</p>

<b>Collaboration</b>	<p>Continued collaborative practice with families, ensuring that intervention is child focused and informed by level of risk and history of concerns.</p> <p>Practitioners display professional curiosity and ensure a focus on child welfare over parental self reporting.</p>	<p>Embed practice guidance around analysis of parental capacity for change to prevent 'Start again' approach with each new referral.</p> <p>Define expectation and process for assessments and ensure that all assessments of children include an analysis of risk including the cumulative impact of harm to children, in order to make the most appropriate plans.</p> <p>Chronologies are evident and used as the <b>starting point</b> for assessment process</p>	HoS / Service Manager	September 2022	<b>AMBER</b>	<p>Further training and development for all staff to promote understanding of the cumulative impact on children of neglect.</p> <p>Share learning from messages from research on the impact of child neglect.</p> <p>Assess the needs of pre-verbal children in the context of neglect e.g., through observations</p>	<p>Audit on the quality of routine management oversight of longer-term cases at key trigger points.</p> <p>Chronologies will be used as a tool to identify and highlight patterns of family dysfunction over time.</p> <p>Audit of Child Protection Plans and Child in Need plans to identify how children's views are being shared and considered as part of the plan.</p> <p>Monthly data reports will consistently show:</p> <p>Repeat Child Protection Plans at or below statistical neighbour average</p>	<p>Suggest target date for this moves to <b>September 2022</b>. Further practice development days are taking place to clarify ways of working and ensure that history is always considered.</p> <p>Ingson QA highlights the need for professional curiosity and more reflection in assessment.</p> <p>Back to basics training on writing analysis to take place alongside further group reflective sessions on challenging parental narrative.</p>
18	Child protection and Child in Need plans focus on specific outcomes to be achieved with timescales, rather than just describing an 'activity' to be completed.	<p>Child in Need and Child Protection Planning offers a robust plan with clear expected outcomes and all involved on clear on what the expectations are.</p> <p>Meetings will focus on updates to the plan and be outcome focussed.</p>	HoS/Service Manager/ IRO	September 2022	<b>AMBER</b>	<p>Work to be undertaken across the service around planning and recording of plans and actions to be taken.</p> <p>Back to basics approach looking how we can clearly record and progress CIN and CP planning</p>	<p>Practice reviews will highlight clear and robust plans.</p> <p>Progression of casework will be evident in progression of plans and timeliness of interventions.</p> <p>Families will be able to clearly understand and articulate what the expected outcome of intervention is.</p>	<p>Plans are clear however further work is required on ensuring expected outcomes are clearly articulated.</p> <p>It is positive that plans are evident on files and plans for children are progressing but some further development on refining plans is required.</p>
	Participation of children and young people is encouraged at every level and recorded on file. Their engagement with services such as SUSO clearly recorded.	Young people are given opportunity to engage with participation events and these are clearly recorded on their files. When young people decline an opportunity this is revisited at different times to encourage engagement.	IRO/John Herbert	September 2022	<b>AMBER</b>	<p>Work on how participation in recorded and reflected on case files to be completed.</p> <p>IRO's to ensure participation is discussed and recorded at review meetings.</p>	<p>Participation is evidenced on case files via audit and the impact on children and young people.</p> <p>There will be an increase in participation from revisiting the opportunities with children and young people.</p>	<p>There is ongoing work in relation to this and the participation service are already looking at the best way to record activity on a child's file.</p> <p>IRO's will also explicitly record this in their meetings.</p>

<b>Decision-making</b>	Supervision is on file and is of good quality with clear updates on current developments within case work and next steps recorded.	Case progression with clear management oversight leads to outcomes being achieved for children and young people.	Service Manager/ Team Managers	September 2022	<b>AMBER</b>	Further development work with managers on the format of supervision to ensure workers are given the support they need to progress case work and that this is robustly recorded.	Clear management rationale will be evident on file.  Social workers and managers will report a good standard of support and supervision with ability to reflect on practice and achieve positive outcomes.	A new supervision template is being looked at- currently the template used is repetitive and onerous.  We know staff are receiving supervision wse now need to ensure the quality os where is should be- this will take place via supervision observations and practice reviews.
19	Regular review of CP cases to determine whether threshold for escalation to pre-proceedings has been met or is being missed.	Develop a contingency section on the case recording system (E.g., PLO minute template) to ensure that parallel planning for children is clearly discussed and recorded.  Produce PLO practice guidance for staff to improve consistency and effectiveness of the process.	HoS/ Service Manager	August 2022	<b>Green</b>	Parallel Planning within pre-proceedings to be outlined at Review Conferences when positive changes are not being achieved through a Child Protection Plan, in a timeframe that is appropriate to the child's age, development and need.	Appropriate management of cases operating within the public law outline (PLO).  Thematic audits to confirm if practice is consistently reviewing appropriateness of implementing the PLO process.	Regional tool kit for effective PLO is being launched in March- this will be used across the service for good practice.  This will be looked at in the service development day in June
	Review of threshold decisions at the front door and those around S47 to ensure that appropriate support is offered at the right time to children and families.	Robust and appropriate application of threshold that leads to fewer re-referrals and ensures that children are offered the service they need at the earliest opportunity.  Child protection planning is used effectively and collaboratively with families and not seen as a draconian intervention.	Service Manager /PSW	December 2022	<b>AMBER</b>	Back to basics training with social workers and managers at the front door in application of threshold.  Develop reflective supervision to encourage professional curiosity in practice.	Fewer repeat contacts and referrals.  Thematic audits show robust application of threshold evidencing professional judgement and interventions at the right level and the right time.	The re-referral rate has fallen however some quality assurance work has raised some issues about the appropriate application of threshold in relation to child protection. Work is being undertaken with the service on threshold application and and considering full history when making threshold decisions.  This will be discussed at the service development day in March and ongoing informal discussions in the office now people are back in more often.

<b>Workforce Development</b>	Better understanding of parental conflict cases through the lens of affluent neglect.  Parrental conflict cases resulting in parental 'emotional neglect', constitutes a large proportion of the main risk indicator in social care assessments.	Develop staff understanding of affluent neglect considering demographics of Rutland and presence of wealthier families, and this type of neglect being more difficult to identify and define.	HoS/ Service Manager/ Team Manager	March 2022	<b>AMBER</b>	Further training and development for all staff to understand affluent neglect as a hidden form of abuse.	Supervision to routinely evidence appropriate challenge and reflection in breaking barriers and myths that neglect only occurs in poorer families.  Child + Family assessments undertaken for children in wealthy families where parental alcohol and substance abuse, domestic abuse and parental mental illness is a risk factor, will consider the emotional neglect and lasting effects on the children in the home.	Training is in place and this is explored via supervision with staff.  History is considered as part of assessments and work is continuing to help staff with reflecting the ijpact of history on current circumstances.
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<b>Children Looked After and Care Leavers</b>								
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20	<b>Placements and achieving permanence</b>	The monthly Permanence Panel Meeting chaired by the Service Manager has ensured that the proportion of children in care now have a current care plan.  Continuinous improvement is required to ensure consistency in implementing concurrent planning early; considering any possible challenges and difficulties in implementing the care plan.	The IRO Chair will offer high expectations, high support, and high challenge in their QA of interventions and plans and to robustly raise dispute resolutions and follow them through to resolution and record this on child's case file.	HoS/ Service Manager/ IROs	March 2022	<b>Green</b>	Placement stability to have a focus on risks and contingency planning in line with the child's needs.	Children's records will demonstrate the impact of IRO Quality Assurance on children's care planning and interventions.  Children and Young People will report that they feel listened to understand why we are involved and there will be evidence of satisfaction with their plans.	There is good quality oversight on children's records.  Ofsted highlighted that children and young people are in setted placements.
		The development of fostering for adoption (FfA) as a route to early permanency	Where a plan for adoption is one of the outcomes being considered, children social care will involve the family finding and adoption service at an early stage.	HoS / Service Manager	December 2022	<b>Amber</b>	Develop an early permanence pathway.  (Consider Essex County Council model as an example of good practice)	Clear evidence on case file that FfA is considered for all children subject to a plan for adoption, including older children and siblings.  Evidence through management decision / IRO / CP plans that unborn	The service are aware of this we currenty have no cases that are suitable for this.  Pathway and training to be embedded

						children at risk and likely to need permanence are identified early through a robust early identification process.  All work to consider viability of extended family will be explored during pre-proceeding work.		
<b>Care Leavers</b>	Pathway plans to be co-created with young people (including with care leavers) – plans to explicitly record reasons where this has not been possible, and evidence of efforts made to engage the young person.	Consult care leavers about their future and fully involve them in the planning process so that they are able to map out their own life goals and plan how to achieve these.	HoS/ Service Manager / Team Manager	March 2022	<b>AMBER</b>	Pathway planning for care leavers will reflect their growing independence as they take on more responsibility for their lives.  Pathway planning will incorporate an element of life story work for the young person so that they have a record of why they were looked after and their wishes for the future.	Regular audit of pathway plans will demonstrate a higher % of good plans seen.  Care Leaver audit theme for Q4 awaiting feedback to this.  Anecdotal feedback is that pathway planning is improved.	
	'Staying Put' arrangements to be regularly considered as an option for our care leavers with the view of ensuring it provides them with the best possible start to their adult lives.	To provide our Care Leavers with the chance to continue to live with their foster carers when they reach the age of 18; ensure that they benefit from a loving and nurturing family environment for longer, giving them time to prepare for independence.	HoS / Service Manager/ Supervising Social Worker / Team Manager	March 2022	<b>Green</b>	Matching assessments with foster carers to include early planning from the time a long term foster placement is agreed.  RCC staying put provision to be updated and clear information to be shared with all foster carers.	An increase in staying put arrangements as permanency options for care leavers.  Feedback from current foster carers and prospective foster carers that they understand that young people may wish to enter into a staying put arrangement when they reach 18	This is progressing well with more young people in staying put arrangements
	Staying Close/ Staying connected- project to look at support for young people leaving care to remain living in the local	To provide care leavers who have lived in residential care the opportunity to stay within their local area with the right support need to	HoS / Service Manager/ Through	January 2023	<b>AMBER</b>	Care leavers will have the right support to enable them to successful transition to independent living.	RIIA project is being implemented with grant funding.	This project is just beginning and will develop over the next 12 months.

	area. Providing young people with the support they need.	develop skills for strong and stable independence.	Care Team Manager			Fewer incidents of homeless Care leavers.  Care leavers are given the option to remain the local area.	Planning on how to best utilise resources provided is taking place.	
<b>Fostering</b>	Increase children's participation in foster carers' and connected person annual reviews both of children and young people directly, and their social workers (sharing their perception of the carers' ability to meet the child's needs).	Ensure that children's views from CLA reviews feed into foster carer supervision and annual reviews and are acted upon.	HoS / Service Manager / Team Manager	December 2022	<b>AMBER</b>	Improved joint working between Fostering and Adoption team, Throughcare Team and Permanency and Protection Service.	Monitoring children's views in annual reviews for foster carers and connected carers.  Feedback from Fostering Independent panel advisor to Corporate Parenting Board.  Young people will be consistently involved in training, assessing and recruiting foster carers.	Most annual reviews occur at the end of the year- work is ongoing to ensure that children's voices are captured
22	Increase resilience within the in-house foster carers to support carers to take on more challenging placements and including developing a short breaks provision.	Foster carers to be offered the skills and knowledge to be the best foster carers they can be.  We will recruit foster carers to match children in RCC care.	HoS / Service Manager / Team Manager/ Supervising Social Worker	December 2022	<b>AMBER</b>	Complete a gap analysis of foster carer training.  Needs analysis to include feedback from young people.	All foster carers will receive training including missing from care, UASC, CSE, children with additional needs as part of the ongoing training portfolio.  All in-house foster carers will have a clear pathway related to career experience.	A robust package of training is in place for foster carers and new carers who are being approved.  Laila has recently signed the foster carers up to the national association of therapeutic parents  Foster carers are also offered training via the training hub.
	Better evidence on case file and understanding of the quality of work being done with carers.	Continue to monitor 6 weekly supervisions with a focus in assessing the quality of work being done with carers through supervisions, annual reviews and unannounced visits.	Service Manager / Team Manager	March 2022	<b>GREEN</b>	8 weekly case supervision by the Team Manager is now in place. This will ensure robust oversight on outcomes from Supervising Social Worker 6-weekly supervisions with carers.	Performance data will show that current completion for 8-weekly supervisions is achieving the target KPI of 90% or above.  Audit and dip sampling of foster carer files and themes from the audit will be fed back and used to improve quality of practice.	Supervision is now on file and foster carers are seen. Further work is being undertaken to ensure supervising social workers are robust in their support to foster carers and their family including the children.



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23 February 2022

Dawn Godfrey  
Strategic Director for Children and Families  
Catmose  
Oakham  
Rutland  
LE15 6HP

Dear Ms Godfrey

### **Focused visit to Rutland children's services**

This letter summarises the findings of the focused visit to Rutland children's services on 19 and 20 January 2022. Her Majesty's Inspectors for this visit were Rebecca Qusteded and John Roughton.

Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for children in care.

This visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework. This visit was carried out partly by remote means. Both inspectors used video calls for some of the discussions with local authority staff. Both inspectors were on site.

### **Headline findings**

Since the last inspection in March 2020, the local authority has maintained a clear focus on protecting children and improving the quality of social work practice in Rutland. Senior leaders know their services well and have focused effectively on an improvement plan despite the challenges of the pandemic. As a result, experiences for children who are looked after have improved. A lack of scrutiny of performance management data, particularly regarding children who are missing from care, is not supporting this improvement journey. Senior leaders recognise this and have plans in place to rectify this.

### **What needs to improve in this area of social work practice?**

- The accuracy of performance management data, in particular the recording and oversight of children who are missing from care.

## **Main findings**

Children in care are seen regularly by social workers who know them well. This has continued despite the various lockdown restrictions. Social workers spend time with children, completing creative and sensitive life story work to help them understand their experiences. Social workers ensure that children's views inform decision-making. This helps children to feel settled and have their needs met.

Social workers work effectively with colleagues and partners to identify and meet children's holistic needs. Social workers are resourceful in ensuring the right support is in place for children, with well-planned transitions when children move home or school. Children are encouraged to pursue their interests. The virtual school head (VSH) is extremely creative in using a variety of community resources to incentivise children's educational engagement, such as a mentoring service provided by members of the local Premier League football team. This supports children's educational progress.

Children's case files are up to date, with most records, assessments and plans written 'to' the child, in a respectful and sensitive way. Assessments are timely, thorough and informed by the child's voice, helping to ensure that plans are child centred. Social workers ensure that children's plans are clear and timebound with the use of child-friendly language. There is good evidence of managerial oversight, which provides a clear rationale for decision-making.

Children, including disabled children, who are looked after in Rutland live in homes which meet their needs well. Most children are settled where they are living and do not experience unnecessary moves. This means that children are able to develop secure relationships with their carers and a strong local support network.

Early permanence is secured for most children. Permanence is secured swiftly for very young children in Rutland. All the children who left care in the last six months aged under one year had permanent care arrangements through adoption or special guardianship. Comprehensive assessments lead to clear plans for children to live with their families, including when this is abroad, where that is in their best interests.

Children benefit from positive relationships with their independent reviewing officers (IROs). Children are always visited in advance of their reviews to establish their wishes about how the meeting will take place. An effective hybrid model of reviews, which are partly in person and partly virtual, has developed in response to the pandemic. This gives children more choices as to how they and others can contribute, without necessarily having everyone physically present. Midway reviews by IROs to monitor the progress of review recommendations have been successful in ensuring that children's permanence plans are kept on track.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children account for most children who have recently entered care in Rutland. The local authority has responded swiftly and effectively to this new challenge. Social workers have received relevant training and

all children are living in appropriate accommodation which meets their needs. The VSH ensures that children's educational needs are identified promptly and a broad educational offer secured. Children's physical and mental health needs are quickly assessed and timely referrals made according to identified needs, such as to the Refugee Council's therapeutic service. Children's cultural and religious needs are well considered and social workers go to great lengths to ensure that children can access community resources to avoid them being isolated.

Children receive the right support with their physical and mental health. Senior leaders are working with health partners to ensure that a flexible child-led health service is commissioned and delivered for children in care. In the interim, the local authority ensures that children's emotional needs are met through alternative therapeutic services when the child and adolescent mental health services do not provide them and, where problems have occurred identifying an NHS dentist, the local authority is funding private dental care.

Children now receive a seamless and well-planned transition to adulthood through the development of a Throughcare team. Personal assistants become involved with children by the time they are 16 years old and are actively engaged in pathway planning from this point, alongside the social worker. Where it is in the child's best interest, the social worker remains involved after children are 18 years old to support the transition.

Children's participation is improving in Rutland. Children in care are well supported by their social workers, IROs and advocates. They also have access to Rutland's children in care council, the Speak Up Speak Out group, who meet regularly and offer activities including residential trips. Children spoken to by inspectors described these opportunities positively as they enjoyed learning new skills and having fun. Children's case records do not reflect this involvement or its positive impact on the child. Older children are not routinely encouraged to consider, or reconsider, their involvement in participation activities which could benefit them. All the children we spoke to during the visit were positive about how their social workers help them, and all felt that their individual needs were being met. They described being happy, secure and safe.

Opportunities to engage in dialogue with the lead member and senior leaders to shape services for children in care are developing through the participation offer. However, children do not have the opportunity to directly influence service development as they are not represented on the Corporate Parenting Board.

There is improved workforce stability. Senior leaders have developed a range of effective strategies to recruit and support new social workers. Social workers report being well supported both formally and informally by their managers. Their caseloads are manageable, which allows them to build relationships with children. Social workers particularly enjoy having the time to undertake direct work with children, including life story work.

Social workers value supervision, which is often reflective and detailed, demonstrating the authority's investment in supervision skills training for team managers. Managers track the progress of agreed actions within supervision, which mitigates delay for children. Social workers also appreciate the training opportunities available to them. Social workers are enthusiastic about the social work practice model which is being embedded across the authority. It is being used effectively for children in care to ensure a shared understanding of risks and needs.

Senior leaders have demonstrated an active focus on improvement over the last 12 months, which has resulted in significant progress in the quality of social work practice and the experiences of children in care. Managerial oversight is evident from team managers and IROs and is contributing to more effective care planning. The focus on addressing sufficiency issues means that more children benefit from remaining in or close to Rutland and living in a home which meets their needs. There are sufficient homes to consider when matching for most children. However, where necessary, in consultation with the wider professional team around the child, appropriate bespoke arrangements are commissioned which meet children's individual needs. The success of Staying Put means that further recruitment of foster carers is necessary. This remains a focus of senior leaders.

Inaccurate data is impairing individual and strategic planning. There are gaps in the data for children who go missing, which means it is not possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of the prevalence of missing episodes for looked after children. Senior leaders have plans in place to rectify this.

Since the last inspection, the quality assurance framework has been revised. Thematic practice reviews are completed collaboratively with social workers. These highlight practice deficits and good practice. Practice review could be strengthened through consultation with children, parents and carers. Practice reviews are mostly moderated to ensure consistency; however, moderation is not taking place contemporaneously, which means that timely actions to support improvement are not always taken. Managers disseminate themes from practice reviews and showcase good practice examples.

Ofsted will take the findings from this focused visit into account when planning the next inspection or visit.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Quested  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

21 April 2022

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)  
SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND UPDATE**

Report Of The Strategic Director for Children and Families

Strategic Aim:	Building a Brighter Future	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	David Wilby Portfolio Holder Education and Children’s	
Contact Officer(s):	Dawn Godfrey Strategic Director Children and Families	01572 758358 dgodfrey@rutland.gov.uk
	Bernadette Caffrey Head of Early Help SEND and Inclusion	01572 722943 bcaffrey@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors		

**DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee:

1. Notes the performance, developments and challenges in the SEND service.
2. Notes and provides direction on recommendations for future actions.

**1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To update Scrutiny Committee on the developments and performance of the SEND service and to note the drivers which require a whole system change.
- 1.2 The presentation and this report provide Scrutiny Committee with detail of the developments in the service and sets out the current challenges for the service as a result of growing demand and the legal burdens placed on Local Authorities and the steps in place to address these and to continue to improve the SEND service.

**2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 2.1 The Children and Families Act 2014 aims to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND by transforming how support is delivered through joined up multi-agency response and resource. The SEND Code of Practice 2014

introduced a number of changes and resultant additional statutory functions for the local authority to support children and young people with SEND up to age 25.

2.2 These duties include:

- To identify all children with SEND in the local area and to process and undertake Education Health and Care Needs assessments (EHCNA) for children who may have SEND. This requires the management of applications and decisions to assess within a statutory 6-week timescale.
- To undertake assessments and issue Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) within 20 weeks from first application, this includes coordinating and compiling multi-agency assessment information and formulating draft EHC plans. This includes statutory duties to ensure parent and child involvement and the co-production of content within set timescales.
- To secure the appropriate education and health provision associated with EHCPs for children with SEND, ensuring provision is named and specific within EHCPs.
- To undertake annual reviews of all children with an EHCP and ensure their plan remains relevant, appropriate and provides a clear pathway for adulthood and independence.
- To produce and maintain an up to date 'Local Offer' which sets out the local area's health, education, and social care provision for children with SEND.
- To keep local services for children and young people with SEND and their families under review to ensure that they meet the needs of the local community, this includes a duty to have in place co-commissioning arrangements for the local area between the local authority, health, and education.
- To provide a range of statutory services including mediation services, independent advice and support services and educational psychology services for the purpose of education, health, and care needs assessments.

### 3 NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

- The SEND Review Green Paper (published 29 March 2022) sets out proposals for a system that offers children and young people access to the right support, in the right place and at the right time, so they can fulfil their potential and lead happy, healthy and productive adult lives. The consultation will be open for 13 weeks, closing on 1 July 2022. **See Appendix A**
- A new Ofsted Inspection Framework for local areas – Local Authorities, NHS and Schools, with a greater focus on inclusion and outcomes for children
- A national programme, which Rutland has been invited to and will take part in, to support Local Authorities to manage deficits in High Needs budgets, titled 'Delivering Better Value Programme'.

- Government Spending Review, which has resulted in delivery and investment in key initiatives, such as health and well-being in schools, Family Hubs, Reducing Parent Conflict, and new legislation to support Service families.
- National Health Service England, (NHSE), programmes such as the Neurodevelopmental Pathway and Key Worker Programme
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, (LLR), SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy, which is entering Year two of the Delivery Plan.

#### **4 WHAT WE HAVE DONE – WHAT’S WORKING WELL**

- 4.1 The SEND and Inclusion service including children with disabilities who are Children in Need, (CiN) is fully integrated with the Early Intervention service, which ensure that children’s needs are identified early, and a response put in place before children’s needs escalate and there is a need for statutory intervention. The service has in place an up-to-date Self Evaluation and Service Plan as well as a SEND Recovery Plan which are driving service improvements. This continuous service improvement is overseen by the internal Practice Oversight Group and the SEND Programme Board, both chaired by the Strategic Director for Children and families and the strategic oversight from the Children’s and Young People’s Partnership, comprising education providers, NHS commissioners and providers, parents, senior officers from RCC and is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Education and Children’s services.
- 4.2 The implementation of the SEND Code of Practice is monitored by a joint Ofsted and CQC inspection framework, both under review. The last Ofsted/CQC inspection took place in Rutland in July 2017. The outcome of this exercise highlighted a range of good practice and also identified areas for development and improvement which have been implemented. During this period the SEND service has also been subject to two Peer Reviews and will be due another one in Summer 2022.
- 4.3 The locality has bi-yearly reviews with the regional DfE SEND Advisor and the NHSE Improvement Lead. The last review was February 2022. The feedback highlighted the following:
- SEND remains a top priority for Rutland Local Area and this is reflected in the Children’s Strategy and Joint Commissioning Strategy (Local Authority and CCG).
  - So far in 2022, 145 Annual Reviews, out of a total of 175, have been completed within 12 months, achieving a percentage total of 83%, the highest recorded in the Region to date.
  - Transition deadlines for 15th February and 31st March are on-track for 100% completion.
  - Good co-production, parent reps make positive and constructive contributions, this reflects well upon the relationships and co-production across the Local Area.
  - The SEND Local Area in Rutland has the potential to both improve and strengthen its Local Offer for children, young people and parents, as well as, all

partners, including schools and clinicians.

## 5 CHALLENGES – WHAT WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT

- 5.1 In the past 3 years the SEND team has seen a significant increase in workload. There has been a 41% increase in the number of children with an EHCP and a 67% increase in the number of EHCNA requests. This number continues to rise rapidly, in spite of the measures put in place as part of the SEND Recovery Plan, due to the increase in parental requests and requests for pre-school aged children.
- 5.2 Over the last 2 years Covid-19 has led to a significant increase in Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) referrals. Additionally, the number of children being diagnosed as Autistic has increased. These increases have put the SEND system under significant pressure.
- 5.3 There are 41% more annual reviews to undertake each year, in addition to the increase in the number of plans and requests, meaning that the team are experiencing significant pressures with each team member under pressure to complete an average of 50% more work.

Year	New EHCNA requests	Number of new EHCP's	Total number of EHCP's
2019	62	31	224
2020	63	44	259
2021	53	36	278
2022 as of end February 2022	16	5	280

## 6 RUTLAND'S PERFORMANCE

Year	% met 6 week deadline	% met 20 week deadline	% annual reviews held within 12 months	% informed within 4 weeks of an AR	% revised plans issued within 12 weeks of an annual review
2019-20	100%	100%	91%	93%	95%
2020-21	100%	20%	89%	74%	95%
2021 -22 (YTD end February 2022)	100%	100%	83%	40%*	92%



- 6.1 The increased demand has placed increased pressure on the SEND service, and the service is trying to address specific difficulties:
- To meet the statutory 4-week legal deadline for informing parents if we intend to cease, maintain or amend the EHCP following an annual review
  - To meet statutory legal deadline to issue a revised EHCP within 12 weeks of an Annual Review
  - To meet statutory legal deadline to issue an EHCP within 20 weeks of receiving a request
- 6.2 Rutland have always prided themselves on meeting its legal obligations. In previous years, the SEND service has only ever missed deadlines where they have been outside of our control, for example, access to schools during the Covid pandemic, schools unable to hold annual reviews within 12 months, school holidays impacting on their response times or parents requesting that they have longer to work with us on the draft planning process.
- 6.3 We know our counterparts in other local authorities do not meet these statutory deadlines, but it is clear from the DfE, directives and recent case law, as well as in the SEND Code of Practice, that Local Authorities must meet these legal deadlines.
- 6.4 In the East Midlands performance against issuing in the 20-week timescale is down by 27%, with 53% of EHCPs issued within the 20-week timescale, the average is 62%. Families can be assured that RCC has maintained high performance on its statutory deadlines, being consistently good or better performance than many other Local Authorities.

## **7 OUR SOLUTIONS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

- 7.1 A co-produced SEND Recovery Plan is in place and having an impact with our education providers, mitigating the long-term impact of Covid-19.
- 7.2 RCC has made a significant investment in the Educational Psychology Service. The procurement and contract evaluation process is underway.
- 7.3 Support for Speech, Language and Communication needs has increased, with additional Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) input funded by the High Needs Fund, (HNF).
- 7.4 The nurture initiative has been highly successful within primary schools. Plans to support a transition 'nurture' pathway into Year 7 in Secondary Schools are in place.
- 7.5 Exclusions have reduced due to an early intervention social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), strategy, fixed term exclusions in Rutland are 2.8% compared to 10.9% nationally
- 7.6 The number of parents and carers accessing support and advice for ASD/ ADHD was 107, (Jan 2022)

## **8 CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The SEND and Children with Disabilities, (CWD) services are legally obliged to

consult with children and families during a child's assessment and in the creation of an Education Health and Care Plan and annual reviews. The service will utilise its current communication channels with parents and carers such as the Local Offer, and the Rutland Parent Carer Voice to consult on any new arrangements.

- 8.2 The SEND case officers and CWD social workers are mindful of case law and the tribunal process when seeking a young person's wishes.

## **9 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 9.1 Options set out in Point 16.

## **10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The Council is carrying a deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant, nearly £1m, caused by High Needs pressures which it aims to recover over time. In statute, the Council is not required to fund this deficit but with funding received barely sufficient to meet current demand, the Council is unclear as to how the deficit will be funded. There is a national problem shown by the number of LA's coming under the support arrangements of the DfE, with 45 LAs in the Delivering Better Value Programme and 14 in the Safety Value Programme.
- 10.2 To Council is one of the 45 LA's receiving support from the DfE from its "Delivering Better Value" programme. There is very little information about the specifics of the programme, but it is thought to be a step down from the Safety Valve<sup>1</sup> programme used to support the LAs with the largest deficits.
- 10.3 The DfE has committed £85m over 3 years for the delivering better value programme. There are 44 other authorities currently in the programme. Funding allocations for individual authorities have not yet been decided. Updates on this programme will be provided through schools' forum, finance reports and other update reports as the details are confirmed.
- 10.4 When the current SEND policy was introduced it increased the requirements for the LA to provide a range of services and manage the contracts that follow, this includes Mediation Services, Independent Advice and Support, (SENDIASS), and Educational Psychology services which all come at a significant cost.
- 10.5 Any health provision which educates, such as Speech and Language therapy, is the responsibility of the local authority to source and provide. There is no funding for such provisions and is an additional financial burden on the Local Authority. This was recently evidenced when the Educational Psychology contract was renewed the Council highlighted a potential pressure on the general fund of c£80k per annum.

## **11 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 11.1 The Council has specific legal duties, processes and timescales to follow to identify, assess and support children with SEND and their families and these duties are set to increase.
- 11.2 In addition to the increase in requests and issued EHCP numbers, the service is receiving more Subject Access Requests (SARs), complaints and Freedom of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dedicated-schools-grant-very-high-deficit-intervention>

Information (FOIs) requests. The SARS and complaints are partly because the service is challenging assessment requests through the SEND multiagency Panel and to make the most effective and efficient use of the HNF, a budget in deficit.

11.3 The service is faced with a number of persistent and perpetual complainants, who seek answers continually and directly from Case Officers and will simultaneously submit complaints that go through each stage of the Corporate Complaints process.

11.4 The increase in FOI requests is the national and local media interest in children's wellbeing some related to Covid 19, some instigated by national pressure groups, such as SEND Jungle. The service receives multiple requests on the same subject and recent FOIs have required historic data going back over a 9-year period. Each request took multiple hours to compile and places huge drain on staff resources.

11.5 The SEND service is working closely and collaboratively with our Disabled Youth Forum and RPCV to manage the relationship between RCC and parents and carers and is fully supported in this by our SENDIASS Provider.

## **12 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed because there are no risks/issues to the rights and freedoms of natural persons.

## **13 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

13.1 The Council has specific legal duties, processes and timescales to follow to identify, assess and support children with SEND and their families and these duties are set to increase.

## **14 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 Children with disabilities by the nature of their disability and associated behaviours may pose a threat to themselves, their family and members of their community. Their assessment and care plan will consider if this is a safeguarding risk or risk to the young person of entering the criminal justice system.

## **15 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

15.2 Rutland's SEND and Inclusion Strategy, (2019) clearly sets out Rutland's intention to meet the education, health and social and care needs of children and young people with special education needs and disabilities.

15.3 The strategic Children Plan 2022/2025 has a clear priority to support and meet the needs of children who are at risk of becoming vulnerable during their education, which includes children with SEND.

15.4 The Health and Well Being Strategy and Place Plan 2022 has identified children and young people with SEND as a priority.

## **16 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

16.1 There is an increase in parental applications for EHCNA and through tribunal challenges, which is in part due to parental perception in the confidence of mainstream schools to manage their children's needs. The SEND service continues

to address the presenting issues which limits capacity to focus on resolving the inherent issues in the system. Performance for the service, particularly against national indicators, is at risk with performance for key timescales falling.

16.2 Human Resources - In the same time period, whilst we have seen a significant increase in need, we have not seen an increase in the capacity within the team.

16.3 In order to relieve pressures which were identified as part of the EHCNA process we have already made some changes within the team, including, a Liquid Logic case management system, and work has started on an automated performance reporting system. The service has implemented a duty system to field parental calls and emails, and to respond in a timely but manageable way.

16.4 In order to maintain the high level of customer satisfaction and compliance with the legal framework and statutory deadlines outlined in the Children and Families Act and the SEND Code of Practice, additional staffing has been agreed to meet current demand – 1fte Case Officer and 0.5 SEND Support Officer. This will be funded via the Changing Lives grant for a fixed period of 12 months. The service is currently out to advert for these posts as well as a 1fte Case Officer post, recruitment is very challenging with little interest or poor-quality applications. The service is currently utilising 1fte Agency Case Officer.

16.5 Procurement Implications - Provision for our children and young people:

- The most local Independent Special School has seen a reduction in placements from 10-12 pupils to approximately 3 pupils.
- Eighteen children and young people are placed in eleven local independent special schools.
- There is growing pressure across the three localities, (LLR) for special provision, which reflects the national picture. The Government's national Capital funded Programme is intended to address some of this shortfall.
- Rutland has increased provision, (10 places, 2020) in UCC, and is on track to increase 10 mainstream plus secondary places per year over the next 5 years, also at UCC.
- RCC's Inclusion service is putting in place innovative solutions for children who may need educational provision other than at school, utilising hospital school. tuition, and alternative provision such as the Melton Learning Hub and New Leaf Triangle, which are securing good and creative education outcomes for children and young people.
- Rutland's provides respite including direct payments. 40 families are accessing the Aiming High Short Breaks respite and 78 children are accessing Positive Activities, (January 2022 figures).

## **17 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY**

17.1 As outlined, there are a number of work streams underway to bring about a whole SEND system change. This includes the work of the SEND Capital Programme, and the SEND Recovery Plan. Early indications are that the projects in our SEND Recovery Plan, such as our EIP, the therapeutic support, our specialist teachers

and the work of RCC's inclusion service, appear to be containing the needs of some children, especially those with SEMH. However, this is a 5-year plan, and there is further development work to be undertaken to have longer term impact.

- 17.2 The service has undergone a review and is looking at opportunities across Early Intervention to expand roles and reshape where provision is placed, upskill and provide training opportunities to enhance practitioner knowledge in order to build greater resilience and capacity within the SEND service, for example strengthening our Inclusion Service and focus our response to children with SEMH.
- 17.3 Schools Forum have agreed funding to schools, through the SEND Recovery Plan, in order to enhance their skills and confidence to be inclusive and to commission specific therapeutic services for children in school as well as a whole scale review of the funding bands and more creative use of funds, with less reliance on traditional methods of support in the classroom.
- 17.4 The service will complete the review of the current model for the Early Years pathway, including the Parks Special School.

## **18 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 18.1 Notes the performance, developments and challenges in the SEND service and provides direction and endorses the recommendations for future actions.

## **19 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 19.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

## **20 APPENDICES**

- 20.1 Appendix A – SEND and Alternative Provision Review Green Paper

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

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## Appendix A

### SEND REVIEW GREEN PAPER – Summary of policy proposals

Building on the schools' white paper published on the 28<sup>th</sup> March, the SEND Review Green Paper (published 29 March 2022) sets out proposals for a system that offers children and young people access to the **right support, in the right place and at the right time**, so they can fulfil their potential and lead happy, healthy and productive adult lives. The consultation will be open for 13 weeks, closing on 1 July 2022.

#### What does the Green Paper propose?

The SEND Review was commissioned to understand what it would take to establish a system that consistently delivers for children and young people with SEND. The proposals respond to the need to restore families' trust and confidence in an inclusive education system with excellent mainstream provision that puts children and young people first; and the need to create a system that is financially sustainable and built for long-term success.

At a glance, the proposals in the SEND and AP green paper include:

- creating a single, national SEND and alternative provision system
- providing excellent provision from early years to adulthood
- introducing a reformed and integrated role for alternative provision
- reforming system roles, funding and accountability

In developing the proposals in the Green Paper, DfE has listened carefully to children, young people and their families and to a wide range of people working across the system - those working in education across early years, schools and further education; those working across health, care, local government; and the many voluntary and community sector organisations that support children and young people with SEND. The team has been advised throughout by a SEND Review steering group and AP steering group.

#### Providing your views

During the consultation period, the Department will continue to engage with children, young people and their families and those working within the SEND and AP system to hear their views. There will be virtual and face to face events, and a series of resources have been produced to help understand the proposals and complete the consultation.

You can access a copy of the Green Paper on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/send-review-right-support-right-place-right-time>. Alongside the Green paper, DfE has also published:

- A dedicated SEND Review website with further information about the consultation and upcoming events: <https://sendreview.campaign.gov.uk/>
- Supporting resources on gov.uk to help understand the green paper: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-ap-green-paper-responding-to-the-consultation>
- A press release on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ambitious-reform-for-children-and-young-people-with-send>

## **CORE POLICIES**

### **Chapter 2: A single national special educational needs and disabilities and alternative provision system**

- establish a **national special educational needs and disabilities and alternative provision system setting nationally consistent standards** for every stage of a child's journey across education, health and care
- review and update the **SEND Code of Practice** to ensure it reflects the new national standards to promote nationally consistent systems, processes and provision
- **establish new local special educational needs and disabilities partnerships**, bringing together education, health, and care partners with local government to produce a **local inclusion plan** setting out how each area will meet the national standards
- **introduce a standardised and digitised Education Health and Care Plan process and template** to minimise bureaucracy and deliver consistency
- **support parents and carers to express an informed preference for a suitable placement by providing a tailored list of settings**, drawn from the local inclusion plan, including mainstream, specialist, and independent settings, that are appropriate to meet the child or young person's needs
- **streamline the redress process**, making it easier to resolve disputes earlier, whilst retaining the tribunal for the most challenging cases

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### **Chapter 3: excellent provision from early years to adulthood**

- **invest an additional £1 billion in 2022-23 alone** for children and young people with complex needs as part of a **£7 billion increase in our total investment in schools' budgets by 2024-25, compared to 2021-22**
- **consult on a new SENCo National Professional Qualification for school SENCos**, and increase the number of staff with an accredited Level 3 SENCo qualification in early years settings
- **commission analysis to better understand the support that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities need**



**from the health workforce** so that there is a clear focus on special educational needs and disabilities in health workforce planning

- **improve mainstream provision**, building on the ambitious Schools White Paper, through teacher training and a ‘what works’ evidence programme
- **fund more than 10,000 additional respite placements through an investment of £30 million**, alongside £82 million to create a network of family hubs, to improve wraparound support for families
- **invest £2.6 billion, over the next three years, to deliver new places and improve existing provision** for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities or who require alternative provision.
- **set out a clear timeline that, by 2030, all children will benefit from being taught in a family of schools**, with their school, including special and alternative provision, in a strong multi-academy trust (MAT), or with plans to join or form one
- **invest £18 million over the next three years to build capacity in the Supported Internships Programme**, and improve transitions at further education by introducing Common Transfer Files alongside piloting the roll out of adjustment passports

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**Chapter 4: a reformed and integrated role for alternative provision**

- **make alternative provision an integral part of local special educational needs and disabilities systems** by requiring the new local special educational needs and disabilities partnerships to plan and deliver an alternative provision service focused on early intervention
- **give alternative provision schools funding stability to deliver a service focused on early intervention** by requiring local authorities to create and distribute an alternative provision-specific budget

- **build system capacity to deliver the vision through plans for all alternative provision schools to be in a strong multi-academy trust**, to deliver evidence-led services based on best practice, and open new alternative provision free schools where needed
- **develop a bespoke performance framework for alternative provision** which sets robust standards focused on progress, re-integration into mainstream education or sustainable post-16 destinations
- **deliver greater oversight and transparency of pupil movements** including placements into and out of alternative provision
- **launch a call for evidence, before the summer, on the use of unregistered provision** to investigate existing practice

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**Chapter 5:  
system roles,  
accountabilities  
and funding  
reform**

- **deliver clarity in roles and responsibilities** with every partner having a clear role to play, and being equipped with the levers to fulfil their responsibilities
- **equip the Department for Education's new Regions Group** to hold local authorities and MATs to account for delivery through new funding agreements between local government and the Department for Education
- **provide statutory guidance to Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)** to set out clearly how statutory responsibilities for SEND should be discharged
- **introduce new inclusion dashboards for 0-25 provision**, offering a timely, transparent picture of how the system is performing at a local and national level across education, health and care
- **introduce a national framework of banding and price tariffs for funding**, matched to levels of need and types of provision set out in the national standards
- **work with Ofsted/Care Quality Commission (CQC) on their plan to deliver an updated Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

**Inspection Framework** with a focus on arrangements and experience for children and young people

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**Chapter 6:  
delivering  
change for  
children and  
families**

- **invest an additional £300 million through the Safety Valve Programme and £85 million in the Delivering Better Value programme**, over the next three years, to support those local authorities with the biggest deficits
- **the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision Directorate within DfE** will work with parent groups, system leaders from across education, health and care and the Department of Health and Social Care to develop the national special educational needs and disabilities standards
- support delivery through a **£70 million SEND and Alternative Provision change programme** to both test and refine key proposals and support local systems to manage local improvement
- publish a **national Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and alternative provision delivery plan** setting out how and by whom change will be implemented
- establish a **new National Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Delivery Board** to bring together relevant government departments with national delivery partners including parents, carers and representatives of local government, education, health and care to hold partners to account for the timely implementation of proposals

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## Agenda Item 10

### Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee DRAFT Work Plan 2022-23

Meeting Date	Publication Date	Proposed Item	Why	Author
		Election of Vice-Chair	Statutory	
		Dentistry Update		NHS & CCG
		Q4 KPI (January - March) FOR INFORMATION ONLY	Quarterly Update	Business Intelligence Manager
		SEND Review: Update		Bernadette Caffrey / Louise Crookenden- Johnson
		Family Hubs: Update		Bernadette Caffrey
		SEND White Paper: Update		Bernadette Caffrey
		Schools' White Paper: Update		Dawn Godfrey
		Q1 KPI (April – June) FOR INFORMATION ONLY	Quarterly Update	Business Intelligence Manager
		Q2 KPI (July - September) FOR INFORMATION ONLY	Quarterly Update	Business Intelligence Manager
January 2023		Scrutiny of the Budget	Statutory	Report from Director - Resources
		Q3 KPI (October - December) FOR INFORMATION ONLY	Quarterly Update	Business Intelligence Manager
		Q4 KPI (January - March) FOR INFORMATION ONLY	Quarterly Update	Business Intelligence Manager

#### **KPI Updates**

Throughout the year the KPI data for the previous quarter will be circulated directly to the Committee Members. Scrutiny chair will discuss with the Committee to determine if there is anything that is of concern and warrants further action.

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