

Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Date: **Thursday 1 May 2014**

Time: **2:00pm**

Venue: **Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

S u p p l e m e n t a r y A g e n d a

- 8. Children's Services Senior Management Arrangements** (Page **A3**)
Report by the Interim Director of Children's Services
- 10. A report on the performance of Norfolk's Children's Centre** (Page **A9**)
Report by the Interim Director of Children's Services
- 14. Response to the O&S Pathway Planning Group Recommendations** (Page **A63**)
Report by the Interim Director of Children's Services

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Children's Services

Senior Management Arrangements

Report by the Interim Director of Children's Services

Summary

This report sets out the arrangements that have been agreed at Cabinet on 14 April 2014 to ensure that the senior leadership arrangements in Children's Services are sustainable and aligned with the improvement priorities and programme. In the light of the current statutory Direction in place for Children's Services, Cabinet were asked to note these arrangements which have been reported to the Children's Social Care Improvement Board and are endorsed by the Managing Director designate.

Recommendation:

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel are asked to note the attached Cabinet report and to support the decision made at Cabinet on 14 April 2014.

1. Background

- 1.1 Please see Cabinet report attached.

2. Resource Implications

- 2.1 **Finance:** The costs of these arrangements will be met from existing budgetary provision.

3. Other Implications

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

There are no implications

Any Other implications

"Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account."

4. Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act (this must be included)

- 4.1 There are no implications

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel are asked to note the attached Cabinet report and to support the decision made at Cabinet on 14 April 2014.

Background Papers

Cabinet report- Children's Services Senior Management Arrangements

Officer Contact

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Children's Services

Senior Management Arrangements

Report by Anne Gibson, Managing Director (Acting)

Summary

This report sets out the arrangements that have been put in place to ensure that the senior leadership arrangements in Children's Services are sustainable and aligned with the improvement priorities and programme. In the light of the current statutory Direction in place for Children's Services, Cabinet are asked to note these arrangements which have been reported to the Children's Social Care Improvement Board and are endorsed by the Managing Director designate.

Recommendation:

To note the continuation of Sheila Lock as interim Director of Children's Services until March 2015 and the planned phased transition to a permanent management structure by the same date.

1. Background

- 1.1 Following three inadequate Ofsted judgments covering Looked after Children, Safeguarding and Support to School Improvement over a period of six months in 2013, Sheila Lock was appointed from September 2013 to establish and lead a major improvement programme. The improvement programme is now well underway and an interim management structure which supports that has been in place since October 2013.
- 1.2 It is essential to have in place a robust plan for sustainable leadership arrangements with planned timelines in place to move from the interim team to a sustainable and strong permanent structure. A plan has been developed, taking account of the challenges and risks facing Children's Services and a tight external recruitment market for both interim and permanent appointments.

2. Improvement Programme Progress

- 2.1 The focus of the first phase of the improvement programme has been about "getting the basics right". Two pieces of review activity - an East of England Peer Review undertaken 31 March - 4 April 2014, and a Department for Education (DfE) commissioned strategic review to be undertaken in late April/early May - will provide evidence of progress and mark the move to the next phase of the improvement work.
- 2.2 There is general recognition that the improvements required represent a 3 - 5 year journey and in that context, this next phase of improvement will be crucial. In that phase we will need to consolidate our performance, redesign services, and undertake a range of further improvement work. Continuing support from the interim leadership

team will be needed to maintain progress at pace and to secure the improvements required.

3. Interim Management Arrangements

- 3.1 The current interim management arrangements are set out in Appendix A.

4. Transition to New Management Structure

- 4.1 It is proposed that a revised senior structure for Children's Services will be developed for consideration by Personnel Committee during May. This will take account of feedback from both external reviews and is likely to propose a structure for Children's Services that includes the role of Director and four Assistant Director roles, recognising the capacity needed to support the improvement work and minimise risks.
- 4.2 At the end of May 2014 a gateway risk assessment will be undertaken to ascertain whether to proceed with recruitment to two Assistant Director roles holding responsibility for Early Help and Prevention, and Planning, Performance and Policy.
- 4.3. A recruitment process would then be undertaken and, assuming that is successful, there would be a managed transition between current interim post holders and new post holders, in Autumn 2014.
- 4.4 In January 2015, a second gateway review risk assessment is planned to ascertain whether to proceed with recruitment to an Assistant Director role with responsibility for Social Care and to the role of Director.
- 4.5 A recruitment process would then be undertaken and, again assuming a successful process, there would be a managed transition between current interim post holders and new post holders.
- 4.6 To support these proposals, recruitment specialists have been commissioned and have begun market analysis to determine the current recruitment market with specific reference to the needs of Norfolk, including benchmarking on salary levels and costs.
- 4.7 Alongside this, a virtual leadership programme is being launched in-house to develop the managerial and leadership talent that already exists so that career development to Assistant Director level is a positive and potentially attainable option for current Norfolk County Council staff.
- 4.8 To support these arrangements Sheila Lock has agreed to continue as interim Director of Children's Services until March 2015. This will enable her to lead the next crucial phase of improvement work and to establish a permanent management team at Assistant Director level.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 Finance: The costs of these arrangements will be met from existing budgetary provision.

6. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- 6.1 There are no implications

7. Any Other Implications

- 7.1 Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

8. Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act

- 8.1 There are no implications

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 In the light of the current statutory Direction in place for Children's Services, Cabinet are asked to note the continuation of Sheila Lock as interim Director of Children's Services until March 2015 and the planned phased transition to a permanent management structure by the same date.
- 9.2 These arrangements have been reported to the Children's Social Care Improvement Board and are endorsed by the Managing Director designate.

OFFICER CONTACT

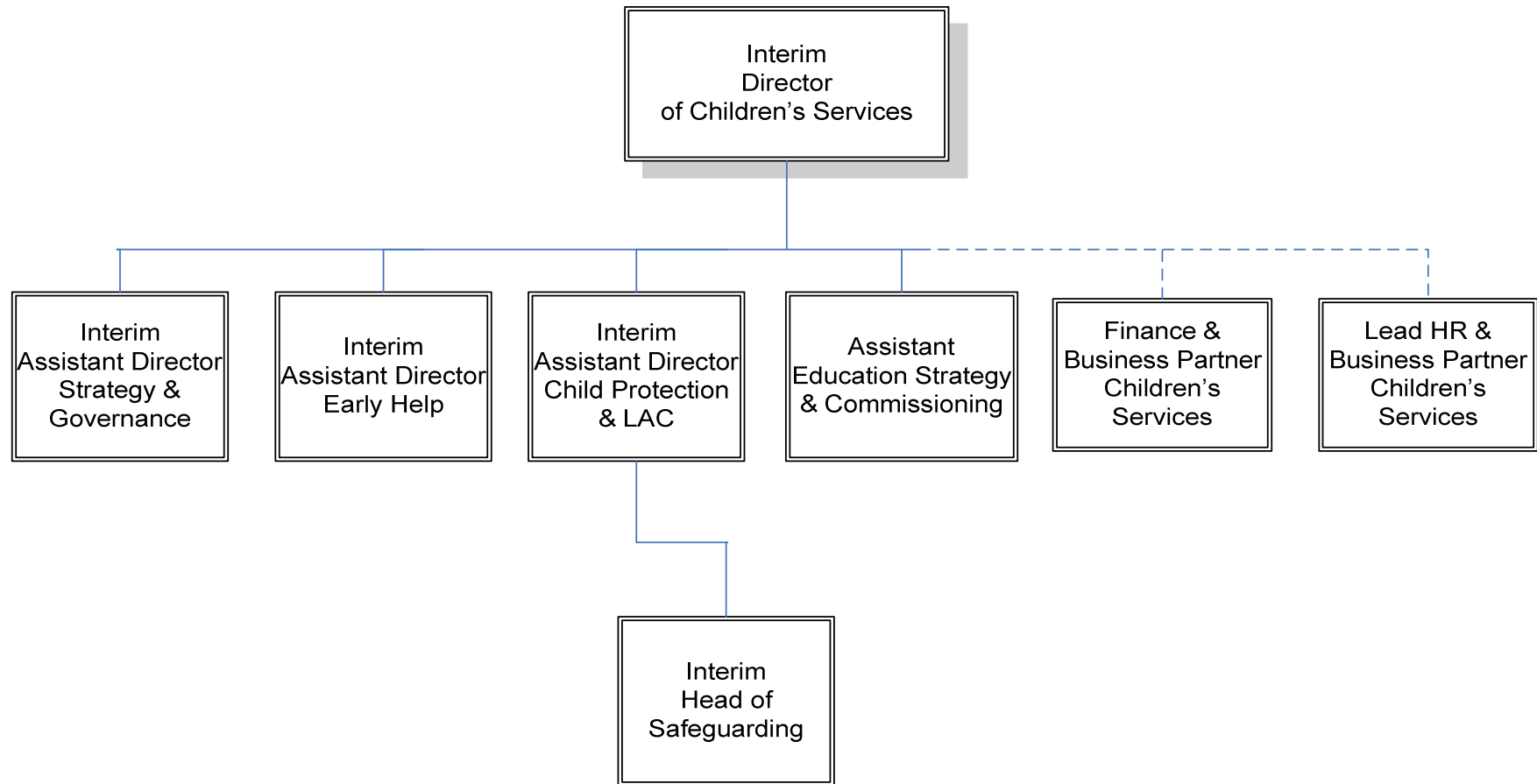
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CHILDREN'S SERVICES – INTERIM MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS



A report on the performance of Norfolk's Children's Centres

Report by the Director of Children's Centres

Summary

The purpose of this paper is to report on the overall performance and progress made of Children's Centres in Norfolk from the point of transfer to the new contractual arrangements in 2012.

Children's Centres are a key component of Early Help in Norfolk. Their purpose is to improve outcomes for all young children, and in particular to close the gap between the outcomes for the most disadvantaged and the rest.

Children's Centres are service hubs where children aged 0 to 4 years and their families can receive services and information. The services will vary from centre to centre but must include integrated early education and childcare, support for families, child and family health services and helping parents into work.

In 2012, Norfolk's Children's Centres were subject to the most complex procurement exercise ever undertaken by the Local Authority, whereby 2 national and 1 local voluntary sector organisations, 1 health organisation and a number of schools took over the management of the children's centres directly.

Since then a picture of improvement has emerged with Children's Centres dramatically increasing the amount of families they work with to record levels. This means that our Children's Centres are now consistently working with our most disadvantaged families.

In addition Children's Services has worked hard to improve the integration of Children's Centres to our social care teams so that we can offer better services to our most vulnerable families. A recent Ofsted inspection of a Children's Centre group (rated 'Good') highlighted this "...families that need extra help are identified and supported well. Regular meetings between professionals help to make sure the right families receive the support they need in a timely manner." (*Ofsted report 4-6 March 2014*)

There is further work to do to ensure that the refocusing of the Early Years Adviser role and in particular our approach to developing the Home Learning Environment, maximises the impact that Children's Centres can make in getting children ready for school and improving outcomes for children at the end of the Foundation Stage.

A decision on the future re-commissioning of Children's Centres will have to be made in summer 2014 as current contracts expire at the end of March 2016.

Recommendation – Members are asked to consider this report and provide comment to the Director of Children's Services on their priorities for future development of Children's Centres.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to report on the progress of Children's Centres in Norfolk, from the point of transfer to new contractual arrangements in 2012.

2. **Background**

- 2.1 Children's Centres are one of the key delivery mechanisms for both Children's Services and some key national health services to improve outcomes for all young children, and in particular to close the gap between the outcomes for the most disadvantaged and others.
- 2.2 Children's Centres are service hubs where children aged 0 to 4 years and their families can receive seamless integrated services and information. These services vary according to each individual centre but should include:
- Integrated early education and childcare – including providing free early education for disadvantaged two year olds
 - Support for families – including advice on parenting, local childcare options and access to specialist services for families
 - Child and family health services – ranging from health screening, health visitor services to breastfeeding support
 - Helping parents into work – with links to Jobcentre plus and training
- 2.3 Norfolk County Council has prioritised funding for Children's Centres to continue to maintain universal coverage of children's centre services across the County and to focus their work on proven early intervention and prevention programmes to ensure all children under five years old have a good start in life and are ready for school.
- 2.4 **Our vision for Norfolk's Children Centres is to:**
- Ensure that all children under five can access children's centre services;
 - Maintain universal services in every community, whilst ensuring they reach those in greatest need;
 - Help children's centres grow to become family hubs where children and families can access a range of services from health and other agencies;
 - Ensure that children's centres are providing value for money and the best possible provision.
 - Deliver the best service possible, capable of being good or outstanding in Ofsted inspections with the money that is available;
 - Focus funding on the frontline and reduce management costs.
 - Establish a model of provision that can be performance managed to deliver consistent quality
 - Make sure that everyone providing children's centre services is committed to the range of services that are now needed
 - Secure a strong and sustainable link with health services
 - Involve the voluntary sector more in the running and delivery of services and commission services at individual centre level.
 - Demonstrate the ability to improve outcomes for all children, but especially the most disadvantaged and narrow the gap.
- 2.5 **Current National Policy and Statutory Framework Requirements**
The Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to:
- 1) Improve the outcomes of all children up to five years of age and reduce inequalities between them
 - 2) Secure sufficient childcare for working parents
 - Local authorities must secure sufficient children's centres to meet local need, so far as this is reasonably practicable.
 - 3) Provide a parental information service
 - 4) Provide information, advice, and training for childcare providers
- 2.6 **Children's Centre Statutory Guidance**

The latest guidance was issued in April 2013. This guidance clarifies the duties on local authorities, commissioners of local health services and Jobcentre Plus and sets out the core purpose of Children's Centres:

- to improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on families in greatest need of support, in order to reduce inequalities in:
- child development and school readiness;
- parenting aspirations, self esteem and parenting skills; and
- child and family health and life chances

Local authorities should commission Children's Centres to achieve the core purpose as a key component of their strategy to improve the well-being of young children.

2.7 Children's Centre links to improvement journey

The Local Authority has a set of plans to improve provision and outcomes for children and families in Norfolk. The two plans where Children's Centres can make a significant contribution to improving outcomes are:

- 'A Good School for Every Norfolk Learner' includes a key target to improve Early Years outcomes
- Early Help Operational Improvement Plan has a priority to improve the quality of early intervention with families in order to prevent the escalation of their needs and reduce the needs for intervention from safeguarding teams.

2.8 Commissioning Norfolk's Children's Centres

In 2011 Norfolk's Children's Centres were commissioned out via a mixture of competitive and non-competitive tendering processes. It was the most complex procurement the authority has conducted. The project spanned nearly 3 years and saved £2.7 million until end March 2016. The Project cost £270,000 to deliver.

The purpose was to

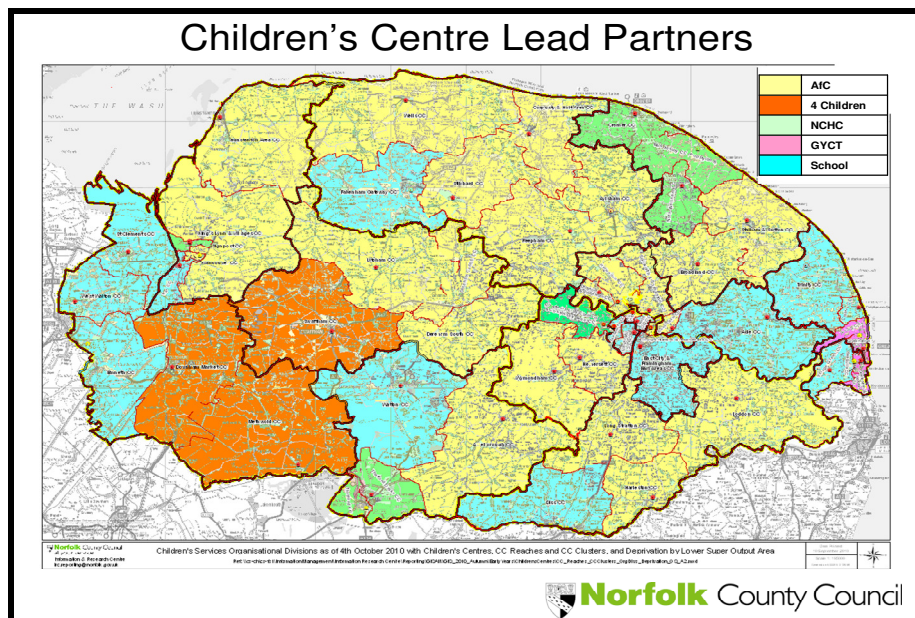
- optimise resources and target services in areas of greatest need
- maintain universal Children's Centre services
- achieve value for money
- establish a model of provision that can be performance managed to deliver consistent quality

2.9 Lots and contracts

Norfolk has 53 separate Children's Centres divided into 36 'Lots'. There are 12 tendered contracts (26 lots) and 11 non-tendered contracts (10 schools lots. The total value of all contracts is £50 million over 4 years (approximately £12.5m per annum).

There are 15 different Lead Partners (including schools). The Lead Partners are:

- Action for Children (AfC) (£4,800,452 per annum)
- Norfolk Community Health & Care (NCH&C) (£2,041,196 per annum)
- 4 Children (£539,023 per annum)
- Great Yarmouth Community Trust (GYCT) (£1,223,280 per annum)
- 11 Schools (£ 3,410,346 per annum)



2.10 How we manage the performance of Children's Centres

A Service Specification sets out our expectations of the 'core offer', divided into 4 themed areas:

- Early Years Provision
- Child & Family Health Services
- Parenting and Family Support
- Education, training and employment services

2.11 Overall performance is managed at 3 levels:

1. Individual centre level:

- Quarterly visits from CC Improvement Officer plus Annual Conversations where centre specific targets are set for the year.
- Quarterly financial monitoring

2. Lead Partner Level

- Quarterly Contract Performance Management meetings with larger providers and annual meetings with schools.

3. Strategic Level

With the goal of collaboration and integration

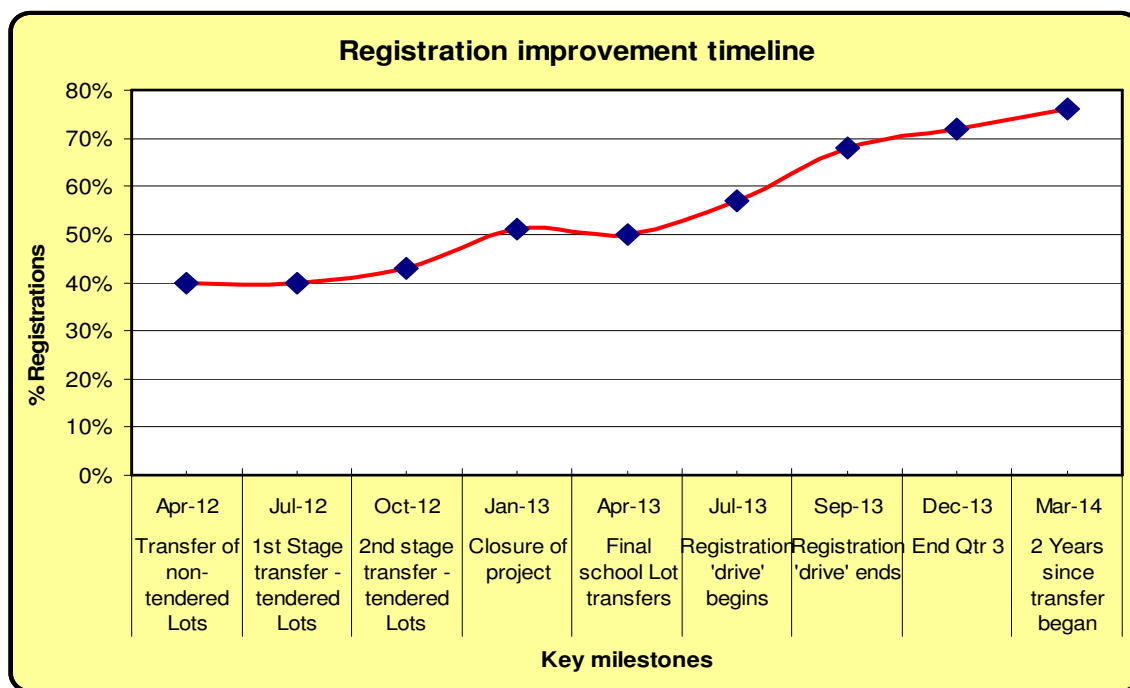
- Termly Lead Partner events
- Strategic Implementation Group, which meets regularly to develop integrated working

In addition

- Quarterly Centre Leader meetings to develop and share best practice

2.12 An Improving picture

The numbers of 0-5s registered at their local Children's Centre has increased significantly since the transfer of Children's Centres from Local Authority control. This is both in line with an Improvement Plan target to increase registrations and the new Ofsted framework (from April 2013). Within the new Ofsted framework the lowest bar for a 'Good' judgement is set at 65% of 0-5 year olds should be registered at their local Children's Centre.



Registration improvement timeline

- **April 2012** - transfer of Children's Centres to the new arrangements began. At this stage registrations stood at around 40%. Within this rounded figure, some centres had registrations as low as 20%.
- There were two further key transfer milestones
 - **July 2013** – 13 centres transferred (in September 1 centre transferred)
 - **October 2012** - 17 centres transferred.
 - **January 2013** – the 'project' phase formally closed
 - **April 2013** – transfer of final school Lot after a period under control of project board
- **July to September 2013** – 'Registration Drive'; all Children's Centres were set a target to achieve at least 65% registrations by 30 September 2013. The target was achieved with an increase of over 4,500 0-5s, registered at their local Children's Centre.
- **March 2014** – the overall Norfolk figure now stands at over 76%, with a target of 80% by the end of the month. Two centres have now reached 100%.

2.13 Benefits of improved registrations

Children's Centres demonstrated their capacity to improve

- They have a greater understanding and connection to the communities they serve
- Are better placed to make a significant contribution to Early Help
- Providers reported that the Registration drive
 - High-lighted areas for development within their staff teams
 - Developed their understanding of local need
 - Re-ignited the original vision of Children's Centres as community hubs
 - Supported the development of local networks and partnership links

2.14 Ofsted - In April 2013 a new Ofsted framework for the inspection of Children's Centres was introduced in line with schools, with a new 'Requires Improvement', replacing the old 'Satisfactory' grade. The framework was rationalised into 4 Key judgements

- Access to services by young children and their families.
- The quality and impact of practice and services.
- The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management.

- Overall effectiveness

2.15 Children's Centre Ofsted inspection results

Below is a table setting out the overall result of all Norfolk inspections. A number of centres have yet to be inspected.

Date	Centre	Result	Key
Mar 2014	Aylsham		Outstanding
Mar 2014	Drayton & Taverham		Good
Mar 2014	Reepham		Requires Improvement
Mar 2014	Hellesdon		Inadequate
Nov 2014	Dereham Central		Not yet inspected
Nov 2014	Dereham South		
Nov 2014	Litcham		
Oct 2013	Village Green		
Sept 2013	Gorleston And Hopton		
Sept 2013	Great Yarmouth (Priory)		
Sept 2013	Greenacre		
Sept 2013	Seagulls		
June 2013	Downham Market		
June 2013	Swaffham		
June 2013	Methwold		
April 2013 New Inspection Framework			
Dec 2012	Thetford Drake		
Oct 2012	Nar		
Sept 2012	Hunstanton		
Sept 2012	Stalham		
Aug 2012	Trinity		
June 2012	North Walsham		
Mar 2012	Diss		
Mar 2012	Earlham Early Years		
Feb 2012	Watton		
Oct 2011	City and Eaton		
Oct 2011	North City		
Oct 2011	Signpost (North Lynn)		
Sept 2011	Mundesley		
Aug 2011	Catton Grove, Fiddlewood And Mile Cross		
July 2011	Bowthorpe		
July 2011	West Walton		
Mar 2011	East City		
Mar 2011	Stibbard		
Feb 2011	Vancouver		
Feb 2011	St Clement's		
Dec 2010	Emneth		
Oct 2010	Thorpe Hamlet		
July 2010	Thetford		
Centres not yet inspected			
	Acle		
	Attleborough		
	Broadland		
	Caister		
	Corpusty And Holt		
	Cromer		
	Dussindale		
	Fakenham Gateway		
	Harleston		
	Hethersett		
	Loddon		
	Long Stratton		
	Sprowston & Spixworth		
	Wells-Next-The-Sea		
	Wymondham		

- 2.16 **Key themes emerging** – as a result of the local inspections and by looking at the results in other areas we are able to identify an number of key area that are important in achieving a successful Ofsted inspection:

- Leadership and Management – unless this is effective there is no chance of getting a ‘Good’ judgement. The requirement to be on top of the game is stringent. Understanding the data, understanding the community and being able to plan effectively are essential ingredients.
- SEFs (Self Evaluation Forms) – this is the first document that an inspector sees. When these are weak or muddled it is difficult to get better than a Requires Improvement.
- Development Plans – as above.
- Data and how it is used to inform planning – Centres have to show they have access to data, have analysed it and used it to inform their planning.
- Role of the Local Authority (information sharing, links to Social Work teams) – this was picked up (see actions below). Inspectors come having done their homework about Norfolk, so the Local Authority cannot afford to be slow to respond to actions that arise from any Ofsted reports.
- School readiness – this has been a recurring theme
- Advisory Boards – inspectors want to know that these are well attended and managed and offer appropriate challenge to the centre
- Involvement of parents – inspectors are keen to see that parents are fully involved and that it is not tokenism or in the ‘too difficult’ tray.

2.17 **Linked Social Worker** - at an inspection in July 2013 Ofsted identified that the Local Authority was not good at sharing information about families that could benefit from being supported by their local Children’s Centre. As a result of this every centre now has a linked social worker whose role it is to:

- Provide information and guidance
- Improve partnership working between the Children’s Centre and Social Care professionals
- Promote safeguarding and the welfare of children
- Focus on targeted young children and their families
- Professional development
- Promote a positive image of the Social Work role and Children’s Services to children’s centre professionals and families
- The role is to be reviewed every 6 months.

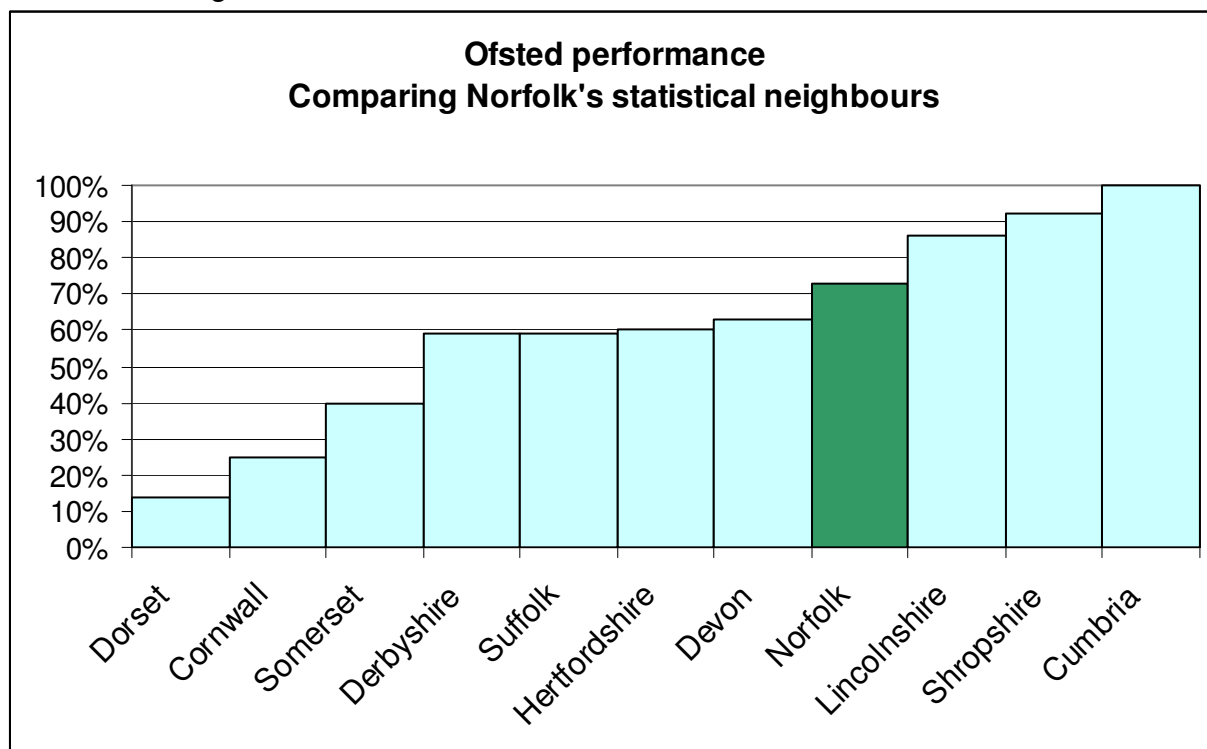
2.18 **Information Sharing** – By sharing Social Care Data with Children’s Centres will offer the opportunity for Children’s Centres and Social Care to work together to provide ‘early help’ and ensure they are meeting the needs of local children and families. As a result a Data Exchange Agreement has been developed:

- Data will be provided weekly and will consist of a report generated from a data feed from CareFirst (Norfolk Social Care Management Information system) to Synergy Connect (Norfolk Children’s Centre Management Information System), detailing the names, dates of birth, address, child/family’s primary social worker and the type of social care intervention (Looked After Children; Children in Need and Children on a Child Protection Plan).
- Children’s Services and Children’s Centres in Norfolk will ensure that each other is made aware of all children aged 0-5 who are known to/working with them. This will be by using information stored with CareFirst and Synergy Connect. This will also include information relating to children involved in the Family Support Process (FSP)

2.19 At the latest inspection (March 2014), Ofsted were positive about our working relationship with Children’s Centres and remarked that: “...families that need extra help are identified and supported well. Regular meetings between professionals

help to make sure the right families receive the support they need in a timely manner. “

- 2.20 Comparing the performance of our Children’s Centres to our statistical neighbours the table below sets out the percentage of Children’s Centres judged ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’.



Norfolk’s Children’s Centres at 73% compares well with some of our statistical neighbours, and are slightly above the national average, which is 69% (*source Ofsted Data View- August 2013*).

2.21 **Contract and Quality review**

Lead Partner Feedback - Between December 2013 and January 2014 a consultation took place with Lead Partners regarding our current contract monitoring and support arrangements.

2.22 **Main Findings**

- It was commonly agreed that the SEF (Self Evaluation Form) and Development Plan are the key component in setting targets and understanding the distance any centre needs to travel in order to achieve a ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ Ofsted judgement.
- Overall Lead Partners felt that the contract and quality monitoring processes were effective and helpful.
- However, the monitoring and support resource was spread too thinly. This meant that they did not get timely feedback after visits and that appropriate information was not readily available at formal contract monitoring meetings.
- There needed to be a distinction and rationalisation between training provided by the Local Authority and Lead Partner in-house training.
- Financial monitoring was described as overly complex and time consuming.
- Centre Leaders valued the regular meetings with the opportunity to share practice and receive important messages.
- Views on the hardship fund were more diverse and ranged from partners who thought it was invaluable and should remain in its current form, to those who felt that it was over bureaucratic and entrenched dependency.

2.23 **Recommendations from the review:**

Undertake risk assessment of all Children's Centres who are yet to be inspected ranging from those likely to get 'Good' or 'Outstanding' at Ofsted to those likely to get 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate' so that we can

- Allocate resources and undertake monitoring and support against the risk assessment.
- Add resource to the quality monitoring to ensure timely information is available to both the Lead Partners and commissioners.
- Develop more focussed performance reporting and information.

3. Resource Implications

- 3.1 As part of the Early Years refocusing additional development worker resource is to be allocated to support the quality improvement of children's centres.

4. Other Implications

4.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

An equality impact assessment has been carried out and each Children's Centre has specific requirements in relation to equalities further work will take into account that children's centres are a universal provision for all families with a child under five. Children's centres must reach and tailor services towards the following target groups who have been identified through national guidance as being vulnerable to poor outcomes and find it hardest to access services:

- Fathers;
- Lone parents;
- Teenage parents and pregnant teenagers;
- Children in workless households;
- Children in Black and Minority Ethnic Groups;
- Disabled children;
- Children of disabled parents

5. Any Other implications

5.1 Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act

Children's Centres provide early, preventative intervention which seeks to reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors. They will have a potential impact on child protection referrals, receptions into care, school exclusion and truancy figures.

6. Action Required

- 6.1 To note the current performance of Children's Centres and consider priorities for their future development.

Background Papers

Children's Centres Annual Report - March 2014

Officer Contact

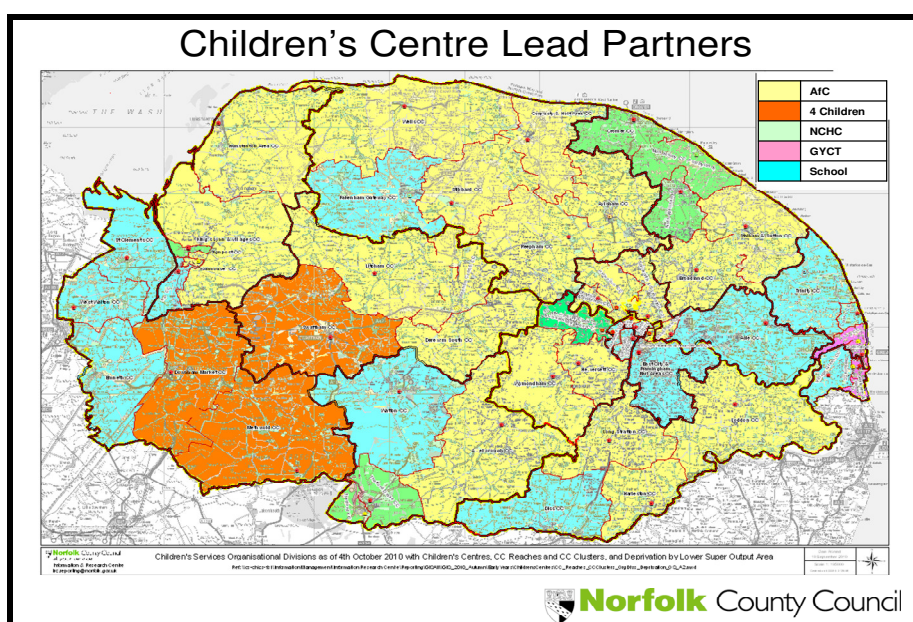
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Norfolk Children's Centres

Annual Report

March 2014



“from competition to collaboration”

Contents

- 1. Introduction - pg. 3**
- 2. Background – pg. 3 - 4**
- 3. Commissioning Norfolk’s Children’s Centres – pg. 4 - 5**
- 4. Getting the basics right - 4 Steps to improving Children’s Centres - pg. 6 - 11**
- 5. Ofsted – new framework – pg. 11 - 13**
- 6. Lead Partner Feedback – pg. 14**
- 7. Building Maintenance Fund (BMF) – pg. 15**
- 8. Other issues – pg. 15**
- 9. Summary and Actions/Recommendations - pg. 15 -16**

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Contracts and Finance – pg 17 - 20**
- Appendix 2 - Contact Levels by Lead Partner – pg. 20**
- Appendix 3 - Lead Partner FSP Ranking – pg, 21**
- Appendix 4 – Contact with target groups – pg. 22**
- Appendix 5 – 2 Year Old Places – pg. 23**
- Appendix 6 – 3 Year Old Initial Funding Report – pg. 24 - 25**
- Appendix 7 – Lead Partner Feedback - pg. 26 - 33**
- Appendix 8 - Support and intervention framework - pg. 34**
- Appendix 9 - Building Maintenance Fund (BMF) - pg. 35 - 36**
- Appendix 10 - Data Pack - pg. 36 - 43**

1. Introduction

Children's Centres are a key component in offering early help to families in Norfolk. They deliver both universal and targeted support at a significant stage in the life of a child and their family. Much of what happens in these early years sets the template for a child's future prospects. Therefore getting it right and making an impact is vital if we are going to change outcomes for families.

The purpose of this paper is to report on the performance Children's Centres in Norfolk, from the point that transfer to the new contractual arrangements began 2 years ago.

2. Background

2.1 Current National Policy and Statutory Framework Requirements

The Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to:

- 1) Improve the outcomes of all children up to five years of age and reduce inequalities between them:
 - Close the gap between groups with the poorest outcomes and the rest by ensuring early years' services are accessible to all families.
 - Outcomes covered by this duty include the well-being, learning, and development of children under five. Local authorities must also ensure that all providers deliver early education that effectively meets the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 2) Secure sufficient childcare for working parents:
 - Local authorities must secure sufficient children's centres to meet local need, so far as this is reasonably practicable.
- 3) Provide a parental information service:
 - Provide information, advice, and assistance to parents and prospective parents on the provision of childcare in their area, including early education places for 2, 3, and 4 year olds, access and flexibility and how to identify high quality provision.
- 4) Provide information, advice, and training for childcare providers:
 - Enable providers to improve the quality of their provision. This includes access to support for good or outstanding providers if they request it and direct intervention to meet the needs of providers judged less than good.

2.2 Children's Centre Statutory Guidance

Issued in April 2013, the guidance clarified the duties on local authorities, commissioners of local health services and Jobcentre Plus relevant to Children's Centres under the Childcare Act 2006. The guidance set out the core purpose of Children's Centres

- to improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on families in greatest need of support, in order to reduce inequalities in:
 - child development and school readiness
 - parenting aspirations, self esteem and parenting skills
 - child and family health and life chances

Local authorities should commission Children's Centres to achieve the core purpose as a key component of their strategy to improve the well-being of young children.

http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/pdf/ccs_dfe_childrens_centres_statutory_guidance.pdf

2.3 Children's Centre links to improvement journey

The Local Authority has a set of plans to improve provision and outcomes for children and families in Norfolk. 2 key plans affect and are affected by Early Years Services, Children's Centres are a key part of this.

Plan1 – 'A Good School for Every Norfolk Learner' identifies 4 key strategic aims. The aims are:

- Raise standards at all key Stages
- Increase proportion of schools judged good or better
- Improve leadership and management
- Improve monitoring and evaluation of impact

The plan includes key targets for improvement, 1 of which in particular is directly linked to Children's Centre provision and outcomes.

A Good School for Every Norfolk Learner (Oct 2013)

Target (national)	Norfolk	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1.1 Improve Early Years outcomes (% achieving Good Level of Development)		N/A	45.3 (51)	55	60	70

Targets from LA strategic plan 'A Good School for Every Norfolk Learner'

Plan 2 – Early Help Operational Improvement Plan identifies 4 improvement priorities. The key one for Children's Centres is:

- To improve the quality of early intervention with families in order to prevent the escalation of their needs and reduce the needs for intervention from safeguarding teams.

The plan includes strategic intent and actions: 'To improve outcomes for children at the end of the Foundation Stage, as they start school with particular emphasis on the most disadvantaged. The actions for this intent lead to the following key performance indicators.

By January 2014 - 85% take up of 2 year old childcare places by January 2014

- By January 2015 - 93%
- By March 2016 - 100%

By January 2014 – 85% take up of 3 and 4 year old early learning places

- By January 2015 – 93%

By 2016 – matching / exceeding national figure (currently 96%)

By July 2014 – 10% improvement in current EYFSP outcomes – 55%

- By July 2015 – a further 5 % - 60%
- By July 2016 – a further 10% - 70%

Attainment gap for children at the end of Foundation Stage for those in receipt of Free School meals (FSM) and the rest will be in line national average by 2015 and better by 2018

79% of Early Years settings judged as good or better by Ofsted

- By July 2014 – 82%
- By July 2015 – 84%
- By July 2016 – 86%

No children excluded from school at the Foundation Stage

Key performance indicators taken from Early Help Operational Improvement Plan

3. Commissioning Norfolk's Children's Centres

Norfolk's Children's Centres were commissioned as a mixture of competitive and non-competitive tendering processes. It was the most complex procurement the

Local Authority had conducted. The project spanned nearly 3 years and saved £2.7 million until end March 2016. The cost of the project was estimated as £270,000.

The purpose was to

- optimise resources and target services in areas of greatest need
- maintain universal Children's Centre services
- achieve value for money
- establish a model of provision that can be performance managed to deliver consistent quality

3.1 Lots and contracts

Norfolk has 53 separate Children's Centres divided into 36 'Lots'. There are 12 tendered contracts (26 lots) and 11 non-tendered contracts (10 school lots). The total value of all contracts is £50 million over 4 years (*See Appendix 1 Contracts and Funding for greater detail*). There are 15 different Lead Partners (including schools).

The Lead Partners are:

- Action for Children (AfC) (£4,800,452 per annum)
- Norfolk Community Health & Care (NCH&C) (£2,041,196 per annum)
- 4 Children (£539,023 per annum)
- Great Yarmouth Community Trust (GYCT) (£1,223,280 per annum)
- 11 Schools (£ 3,410,346 per annum)

AfC, NCHC, GYCT and some of the schools have centres considered to be in priority areas in terms of need.

3.2 Managing Performance

A Service Specification sets out our expectations regarding the 'core offer', divided into 4 themed areas:

- Early Years Provision
- Child & Family Health Services
- Parenting and Family Support
- Education, training and employment services

3.2.1 Overall performance is managed through:

At individual centre level:

- Quarterly visits from CC Improvement Officer with a focus on a different themed area each quarter
- Annual Conversations where centre specific targets are set for the year
- Quarterly financial monitoring

At Lead Partner Level

- Quarterly Contract Performance Management meetings with larger providers and annual meetings with schools

At Strategic Level

With the goal of collaboration and integration

- Termly Lead Partner events
- Strategic Implementation Group, which meets regularly to develop integrated working (progress so far includes Partnership Agreement for joint working and a working group for Work Programme providers)

In addition

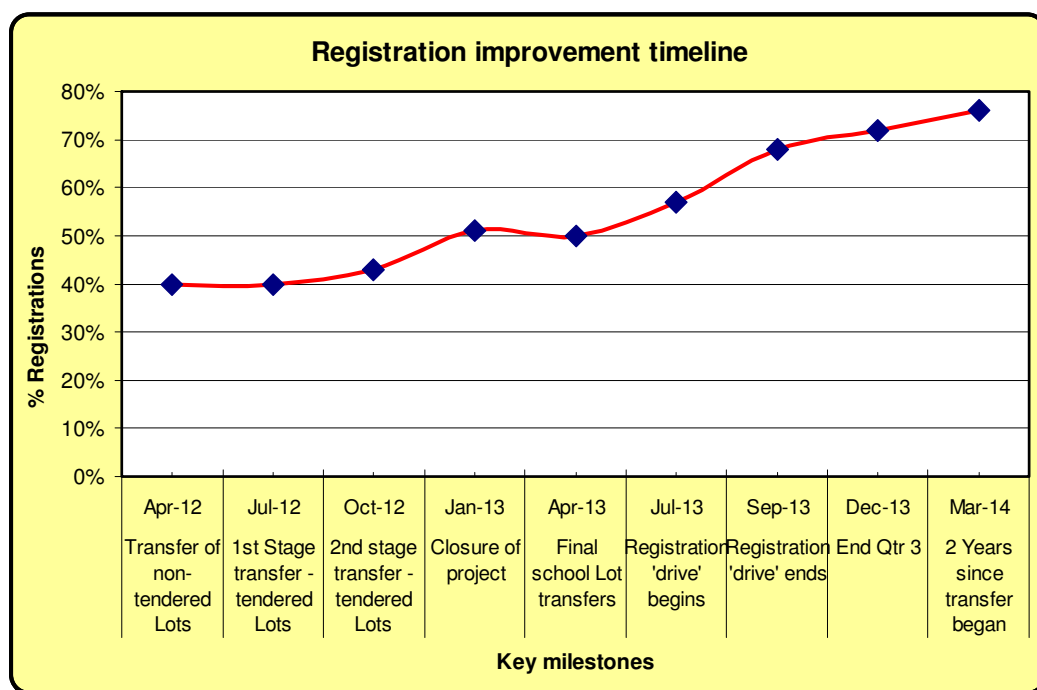
- Quarterly Centre Leader meetings to develop and share best practice

4. Getting the basics right - 4 Steps to improving Children's Centres

- **Step 1 Registrations** – high registration rates are an essential foundation stone to effective working with families. Children's Centres can only understand their communities if they have stepped out, stepped up and got families registered.
- **Step 2 Meaningful Contact** – Children's Centres can only make a difference to families if they have meaningful contact with them. This can range from signposting to significant engagement, such as parenting programmes or family support work.
- **Step 3 Working with families most in need of support** – working with families who need help the most can make the biggest difference.
- **Step 4 Increasing the take up of 2, 3 and 4 year old places** – making sure children get their entitlement can make a huge difference to school readiness and FSP results later on.

4.1 Step 1 - Registrations

The numbers of 0-5s registered at their local Children's Centre has increased significantly since the transfer of Children's Centres from Local Authority control. This is both in line with an Improvement Plan target to increase registrations and the new Ofsted framework (from April 2013). Within the new Ofsted framework (<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-childrens-centre-inspection-april-2013>), the lowest bar for a 'Good' judgement is 65% of 0-5 year olds should be registered at their local Children's Centre.



4.1.1 Registration improvement timeline

- **April 2012** - transfer of Children's Centres to the new arrangements began. At this stage registrations stood at around 40%. Within this rounded figure, some centres had registrations as low as 20%.

There were two further key transfer milestones, followed by a period of staffing changes and restructuring

- **July 2012** – 13 centres transferred (in September 1 centre transferred)
- **October 2012** - 17 centres transferred.
- **July 2012 – January 2013** Post Implementation Reviews with Lead Partners to ensure smooth transition.
- **January 2013** – the ‘project’ phase formally closed
- **April 2013** – transfer of final school Lot after a period under control of project board
- **July to September 2013** – ‘Registration Drive’; all Children’s Centres were set a target to achieve at least 65% registrations by 30 September 2013. The target was achieved with an increase of over 4,500 0-5s, registered at their local Children’s Centre.
- **March 2014** – the overall Norfolk figure now stands at over 76%, with a target of 80% by the end of the month. Two centres have now reached 100%.

Case Study – At the point of transfer City and Eaton Children’s Centre had less than 32% of 0-5s registered (607 children); now there are over 70% of all 0-5s registered (1248 children).

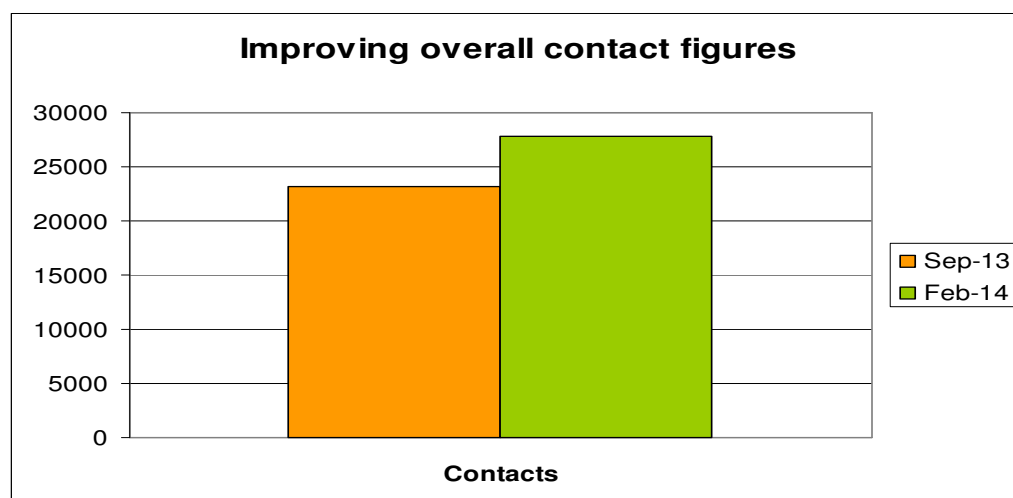
4.1.2 Benefits of improved registrations

- Children’s Centres demonstrated the capacity to improve
- They have a greater understanding and connection to the communities they serve
- Better placed to make a significant contribution to Early Help
- Providers reported that the Registration drive
 - High-lighted areas for development within their staff teams
 - Developed their understanding of local need
 - Re-ignited the original vision of Children’s Centres as community hubs
 - Supported the development of local networks and partnership links

Action – Ensure improved registrations are sustained

4.2 Step 2 - Meaningful Contact

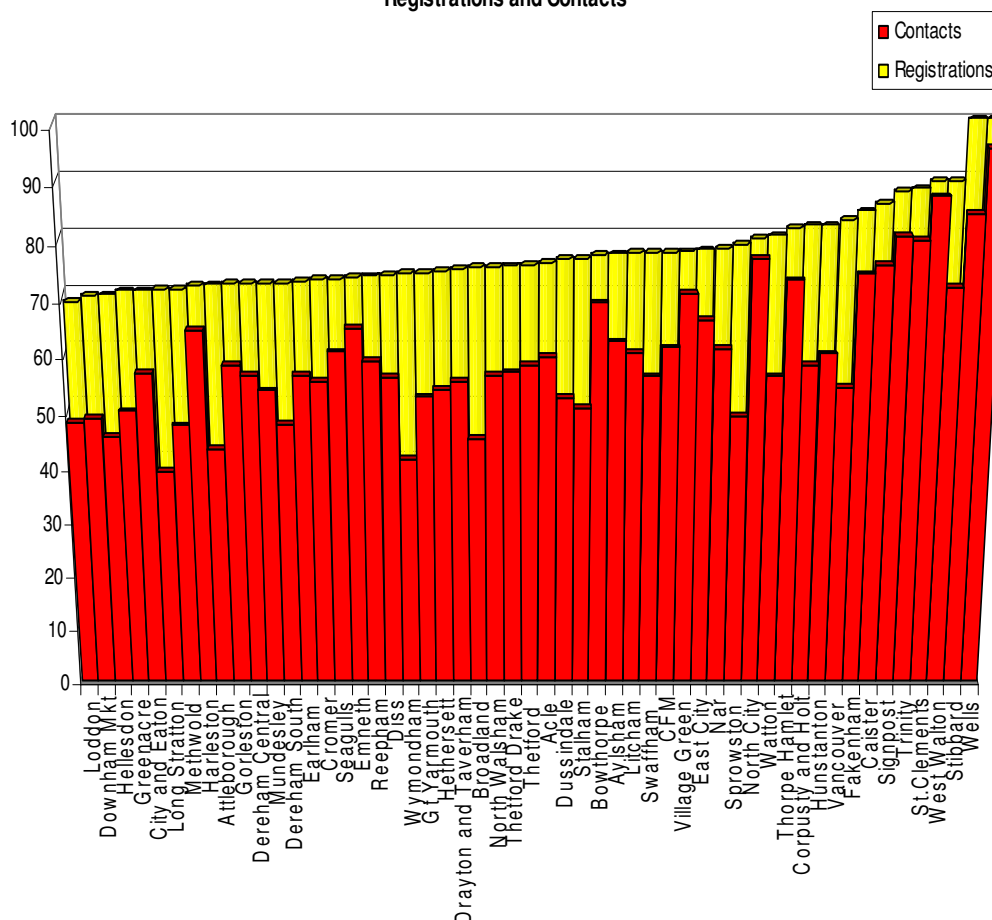
Meaningful contact with children and families is the only way to make a real difference. Contact figures have gradually risen.



Case Study - Signpost Children’s Centre is an excellent example of a centre that has not only built registrations up from a very low base (about 20% at transfer), but

has also managed to develop high levels of contact to match. Their model of 'door knocking' and a strong presence in the community has been used as a model by other Children's Centres.

Registrations and Contacts



4.2.1 Keeping up – although all centres have improved their registrations, this must be followed by meaningful contact. Performance information enables us to focus our efforts on those centres and providers that are not keeping up with the improvement journey. The table above shows that Long Stratton and Broadland, for example have a wide gap between registration and meaningful contact., whereas City and Eaton have built on the success of the registration drive.

4.2.2 Effort where it is needed most - the 0-5 Needs Assessment highlighted a direct link between FSP results and achievement at GCSE.

Top Quartile			Upper Median Quartile		
	Ranking			Ranking	
	FSP	Contact		FSP	Contact
Reepham	1	23	Dussindale	14	41
Wymondham	2	52	Methwold	15	48
Diss CC	3	34	Hunstanton	16	21
Hellesdon	4	49	Broadland	17	50
North Walsham	5	30	Aylsham	18	16
Acle	6	22	Stibbard	19	3
Emneth	7	14	Harleston	20	15
Drayton & Taverham	8	35	Dereham South	21	47

Caister	9	7	North City	22	6
Downham Market	10	45	St Clement's	23	2
West Walton	11	10	Wells	24	1
Long Stratton	12	53	Vancouver	25	37
Hethersett	13	38	Trinity	26	5
Lower Median Quartile			Bottom Performing		
	Ranking			Ranking	
	FSP	Contact		FSP	Contact
Stalham	27	42	Swaffham	40	33
CFM	28	17	Gorleston & Hopton	41	26
Watton	29	32	Signpost	42	4
Fakenham	30	8	Seagulls	43	19
Mundesley	31	39	Loddon	44	46
Attleborough	32	51	Nar	45	18
Village Green	33	11	Greenacre	46	43
Thorpe Hamlet	34	9	East City	47	13
Cromer	35	36	Thetford	48	27
Bowthorpe	36	12	Dereham Central	49	31
Corpusty & Holt	37	24	Spixworth & Sprowston	50	44
City & Eaton	38	28	Earlham EY	51	29
Thetford Drake	39	25	Litcham	52	20
			Gt. Yarmouth (Priory)	53	40

If meaningful contact rankings are set against the FSP rankings, only two of the lower performing FSP areas benefit from high levels of Children's Centre contact. Centres in the lowest performing quartiles must improve their performance. This will be high on the agenda for Lead Partner meetings in late March.

Action – Maintain pressure on Lead Partners to increase levels and quality of meaningful contacts (see Appendix 2 for details of performance by Lead Partner and Appendix 3 for FSP Results by Lead Partner)

4.3 Step 3 Working with families most in need of support

Children's Centres are required to work with the following target groups: fathers, lone parents, teenage parents and pregnant teenagers, children in workless households, children in BAME groups, disabled children and children of a disabled parent. The table below is of data relating to the percentage of registered target families who receive a service.

4.3.1 Getting the balance right

Children's Centres have to balance the necessity of providing a universal offer with the duty to support those most in need. Children's Centres are successfully developing targeted work as they increase their reach and begin to understand the needs of the communities they serve. However, the table below highlights some concerns:

- BAME groups and families with English as a second language seem to be two groups that are not well served.
- Fathers and Male Carers also seem to be doing poorly in terms of service delivery.

- Families with a Pregnant Teenager - a closer look at the detailed data in Appendix 4 show very low figures for Great Yarmouth, for example, where we would expect there to be large numbers.

	AfC		NCHC		GYCT		4C		Schools	
	Any Contact	3+ Contact	Any Contact	3+ Contact	Any Contact	3+ Contact	Any Contact	3+ Contact	Any Contact	3+ Contact
Total Registered Families	78.2%	54.4%	86.4%	65.5%	86.1%	64.1%	86.9%	68.3%	88.8%	71.4%
Families with a Parent/Carer under 20	87.1%	55.6%	93.2%	69.9%	89.5%	51.3%	100.0%	88.9%	92.4%	76.0%
Families with a Parent/Carer under 25	82.8%	57.4%	87.2%	67.0%	88.3%	64.3%	91.0%	78.2%	88.9%	69.3%
Families with a Disabled Parent	84.9%	62.5%	89.1%	70.6%	91.3%	76.1%	89.7%	76.9%	87.7%	74.1%
Families with a Disabled Child (aged 0-5)	88.5%	68.6%	93.2%	83.1%	96.2%	86.5%	95.7%	91.3%	91.8%	82.3%
Families with a Disabled Child (any age)	82.8%	62.8%	90.4%	75.0%	94.8%	82.8%	88.1%	83.3%	87.9%	78.8%
Lone Parent Families	86.6%	64.2%	87.6%	70.5%	92.3%	82.6%	92.2%	75.3%	90.6%	74.6%
Families with a Smoking Parent/Carer	80.0%	57.7%	83.1%	61.7%	89.7%	75.9%	89.3%	79.0%	88.5%	72.0%
Priority or Excluded Families	96.3%	85.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	96.4%	64.3%	97.4%	91.4%
Families with a Pregnant Teenager	70.8%	41.7%	85.7%	42.9%	63.6%	36.4%	100.0%	50.0%	72.7%	45.5%
Families in Workless Households *	81.5%	58.9%	86.5%	65.8%	89.1%	72.8%	84.9%	51.6%	86.7%	67.3%
Families in Workless Households **	80.1%	56.9%	85.1%	61.1%	87.4%	70.3%	85.8%	56.3%	85.5%	65.3%
Families with English as a Second Language	77.2%	53.4%	70.3%	44.6%	92.9%	75.0%	76.9%	53.8%	76.3%	56.1%
Registered Fathers and Male Carers	80.2%	59.0%	85.4%	63.1%	89.0%	72.0%	85.2%	59.9%	86.1%	70.1%
Families with Only a Registered Male Carer	64.6%	25.9%	70.7%	43.9%	70.5%	29.5%	50.0%	19.2%	77.7%	45.9%
Registered Families in Minority Ethnic Groups	73.7%	46.6%	75.6%	48.6%	74.9%	52.5%	62.9%	33.9%	79.6%	58.0%

* Counts 0-5s where a registered carer has answered "No" to the registration form question "Is anyone aged over 16 in your household in employment?"

** Counts 0-5s where **all** registered carers have an Employment Status explicitly not related to employment. "Not Obtained" and "Other" statuses are excluded.

Below the Large Majority
Large Majority
Very Large Majority or Higher

Action – Make sure Lead Partners take concerted action to improve the level and quality of work with target groups

4.4 Step 4 - Increasing the take up of 2, 3 and 4 year old places

4.4.1 2 Year Olds

The local authority has a new duty to deliver free early education places for two year olds. This is part of the Government's Fairness Premium, to drive up social mobility and improve life chances. The primary focus is on disadvantaged children, who are currently less likely to access the benefits of early education.

The new entitlement is being implemented in two phases. September 2013 (Phase One) Norfolk has a target to provide 1,668 free early education places for disadvantaged 2 year olds. From 2014 (Phase Two), the entitlement will be extended to a further 2,200 2 year olds.

4.4.2 Identifying priority areas for development based on need

In order to focus resources on the areas of greatest need in Phase One (2012/2013) priority areas for development have been identified. The Children's Centre Lot areas are used as the sub geographical areas on which to base development (see Appendix 5 for details)

4.4.3 3 and 4 year Old Places

Improvement Plan target - Work with children's centres to use their data to target and contact local families with 3 and 4 year olds not taking up free early learning places. There has been an increase in take up of 3-4 year old places. The reported figures for Spring 2013 were 80.6% overall, by Autumn 2013 the figure stood at 81.5% (see Appendix 6)

Within these figures, however, it is evident that some Children's Centres have made quite large improvements in take up, Attleborough by 5%, City and Eaton by 5%, Great Yarmouth Priory by 6%. However other centres had fallen back, Earlham Early Years by 6%. Emneth had the poorest figures at only just over 60% a decline by about 5% since the Spring. The news is mixed with some positive results for our priority Children's Centres and some concerns with others.

All Children's Centres have good access to this data.

Action - circulate regular, annotated open performance reports to Lead Partners, linked to the priority centres identified in the 0-5 Needs Analysis

5. Ofsted – new framework

In April 2013 a new Ofsted framework for the inspection of Children's Centres was introduced. The framework was rationalised into 4 Key judgements

- Access to services by young children and their families.
- The quality and impact of practice and services.
- The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management.
- Overall effectiveness

Inspections so far

- Swaffham, Downham Mkt. & Methwold (4C), June 2013
 - Requires Improvement
- Priory, Greenacre, Gorleston & Hopton, Seagulls (GYCT), September 2013
 - Good
- Village Green (School), October 2013

- Inadequate
- Dereham Central, Dereham South and Litcham (AfC), November 2013
 - Requires improvement
- Wells, Corpusty & Holt, Stibbard (AfC), December 2013
 - Postponed
- Drayton & Taverham, Hellesdon, Aylsham and Reepham (AfC) March 2014
 - Good (not yet published)

5.1. Although there have been some variations in the inspections there are certain key themes emerging

- Leadership and Management – unless this is effective there is no chance of getting a ‘Good’ judgement. The requirement to be on top of the game is stringent. Understanding the data, understanding the community and being able to plan effectively are essential ingredients.
- SEFs (Self Evaluation Forms) – this is the first document that an inspector sees. When these are weak or muddled it is difficult to get better than a Requires Improvement.
- Development Plans – as above.
- Data and how it is used to inform planning – Centres have to show they have access to data, have analysed it and used it to inform their planning.
- Role of the Local Authority (information sharing, links to Social Work teams) – this was picked up (see actions below). Inspectors come having done their homework about Norfolk, so the Local Authority cannot afford to be slow to respond to actions that arise from any Ofsted reports.
- School readiness – this has been a recurring theme
- Advisory Boards – inspectors want to know that these are well attended and managed and offer appropriate challenge to the centre
- Involvement of parents – inspectors are keen to see that parents are fully involved and that it is not tokenism or in the ‘too difficult’ tray.

In July 2013 Ofsted gave a Requires Improvement judgement at Swaffham, Downham Market & Methwold Children’s Centre Group. In the inspection report Ofsted said:

“The local authority does not routinely share information about the children and families who have social care involvement, such as children subject to child protection plans, as a result, the centres are not able to support all families who may benefit from what they offer”

An action was:

“The local authority should develop a protocol for information sharing between social services and children’s centres to support early intervention”

5.2.1 Key Actions arising from the inspection have been:

Linked Social Worker

- every centre now has a linked social worker whose role it is to:
 - Provide information and guidance
 - Improve partnership working between the Children’s Centre and Social Care professionals
 - Promote safeguarding and the welfare of children
 - Focus on targeted young children and their families
 - Professional development

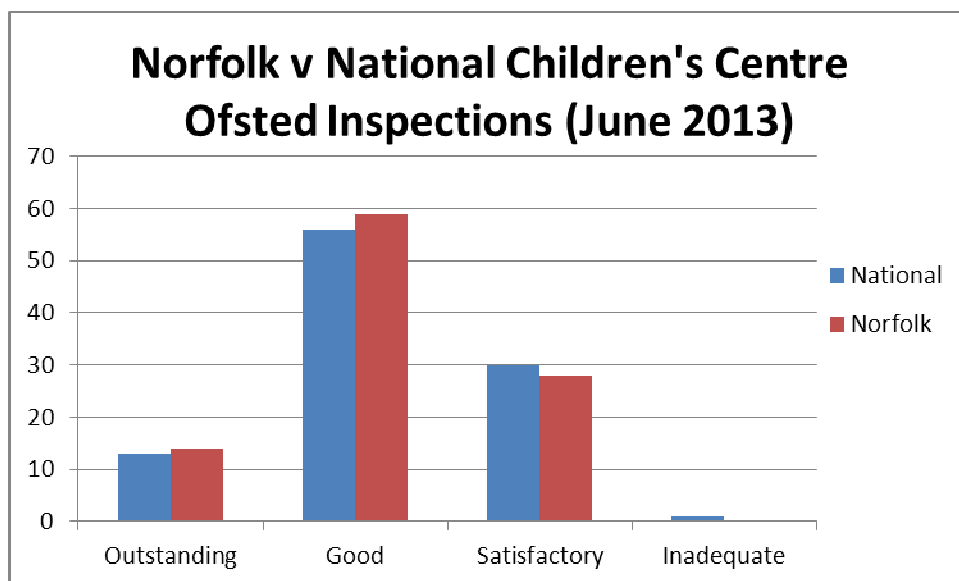
- Promote a positive image of the Social Work role and Children's Services to children's centre professionals and families
- The role is to be reviewed every 6 months.

5.2.2 Information Sharing

- The Norfolk Information Sharing Protocol has been circulated to Lead Partners for them to sign.
 - The aim of the protocol is to facilitate sharing of information between the public, private and voluntary sectors so that members of the public receive the services they need.
- A Data Exchange Agreement has been developed and finalised, signed copies are being collated.
 - Data will be provided weekly and will consist of a report generated from a data feed from CareFirst (Norfolk Social Care Management Information system) to Synergy Connect (Norfolk Children's Centre Management Information System), detailing the names, dates of birth, address, child/family's primary social worker and the type of social care intervention (Looked After Children; Children in Need and Children on a Child Protection Plan).
 - Children's Services and Children's Centres in Norfolk will ensure that each other is made aware of all children aged 0-5 who are known to/working with them. This will be by using information stored with CareFirst and Synergy Connect. This will also include information relating to children involved in the Family Support Process (FSP)

By sharing Social Care Data with Children's Centres will offer the opportunity for Children's Centres and Social Care to work together to provide 'early help' and ensure they are meeting the needs of local children and families.

Case Study – Village Green Children's Centre was given an 'Inadequate' judgement by Ofsted, despite high levels of registrations and contacts. The failure can be attributed to poor leadership and management. We must not be complacent that looking at data alone will allow us to know which centres are 'Good'.



Norfolk Children Centre outcomes compared to national- Data View June 2013

6. Lead Partner Feedback

Between December 2013 and January 2014 a consultation took place with Lead Partners regarding our current contract monitoring and support arrangements.

The consultation covered three key areas

- Contract and quality monitoring
- Financial monitoring
- Hardship Fund

In addition Centre Leaders were asked for their views on the contract and quality monitoring processes (*full feedback available at Appendix 7*)

6.1 Main Findings

- It was commonly agreed that the SEF (Self Evaluation Form) and Development Plan are the key component in setting targets and understanding the distance any centre needs to travel in order to achieve a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' Ofsted judgement.
- Overall Lead Partners felt that the contract and quality monitoring processes were effective and helpful.
- However, the monitoring and support resource was spread too thinly. This meant that they did not get timely feedback after visits and that appropriate information was not readily available at formal contract monitoring meetings.
- There needed to be a distinction and rationalisation between training provided by the Local Authority and Lead Partner in-house training.
- Financial monitoring was described as overly complex and time consuming.
- Centre Leaders valued the regular meetings with the opportunity to share practice and receive important messages.
- Views on the hardship fund were more diverse and ranged from partners who thought it was invaluable and should remain in its current form, to those who felt that it was over bureaucratic and entrenched dependency.

6.2 Recommendations from the review:

- 1) Undertake risk assessment of all Children's Centres ranging from those likely to get 'Good' or 'Outstanding' at Ofsted to those likely to get 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate'.
- 2) Allocate resources and undertake monitoring and support against the risk assessment (see Support and Intervention framework, Appendix 8).
- 3) Add resource to the quality monitoring to ensure timely information is available to both the Lead Partners and commissioners.
- 4) Develop more focussed performance reporting and information.

7. Building Maintenance Fund (BMF)

The BMF is a charge levied on Children's Centres, which is calculated according to floor space. The purpose of the fund is to ensure there is a resource available to pay for any costs regarding the building structure or key elements such as boilers or door fittings etc. (it does not cover things like tables and chairs). As many of the buildings are quite new it is thought that initially the fund will run at a surplus and accrue a capital sum that can be spent later as the buildings require greater repair and maintenance. The BMF is managed by NPS, who charge a fee of 12% of the total (see Appendix 9 for details).

- The surplus for this year is around £44,000.

7.1 Issues to explore

- Is the Building Maintenance Fund good value for money?
- The commissioning process has opened some of the childcare providers to the costs of the BMF, which is placing a strain on their sustainability. Do we need to look at those areas where we are prioritising child care places?

Action – Explore the report from NPS (updated report is due) and make a decision on how to proceed.

8. Other issues

Each centre is a complicated organisation in itself, with a building and staff, delivering a variety of services. Therefore there is a range of running issues

8.1 Buildings – Access to some of the sites by Lead Partners is either blocked or made difficult in one or two cases.

Thetford the school refuses to recognise the right of the Lead Partner to have the necessary access to the Children's Centre.

Loddon the school makes it difficult to use the room set aside for Children's Centre activity.

Recommendation – the Local Authority should assert its right to use the facilities it has built or develop suitable alternative arrangements so that the Lead Partner can discharge its contractual obligations

8.2 Leases – the process for signing-off the leases has been interminably slow and is only just nearing completion.

8.3 Miscellaneous

- An large pension liability has arisen and is currently under discussion
- One Children's Centre has not had a gas bill since it was built in 2008

9. Summary and Actions/Recommendations

It has been 2 years since the first group of Children's Centres transferred to the new specification and contractual arrangements. Since then Children's Centres have transformed their engagement with the communities they serve. They have also developed their own capacity to improve. In addition the key role that Children's Centres can play in the outcomes for children and families has been recognised.

9.1 Step 5 - Integration

In the report we have outlined the 4 Steps to Improvement. We are now taking a 5th step where Children's Centres become fully integrated and achieve their maximum potential for children and families.

9.2 Summary Actions

9.2.1 Priority Actions

- Ensure improved registrations are sustained
- Maintain pressure on Lead Partners to increase levels and quality of meaningful contacts
- Make sure Lead Partners take concerted action to improve the level and quality of work with target groups
- Circulate regular, annotated open performance reports to Lead Partners, linked to the priority centres identified in the 0-5 Needs Analysis

9.2.2 Action – BMF (Section 7)

Explore the report from NPS regarding the Building Maintenance Fund and make a decision on how to proceed.

9.2.3 Recommendations from the Lead Partner feedback (section 6):

- 1) Undertake risk assessment of all Children's Centres ranging from those likely to get 'Good' or 'Outstanding' at Ofsted to those likely to get 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate'
- 2) Allocate resources and undertake monitoring and support against the risk assessment (Support and Intervention framework Appendix 8)
- 3) Add resource to the quality monitoring to ensure timely information is available to both the Lead Partners and commissioners
- 4) Develop more focussed performance reporting and information

9.2.4. Recommendation from Other Issues (section 8)

The Local Authority should assert its right to use the facilities it has built or develop suitable alternative arrangements so that the Lead Partner can discharge its contractual obligations

(please note additional reports at Appendix 10)

Appendix 1 Contracts and Finance

Summary of Children's Centres Tendered Contracts by Lot and Provider

Provider	Lot No.	Date of commencement
	15, 26 &	
AfC	29	from 1st July
		from 1st July
AfC	2	(varied to include lots 17 & 18 from 1st Oct)
AfC	3, 7 & 33	from 1st October
	8, 10, 11,	
	13, 19 &	
AfC	36	from 1st October
St. Michael's	28	from 1st October
Caister Infants	20	from 1st September
4 Children	31 & 32	from 1st October
Gt. Yarmouth		
Community Trust	23 & 24	from 1st July
NCH&C	4	from 1st July
NCH&C	12	from 1st July
NCH&C	14	from 1st July
NCH&C	27	from 1st July
NCH&C	35	from 1st July

Provider Lots and annual contract values

Action for Children

Wells, Stibbard, Holt and Corpusty (Lot 15), Vancouver (King's Lynn) plus Springwood Area (Lot 26), Hunstanton (Lot 29) **£1,080,900**
 Thorpe Hamlet and Heartsease (Lot 2), Sprowston & Spixworth (Lot 17) and Drayton & Taverham and Hellesdon (Lot 18) **£882,991**
 Harleston and Loddon (Lot 8), Long Stratton (Lot 10), Wymondham and Hethersett (Lot 11), Stalham and Broadland (Lot 13), Reepham and Aylsham (Lot 19), Attleborough (Lot 36) (CF0436) **£1,546,038**
 Catton Grove, Fiddlewood and Milecross (Lot 3), City & Eaton (Lot 7) and Dereham Central, Dereham South & Litcham (Lot 33) (CF0437) **£1,290,523**

Total Value **£4,800,452**

Norfolk Community Health & Care (NCH&C)

Bowthorpe, West Earlham and Costessey (Lot 4) **£467,508**
 Signpost (North Lynn) Plus Gaywood North Bank and the Wootons (Lot 27) **£418,601**
 North Walsham (Lot 14) **£224,470**
 Cromer and Mundesley (Lot 12) **£408,506**
 Thetford and Thetford Drake (Lot 35) **£522,111**
 Total Value **£2,041,196**

4 Children

Downham Market and Methwold (Lot 31) and Swaffham (Lot 32) (CF0443) **£539,023**

Great Yarmouth Community Trust (GYCT)

Greenacre and Priory (Great Yarmouth) (Lot 23), Seagulls (Gorleston) and Gorleston and Hopton (Lot 24) **£1,223,280**

Schools

Caister Infants School

- Acle (Lot 20) £192,089
- Caister (Lot 22) £323,496
- Total value of contacts **£515,585**

Angel Road Infant School - North City (Lot 5) £395,776

Emneth Infants and Nursery School - Emneth (Lot 30a) £224,794

West Walton Community Primary School - West Walton (Lot 30b) £164,495

Moorlands CE Primary School - Village Green (Lot 25) £210,552

Earlham Early Years Centre - Earlham Early Years Centre (Lot 1) £446,681

Cavell Primary & Nursery School - East City & Framingham Earl (Lot 6) £432,611

Diss Infant & Nursery School - Diss (Lot 9) £253,500

Fakenham Infant & Nursery School - Fakenham Gateway (Lot 16) £297,362

Martham Primary & Nursery School Trust - Trinity Children's Centre (Lot 21)

£230,832

Watton Westfield Infant & Nursery School - Watton (Lot 34) £238,158

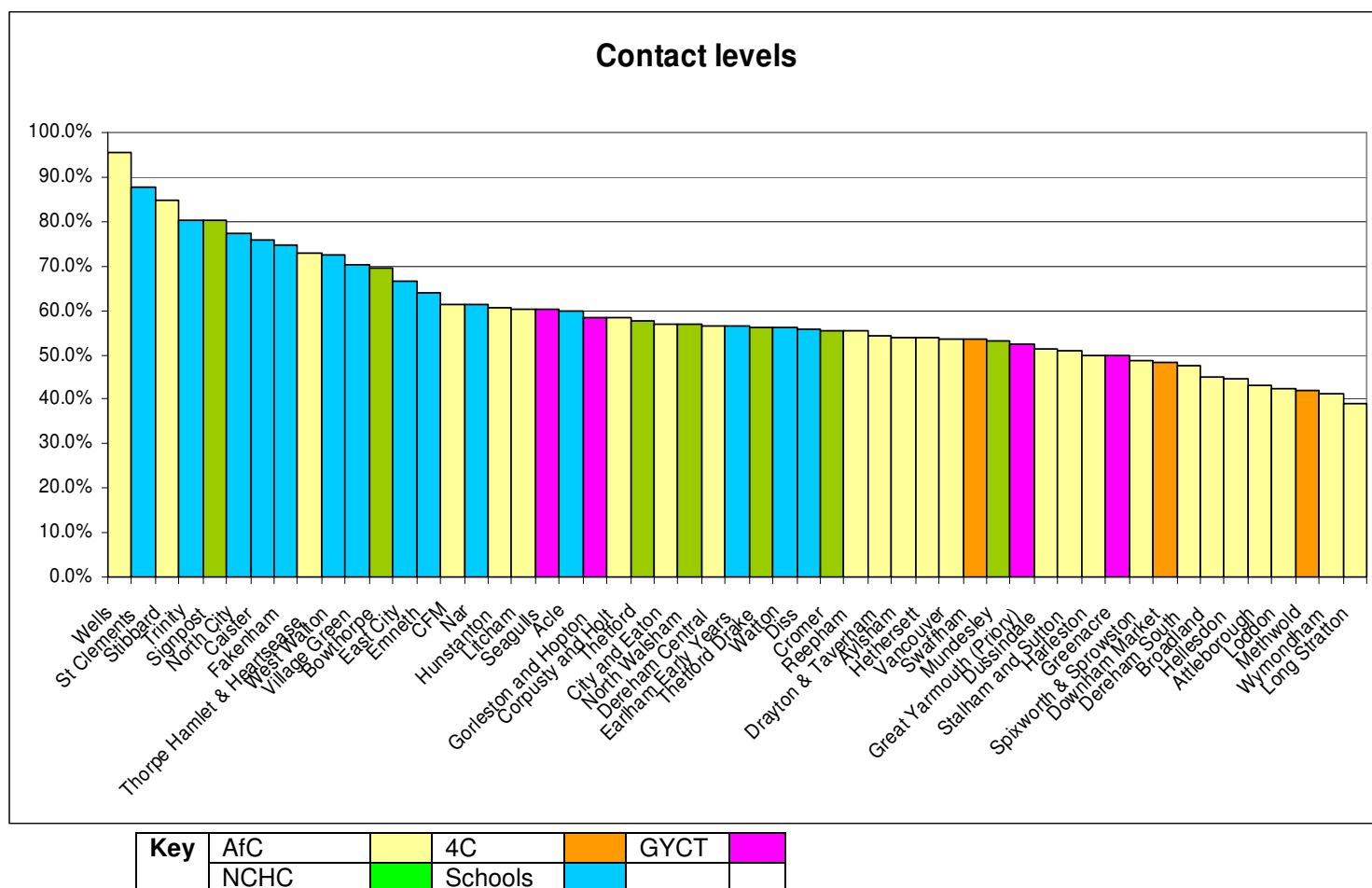
Children's Centre Individual Centre Contract Values

CF Number	Provider	Contract Period	Lots	Total value	Annual value
CF443	4 Children	1 Oct 12 - 31 Mar16	31	£1,049,260	£276,708.25
			32	£1,106,833	£262,315
CF435	Action for Children	1 July12-31 Mar16	2	£1,596,228.00	£425,080.00
CF471	Action for Children	1 Oct 12- 31 Mar 16	17	£734,679	£209,908.00
			18	£994,010	£248,003.00
CF436	Action for Children	1 Oct 12- 31 Mar 16	3	£1,595,570	£455,877.00
			7	£1,368,640	£391,040.00
			33	£1,552,622	£443,606.00
CF434	Action for Children	1 July12-31 Mar16	15	£1,547,547	£412,679.00
			26	£1,596,941	£425,851.00
			29	£908,889	£242,370.00
CF436	Action for Children	1 Oct 12- 31 Mar 16	8	£873,806	£249,659.00
			10	£638,760	£182,503.00
			11	£973,399	£278,114.00
			13	£1,142,176	£326,336.00
			19	£871,171	£248,906.00

			36	£911,820	£260,520.00
CF438	NCH&C	1 July12-31 Mar16	4	£1,753,156	£467,508.00
CF441	NCH&C	1 July12-31 Mar16	12	£1,531,899	£408,506.00
CF440	NCH&C	1 July12-31 Mar16	14	£841,764	£224,470.00
CF439	NCH&C	1 July12-31 Mar16	27	£1,569.76	£418,601.00
CF442	NCH&C	1 July12-31 Mar16	35	£1,957,916	£522,111.00
CF444	Great Yarmouth Community Trust	1 July12-31 Mar16	23	£2,424,676	£646,580.00
			24	£2,162,626	£576,700.00
CF446	Caister Infants (Acle Area)	1 Sept 12 – 31 Mar 16	20	688,319.00	£192,089.00
CF445	St Michaels	1 Sept 12 – 31 Mar 16	28	1,984,339.00	£566,954.00
No id	Emneth	1 Apr13 - 31 Mar16	30a	1,557,156.00	£389,289.00
No id	West Walton	1 Apr13 - 31 Mar16	30b	Note:part of above	Note:part of above
No id	Village Green Moorlands	1 Dec 12 – 31 Mar16	25	£842,208.00	£210,552.00
No id	Earlham	1 Apr13 - 31 Mar16	1	£1,786,724.00	£446,681.00
No id	North City	1 Apr13 - 31 Mar16	5	£1,583,101.00	£395,776.00

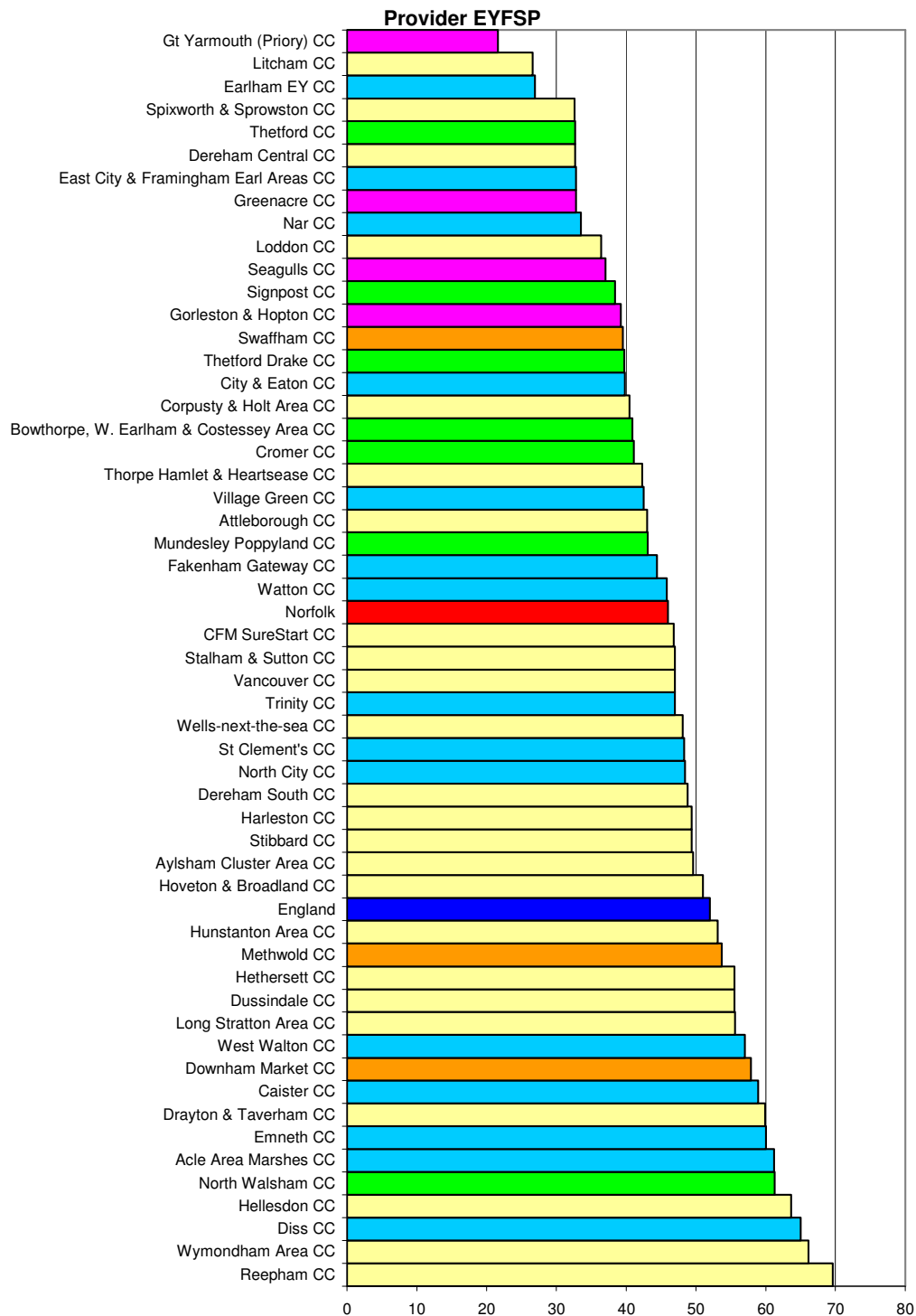
No id	East City & Framingham Earl	1 Apr13 - 31 Mar16	6	£1,730,444.00	£432,611.00
No id	Diss	1 Apr13 - 31 Mar16	9	£1,014,000.00	£253,500.00
No id	Fakenham	1 Apr13 - 31 Mar16	16	£1,189,448.00	£297,362.00
No id	Trinity	1 Apr13 - 31 Mar16	21	£923,328.00	£230,832.00
No id	Caister	1 Apr13 - 31 Mar16	22	£1,293,982.00	£323,496.00
No id	Watton	1 Apr13 - 31 Mar16	34	£952,632.00	£238,158.00
				£45,681,639	£12,581,251.25

Appendix 2 - Contact Levels by Lead Partner



Appendix 3

Lead Partner FSP Ranking



Key	England		AfC		4C		GYCT	
	Norfolk		NCHC		Schools			

Appendix 4 – Contact with target groups

Detailed Figures Contact figures

	AfC			NCHC			GYCT			4C			Schools		
		Any	3+		Any	3+		Any	3+		Any	3+		Any	3+
Total Registered Families	12312	9629	6700	3711	3206	2430	2068	1780	1325	1842	1601	1259	9918	8810	7077
Families with a Parent/Carer under 20	172	150	96	73	68	51	76	68	39	18	18	16	171	158	130
Families with a Parent/Carer under 25	1698	1406	976	743	648	498	555	490	357	156	142	122	1592	1415	1104
Families with a Disabled Parent	344	292	215	119	106	84	92	84	70	39	35	30	359	315	266
Families with a Disabled Child (aged 0-5)	191	169	131	59	55	49	52	50	45	23	22	21	147	135	121
Families with a Disabled Child (any age)	366	303	230	104	94	78	116	110	96	42	37	35	307	270	242
Lone Parent Families	1047	907	673	444	389	313	298	275	246	77	71	58	1177	1066	878
Families with a Smoking Parent/Carer	2586	2069	1495	1271	1056	784	671	602	509	243	217	192	2916	2582	2100
Priority or Excluded Families	54	52	46	36	36	36	2	2	2	28	27	18	268	261	245
Families with a Pregnant Teenager	24	17	10	7	6	3	11	7	4	2	2	1	22	16	10
Families in Workless Households *	2150	1753	1266	859	743	565	588	524	428	219	186	113	2318	2009	1561
Families in Workless Households **	1328	1064	756	637	542	389	380	332	267	190	163	107	1466	1253	957
Families with English as a Second Language	206	159	110	101	71	45	28	26	21	13	10	7	367	280	206
Registered Fathers and Male Carers	7837	6289	4622	2815	2405	1777	1012	901	729	736	627	441	7408	6379	5193
Families with Only a Registered Male Carer	294	190	76	41	29	18	61	43	18	52	26	10	148	115	68
Registered Families in Minority Ethnic Groups	889	655	414	356	269	173	183	137	96	62	39	21	1004	799	582

* Counts 0-5s where a registered carer has answered "No" to the registration form question "Is anyone aged over 16 in your household in employment?"

** Counts 0-5s where **all** registered carers have an Employment Status explicitly not related to employment. "Not Obtained" and "Other" statuses are excluded

Appendix 5 – 2 Year Old Places

Spring 2014 Data

Claim Period: 01/01/14 to 31/03/14

Spring 2014 Data		DWP Eligible Children	Child Take Up as at 27/02/14				% Take Up	% Take Up
			Criteria			Total Take Up to Date	Based on Sept 13 Criteria	Total
			Sept 2013	Sept 2014	Local			
Claim Period: 01/01/14 to 31/03/14								
Spring Target							1668	
Priority Lots	925	626	150	29	805	68%	87%	
Other Children's Centre Lots	751	575	186	73	834	77%	111%	
TOTAL	1676	1201	336	102	1639	72%	98%	

Breakdown -

Priority Lots

Bowthorpe, West Earlham & Costessey Area	70	70	18	5	93	100%	133%
Catton Grove, Fiddlewood & Milecross	92	47	11	3	61	51%	66%
City & Eaton	54	23	7		30	43%	56%
Earlham	79	55	7	6	68	70%	86%
East City & Framlingham Earl Area	60	46	7	1	54	77%	90%
Great Yarmouth and Greenacre	151	118	32	2	152	78%	101%
North City	57	27	4	1	32	47%	56%
Seagulls and Gorleston & Hopton	91	65	22	1	88	71%	97%
Signpost and Woottons & Gaywood N Bank	49	44	11	2	57	90%	116%
Thetford and Thetford Drake	76	50	15	2	67	66%	88%
Thorpe Hamlet & Heartsease and Dussindale	78	44	9	5	58	56%	74%
Vancouver and Springwood	68	37	7	1	45	54%	66%

Other Lots

Acle Area (Marshes)	26	18	9		27	69%	104%
Attleborough	31	21	2	3	26	68%	84%
Aylsham and Reepham	31	19	7	1	27	61%	87%
Caister and Yarmouth North Ward	29	9	5		14	31%	48%
Cromer and Mundesley	31	29	9	0	38	94%	123%
Dereham Central, Dereham South & Litcham	57	53	15	9	77	93%	135%
Diss	29	36	3	3	42	124%	145%
Downham Market and Methwold	70	30	12		42	43%	60%
Emneth and West Walton	35	18	8	1	27	51%	77%
Fakenham	21	10	4		14	48%	67%
Harleston and Loddon Area	31	24	4	2	30	77%	97%
Hellesdon and Drayton & Taverham	24	20	9	2	31	83%	129%
Hunstanton Area	28	16	5	2	23	57%	82%
Long Stratton	20	15	7		22	75%	110%
Nar (South Lynn) and St Clements	71	51	13	1	65	72%	92%
North Walsham	28	29	10	1	40	104%	143%
Spixworth & Sprowston	18	26	4		30	144%	167%
Stalham & Sutton and Broadland	18	18	5	1	24	100%	133%
Swaffham	31	26	7	35	68	84%	219%
Trinity	16	21	10	6	37	131%	231%
Village Green	20	14	5	2	21	70%	105%
Watton	27	24	13	1	38	89%	141%
Wells, Stibbard, Holt & Corpusty	28	22	11	2	35	79%	125%
Wymondham and Hethersett	31	20	9	1	30	65%	97%
Out of County		6			6		

Appendix 6 – 3 Year Old Initial Funding Report

Initial Funding Report

Autumn Term 2013

This report compares the number of children eligible for 3 & 4 Year Old funding in Spring Term 2013 (Date of Birth between 01/09/2008 and 31/08/2010) with the number of children taking up their funded place or already attending school.

The report is based on child-level data linked between multiple databases and therefore can never be completely precise, but the match rate is very high.

Limitations of the data are as follows:

- A child may not be counted if we're unable to match them across databases
- A child may not be counted if they have taken up their funded provision in another County
- A child may not be counted if they have taken up their provision after headcount day.

Children's Centres have the ability to update this data if they discover a child whose funding status is incorrect. After the Children's Centres have made all of their amendments this report will be circulated as the Final Funding Report for this term.

Children's Centre Area	Not in Receipt		In Receipt		Total	Ofsted Speak
Outside Norfolk or Unknown Postcode	517	63.2%	301	36.8%	818	Minority
Acle Area (Marshes)	41	10.0%	371	90.0%	412	Very Large Majority
Attleborough	62	12.1%	452	87.9%	514	Very Large Majority
Aylsham	22	7.7%	264	92.3%	286	Very Large Majority
Bowthorpe, West Earlham and Costessey Area	120	16.3%	617	83.7%	737	Very Large Majority
Broadland	21	10.9%	171	89.1%	192	Very Large Majority
Caister	33	11.1%	264	88.9%	297	Very Large Majority
Catton Grove, Fiddlewood and Mile Cross (CFM)	77	13.6%	488	86.4%	565	Very Large Majority
City and Eaton	112	18.6%	490	81.4%	602	Very Large Majority
Corpusty and Holt Area	33	13.0%	220	87.0%	253	Very Large Majority
Cromer	18	8.5%	194	91.5%	212	Very Large Majority
Dereham Central	43	10.2%	379	89.8%	422	Very Large Majority
Dereham South	23	7.3%	293	92.7%	316	Very Large Majority
Diss	80	21.6%	291	78.4%	371	Large Majority
Downham Market	77	16.3%	394	83.7%	471	Very Large Majority
Drayton & Taverham	34	9.6%	319	90.4%	353	Very Large Majority
Dussindale	22	7.4%	276	92.6%	298	Very Large Majority
Earlham Early Years Centre	123	25.9%	352	74.1%	475	Large Majority
East City & Framingham Earl Area	130	19.8%	526	80.2%	656	Very Large Majority
Emneth	107	38.9%	168	61.1%	275	Majority
Fakenham Gateway	26	9.5%	249	90.5%	275	Very Large Majority
Gorleston and Hopton	121	31.3%	265	68.7%	386	Large Majority
Great Yarmouth (Priory)	47	20.8%	179	79.2%	226	Large Majority
Greenacre	172	29.4%	413	70.6%	585	Large Majority
Harleston	40	20.6%	154	79.4%	194	Large Majority
Hellesdon	65	22.1%	229	77.9%	294	Large Majority

Hethersett	44	10.7%	366	89.3%	410	Very Large Majority
Hunstanton Area	26	9.1%	260	90.9%	286	Very Large Majority
Litcham	30	16.8%	149	83.2%	179	Very Large Majority
Loddon	42	19.5%	173	80.5%	215	Very Large Majority
Long Stratton	33	10.4%	283	89.6%	316	Very Large Majority
Methwold	65	23.3%	214	76.7%	279	Large Majority
Nar	76	18.4%	337	81.6%	413	Very Large Majority
North City	109	18.6%	478	81.4%	587	Very Large Majority
North Walsham	12	4.2%	276	95.8%	288	Very Large Majority
Poppyland (Mundesley)	9	8.2%	101	91.8%	110	Very Large Majority
Reepham	27	11.9%	200	88.1%	227	Very Large Majority
Seagulls	50	15.1%	281	84.9%	331	Very Large Majority
Signpost	57	11.1%	457	88.9%	514	Very Large Majority
Spixworth & Sprowston	52	8.9%	532	91.1%	584	Very Large Majority
St Clements	22	11.2%	174	88.8%	196	Very Large Majority
Stalham and Sutton	16	8.9%	163	91.1%	179	Very Large Majority
Stibbard	8	6.6%	113	93.4%	121	Very Large Majority
Swaffham	188	33.3%	376	66.7%	564	Large Majority
Thetford	78	21.5%	284	78.5%	362	Large Majority
Thetford Drake	96	26.4%	267	73.6%	363	Large Majority
Thorpe Hamlet & Heartsease	137	32.2%	289	67.8%	426	Large Majority
Trinity	19	7.2%	245	92.8%	264	Very Large Majority
Vancouver	76	12.9%	512	87.1%	588	Very Large Majority
Village Green Childrens Centre	66	18.9%	283	81.1%	349	Very Large Majority
Watton	68	17.1%	329	82.9%	397	Very Large Majority
Wells	15	11.4%	117	88.6%	132	Very Large Majority
West Walton	22	14.5%	130	85.5%	152	Very Large Majority
Wymondham	54	11.4%	421	88.6%	475	Very Large Majority
Total	3662	18.5%	16129	81.5%	19791	Very Large Majority

Appendix 7 – Lead Partner Feedback

Action for Children Comments on Contract Monitoring

Context

Since the contract and tender documents were written the new Ofsted requirements have come into effect.

The contract has been in place for well over a year and therefore we have had some chance to reflect on the monitoring requirements and methods from a provider point of view.

Action for Children will ensure we comply with the requirements of the authority and submit this in direct response to a request from commissioners who wished to seek our views.

What is provided:

Core Offer – we assume that this will remain as within the contract specification.

How it is monitored:

Data

Synergie – we are reliant upon this system for the bulk of our data and from data provided to the authority by partner agencies – to monitor progress against some of the KPIs in the contract.

Regardless of how many monitoring visits are undertaken per year the KPIs which have a numerical value can still be reported upon (and are gathered within the centres for SEF and development plans which CSMs monitor quarterly) NCC may wish to simply assess some key data reports quarterly?

Action for Children would in addition be able to provide evidence of Impact for our one to one work using our internal system Easpire – and this is used for evidence of impact for Ofsted. Links to Early Help in terms of centres offering individual support to families could be improved – see summary suggestions.

Parental Satisfaction Survey

This currently does not provide the amount of feedback which is needed to support planning. We would like to work with you on ways to secure an improved response rate.

Whilst this does not form the only way that parental feedback is sought, it is a current requirement which we believe is key, but that needs to be improved upon.

Reach and Engagement

All services need to ensure that reach is maintained (as has been monitored recently with good results) and the emphasis in the next period within Action for Children services is on engagement in vulnerable groups

This is not specifically monitored within the contract (as reach was not) but is a strong requirement to ensure Good or above in terms of Ofsted gradings.

Since this is reported on in terms of the SEF (and development plan) which can be accessed by NCC on perspectives we would suggest that criteria for what is a setting of concern is linked to this (as one criteria) and frequency of monitoring visits linked to it (see below)

Frequency of Visits

Currently each centre gets five visits a year (for looking at each quarterly theme and one annual conversation) which is very labour intensive for the person leading on this. The reports from these meetings consequently are not received back within the timeframe in the contract (and no criticism we recognise this is an enormous task and that this is a resource issue) and therefore actions from them may be delayed.

We would suggest that this amount of visits (whilst supportive and helpful to coordinators) is in excess of what is needed by the authority to monitor the contract. In Action for Children's case we see the quality assurance role to review SEFs and ensure development plans are making the necessary improvements as that of our Children's Services Managers.

We do recognise that it is necessary for the authority to monitor through visits at least annually and more frequently against the development plan/action plan if the services have had:

- i. Inadequate grading in Ofsted
- ii. Requires Improvement (may be a need to differentiate within which graded area or amount of RI)
- iii. SEFs – which show inadequate in any graded area
- iv. Settings of concern – we would like the criteria to be more explicit and could be linked with the above?

Our suggestion for services which are graded in the SEF/Ofsted as Good or above receive the annual conversation visit and one other visit per year which could be unannounced / announced as per Ofsted announcement and therefore show a true reflection for the authority?

The team (NCC) could then also potentially provide training around areas of need identified through this process either collectively or per centre depending on need.

Monitoring Information other than direct deliver

Compliance such as those headings below are also assessed through the quarterly visits and therefore clarity around how they would be assessed in future would need to be detailed. Many contracts Action for Children have ensure we provide details within a quarterly report format.

Safeguarding

Health and Safety

Complaints

Children's Centre Monthly Meetings

Whilst these are supportive and helpful for coordinators you also asked us to comment on the role of the early years team. Potentially these could move to a quarterly meeting perhaps – share elements of good practice etc? Possibly again there may be a duplication here of roles and responsibilities – we hold monthly practice meetings ourselves but recognise that single or smaller agencies may struggle if NCC do not host. This comment is made in the interests of utilising resources – as these meetings do not form part of your monitoring arrangements and it could be said you are buying this expertise from your contracts and management organisations?

Financial Monitoring

Special Certificates:

Costly process administratively (to prepare) time and expense

Costly process to pay auditors for certificate

The need for these may have come from old Sure Start Local Programme Days when government department monitored the spend of grant.

Potentially other ways that NCC could be reassured that funding was being spent solely on the service (in this case children's centres) through the contract wording thus making savings which could be spent on delivery. Across all our services in Action for Children, including children's centres, we have extremely few audit certificate requirements remaining in place and no new contract have required these for a considerable time. We do provide other services for NCC and assume that we satisfy the authority that we only use funds for the services we provide for them.

Finance forms

Currently we do not receive feedback about financial forms we have submitted in a timely way (ie which would enable us to change/respond to queries as required)

The requirement to complete extremely detailed breakdown of information:

- i. Is perhaps linked to the old local Sure Start Programme financial monitoring forms.
- ii. May be interpreted differently by different management organisations and therefore will not give any true comparators (the splitting into core offer)
- iii. May be entirely appropriately split unequally due to that communities identified needs and is likely to be different throughout the duration of the contract – therefore again not sure what information this provides to the authority in terms of monitoring or subsequent actions from the information
- iv. Many services actually meet more than one core objective
- v. Splitting across 12 months in most cases would result in 12 equal amounts.
- vi. Is a time consuming exercise to complete

Financial monitoring forms could be simplified – still submitted as per quarterly requirements and detailing spend against agreed headings. All children's centres would use the same global headings so the authority had comparators.

Hardship Fund

Our monitoring of spend to budget on this fund demonstrates that it is underspent significantly in some cases.

Our view is that it should have the same criteria applied across all centres (not just ours) but this is exceptionally hard to ensure when there is an amount in the pot and a seeming need. However this can create a dependency culture and also has the potential to create both good and less good relationships with partner organisations (depending on decisions made and/or differences of opinion.)

It is also potentially a 'postcode' lottery – something that we would wish to avoid.

The administration of such a fund is also time consuming.

There is evidence that for access for vulnerable groups in a rural area with poor transport that this is an effective use of such an amount of money, plus in some cases (although fewer with two year old funding etc) for childcare to support one to one or group work.

It would perhaps be better if the amounts were amalgamated within the total and the centre coordinators (across Norfolk not only AFC) were allowed to use for access of service issues for vulnerable groups (In effect transport and childcare) which fits with the need to ensure engagement and Ofsted requirements.

Whilst we do appreciate that there are times when this has been used for other support – this may inadvertently plug a gap and prevent a proper needs analysis which should be highlighted within Norfolk.

Our view would be that the delivery of services to improve the lives of children is the paramount purpose of the funding.

Summary

Much of the current monitoring requirements are labour intensive (for both NCC and Action for Children) and this resource could be redeployed elsewhere

Children's Centres and the Early Help agenda – further discussion could be held on how to ensure through contract monitoring that this is effective and leading to improved outcomes

Assuming the core offer remains NCC may require a quarterly report (and be able to reduce the amounts of visits) – since Action for Children are a large provider of children's centres we could make further suggestions if required.

Anne Waterman
Action for Children
Operational Director Children's Services
January 2014

Sure Start Children's Centre Contract

Dear Kevin,

In response to our last meeting please find comments from NCH&C

Data:

It is important to collect data that demonstrates that centres are aware of their target groups and where most difference can be made to children's outcomes therefore we suggest the following data is significant.

- **Antenatal Contacts**
- **Contact by ages – to show highest proportion of contact is made with under 2s**
- **Home visiting contacts**
- **Numbers of children/families with family support process in place**
- **Children transferring into area**
- **Contact with target groups** including centres own target groups specific to their local demographics, i.e. not all centres will have fathers as a target group in particular in more affluent reach areas
- **Numbers of children attending specialist groups/services provided by Centre**
- **Uptake of 2 year places**, current information provided by NCC is not accurate

Reach and Engagement:

Registrations – current registration process works well and supports ambitious targets for all centres.

Contacts. Contact should only be recorded if it has been significant and this may need a description as we are aware that some centres are marking a contact simply when a letter, programme or other non-meaningful communication is sent out. ‘Meaningful contact’ should be either face to face or possibly a phone call providing a highly supportive element.

Nursery contacts: we are aware that centres are recording contact with children at nurseries in different ways, some recording every contact with every child and some recording a child attending as one contact. Where nurseries mark children as a contact at every session this is distorting real contact figures, and does not demonstrate that the centres are having more meaningful interactions, in future we suggest the following:

- Children funded by hardship funding - all sessions attended should be marked as contact
- Routine attendance at nursery – one contact per term to demonstrate attendance
- Contact with children as part of higher intervention (universal partnership plus), family support process, S17 and S47 – all contacts recorded

Monitoring Visits and Monitoring Information

The regularity of the monitoring visits in line with the service specification has been effective, and has enabled each centre to start to build a focussed portfolio of data in line with OFSTED requirements. However there needs to be more focus on quality rather than quantitative data as the visits currently lack a focus on quality monitoring.

If the monitoring visits are quarterly then NCC may need to consider additional staff to ensure they are all managed within a timely fashion

With the regularity of the visits the annual conversations seem superfluous

Children’s Centre Leader Meetings

Our Centre Leaders have found these a useful forum to share experiences and knowledge.

Children’s Centre Leader Training

NCH&C believes that the responsibility for the ensuring that staff are trained to deliver high quality services, and activities passed to the lead agency following the recommissioning. We do not feel that NCC should provide free training in regards to the SEF and/or service delivery and that lead partners should source relevant training for their staff, thereby increasing knowledge expertise and experiences within our Children’s Centres

Financial Monitoring

There is an unnecessary duplication of data information required for the financial monitoring and that provided within the quarterly monitoring visits

Hardship Fund

The hardship fund has been hugely beneficial in providing immediate support and additional support packages for families, including nursery provision for children who do not qualify for, or are just too young for, 2 year places.

Sian Larrington
NCH&C Children's Centre Lead

Great Yarmouth Community Trust
SUBMISSION ON CHILDREN'S CENTRES CONTRACT AND PERFORMANCE
MONITORING

- Use the SEF & Development Plan (with targets agreed at Annual Conversation) as the heart of the performance management system. If more than one centre is being included in the annual conversation, then they should all be visited by someone from NCC before the conversation who can feed into the AC. Ensure that Family Support files are reviewed as part of the Annual Conversation.
- Review of development and targets action plans. For Centres causing concern (or not yet inspected) this should take place at least quarterly. For those judged good or better or not causing concern Annual Conversation and 6 month review of progress should be sufficient.
- Ensure monitoring focuses on the 3 Ofsted areas – the spec is important but Ofsted is key. Monitoring visits should focus on capacity to improve across the board, rather than a specific area of the spec. Now that there is enough data to review all areas at every meeting to see how things are going. Waiting a year to see if a centre is effective in a particular area will not pick up weaknesses or problems early enough for timely solutions to be implemented.
- Agree budget annually (including expected position each quarter) – don't rewrite every quarter.
- Make financial reporting simpler. Link financial reports to synergy centrally.
- Expect lead partners to supply explanations for significant variations from budget (10%+) but not for everything that's changed.
- It would also be great only to have to explain once – or if something has changed – rather than the same explanation every time even when the situation hasn't changed.
- The most helpful thing is for data to be available when we need it, eg, new births at end of every month.
- Use LCC Leaders Meetings to share good practice/common issues & challenges, rather than at monitoring visits. It's great for Tracy to share what other people are doing – but more meaningful to hear it from them direct (eg hearing Sian talk about the door knocking in King's Lynn was the moment we realised we just had to get on with it if the reach was ever to go up).
- The quarterly monitoring data should provide the issues that are common across the county and identify if there are specific CC Leaders who could lead/brief a discussion.

From: Michelle Giles [Michelle.Giles@4children.org.uk]

Sent: 17 January 2014 17:17

To: Howard, Kevin

Cc: Sue Addison

Subject: FW: Children's Centres - Feedback on Contract monitoring and Support

Importance: High

Hi Kevin

Please see below our feedback on contract monitoring and support within Norfolk

Data

We have found some of the data supplied as a Local Authority good. Some areas which would support us further are as follows

- Foundataion stage profile data, 2,3 and 4 yr funding data is good, however 3 and 4yr data not updated since Spring 13 so limits us.
- There is a lot of data provided which is in a large pack this can sometimes be difficult to analyse and Managers find it difficult to utilize quickly. Is there opportunity to make it more concise. 4Children have noticed that some of the data provided has had some inaccuracies therefore we have been using our own data to ensure accuracy in reporting and planning.
- CP and CIN data provided by Norfolk LA is not up to date and we do not receive named CP/CIN data. This would be really useful

Reach and Engagement

- Reach and registration figure monitoring is not consistently linked to the ofsted inspection framework – ‘children’ reached is used as opposed to ‘families’. As we are targeting and many of our priorities are linked to parents our children’s figures do not always fully show the work being done. The Ofsted framework clearly uses families and 4Children have worked with families figures for almost 2 years. Therefore our internal monitoring is sometimes difficult to monitor against how Norfolk are monitoring the contract
- We are currently monitored on bottom line figures / % , it would be good to analyse the data and evidence behind the figures for example targeted groups. Also, how significant contacts are measured as many lead bodies consider this differently and often input onto systems differently. For example inputting children as attending if they have only seen the parent. 4Children’s policy is children must be seen to be considered in a contact for safeguarding reasons. Also, how much contact consists of telephone calls, emails etc rather than a significant contact / assessment.

Monitoring Visits

- It is not always clear the purpose of the monitoring visits. A lot of preparation is put into the visits but it is not clear how this supports the development of centres moving forward.
- There is usually a time delay between the date of the visit and receiving the feedback report following the visit therefore teams are working from their notes rather than the final agreed documents / actions
- The report does not always show clearly the steps for required for service progression/improvement as well as the targets to reach them

Monitoring Information

- As a new provider entering Norfolk , 4Children do not feel fully our National experience is utilized. We have always been excited about working in Norfolk and what we can bring to the contract we are delivering especially around our Ofsted experience and how we measure progress and monitor

performance to meet the Ofsted framework, instead we are changing ways of working to ensure we are meeting contract criteria and working similar to other lead bodies. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and to share best practice in order to support improvements in partnership with Norfolk.

Children's Centre Leader Meetings

- Although this meeting is structured, it would be useful for managers to provide agenda items for this meeting. This would enable managers to discuss key issues affecting centres in Norfolk

Financial Monitoring

- This is time consuming to complete and requires high level of resources.
- No guidance on how to complete has been received and staff are finding it difficult to contact Norfolk named contact for guidance and support.
- 4Children do not provide this level of operational information supporting financial returns for any other contracts held nationally.

Hardship Fund

- 4Children feel this is a good offer and positive in supporting families. We have achieved some good outcomes as a result of utilising the fund.
- Lots of paperwork involved
- The panel process is positive as it brings together the range of agencies involved with the family. However this can be time consuming if money is needed urgently.

Hopefully the above is helpful

In addition to the comments above I would appreciate a meeting to discuss data etc as we are coming across a number of issues. As a result of our recent contract monitoring meeting we have been reviewing the data and our progress linked to children's reach. It was highlighted that we were not progressing at the same rate as some of the other lead bodies. Our analysis is showing a slightly different picture and I would really like to arrange a meeting to discuss this further to ensure we are measuring the same things.

I understand from the team the families reports have been removed from Synergy , this will cause us potential problems with our Ofsted monitoring as we presented families figures at our Ofsted inspection and will need to present the progress on these figures. At present we are unable to run these reports. It would be really useful if we could discuss the families / child reach further and the reasons why we work in this way. Also, to review the requirements of what we need to present to Ofsted.

I look forward to hearing from you and the possibility of a data meeting

Many thanks

Michelle

Appendix 8 - Support and intervention framework

Children's Centres Support and Intervention Framework						
Level	Status	Intervention/ Support	Influencing Factors			
			Contract	Ofsted Judgement	Quality and Impact	Leadership and Management
Level 1	Normal	Contract Monitoring	Light touch CPM	Outstanding Good	Green RAG	Green RAG
		Light touch Quality Monitoring	SEF/Dev Plan Data			
Level 2	Raised	Regular Performance data	Closely managed CPM	RI	Green/ Amber RAG	Green/ Amber RAG
		Regular contact and quality monitoring	Close links to EY Teams			
Level 3	Supported	Regular quality and performance visits	Centre of Concern Protocol	RI2 Inadequate	Amber/ Red RAG	Amber/ Red RAG
		Detailed plans				
		Improvement Board				
Level 4	Intensive	Project Board	Section C12	Inadequate (RI3)	Red RAG	Red RAG
		Re-commissioning				

Appendix 9 - Building Maintenance Fund (BMF)

CHILDREN'S CENTRES MAINTENANCE 2013-14

01/03/2014

		Area sq m	Contribution	Expenditure As at 31/12/13	+ / -
BMPP included NPS fees		£22.49 per m ²			
EK8011	Diss	136	£3,059.00	£2,275.00	£784.00
EK8020	Watton Westfield	152	£3,419.00	£1,320.00	£2,099.00
EK8023	Fakenham Infants	270	£6,073.00	£1,798.00	£4,275.00
EK8026	Village Green (Belton & Bradwell)	391	£8,794.00	£1,940.00	£6,854.00
EK8028	North City (Angel Road)	270	£6,073.00	£2,300.00	£3,773.00
EK8033	Emneth	99	£2,227.00	£1,995.00	£232.00
EK8110	Cromer	90	£2,024.00	£0.00	£2,024.00
EK8111	Litcham	295	£6,635.00	£2,898.00	£3,737.00
EK8116	Hunstanton	198	£4,453.00	£4,287.00	£166.00
EK8118	Nar	280	£6,297.00	£2,330.00	£3,967.00

BMPP TOTAL

£49,054.00

£21,143.00

£27,911.00

BMF

£19.99 per m²

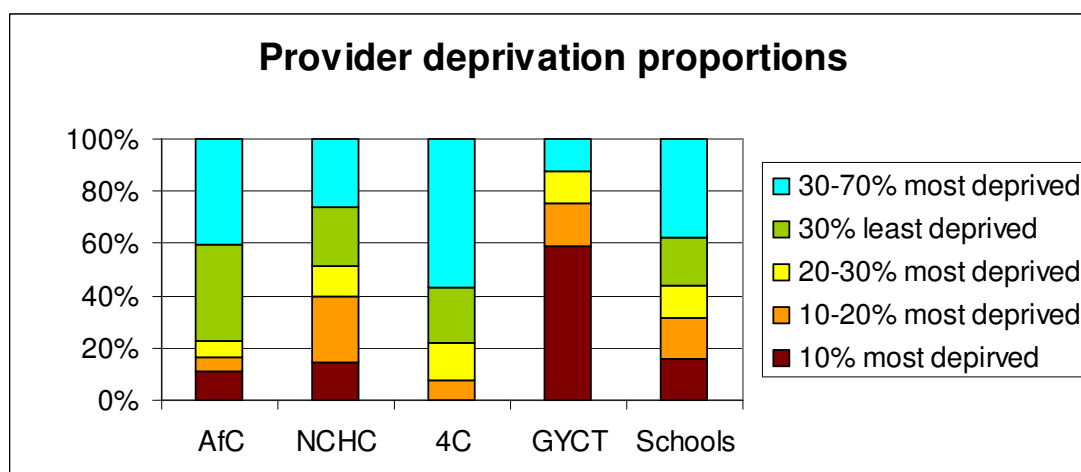
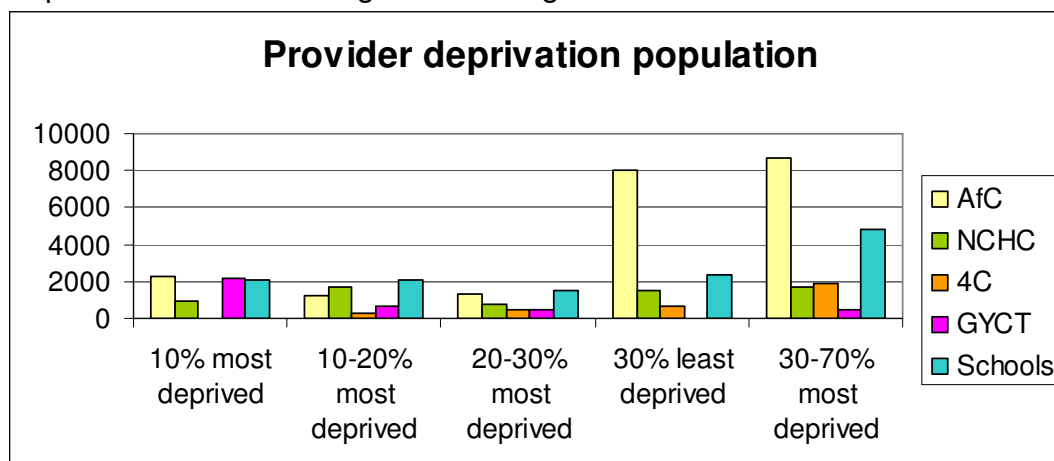
EK8024	Caister	182	£3,639.00		
EK8024	Caister (additional)	79	£1,579.00	£2,730.00	£2,488.00
EK8034	Earlham Surestart	50	£1,000.00	£1,292.00	-£292.00
EK8108	CFM	328	£6,557.00	£9,879.00	-£3,322.00
EK8110	Mundesley (Poppyland)	419	£8,377.00	£1,949.00	£6,428.00
EK8110	Stalham & Sutton	195	£3,898.00	£1,645.00	£2,253.00
EK8111	Dereham	794	£17,857.00	£9,545.00	£8,312.00
EK8112	Methwold	260	£5,198.00	£6,766.00	-£1,568.00
EK8112	Downham Market	142	£2,839.00	£7,381.00	-£4,542.00
EK8115	Drayton & Taverham	192	£3,838.00	£1,459.00	£2,379.00
EK8117	Long Stratton	131	£2,619.00	£967.00	£1,652.00
EK8118	St Clements	245	£4,898.00	£9,879.00	-£4,981.00
EK8119	Nth Walsham	193	£3,858.00	£1,682.00	£2,176.00
EK8121	Seagull's	690	£13,794.00	£7,539.00	£6,255.00
EK8125	Swaffham	160	£3,199.00	£1,756.00	£1,443.00
EK8126	Thetford (Canterbury)	465	£9,296.00	£2,112.00	£7,184.00
EK8127	Thorpe Hamlet	409	£8,177.00	£8,212.00	-£35.00
EK8128	Vancouver	415	£8,297.00	£7,163.00	£1,134.00

EK8129	Stibbard	275	£5,498.00	£5,320.00	£178.00
EK8129	Holt & Corpusty	287	£5,738.00	£4,496.00	£1,242.00
EK8129	Wells	195	£3,898.00	£18,969.00	-
EK8129	Wells (additional)	30	£600.00		£14,471.00
EK8130	Wymondham	215	£4,298.00	£1,525.00	£2,773.00
BMF TOTAL			£128,952.00	£112,266.00	£16,686.00
TOTAL CONTRIBUTION			£178,006.00	£133,409.00	£44,597.00

Appendix 10 - Data Pack

How need is shared between the providers

Levels of deprivation are not spread evenly across Norfolk. The commissioning process has meant that some providers bear a heavier responsibility. However, they responded to this challenge in their original bids.



Children's Services Operational Division – Children's Centre Provider Profiles

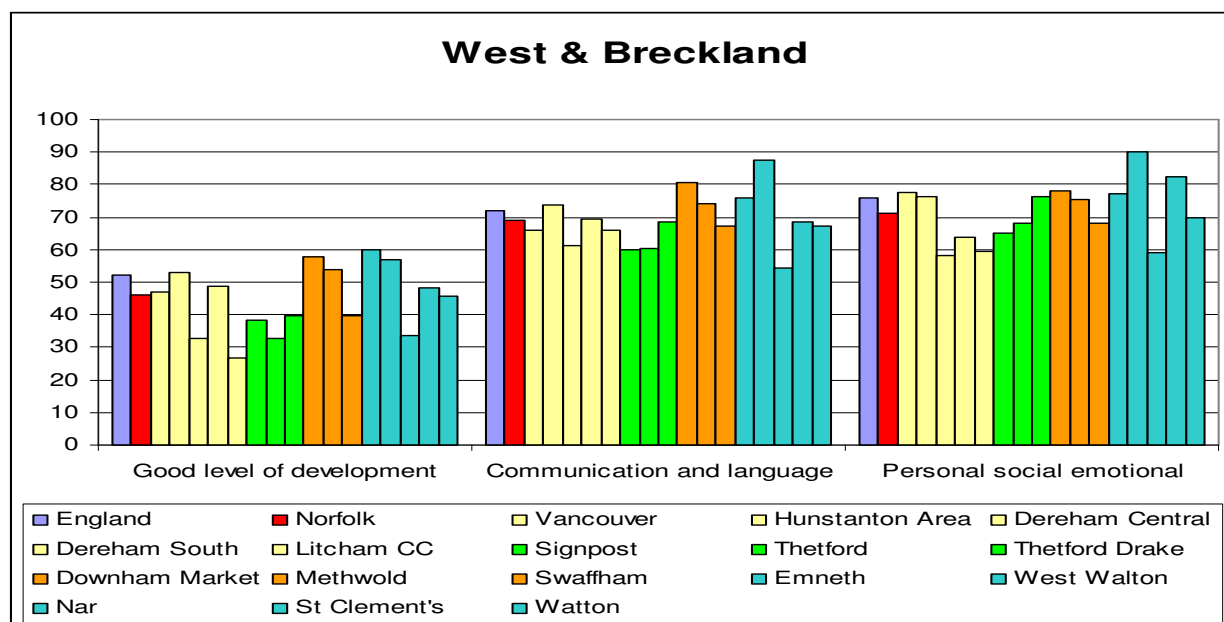
The summary information in the tables shows:

- EYFS Results for each Children's Centre Area
- Levels of deprivation per provider
- Levels of Social Work need per provider and Children's Centre
- Improved registration figures for each centre

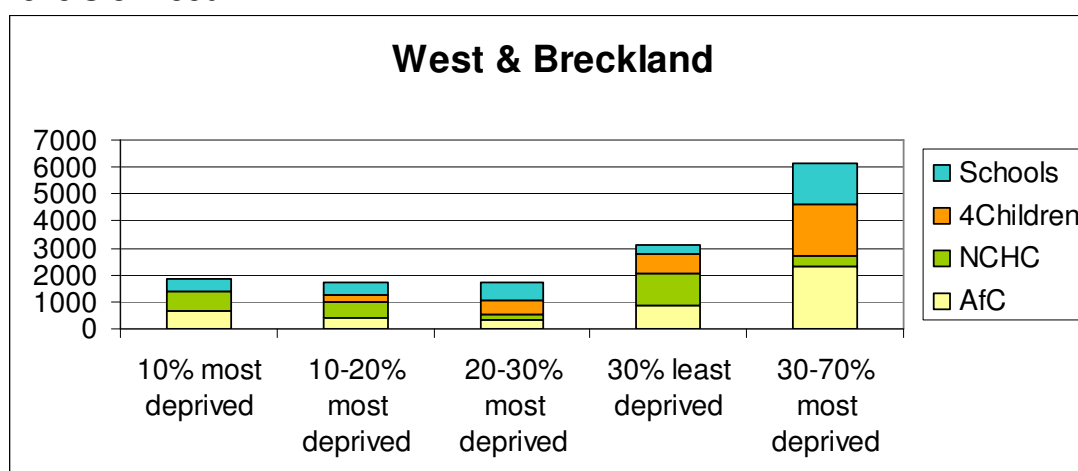
EYFS Results are a lagging indicator for Children's Centres. They are very helpful in identifying particular areas of development that could do with improved resources or quality.

Key	England	AfC	4C	GYCT	
	Norfolk	NCHC	Schools		

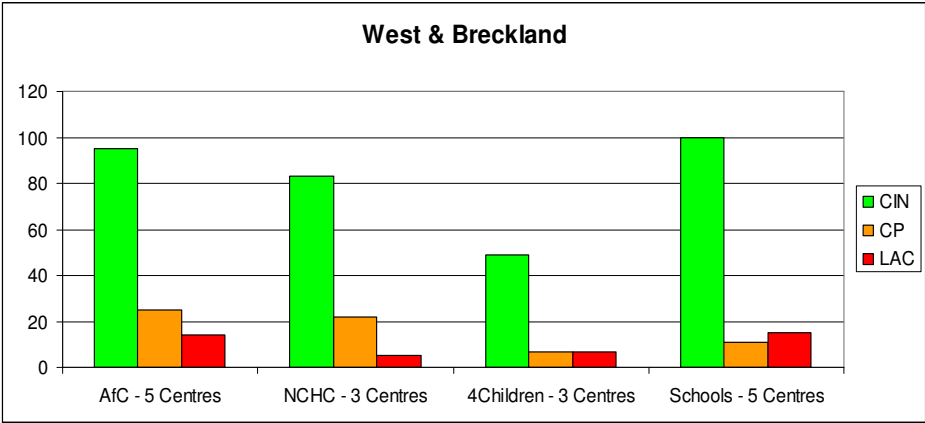
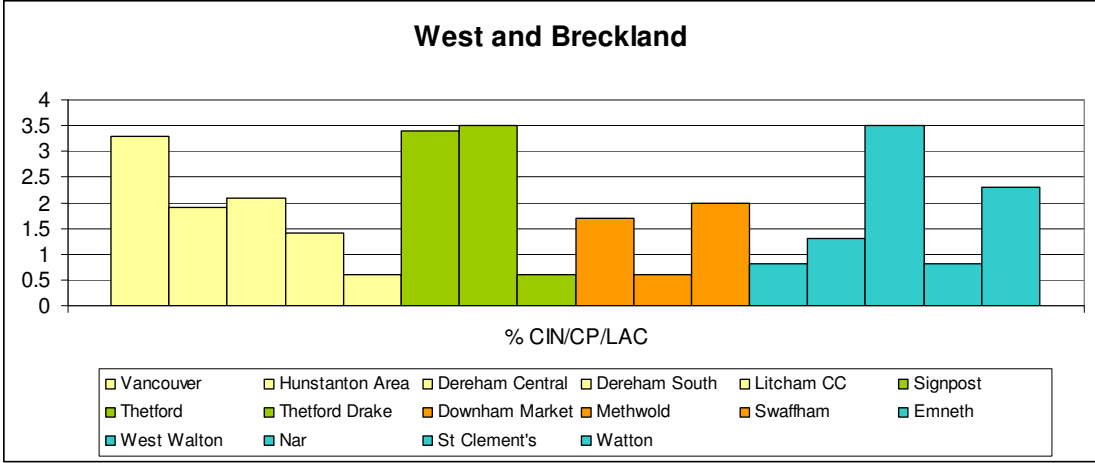
West & Breckland EYFS Results



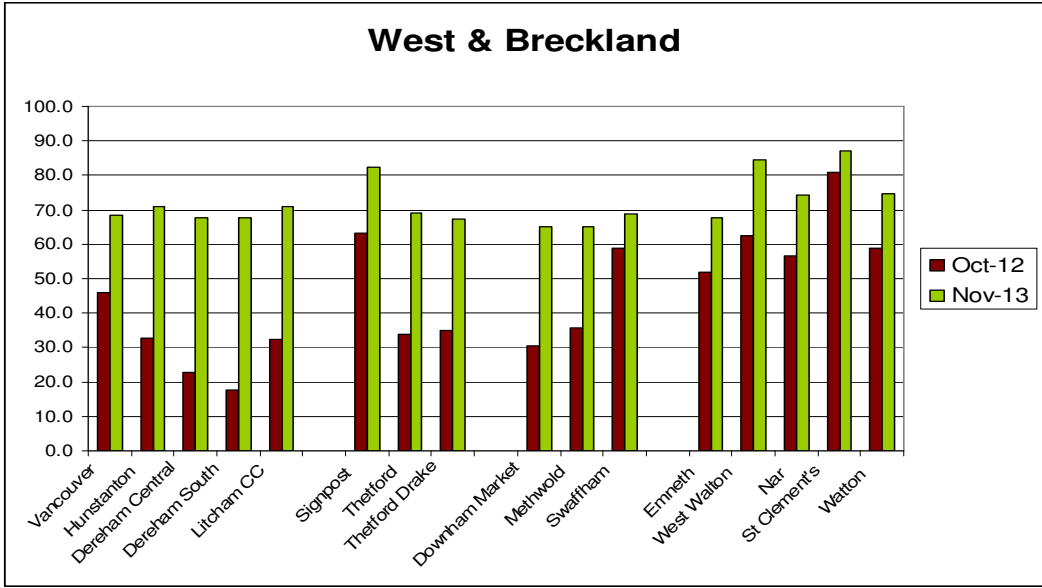
Levels of need



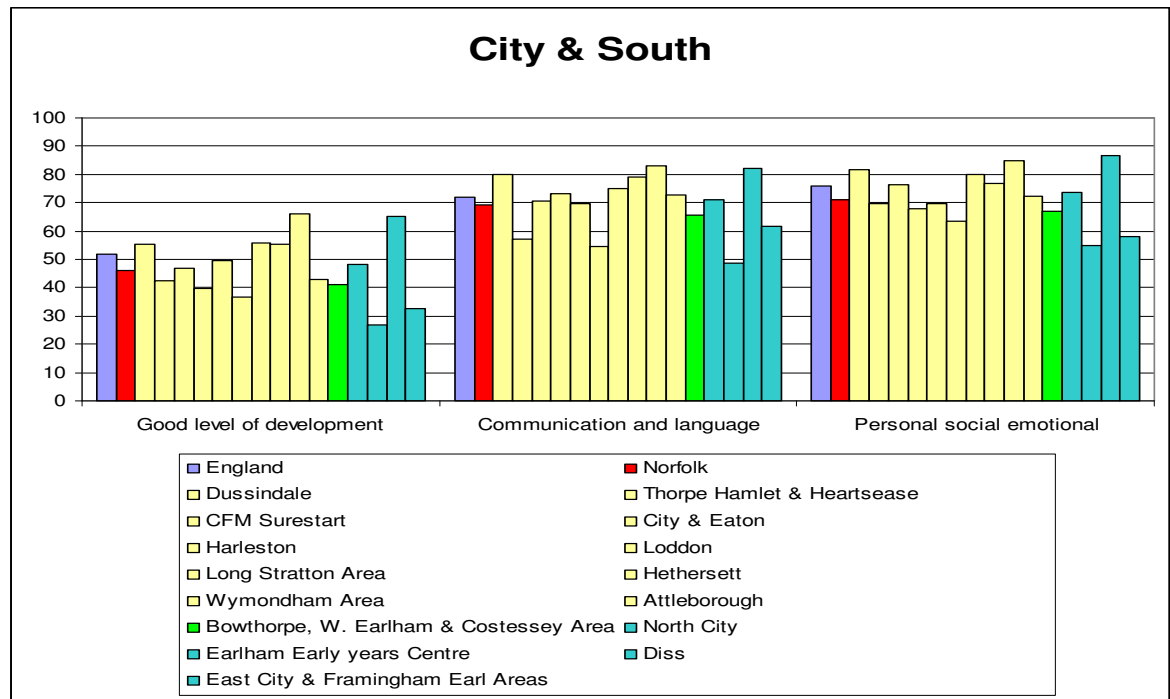
Levels of Social Work need per provider and Children’s Centre



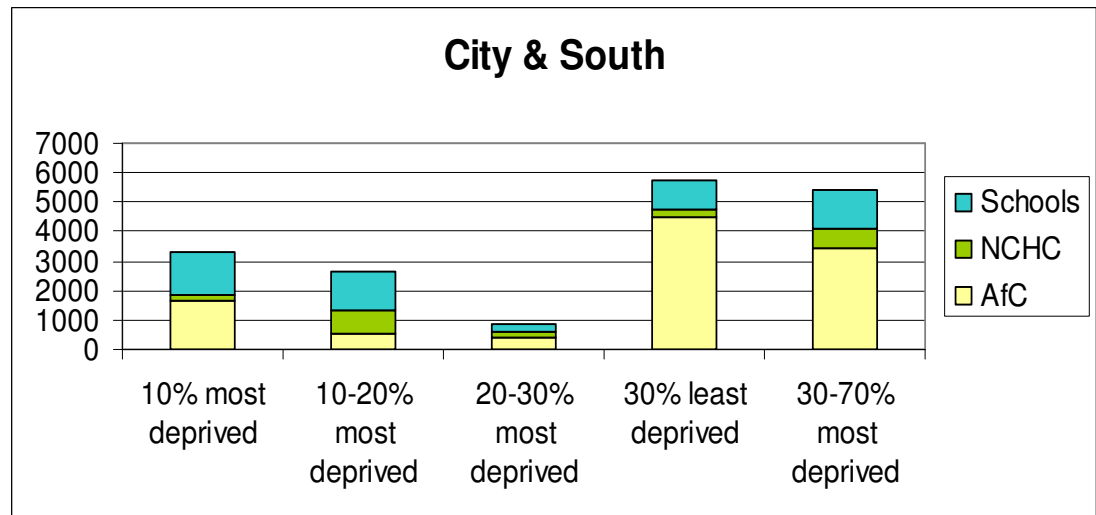
Improved registrations



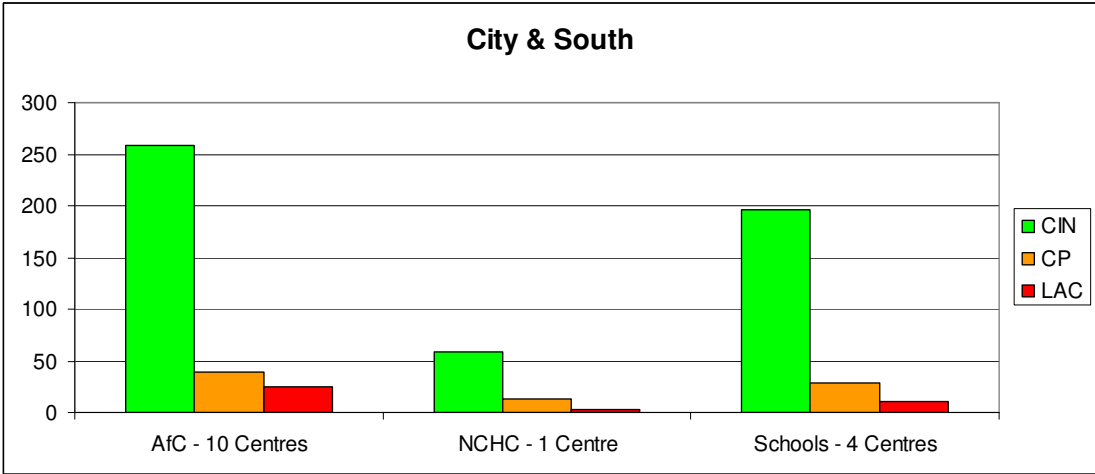
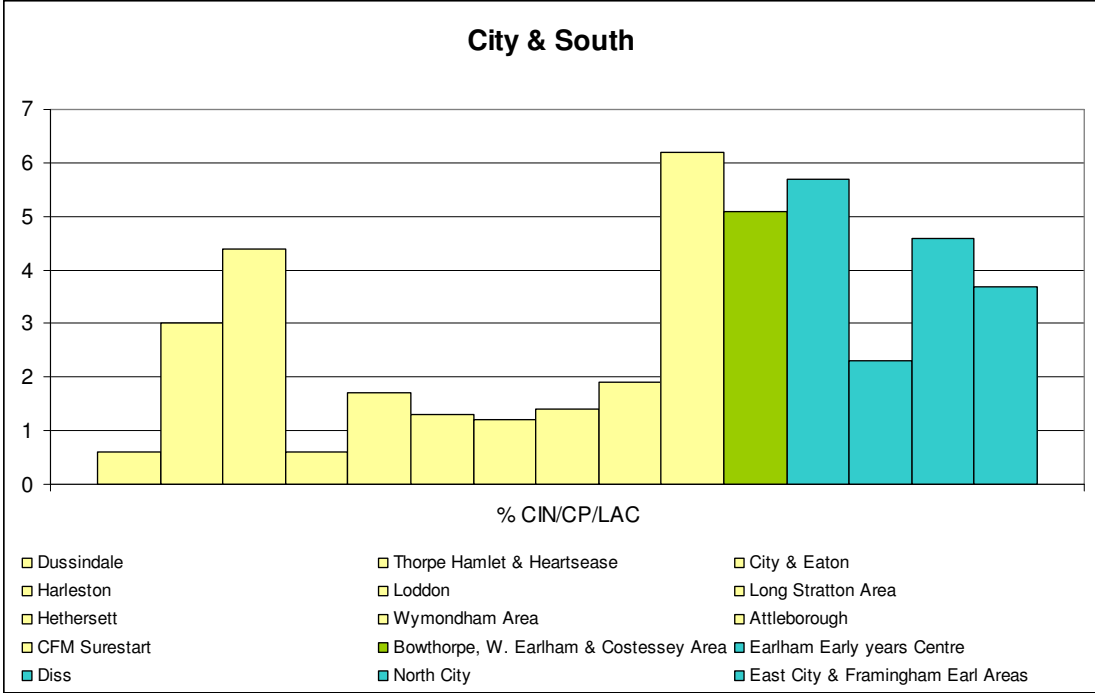
**City & South
EYFS Results**



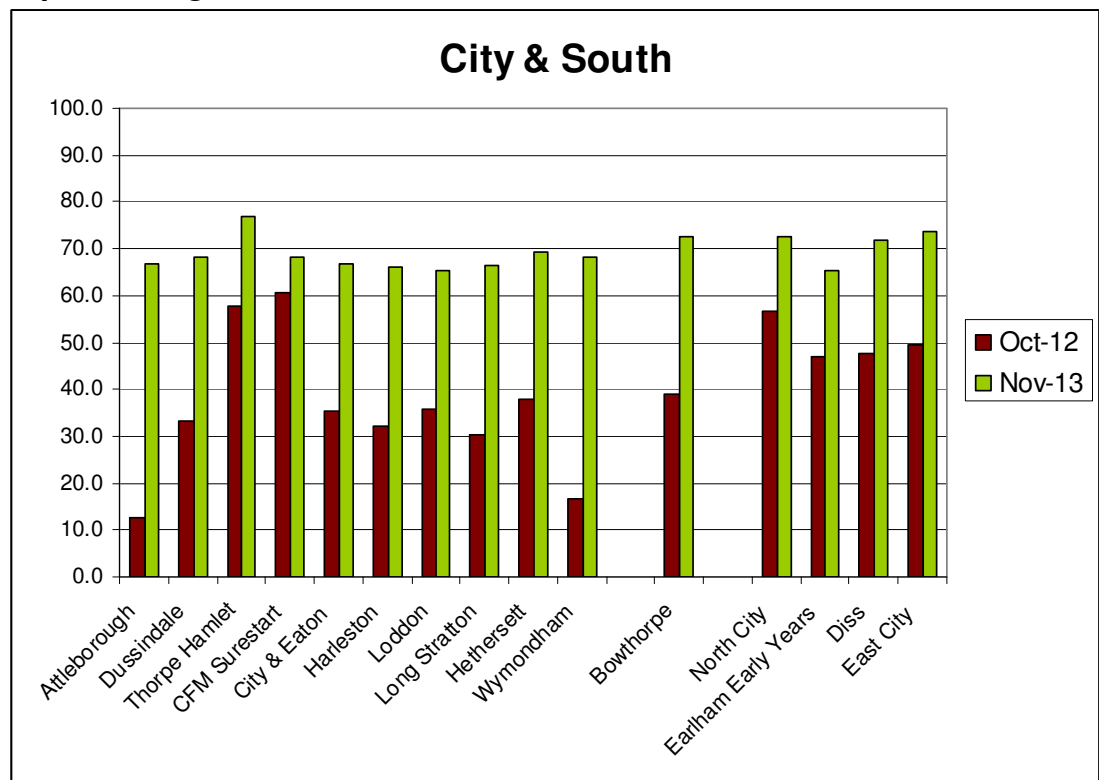
Levels of need



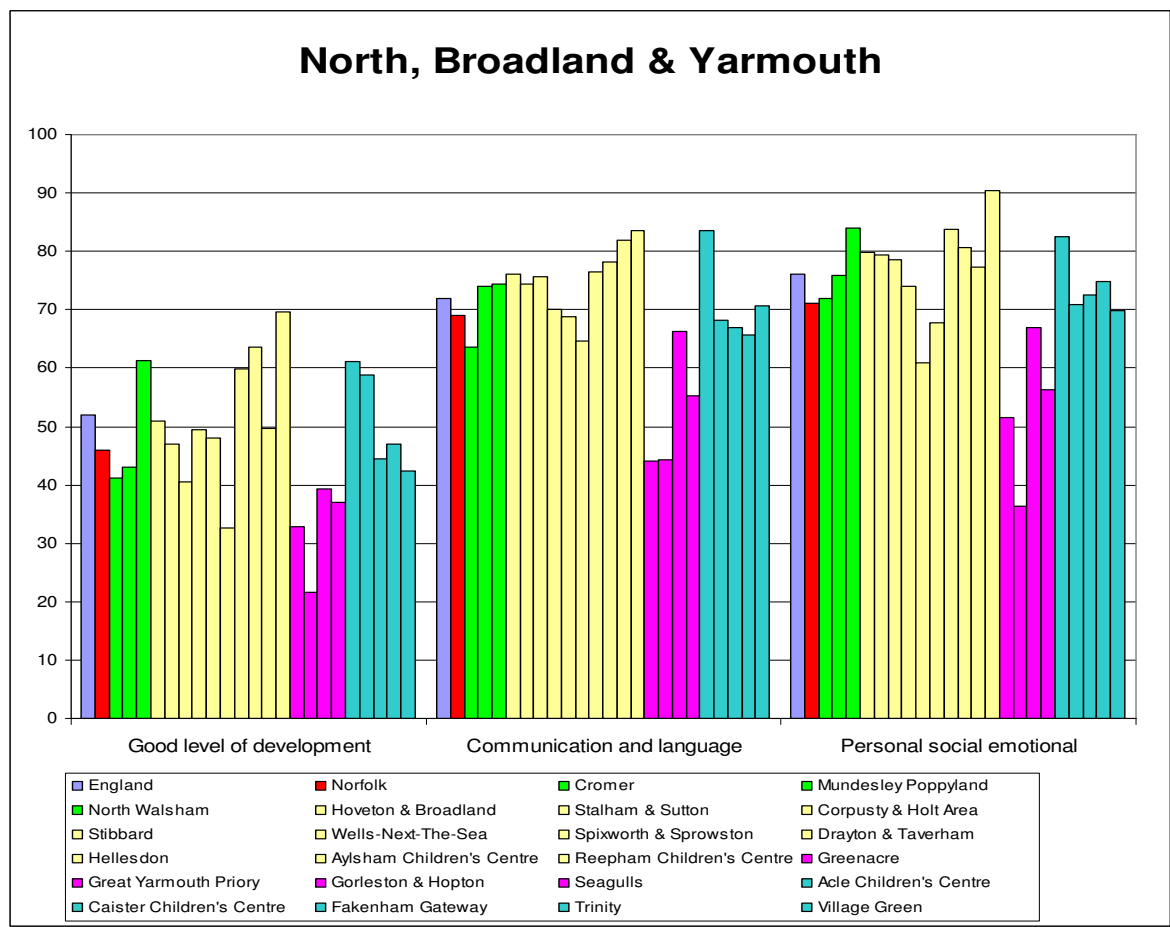
Levels of Social Work need per provider and Children’s Centre



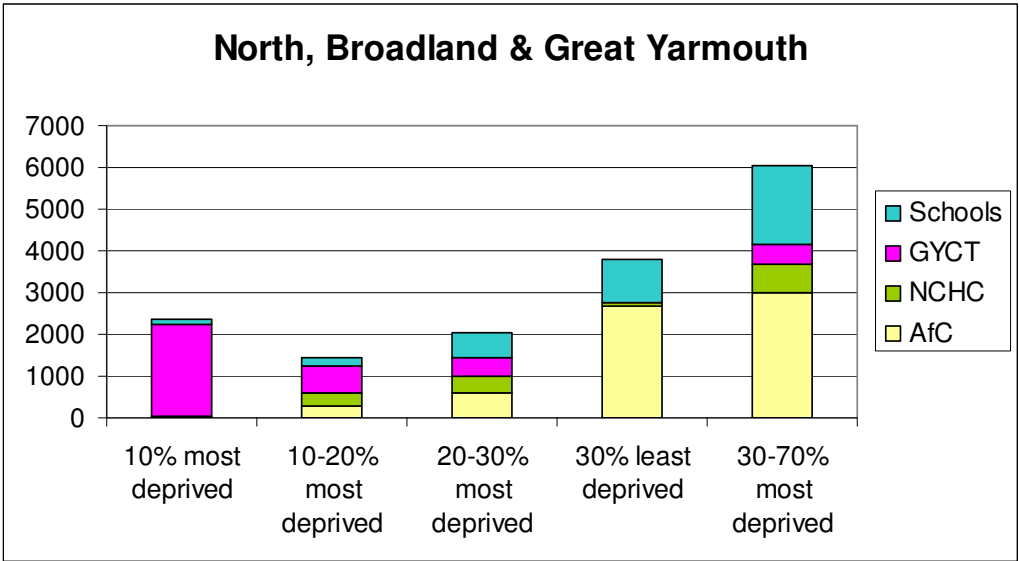
Improved registrations



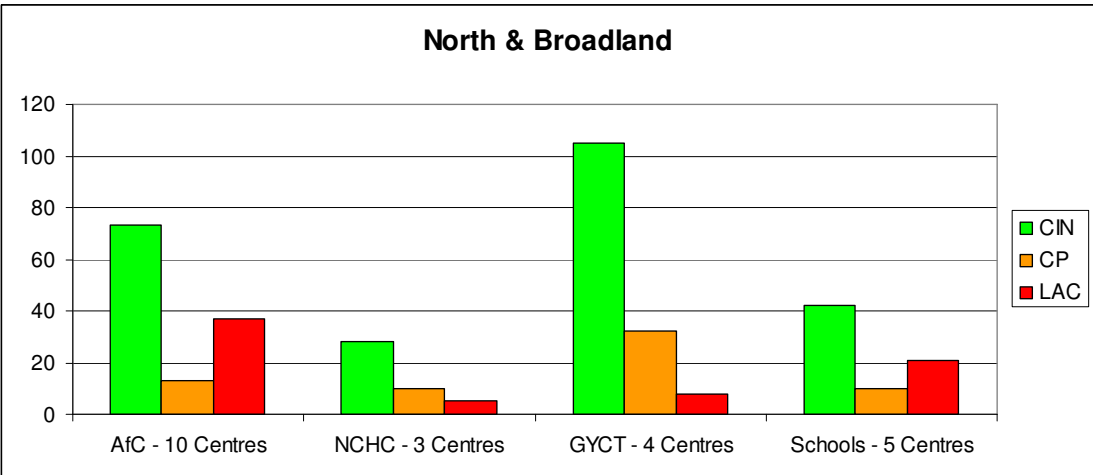
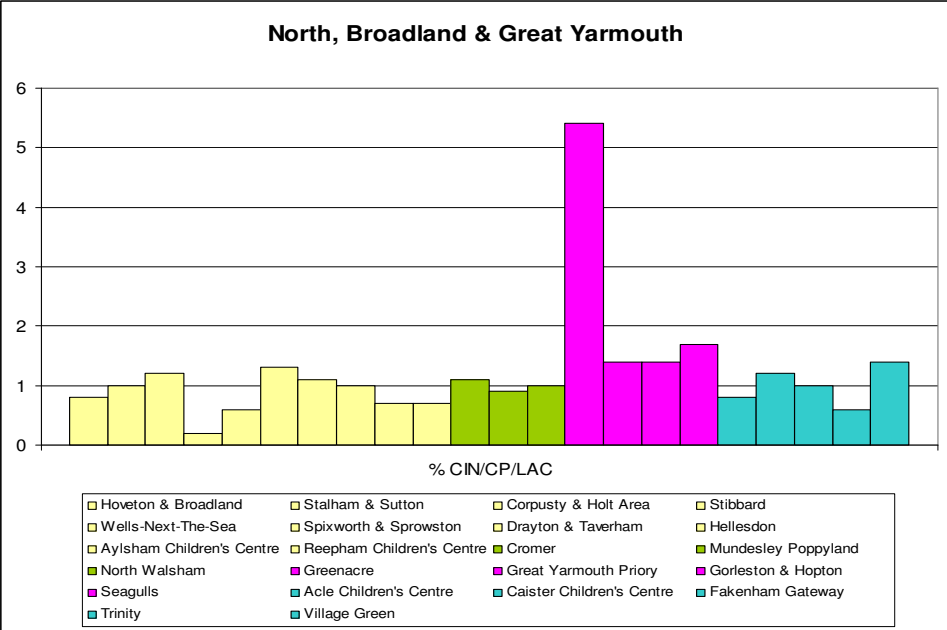
North Broadland & Great Yarmouth
EYFS Results



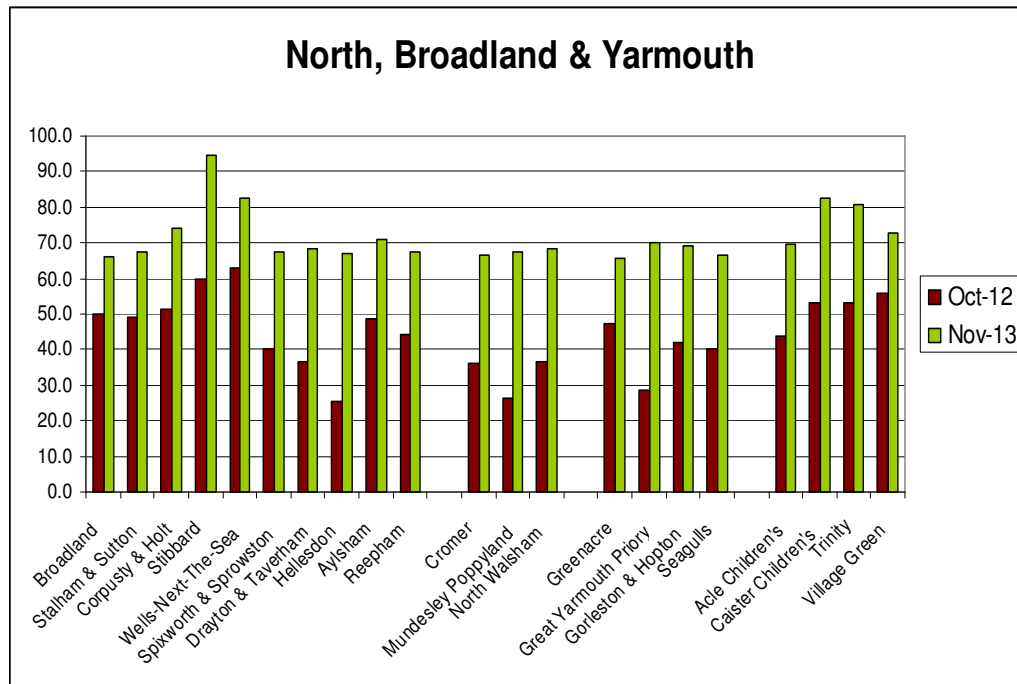
Levels of need



Levels of Social Work need per provider and Children's Centre



Improved registrations



Response to the O&S pathway planning group recommendations

Report by Interim Director of Children's Services

Summary

The report outlines how Children's Services intends to take forward the recommendations detailed in the report produced by the Pathway Planning working-group.

The report also outlines, as an appendix, responses to ten further points raised by Cllr Leggett in a letter to Sheila Lock. This letter was reviewed by the Corporate Parenting Board and Cllr Leggett agreed a response could be offered as an appendix to this report.

Cllr Leggett has reviewed the action plan and letter response and is satisfied they adequately address the issues raised

Recommendation:

The O&S Panel is asked to consider and agree on the proposed action plan and to acknowledge the response provided in respect of Cllr Leggett's letter.

1. Background

- 1.1 The O&S pathway planning working group was established to examine why there is a low rate of completion in Norfolk and to establish how arrangements to support pathway planning can be improved, to ensure their timeliness and quality.
- 1.2 The group reported its findings to the O&S panel in March 2014 and that report included a number of recommendations which were accepted by the O&S panel.

2. Contents of Report

- 2.1 This document sets out Children's Services response to the recommendations made by the working group.

Action Plan in response to O&S Working Group - Pathway Planning for Care Leavers

Recommendation	Response	Lead	Timescale for completion
1) We recommend that the Interim Director of Children's Services should commission an audit by the Quality Assurance Team, working together with young people, to review the impact of the current improvement work on the quality of pathway plans, and report back to the relevant committee within six months	The recommendation is accepted and the QA team will conduct an audit in partnership with young people to review the impact of improvement work on pathway planning.	Bramwell Chapman	September 2014
2) We recommend that the Interim Director of Children's Services should review the feasibility and cost of providing Looked After Children Teams with up-to-date mobile IT technology and report back to the relevant committee within three months	<p>The principle behind the recommendation is accepted. However, a significant amount of activity is already underway to ensure that staff have the necessary technology to enable them to carry out their roles more efficiently including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows phones being provided to 250 frontline staff, an up-to-date smartphone with access to email • A 3-month pilot of Microsoft Lync for 100 managers, team managers and some specific sites follows on from the Enabling Social Care trial in North Norfolk. This technology provides instant messaging and personal calls and video calls. • CareMobile is being tested as a 	Andrew Moll	June 2014

	<p>solution to download cases from CareFirst into a virtual “briefcase” to use offline and then upload back to the main system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative technologies which allow real-time access via 3G to CareFirst and other systems will be considered if they can be proven to be secure. <p>These activities form part of the wider DNA agenda and as such, may not be deliverable within the 3 months suggested timescale. However, a progress update will be provided in June 2014. Consideration will be given within these initiatives to how we can ensure young people receive copies of their pathway plan (including any updates) in a timely way.</p>		
<p>3) We recommend that the Interim Director of Children’s Services should ensure that :</p> <p>a) There is rigorous follow-up of attendance at mandatory staff training to ensure that all relevant staff (social workers, family support workers and independent reviewing officers) are clear about the processes, procedures and practice standards expected for pathway planning.</p> <p>b) Practice standards emphasise the importance of starting the conversation about pathway planning with care leavers at an early stage.</p>	<p>The recommendation is accepted and an audit of current staff will be conducted to highlight any who have not completed the training and all those highlighted will be required to complete the training. Pathway planning training will be included in the core training offer for new staff.</p> <p>The practice standards will be reviewed and amended to reflect this recommendation.</p>	<p>Elly Starling</p> <p>Elly Starling</p> <p>Andrea Brown</p>	<p>June 2014</p> <p>June 2014</p> <p>June 2014</p>

c) Practice standards emphasise the need to clearly document where a young person is not engaged with the process and the action being taken to encourage them to think about their future	The practice standards will be reviewed and amended to reflect this recommendation.	Andrea Brown	June 2014
d) An information pack for care leavers is developed, that explains what a pathway plan is, who (relevant professionals, current carers, family) should be involved and when, the support they are entitled to and where they can find out more information about benefits, housing, access to work, further education etc.	The recommendation is accepted and an information pack will be developed in partnership with young people.	Stewart Betts	June 2014
e) There is rigorous management oversight of the quality of pathway plans, which should not be signed-off unless it is clear that the young person's voice shows through and that clear actions are identified (stating what will be done when, and by whom).	The recommendation is accepted and quality monitoring programme will be embedded in to overall case management for both social workers and IROs.	Ali MacPhail/ Wendy Dyde	June 2014
f) A regular programme of training is introduced within six months for foster carers and other appropriate professionals who may be involved in the pathway planning process, explaining what the young person should expect, and how and when they themselves can have an input. This should include regular refresh training.	The recommendation is accepted and a training programme will be introduced	Peter Ronan	September 2014
g) Confirm that there is clear communication with private providers when commissioning services to support care leavers about the standards of practice expected by Norfolk County Council.	We are confident that commissioned providers are aware of the planning framework around children and young people. The provider in this specific case has given assurances that its staff understand the pathway planning process.	Don Evans	June 2014
Confirmation that these actions have been undertaken should be provided to the relevant committee within three	Awareness of/engagement with pathway		

months	planning will be further highlighted through our intention to encourage carers to take a lead role in working with young people to develop their pathway plans.		
4) We recommend that the Interim Director of Children's Services should identify some options for bringing together staff with specialist knowledge of leaving care, to strengthen our approach to pathway planning and improve the support we provide (together with partner agencies and organisations) to care leavers. These options should take on board best practice from high performing Local Authorities and should be reported to the relevant committee within three months	The principle behind the recommendation is accepted and a commitment has already been made to create a discrete leaving care service.	Ali MacPhail	June 2014

3. **Resource Implications**

- 3.1 **Finance:** Any costs will be met from within existing budgets
- 3.2 **Staff:** There are no proposed substantive increases in staffing compliment, although specific roles and responsibilities may change for existing staff
- 3.3 **Property:** There are currently no identified property-related issues
- 3.4 **IT:** IT resources are scheduled to be met from within existing plans (e.g. DNA)

4. **Other Implications**

- 4.1 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**
Every care leaver must have their needs assessed (including financial needs) and included in a pathway plan, together with actions that will support their choices around education, employment, accommodation and personal support (health, development and taking their place in the community). Making sure that every care leaver has the right support and guidance in place through the pathway planning process should enhance the equality of opportunity for all the young people who have been in our care.
- 4.2 **Any Other implications**

5. **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**

- 5.1 Young people who have been in care are a particularly vulnerable group; they are both at risk of being drawn into crime and becoming a victim of crime as they make the transition into adulthood. Making sure that every care leaver has the right support and guidance in place through the pathway planning process should reduce these risks.

6 **Background Papers**

- 6.1 Report from the Chairman of the Members' Working Group – Pathway Planning for Care Leavers. As tabled at O&S panel on 13th March 2014

7 **Officer Contact**

- 7.1 If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with Kevin Peers on 01603 223475 or via email at kevin.peers@norfolk.gov.uk

Report Authors

Don Evans – Head of Commissioning (LAC & Alternatives to Care) – 01603 223909

Ali MacPhail - Corporate Parenting Fieldwork Operations Manager - 01603 638370

Peter Ronan - Adoption, Fostering and Residential Care Operations Manager – 01603 222574

If you need this Agenda in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact DON EVANS on 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

Appendix A

Response to Points raised by Cllr Leggett, Chairman of the Pathway Planning for Care Leavers Scrutiny Task & Finish Group

1. Currently, elected Members are not automatically signed up for a CRB check and we feel this should be done, to support them in their role both as community leaders and corporate parents. **We would like you to discuss with the Head of Democratic Services how this might be achieved.**

Kevin Peers is progressing this matter with democratic services.

2. Not all social workers are clear about the rationale for the Norfolk In-Care Council, or how or when to refer young people to it, or to other groups for young people aged 18-21. Some spoke of a need for more local In-Care Council groups. **We would like you to raise the awareness of staff about the NiCC, which is a valuable resource for support, guidance and development of our LAC. We would also like to ensure that arrangements for the NiCC meet best practice of high performing local authorities.**

Awareness-raising in relation to NiCC has been initiated both within NCC and externally with key partners including using the NiCC website. The 'Promise' was highlighted and on display throughout the recent Colloquium event. The Corporate Parenting Board is co-Chaired by a NiCC member and this will play a key role in ensuring the role of the NiCC is widely understood.

The NiCC has been widely praised for much of its work and now has a relentless focus on connecting and representing the whole LAC population. We are checking our performance and practice against regional and London boroughs and are pleased to report that it is generally the NiCC who are asked to provide best practice examples at national conferences.

We will continue to review the wider engagement structure to ensure that children and young people have a wide range of opportunities for formal and informal engagement including local groups where appropriate.

3. Financial support for Looked After Children in apprenticeships. This payment needs to be completely separate from their wages. NCC is working with HMRC to ensure the system is legal and delivers the required benefit. NCC is ahead of other LAs in having a 'legal' system. However, the system is not geared for flexibility; NCC needs to find a way to challenge funding agencies due to the cost to the employer.

This work will ensure that young people receiving the appropriate apprenticeship wage can claim benefits to enable them to pay their rent etc. **Has this been finalised and are all relevant staff aware?**

This issue has been resolved with HMRC and relevant sections of fostering and leaving care finance documents have been revised and issued to all in house foster carers and are available to all staff. LAC Managers have been briefed to that effect. It is expected that securing young care leavers' finances around apprenticeship will help with our determination to increase the level of take up of apprenticeships by looked after children to at least 40.

4. Specialist teams (the Children with Disabilities and the Specialist Social Worker and Diverse Communities teams) told us that with more resources, they could offer support to help staff in other teams with lower needs especially those on the autistic spectrum. **We would like to hear your views, and whether you would review this as part of our recommendation to bring specialist knowledge together (Recommendation 4).**

Recommendation 4 relates specifically to care leavers and we are committed to establishing a specialist leaving care service. However, we acknowledge that there are a number of areas, including the ones highlighted above, where we could use existing in-house expertise more expansively. This will be considered within the wider agenda of future workforce planning to ensure any changes compliment that key piece of work.

5. The Specialist Social Worker Team told us that there is a lack of office facilities; less desks available than the 7 desks to 10 staff target, which impacts on their ability to do their job. **We would like you to ensure that office accommodation for staff does not inhibit their ability to undertake their work, perhaps as part of our recommendation to review the feasibility and cost of providing Looked After Children Teams with up-to-date mobile IT technology (Recommendation 2)**

In light of emerging research from Ofsted relating to the negative impacts of hot-desking on social work staff, Sheila Lock is working to secure a 'fixed' desk policy for all social workers.

6. We watched two DVD's ('Journey to independence' and 'It's my plan too') that had been created by NCC, with input from the NICC, to explain the issues around leaving care and ensuring that plans are focused on each young person. Although these are now slightly dated, we feel they are useful tools to help engage young people and enhance practice standards. **We would like you to encourage teams to use them.**

We will provide copies of this DVD and the 'Promise' DVD to all relevant teams. We will also integrate the DVDs use into our training and showcase the DVDs at our events and conferences.

7. Fosternet was closed by NCC and some foster carers now use a national closed Facebook group, but take on trust that joiners are foster carers. There is a danger that confidentiality can be compromised. **We would like you to explore how NCC might initiate and support a foster carer led forum where foster carers can support each other.**

All in house foster carers are members of fostering network where they have access to a secure on line forum as well free legal and financial advice including free access to a solicitor if an allegation is made against them. Whilst these benefits are communicated to foster carers, we appreciate that more could be done to increase awareness and as such, further work is being progressed to publicise these benefits to foster carers.

In house fostering have 6 vibrant support groups across Norfolk, a support group for children of foster carers and a buddying scheme. Fortnightly in-house newsletter is sent to foster carers and all our procedures and handbook are accessible on the internet.

8. We heard from staff, young people and foster carers that care leavers need support with managing money and budgeting. Partner organisations such as the Mancroft Advice Project (MAP) run short courses for young people about coping and budgeting. **We would like you to explore whether this is something that NCC might make more use of.**

Some of our young people do access this type of resource on a case-by-case basis. However, we acknowledge that access/availability is not likely to be uniform. To address this, as part of its remit, the care leavers service will ensure that an independence-skills programme (including budgeting), is embedded in the pathway planning process.

9. The two young people co-opted from the NICC raised, on a number of occasions, the fact that they did not feel that any checks were being made to review the quality of work undertaken by Independent Review Officers. They understood that an IRO should oversee care leavers' cases and make sure their social worker and the local authority are doing everything they are meant to do. They saw this as being key to ensuring successful pathway planning. We heard this only from them, so did not consider that we could include this as a key theme in our report to the Panel. **However, we would like you to clarify how the quality of our IRO's work is reviewed and managed.**

IRO's receive individual supervision via their line-managers, where their understanding, thinking and practice in relation to casework is reviewed/scrutinised.

Where an IRO is involved in a case that is audited, the quality of the review meetings and input into the review meetings, including all documentation, will be considered within the audit. The QA Team does not currently undertake specific audits pertaining to IRO work.

However, we understand that the particular concern raised by the young people in this case related to the loss of IRO input post-18 and not the quality of their work. Whilst the IRO does not have any direct involvement post-18, we do continue to support young people post-18 via the Personal Advisor' (PA) role. The leaving care service will play a key role in ensuring young people fully understand the PA role.

10. Looked After Children Teams appeared to be reluctant to assist us with recruiting care leavers for our workshops to explore their experience of pathway planning. **We would like you to look into this and encourage staff to support Members with any future reviews.**

Having investigated this issue we recognise that staff did not appropriately prioritise this work. Operational leads (tier 4 managers) will ensure that this does not re occur by raising awareness of the priority of working with members , members role as a corporate parent and the importance of task and finish groups.