

# Children's Services Committee

Date: **Tuesday 12 May 2015**

Time: **10am (Please note new start time)**

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

**Persons attending the meeting are requested to turn off mobile phones.**

## **Membership**

Mr J Joyce - Chairman

Mr A Adams  
Mr R Bearman (Vice-Chair)  
Mrs J Chamberlin  
Mr D Collis  
Ms E Corlett  
Mr D Crawford  
Ms D Gihawi  
Mr P Gilmour

Mr M Kiddle-Morris  
Mr B Long  
Mr J Perkins  
Mr E Seward  
Mr R Smith  
Mr B Spratt  
Miss J Virgo  
Mr A White

## **Church Representatives**

Mrs H Bates  
Mr A Mash

## **Non-voting Parent Governor Representatives**

Mrs S Vertigan  
Mrs K Byrne

## **Non-Voting Schools Forum Representative**

Mrs A Best-White

## **Non-Voting Co-opted Advisors**

Mr A Robinson	Norfolk Governors Network
Ms T Humber	Special Needs Education
Ms V Aldous	Primary Education
Mr J Mason	Post-16 Education
Ms C Smith	Secondary Education

**for further details and general enquiries about this Agenda please contact the Committee Officer: Julie Mortimer on 01603 223055**  
or email [committees@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:committees@norfolk.gov.uk)

**Under the Council's protocol on the use of media equipment at meetings held in public, this meeting may be filmed, recorded or photographed. Anyone who wishes to do so must inform the Chairman and ensure that it is done in a manner clearly visible to anyone present. The wishes of any individual not to be recorded or filmed must be appropriately respected.**

## **A g e n d a**

### **1 To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending**

### **2 Minutes.**

To confirm the minutes from the meeting held on 10 March 2015.

To confirm the minutes from the meeting held on 17 March 2015.

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### **3 Members to Declare any Interests**

If you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is on your Register of Interests you must not speak or vote on the matter.

If you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is not on your Register of Interests you must declare that interest at the meeting and not speak or vote on the matter.

In either case you may remain in the room where the meeting is taking place. If you consider that it would be inappropriate in the circumstances to remain in the room, you may leave the room while the matter is dealt with.

If you do not have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest you may nevertheless have an Other Interest in a matter to be discussed if it affects

- your well being or financial position
- that of your family or close friends
- that of a club or society in which you have a management role
- that of another public body of which you are a member to a greater extent than others in your ward.

If that is the case then you must declare an interest but can speak and vote on the matter.

### **4 To receive any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency**

### **5 Local Member Issues/Member Questions**

Fifteen minutes for local members to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given.

Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk or 01603 223055) by **5pm on Thursday 7 May 2015.**

### **6 Children's Services Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring report**

Report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services

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<b>7</b>	<b>Signs of Safety Policy Statement and Outcome framework update</b> Report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services	<b>Page 61</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Working together to support young carers and families</b> Report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services	<b>Page 63</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Developing the children's system in Norfolk – working across the partnership</b> Report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services	<b>Page 70</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Schools Capital Programme 2015-18</b> Report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services	<b>Page 76</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Consultation on a major change to School Organisation requiring the publication of a Statutory Notice</b> Report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services	<b>Page 87</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2015-17</b> Report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services	<b>Page 93</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Healthy Child Programme</b> Verbal Update by the Interim Director of Public Health	
<b>14</b>	<b>Update to Committee on Norfolk Fostering</b> Report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services	<b>Page 117</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Board (NSCB) Update</b> Verbal Update by David Ashcroft, Chair of the NSCB	
<b>16</b>	<b>Accommodation Strategy</b> Report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services	<b>To follow</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Exclusion of the Public</b>	

The committee is asked to consider excluding the public from the meeting under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for consideration of the items below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The committee will be presented with the conclusions of the public interest tests carried out by the report author and is recommended to confirm the exclusion.

<b>18</b>	<b>Final report by Members of the Children's Centres Task and Finish Group (re-convened)</b> Report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services	<b>Page 122</b>
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## 19 Exempt Minutes from Children's Services Committee meetings

To confirm the Exempt minutes from the meeting on 10 March 2015.

To confirm the Exempt minutes from the meeting on 17 March 2015

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### Group Meetings

Conservative	9am	Conservative Group room, Ground Floor
UK Independence Party	9am	UKIP Group room, Ground Floor
Labour	9am	Labour Group room, Ground Floor
Liberal Democrats	9am	LD Group room, Ground Floor

**Chris Walton**  
**Head of Democratic Services**  
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NR1 2DH

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## **Children's Services Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Tuesday 10 March 2015  
2:00pm Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

### **Present:**

Mr J Joyce - Chairman

Mr R Bearman (Vice-Chair)

Mr D Collis

Ms E Corlett

Mr D Crawford

Mrs M Dewsbury

Mr C Foulger

Mr T Garrod

Mr P Gilmour

Mr M Kiddle-Morris

Mrs J Leggett

Mr J Perkins

Mr W Richmond

Mr M Sands

Mr E Seward

Mr R Smith

Miss J Virgo

### **Church Representatives**

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### **Non-Voting Schools Forum Representative**

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### **Non-Voting Co-opted Advisors**

Mr A Robinson      Norfolk Governors Network

Ms T Humber      Special Needs Education

Ms V Aldous      Primary Education

Ms C Smith      Secondary Education

Mr J Mason      Post16 Education Adviser.

## **1 Apologies and substitutions**

1.1 Apologies were received from Mrs J Chamberlin (Mr W Richmond substituted and Ms D Gihawi (Mr M Sands substituted).

2 The Chairman welcomed James Mason, who had joined the Committee as the Post 16 Education non-voting co-opted advisor.

### **3 Minutes from the meeting held on 13 January 2015**

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **3.2 Matters Arising**

- 3.2.1 The Interim Director of Children's Services updated the Committee on the matters arising from the last meeting. A copy of the completed action log is attached at Appendix A to these minutes.
- 3.2.2 The format for Member training on Signs of Safety had now been finalised and was ready to be rolled out. The full training session would last two days, with a half-day abridged session available for Members.
- 3.2.3 The Committee **agreed** that they would attend the half-day training session initially, with the option of attending the two-day session afterwards if they wished to do so. The training would then be opened up to all Members.
- 3.2.4 The Interim Executive Director of Children's Services agreed to circulate copies of the letters about the School Crossing Patrols and The Promise to the Committee.
- 3.2.5 The issue of an action plan relating to the MASH review was awaited by the Committee. The Interim Director agreed to finalise this following resolution of the arrangements for partnership working. It was also agreed that the Annual Report on Safeguarding would be circulated to the Committee with a note from the NSCB chair and that it would feature on the agenda at the first safeguarding meeting.

### **4 Declarations of Interest**

- 4.1 Mrs J Leggett declared the following interests:
- Item 7 (Sustaining High Quality Leadership – responding to the Ofsted Challenge) as she is the Chair of Governors at a Federation VC and Community School Partnership.
  - Item 12 (Domestic Abuse and Violence Progress Report) as she is a Trustee of a charity supporting victims of domestic violence.
  - An "Other interest" in item 8 (Open consultations into major changes to School organisation requiring the publication of a Statutory Notice or Determination).
- 4.2 The Interim Director of Children's Services stated that she would leave the room and not take part in the debate under item 8 (Open consultations into major changes to School organisation requiring the publication of a Statutory Notice or Determination) as she would be making the decisions under delegated authority.

## 5 Items of Urgent Business

- 5.1 The Interim Director of Children's Services updated the Committee about the current situation with regard to Hewett School, during which the following points were noted:
- Following the direction from Lord Nash that the Hewett School should be fast-tracked into an academy, a Judicial Review pre-action letter had been issued to the Department for Education. The Local Authority had put in arrangements for an Interim Executive Board (IEB) after the Ofsted judgement, which the Secretary of State had deemed unacceptable. The pre-action letter did not bind the Authority to any legal obligation, it asked for the reasons why the DfE had deemed the IEB proposed by Norfolk County Council unacceptable and why the school was being fast-tracked into an Academy. The Interim Director of Children's Services advised that no response had been received as yet.
  - The Local Authority needed to decide, in conjunction with the Children's Services Committee, whether it wanted to pursue a Judicial Review. The Committee discussed the merits of delegating the authority for making a decision to the cross-party spokespersons in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, or to convene an additional Committee meeting. After deliberation, the Committee **AGREED** to hold an additional Children's Services Committee meeting on Tuesday 17 March 2015 at 2pm in the Edwards Room, County Hall.
  - The Consultation with the Community Trust to ascertain public views on the use of the land was due to close on Monday 16 March. This meant the Secretary of State could make a decision about the Hewett School as soon as 17 March.
  - As she understood it, the Interim Director of Children's Services advised that there were a number of options open about the use of the land, for example:
    - Invest all the land into the academy Trust.
    - Use part of the land for an academy, with the rest being placed into alternative ownership.
    - Transfer all the land to the Local Authority provided the land was leased back for the purpose of education, in whatever form was decided.
- 5.2 The Committee **agreed** that agenda item 15 (Norfolk Youth Parliament update) be debated before item 6 (A Good Education for Every Norfolk Learner) and that item 17 (Children's Services Integrated performance and Finance Monitoring Draft Report for 2014-15) should be debated before item 16 (Healthy Child Programme).

## 6 Local Member Issues/Member Questions

- 6.1 Two Local Member Issues/Questions were received. Details of the questions and their responses can be found at Appendix B to these minutes.
- 6.2 Mrs J Brociek-Coulton asked, as a supplementary question, if the Chairman agreed that students, parents and members of the public needed to be consulted before any decision was made about Sewell Park College? The Chairman said he did agree.
- 6.3 Mr R Smith asked, as a supplementary question, what the Council was doing to support the current 600 students at Hewett School, particularly those who were studying for their GCSE's. The Assistant Director, Education responded that it was "business as usual" at the school and that the school was progressing. He said he was optimistic that signs of improvement would be noticed soon and that the focus of the IEB. The Local Authority team and the staff at the school was concentrated on the pupils who were currently studying at the school. The monitoring visit by HMI had indicated the plans in place by the LA and school were fit for purpose to support this objective.
- 6.4 The Chairman invited the Chair of Governors at Mileham School to address the Committee in objection to the closure of Mileham School.

## **7 Presentation/Update from Youth Parliament**

- 7.1 The Committee received the report from the Head of Business Intelligence and Performance Service and Corporate Planning and Partnerships Service providing the annual review of Norfolk Youth Parliament's work both nationally and locally.
- 7.2 The Committee welcomed Kieran Buxton, Member of the Youth Parliament to the meeting. A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix C to these minutes.
- 7.3 The following responses to questions from the Committee were noted:
- The reasons a lot of young people did not vote in elections was because they didn't generally have enough information and knowledge about politics and could not see the relevance to them. More education was required about politics during school time and this could be linked into life skills studies, although care needed to be taken to ensure this education was apolitical.
  - Members supported the view that everyone should be paid a living wage, although it was noted that it would be difficult to impose such an initiative on other organisations.
  - The Interim Director of Children's Services informed the Committee that Norfolk County Council was the first Local Authority in Norfolk to express an interest in sign up to the #Iwill scheme.
  - Following a proposal by the Chairman, seconded by Mr W Richmond, the Committee **pledged their support** to the #Iwill scheme which aimed to raise the number of 10-20 year-olds taking part in meaningful social action by 50%



by 2020. Meaningful Social Action was described as ‘young people taking practical action in the service of others to create positive change’.

7.4 The Committee **NOTED** the report.

## **8 A Good Education for Every Norfolk Learner**

8.1 The Committee received the report by the Interim Executive Director of Children’s Services summarising the existing strategy for supporting education improvement, specifically the Local Authority’s strategy for supporting school improvement. The paper set out how the responsibilities of schools and other education providers were balanced with those of the Local Authority and how the existing strategy would be sustained and improved. In particular, the paper highlighted the continuation of support of improvement of schools through the approach ‘Norfolk to Good and Great’ and indicated how inclusivity had become a prominent theme which would broaden the overall strategy further to ‘A Good Education for Every Norfolk Learner’.

8.2 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Committee:

- If schools were unable to fund their own involvement in the Norfolk Better To Best (NB2B) from their school improvement budgets, there was no alternative funding available to assist them. .
- The number of schools which had engaged with Norfolk To Good and Great (N2GG) had shown that the programme had made a significant impact. NB2B was something that could not be imposed on schools, however any schools that were not performing could receive intervention from the Local Authority.
- A list of the members of the Norfolk Schools supporting Norfolk Schools Group would be circulated to the Committee.
- The LA in its restructure of children’s services had considered its response to ‘vulnerable’ children. With the increased focus by Ofsted on Looked after Children, this was the right thing to do and Children’s Services had introduced a new service – the Education Inclusion Service, which drew together the LA’s support and challenge for schools, colleges and other providers and partners in their work with some of Norfolk’s more vulnerable children and young people. This service would work with partners in prioritising inclusivity and in developing an outcome performance framework.

8.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Support the current approach to education improvement including the LA’s strategy for supporting school improvement.
- Endorse the transition of N2GG to NB2B in September 2015 as requested by Norfolk Education Challenge Board.

- Note the approach to improvement planning approved by Norfolk Education Challenge Board.
- Approve the important broadening of the overall approach from ‘A Good School for Every Norfolk Learner’ to ‘A Good **Education** for Every Norfolk learner’ in working with Norfolk’s education providers.

## **9 Sustaining High Quality leadership – responding to the Ofsted Challenge**

9.1 The Committee received a report by the Interim Executive Director of Children’s Services setting out the proposals to support the strategy ‘A Good School for Every Norfolk Learner’ by utilising the school organisation function and partnership opportunities.

9.2 The following points were noted during the discussion:

- Although there was no direct reference to the leadership of Governors within the report, the significant role that Governors played in the success of a school was recognised.
- Governing bodies would make decisions about whether schools were suitable to become Federation Schools. If any school was failing to provide a sufficient level of education then Norfolk County Council would intervene.
- The Committee was advised that, although not all the forms of co-operative arrangements had been included in the report, Norfolk currently had two examples of co-operative school arrangements in Norfolk, both of which were working well.

9.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the implementation of the strategy.

The Interim Director of Children’s Services left the meeting while the Committee debated the next item.

## **10 Open Consultations into major changes to School Organisation requiring the publication of a Statutory notice or Determination.**

10.1 The Committee received a report by the Assistant Director Education and Learning informing the Committee about the progress of the four proposals listed below:

1. A proposal by the Governors of Churchill Park School, a Foundation school, to increase the number of pupils on roll from the current 150 to 205.
2. A proposal by the Federated Governing body to close Horsford Voluntary Controlled Infant School and Horsford Voluntary Controlled Junior School, related to a proposal by the Diocese of Norwich, to open a new voluntary Aided Primary School on the existing sites.

3. A proposal by Norfolk County Council to discontinue the Sixth Form at Sewell Park College, a Community School.
  4. A proposal by Norfolk County Council to close Mileham Primary School, a Community school in order to amalgamate it with Litcham School, a community school.
- 10.2 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Committee about each proposal:
- 10.3 Churchill Park School**
- The Governing Body and the Headteacher were confident that Churchill Park School could cope with the proposed 13% increase in pupil intake.
  - The Local Member for Gaywood South, Margaret Wilkinson, had asked Mr Collis to inform the Committee that she was in favour of the proposal as were the majority of residents in the local area.
- 10.4 The Committee **agreed** the proposal by the Governors of Churchill Park School, a Foundation School, to increase the number of pupils on roll from the current 150 to 205.
- 10.5 Horsford Schools**
- The two schools were on separate sites at present and would remain on separate sites if the proposal was agreed.
- 10.6 The Committee **agreed** the proposal by the Federated Governing Body to close Horsford Voluntary Controlled Infant School and Horsford Voluntary Controlled Junior School, related to a proposal by the Diocese of Norwich, to open a new Voluntary Aided Primary School on the existing sites.
- 10.7 Sewell Park 6<sup>th</sup> Form College**
- The IEB had considered the proposal carefully and come to the view that the proposal should be approved.
  - In order to provide professional development opportunities for teachers, a school needed to be sustainably successful. The current situation at Sewell Park College meant that there were no openings for offering professional development opportunities at the moment.
  - The excellent work undertaken by the staff at the school was recognised, but it was important to do what was considered best for all of the children at the school, not just the current 6<sup>th</sup> form pupils.
  - If the Interim Executive Director made a decision to consult on the proposal, all the comments made by the Committee and other interested parties would be taken into consideration before a final decision was made.

- Half of the sixth form pupils attending the college in 2013/14 had applied for university places, although it was not known how many had been successful.
- The Interim Executive Board had decided that students currently in year 11 would not be offered an opportunity to start year 12 education in September 2015 at Sewell Park 6<sup>th</sup> Form College and would need to look elsewhere if they wished to enter sixth form education. Those currently in year 12 would remain at the college to complete their education.
- Members acknowledged the hard work and commitment of the staff in improving the whole school after the Ofsted inspection judged the school to require Special Measures.
- The IEB had taken a decision not to offer post 16 education at Sewell Park, but to concentrate on different issues across the whole school.
- The Committee was being asked for its views on entering into a 4-week consultation period to discontinue the sixth form at Sewell Park College. If the Committee supported the recommendation, the consultation would commence on 13 April, which would allow sufficient time for everyone to make their comments. Once the consultation had been completed, the Interim Director of Children's Services would make a decision.

10.8 On being put to a vote and with 10 votes in favour, 6 votes against and 0 abstentions, the Committee **agreed** to support the recommendation that the Director should publish a statutory notice concerning the proposal to discontinue the Sixth Form at Sewell Park College.

#### 10.9 Mileham Primary School

- The Local Member for Mileham, Mr M Kiddle-Morris addressed the Committee in objection to the proposal.
- It was confirmed that there was sufficient space at Litcham School to accommodate the proposed increase in pupils.
- Norfolk County Council would try to ascertain ways of mitigating the costs of school uniform for those families who could not afford it.
- The Assistant Director for Education advised that there was no viable alternative to the proposal as set out in the report.
- The Assistant Director Education said that there were some lessons that could be learned from the initial consultation which opened on 13 February and that these would be taken on board in the future.

10.10 On being put to a vote and with 10 votes in favour, 7 votes against and 0 abstentions, the Committee agreed to support the recommendation that the Interim Director of Children's Services should publish a statutory notice concerning

the proposed closure of Mileham Primary School in order to amalgamate it with Litcham School.

10.11 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- **Agree** the proposal by the Governors of Churchill Park School, a Foundation School, to increase the number of pupils on roll from the current 150 to 205.
- **Agree** the proposal by the Federated Governing Body to close Horsford Voluntary Controlled Infant School and Horsford Voluntary Controlled Junior School, related to a proposal by the Diocese of Norwich, to open a new Voluntary Aided Primary School on the existing sites.
- **Request** the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services to **publish** a statutory notice concerning the proposal to discontinue the Sixth Form at Sewell Park College.
- **Request** the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services to **publish** a statutory notice concerning the proposed closure of Mileham Primary School in order to amalgamate it with Litcham School.

**11 Admission Arrangements for September 2016**

11.1 The Committee received a report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services summarising the statutory consultation outcomes and proposing Norfolk's Admissions co-ordination scheme and the admissions policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools for the academic year 2016/17.

11.2 During the presentation of the report, the Committee was asked to consider the following additional recommendation as part of their deliberations.

"It is recommended that the Schools Admissions Forum is formally ceased from 31 August 2015."

11.3 The Committee **AGREED** :

- With regard to Local Authority admissions co-ordination, the 2015/16 co-ordination schemes and timetables including in-year co-ordination for 2016/17.
- With regard to Admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, that the 2015/16 admission arrangements be maintained for 2016/17.
- That the Schools Admissions Forum be formally ceased from 31 August 2015.

**12 Apprenticeships – Moving Forwards**

- 12.1 The Committee received a report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services and Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services informing Members of the need to further stimulate the market for apprenticeships working with communities, schools and employers.
- 12.2 The following responses to questions from the Committee were noted:
- It was acknowledged that there was still some work to be done around pathway plans for young people leaving care to help them gain employment. A new team was in the process of being established and it was hoped that once this new team was in place, the right support would be provided. Moral and financial support would be offered to young people leaving care and this could allow them to take on an apprenticeship. Financial support could be given to assist them with living costs, travelling costs where this was considered appropriate.
  - The New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) had written to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to see if the differences in how the social care data and the education data provided by the different groups could be aligned.
  - Members commended the work carried out to date with Looked after Children.
  - The definition of an apprenticeship was clarified as a job that included a nationally recognised qualification and which was set out in a framework with an employer and a training provider which, upon completion, would provide the apprentice with a recognised qualification.
  - All apprenticeships had a minimum duration of at least 1 year and 1 day, with some employers offering apprenticeships of 3 or 4 years.
  - All secondary schools were encouraged to be part of the Apprenticeships Norfolk Network, although only 26 secondary schools had signed up so far.
  - A list of the schools who were participating in the scheme would be circulated to the committee.
  - Members were asked to promote apprenticeships within their constituencies, particularly apprenticeships for 17 and 18 year olds.
  - The rate of £2.73 per hour was the minimum nationally set rate, although the Committee noted that many of the employers paid more.
  - Further information about vacancies could be found on the gov.com website. Local vacant apprenticeship information was collated weekly onto a spreadsheet, together with pay rates and a copy of a spreadsheet would be circulated to the Committee. If Committee Members wanted to see a regular vacancy list, they could request a copy.
- 12.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Endorse the approach outlined in the report.
2. Promote apprenticeships to the communities with whom members work – schools, employers, parents and carers.
3. Ensure access to relevant data, in order that a looked after child, care leaver or vulnerable young person who had the aspiration to, and capability of, successfully completing an apprenticeship, could receive appropriate support.

### **13 Norfolk Youth Justice Plan 2015-16**

13.1 The Committee received a report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services. The existing Norfolk Youth Justice Plan had been updated to outline the actions, risks and opportunities identified to ensure that desired outcomes for young people and the victims of their crime are achieved by Norfolk Youth Offending Team (YOT) in 2015-16. The Plan set out the key external and internal drivers behind this area of the County Council's work which is delivered in partnership with the required statutory agencies on the Norfolk Youth Justice Board (Health, Police and Probation) and others such as the County Community Safety Criminal Justice Board.

13.2 In the course of discussion the following key points were made:

- There was no statutory format for the report, with the format of the previous report being used.
- The Plan had been presented to the Committee for their comments, although accountability for the plan rested with the Norfolk Youth Justice Board. Norfolk County Council was a key partner and a Board member, therefore there was a need to ensure that all Members of the County Council had an opportunity to comment on the plan to ensure it was right for the people of Norfolk.
- The negative comments about some offices having unwelcoming reception areas were acknowledged. It was explained that this was mainly due to offices having shared reception areas and therefore there was an inability to make some of them more welcoming, although an attempt was made to make reception areas as child friendly as possible.
- Due to the closure of nearer youth prisons, Kent was now the nearest facility and there was no opportunity to influence where a young offender was imprisoned.
- It was expected that all staff who were employed by the service for more than one year would undertake the Youth Justice qualification.
- No young person would be asked to attend interviews with their social worker during school or working hours and YOT visits would be arranged outside of these times.

- 13.3 The Committee **ASKED** Norfolk Youth Justice Board to take on board the comments made by the Committee and to recommend consideration of the finalised Norfolk Youth Justice Plan 2015-16 to Full Council in May 2015.

#### **14 Domestic Abuse and Violence Progress Report**

- 14.1 The Committee received a report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services providing an update on the multi-agency work in Norfolk to reduce domestic abuse and violence.

- 14.2 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Committee:

- The definition of domestic abuse was clarified as any form of abuse which was carried out inside the home. This included assault and controlling behaviours, for example control of money, freedom of movement. Domestic abuse covered the full age range, although the report focussed on children.
- The Committee **agreed** to invite the Assistant Chief Constable to attend a future meeting to inform Members about the work being done around child sexual exploitation.
- The Interim Director of Children's Services would be presenting a paper to the next Policy and Resources Committee about information sharing.
- Any psychological work was a standard part of social work practice and assessments would be carried out as part of the normal safety arrangements.

- 14.3 The Committee **AGREED** to endorse the strategy and allocation of resources.

#### **15 Final report by Members of the Looked After Children's Task and Finish Group**

- 15.1 The Committee received the final report by Members of the Looked after Children's Task and Finish Group which was presented by the Chair of the Task and Finish Group, Mrs J Leggett.

- 15.2 The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group thanked Members and officers for their input in producing the report, as well as the people who had provided with the information.

- 15.3 The following responses to questions from the Committee were noted:

- The Interim Executive Director of Children's Services commended the Task and Finish Group for its approach and the excellent report. She took on board the issues and recommendations and agreed to produce an action plan, which would be brought to the next meeting.
- A question was asked as to whether Norfolk County Council could contact the governments of those children from overseas that were taken into care in



order to recoup some of the costs involved. In response the Interim Executive Director advised that Norfolk County Council had a responsibility to provide care for all vulnerable children and she thought it would prove very difficult to charge another country for the costs of care. She agreed to make some enquiries as to whether this may be possible.

- Although the number of looked after children showed only a small reduction, it was recognised that the numbers were no longer rising. The Interim Director was confident that the target would be met as planned and reassured Members that personalised plans were in place for each child in care.

15.4 The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations set out in the report and asked the Interim Director of Children's Services to produce an action plan which embraced all 13 recommendations and the actions being taken, and present it to the next meeting of the Children's Services Committee.

## **16 Final report by Members of the Variations in Educational Attainment by District Task and Finish Group.**

16.1 The Committee received the final report by Members of the Variations in Educational Attainment by District Task and Finish Group which was presented by the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group, Mr Richard Bearman.

16.2 The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group thanked officers and Members for their support to the Group, in particular Bev Herron. During the presentation of the report, the following points were noted:

- Rating parameters had been incorporated into the risk report to reflect that unless the outcome had been reached, or was above the national average, it would not be marked as green.
- Children's Services would develop a training programme on understanding, interrogating and interpreting school data which would be rolled out to members of the Children's Services Committee.
- The work of the District Education Improvement Boards was commended to the Committee and Members were asked to consider some further involvement to give them a better understanding of the work that was being achieved.

16.3 The Committee **AGREED** the recommendations as set out in the report and asked the Interim Director of Children's Services to produce an action plan which embraced all the recommendations and the actions being taken, together with how the work fit in with the work of the department, and present it to the next meeting of the Children's Services Committee.

## **17 Children's Services Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring Draft Report for 2014/15.**

17.1 The Committee received a report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services providing an update on operational performance within Children's

Services including Support for School Improvement, Social Care and Safeguarding and finance monitoring information for the 2014/15 financial year. The report also set out financial monitoring data for the period ending 31 January 2015, together with the variations between the approved budget for 2014/15 and the actual spending during the year. The paper also commented on the Children's Services Revenue Budget, Capital Budget, School Balances and Children's Services Reserves and Provisions.

17.2 The following responses to questions from the Committee were noted:

- A comparison between the numbers of children receiving free school meals and those with non-free school meals would be provided to the Committee as Members felt comparing free school meals with all children, although this was the national standard comparison, was misleading.
- The Norfolk Family Focus Locality Coordinator was confident that the department would be able to manage a 21% increase in the number of contacts. The restructuring of the Children's Services department would provide six localities with 12 teams supporting. The Coordinator was confident that the right level of support would be built in to ensure that social care and safeguarding improved.
- It was acknowledged that there was still a lot of work to be done around the provision of pathway plans and that the performance differed greatly across the county.
- Further investigation was needed to understand the issues that had caused the drop in the number of Section 47 Core Assessments being conducted.
- A commentary about the reasons for the financial pressures in delivering a balanced budget would be included in future finance and monitoring reports.
- The Committee requested additional information about the actions that were being taken with risk number RM14157 (Lack of Corporate capacity and capability in particular ICT".

17.3 The Committee **NOTED** the report, specifically:

- the data received from schools and the trends that were being established.
- Social Care and Early Health Performance data.
- **Agreed** that an action plan be brought to the next Children's Services committee meeting, including the actions being taken to mitigate the financial pressures in delivering a balanced budget and that further analysis of the areas and issues of concern in social care were brought with an explanation of action to the spokespersons meeting.

## 18 Healthy Child Programme

- 18.1 The Committee received a verbal update from Public Health Commissioning Manager for Children and Young People about the Healthy Child Programme, during which the following points were noted:
- A joint project team had been established between Public Health, Children's Services and NHS England to commission an integrated 0-19 Health Child Programme.
  - The service would incorporate the transfer of commissioning responsibilities from NHS England to local authorities for 0-5 year olds from 1 October 2015.
  - The integrated 0-19 service would have a single lead provider and would join up children's commissioning locally and provide better integration of services at point of delivery with improved access and experience.
  - The contract for the new county-wide Norfolk 0-19 years Healthy Child Programme service would be awarded on 16 April 2015.
  - The aim of the new service included protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of all children, young people and their families. It would provide a universal service and would ensure contact with every child in Norfolk at key points in their life was maintained. The 0-19 service would be fully joined up, with early and targeted intervention for families needing more help, communication would be improved and improved outcomes should follow.
  - After a six-month transition period, the new service would come into effect in October 2015.
  - The successful provider would deliver an integrated service which included health visiting, school nursing, healthy schools, hearing and vision screening, primary obesity prevention and weight management for children and young people.

18.2 The Committee **noted** the update.

## 19 **Exclusion of the Public**

19.1 The Committee considered excluding the public whilst agenda item 19 was discussed and was presented with the following public interest test, as required by the 2006 Access to Information Regulations for consideration by the committee:

"Exclusion of the press and public in relation to agenda item 19 (Norfolk Children's Centre Vision and Delivery Options from 1 April 2016) is sought under paragraph 3 of part 1 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as it contains commercially sensitive information".

19.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded whilst the report was considered.

## 20 **Norfolk Children's Centre Vision and Delivery Option from 1 April 2016.**

- 20.1 The Committee received the exempt report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services.
- 20.2 The Committee **AGREED** to commission the Task and Finish Group to carry out some additional investigations with regard to the proposed options and to bring a further report to the May 2015 meeting of the Children's Services committee.

The Committee **AGREED** the new vision for Children's Centres in Norfolk.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

**Chairman**



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Committee Date	Minutes reference number	Matters arising	Update
13 January 2015	2.1	Point 9.2. A report was promised to come to the Committee members once the NSCB and MASH Board had considered it. This meeting was due to take place on 14 January and members would be provided with the report subsequently.	The revamp of the Children's partnership arrangements has held this up a little but a report will come in May 2015.
	5.1	<b>Local Member Issues/Member Questions.</b> Cllr E Corlett asked the Chair to write to the exam boards regarding the issue of sanctions schools had received for cheating to confirm whether any of the schools in question were Norfolk schools.	A second letter has been sent out this week to Ofqual.
	8.2	<b>Norfolk County Council's Promise to Children and Young People in its Care.</b> The Committee commented that the 30% of Looked After Children receiving a copy of the Promise in November seemed low and asked to be kept up to date on the progress.	Recent evidence considered by Corporate Parenting Executive Board has shown there has been an increase in the distribution of The Promise.
	8.3	The Committee agreed to write to the staff of Children's Services to highlight how important the Promise was to Norfolk County Council.	Completed, email sent on 14 January 2015.
	11.3	<b>Final report by Members of the Children's Centres Task and Finish Group.</b> The Interim Director of Children's Services develop an action plan and options appraisal for each of the recommendations in the report and bring a report back on this matter to the March 2015 meeting of the Committee.	On the Committee agenda for March 2015.

Committee Date	Minutes reference number	Matters arising	Update
	12.2	<b>Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy.</b> The Interim Director of Children's Services agreed to meet with Members of the Teachers Joint Consultative Committee to explain the issues contained in the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy.	Completed, further work underway.
	12.2	The Interim Director of Children's Services agreed to let Mrs J Leggett have details as to the number of children and young people with a recognised mental health disorder in the Broadland area.	Information sent to Cllr Leggett on 23/01/15.
	13.2	<b>Signs of Safety</b> The Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Board had recently signed up to "Signs of Safety" becoming the overarching practice framework to transform social work practice in Norfolk. While the full implementation would take several years to be fully embedded, the project would run for 18 months, having commenced in October 2014. Progress would be reported to the Committee through the Children's Services dashboard.	Arrangements in hand, regular updates to members. There is an offer of training for members of this committee to attend the full 2 day course or a bite size commissioned piece of training, this will be discussed at the next Group Spokespersons meeting.
	14.2	<b>Young Carers and Families Legal Reform Implementation Project</b> A full report on the 2014 views of young carers and young adult carers in Norfolk would be shared with Members shortly.	Completed
	15.2	<b>Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring Report 2014-15.</b> Comparative data regarding the take up of free school meals across Norfolk would be made available to Members after the meeting.	The FSM and Non FSM figures were provided to councillors in the Education Attainment Variations Task and Finish Group as part of the 'District variation pack.

**Children's Services Committee  
10 March 2015**

**5. Local Member Questions**

**Question 1 from Mrs Julie Brociek-Coulton**

Sewell Park College is currently under close scrutiny. The committee has to decide on closing the 6th form. The IEB has, despite telling parents it had no powers in the academy process, recommended the Secretary of State appoint 'Right to Success' as sponsor. Whatever merits any proposals have, parents, students, staff and wider community have scant opportunity to comment or influence the process or outcomes although the decisions will have a profound impact.

Will the Chair ask the committee to use their powers and influence to ensure sufficient time and opportunity for those wishing to express views to do so and for those to be evaluated before final decisions?

**Reply by the Chairman:**

The committee is not being asked to decide upon the closure of the Sewell Park College Sixth Form. Rather, the Committee is being asked to consider the matter and to recommend that the Director of Children's Services publishes a statutory notice setting out a proposal to discontinue the Sixth Form at Sewell Park College. A four week representation period would follow publication, at the end of which the Director, in discussion with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, would make the final determination.

The Secretary of State's assumption is that any school in special measures should become a sponsored Academy. The Interim Executive Board (IEB) has asked the Secretary of State to consider the 'Right for Success' Trust as the potential sponsor for the school. The IEB will shortly outline the process by which students, staff, parents and interested members of the community will be able to hear the vision of the potential sponsor and to express their own views about the future of Sewell Park College. Views expressed will help to shape an improving school as it develops further.

**Question 2 from Mr R Smith**

**HEWETT SCHOOL, Norwich**

I am increasingly concerned about almost daily EDP reports about the future of this school without any reference to this Committee. The report on P13 of today's EDP appears to diverge from the County Council's stated policy of neutrality on school academisation in contesting a Government decision. There appears to be a political

agenda driving this in a system of governance when the Committee should be making decisions, especially when decisions seem contrary to policy.

Consequently could the Committee be informed as to who in the Council is making decisions regarding the future of Hewett School and the rationale for doing so and be debated at Committee?

**Reply by the Chairman:**

Local Authority officers have worked closely with The Hewett School over recent months and particularly since the school was deemed to require 'special measures' in October last year. The interim Headteacher, the Governing Body and the LA have all worked to ensure that better learning by the young people who attend the school is provided as a matter of urgency. There are positive signs of this.

The Secretary of State has an expectation that all schools judged to require 'special measures' should become sponsored academies. In usual circumstances, the Local Authority's role is to work with the Department for Education and the school's governing body to find the most suitable sponsor and to ensure that the vision for the school is one that will rapidly bring about improved education for the local community.

It should be noted that powers under the Academies Act 2010 enable the Secretary of State to issue an Academy Order directly or in response to a request from a Governing Body. In all cases, it is the Secretary of State who makes the decision about the future of a failing school although with a requirement that the Governing Body and intended sponsor takes account of local views in creating the vision for the future of the school.

In the case of The Hewett School, there is a widely expressed local view that a community or foundation school – rather than an academy school – would be best suited to the vision for a 'learning village' on the unique and extensive campus. Nevertheless, and for the first time in Norfolk, the Secretary of State is proposing to use her powers under Section 4 of the Academies Act 2010 to issue an Academy Order.

In the light of this and recognising Norfolk County Council's policy of neutrality on whether or not a school should become an Academy, the Chair of Children's Services Committee took the decision, on balance, to express opposition to the Secretary of State's indication that an academy school should replace the existing foundation school. He did so following consultation with local members and drawing on advice from Officers. Given that neither an Academy Order nor an Academy Funding Agreement have yet to be agreed, the Chair's action enables a continuation of discussion about the future of the school.



### **Presentation by Kieren Buxton, MYP.**

In Norfolk, we have 9 Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) which cover each of the 9 constituencies in the county. This is managed by the Consultation and Community Relations Team.

MYPs play a valuable role in helping to:

- Represent the views of children and young people
- Enhance democracy
- Increase youth participation
- Develop actions to tackle national and local issues

Elections for Norfolk Youth Parliament were held in March 2014 (via text voting), where 37,679 young people (aged between 11-19 years) voted for a range of candidates standing across the 9 constituencies. This result was a turnout of 48% which was up by 32% from the last election in 2012, which had a turnout of 16%. This was Norfolk's largest youth election.

From the youth parliament elections, we have attracted positive media coverage in the EDP, local newspapers and the radio. This has all contributed to gaining Norfolk County Council a positive reputation and this also helps with Children service's improvement journey.

Youth Parliament seek the views of other young people through the Make Your Mark ballot, which is the largest youth consultation in the UK which is part of the UK Youth parliaments work annually. We then use these results to develop a Norfolk work plan focusing on young people's concerns.

The top 5 issues in Norfolk from the 2014 ballot are:

1. Everyone should be paid the living wage of £7.65 per hour
2. Work Experience
3. Bring back exam resits in English and Maths
4. Mental Health services should be improved
5. A curriculum to prepare us for life

This year we had 27 schools take part in this vote across Norfolk, which led to 19,338 votes being cast, exceeding our target of 15,000. In 2013, we had 6,200 votes cast which shows a massive increase in one year. In terms of votes collected, Norfolk was the 5<sup>th</sup> highest in the UK and the highest in the East and South East of England.

The top 5 issues nationally were the same as Norfolk except for Votes at 16, which replaced A curriculum to prepare us for life.

The top 5 issues were then debated by the UK Youth Parliament in the House of Commons which included 4 MYPs from Norfolk. This commenced on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014 with the speaker of the house chairing these debates. Raise the living wage and Improving mental health services got voted in as national campaigns.

After working with members of the Children service's leadership team, MYPs have created a presentation about mental health to tackle the stigma surrounding mental health with young people. The presentation has now been sent to all school councils to encourage discussion of where to access support services. So far, we have had good, positive responses.

We have agreed to write to all the school councils to evaluate the impact of the presentation and consult schools on how to further develop action on mental health. This has also led to Norfolk MYPs to contribute to Children Service's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Norfolk MYPs have also written to their local MPs to raise awareness of the living wage campaign to meet and discuss the issue in detail. We have also agreed to write to the Personnel Committee to find out Norfolk County Council's position on paying a living wage to young people.

MYPs have debated paying young people a living wage with councillors during this year's takeover day. Around 10 councillors took part in the debate and heard first-hand how low pay was having an impact on young people in Norfolk. Young people and councillors voted in favour of paying a living wage. This debate was highlighted by Maggie Atkinson, Children's Commissioner for England in her Takeover Day 2014 evaluation report.

MYPs also have a massive opportunity to raise the above issues with the Leader of the Opposition, Ed Miliband, in December 2015 where we were invited along to go to a speech which was then followed by a Q&A in the Town Hall, Great Yarmouth. 3 MYPs were picked to ask questions where we raised the topics improving mental health services, work experience and raising the living wage.

Furthermore, myself, Chelsie (MYP Norwich North), Paul Jackson met up with Sheila Lock, James Joyce and Dominic Cotton (Head of Communication and Media Relations) from the organisation Step Up to Serve, talking about how Norfolk can help their #i will campaign to design a distinctive pledge for all local authorities in England and Wales to sign up. As a result of this meeting, Norfolk Youth Parliament has agreed to write a joint letter with Sheila Lock to other Directors of Children Service's inviting them to a meeting that is likely to take place in London next month to develop the pledge.

The campaign #iwill was launched in November 2013 thanks to the leadership of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales who chairs it and a cross-party backing. Its aim is to increase the number of 10-20 year-olds to take part in meaningful social action by 50% by 2020. Meaningful Social Action is described as 'young people taking practical action in the service of others to create positive change'. Some examples of what this would include is caring for someone in the community, providing peer support online, volunteering for a charity, campaigning or fundraising for a specific cause.

By taking part in social action, young people are able to strengthen their communities as well as develop their character and skills producing a double benefit. We want every young person to have the chance to fully participate and create a habit for life.

Today, we'd like Norfolk County Council to be the first Local Authority to pledge our support to the '#I Will' campaign which will put Norfolk at the forefront of this pledge.

## **Children's Services Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Tuesday 17 March 2015  
2:00pm Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

### **Present:**

Mr J Joyce - Chairman

Mr R Bearman (Vice-Chair)

Mr D Collis

Ms E Corlett

Mr D Crawford

Mrs M Dewsbury

Mr T FitzPatrick

Mr C Foulger

Mr P Gilmour

Mr M Kiddle-Morris

Mrs J Leggett

Mr S Morpew

Mr J Perkins

Mr E Seward

Mr R Smith

Miss J Virgo

### **Other Members Present:**

Mr G Nobbs

### **Non-voting Parent Governor Representatives**

Mrs K Byrne

Mrs S Vertigan

### **Non-Voting Schools Forum Representative**

Mrs A Best-White

### **Non-Voting Co-opted Advisors**

Mr C Collis                      Special Needs Education

Mrs B Carrington            Primary Education

Ms C Smith                    Secondary Education

Mr J Mason                    Post16 Education Adviser.

## **1 Apologies and substitutions**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mrs J Chamberlin (Mr T FitzPatrick substituted), Mr T Garrod; Ms D Gihawi (Mr S Morpew substituted), Mr A Robinson (Norfolk Governors Network), Mr A Mash and Mrs H Bates (Church Representatives), Ms T Humber (Mr C Collis substituted) and Ms V Aldous (Mrs B Carrington substituted).

## **2 Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 The following declarations of interest were noted:

- Ms E Corlett declared an Other Interest in item 4 (Hewett School) as she was a Governor of Bignold School which was in the Hewett Cluster, and which her daughter attended. Ms Corlett had been asked to be the County Council representative on the proposed IEB if it was approved by the Secretary of State.

### **3 Items of Urgent Business**

- 3.1 The Interim Executive Director of Children's Services updated the Committee on the forthcoming Foster Care Review which had been convened following historic concerns which had been expressed by foster carers. The review would commence on 24 March 2015 and would be led by a former County Council Chief Executive and included members from Partner Organisations.

### **4 Local Member Issues/Member Questions**

- 4.1 No Local Member questions were received.

### **5 Potential Legal Challenge to Section 4 Academy Order for the Hewett School**

- 5.1 The Assistant Director Education gave the Committee some background information about the Hewett School, during which the following points were noted:
- The Hewett School had been open for many years and received a great deal of support from the local community. The school was a foundation school with its own trust, the Central Norwich Foundation Trust. The entire school site was owned by this Trust.
  - The Local Authority had become increasingly concerned about the Hewett School during the last few years, particularly around the financial situation, the achievements of pupils and the fall in the number of pupils attending the school.
  - Ofsted had inspected the school in October 2014 and had judged the school "inadequate". The County Council's intervention measures were stepped up accordingly.
  - The Local Authority had considered all available options very carefully and had proposed putting in its own Interim Executive Board (IEB) at the school. The proposed IEB consisted of five members, including a representative from the Central Norwich Foundation Trust and a County Councillor (Ms E Corlett).
  - The IEB proposal had been forwarded to the Department for Education on 19 December 2014.
  - An outline proposal had also been made about the possibility of developing a learning village at the site and discussions with Councillors and other educational providers had taken place. The scheme could function regardless of the kind of school at its centre. The concept had received widespread local support, with members of the local community expressing

their wish for a community maintained school rather than an academy school to be provided.

- All of the previous applications made by Norfolk County Council to introduce its own IEBs at schools which had been deemed 'inadequate' had been successful.
- In February 2015, the County Council received notification that its request to appoint its own IEB had not been accepted by the Department for Education. The DfE had notified Norfolk County Council they were considering installing their own IEB, this had made no provision to include a councillor representative. Members were informed that this decision had been unexpected as several discussions had been held with the DfE about the IEB, including talks about substituting members to provide more direct experience of school improvement.
- The Secretary of State subsequently notified the County Council that they would be proceeding to appoint their own IEB and at the same time started consultation on their intention to issue an Academy Order, on 2 March 2015.
- After receiving the decision from the DfE on 2 March, Norfolk County Council issued, on 9 March, a pre-action letter to the Secretary of State indicating that it was issuing a notice of intent to go to Judicial Review.
- The IEB had taken up office on 4 March 2015 and at that time the previous governing body had ceased to exist.
- It was understood the Secretary of State would make a decision with regard to the ownership of the land following completion of the consultation with the Central Norwich Foundation Trust and prior to the signing of an Academy funding agreement.
- On 12 March 2015 a response to the pre-action note to the Secretary of State had been received. The response had included a clear rebuttal of the application made by Norfolk County Council.
- Discussions about the provision of a learning village on the site would continue.

**6** The following points were noted in response to questions from the Committee:

- 6.1** The Department for Education (DfE) had considered the IEB proposed by Norfolk County Council was insufficiently focused on school improvement and that four out of the five members did not have sufficient experience of leadership at secondary school level. This decision had been received by Norfolk County Council on 2 March 2015.
- 6.2** Although the IEB proposed by the County Council had been amassed quickly, discussions had been held with the DfE and reassurance given that the right people had been appointed. This made the shock of receiving notification from the DfE that the IEB was not acceptable even more unexpected.

- 6.3 The IEB was working with the Norfolk County Council Education team to focus on the children at the school at the present time and those who would be taking exams in the near future. The outgoing Governing Body continued to work with the Local Authority to achieve this.
- 6.4 In regard to the land, there were several options available which would depend on the final decision of the Secretary of State.
- 6.5 If the school became an academy, any negative budget balances would need to be borne by the remaining maintained schools.
- 6.6 The consultation undertaken by the Secretary of State which was due to end on 16 March was with the Foundation Trust only, who are the current landowners of the school site.
- 6.7 Norfolk County Council had a good track record of assembling IEBs to fast-track improvement and the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services was confident that the IEB that had been proposed was the best that could be put in place to drive improvement.
- 6.8 The projected number of pupils who could be expected to enter into high school education over the next four years required a school in the area in whatever form was provided.
- 6.9 The new IEB was working with the interim headteacher at the school and was providing strong governance to the school.
- 6.10 The role of the IEB was to put the school on a sound financial footing for the future.
- 6.11 Any staff redundancy costs or severance pay resulting from any future staff restructuring would need to be met from the maintained schools budget, which would reduce the funds available for all the other LA maintained schools in Norfolk.
- 6.12 It was recognised that some of the buildings on the site were in a poor condition.
- 6.13 There had been sufficient merit in the concept of a learning village to show there was potential for future development as it was in an excellent location and had good access. A number of different organisations were already using the site.
- 6.14 Consideration had been given to mothballing the site pending redevelopment, although the difficulties in bussing pupils to other schools in the area would be disruptive and this option had not been progressed further.
- 6.15 Although not individually reported to the Children's Services Committee, the progress of the Hewett School had been included within the performance report for all Norfolk Schools in terms of finances and standards.

- 6.16 The application made by the previous Governing Body for capital money to repair existing buildings had been unsuccessful due to it not being possible to demonstrate the required increase in pupil numbers to fulfil the requirements of the bid.
- 6.17 The Local Authority did not earn any money from letting the site to other users. Any money from letting facilities would be earned by the Central Norwich Foundation Trust.

## **7 Exclusion of the Public**

- 7.1 The Committee considered excluding the public for consideration of the report and presented the following public interest test, as required by the 2006 Access to Information Regulations for consideration by the committee:

“The Committee may consider the matter without the public being present as paragraph 5 of Schedule 12a applies – the report discloses information in respect of which a claim of professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings and the required public interest may be regarded as being met for the following reasons:

- There is a general duty to conduct council business transparently and openly, so that residents understand the reasons for decisions made. This duty has to be balanced with the wider public interest. In particular, in situations where the Council is contemplating legal action, disclosure of an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the case would compromise the ability of the Council to take such action, before the committee has taken a decision as to whether such action should proceed. Furthermore, members are advised to consider that disclosure of this report could have the following two additional effects. First, it may compromise the ability of the Council to take future legal action in any similar context, by revealing an analysis of when such action may be taken in relation to the strengths of the case. Secondly, it may act as a partial waiver of privilege of the legal advice underlying this report. This essentially means that if we disclose part of the legal advice we have relied on, we may have to disclose the remainder

- 7.2 On being put to the vote, with 9 votes in favour and 7 votes against, the Committee **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded whilst the report was considered.

## **8 Discussion of issues related to the Hewett School**

### **8.1 Potential legal challenge to section 4 Academy Order for the Hewett School.**

- 8.2 The Committee received and considered the exempt report by the Interim Executive Director of Children’s Services and the Practice Director npLaw.

## **9 Return to Public Session**

The Committee agreed to include the public and press to hear the decision of the Committee.

## **10 Potential legal challenge to Section 4 Academy Order for the Hewett School**

10.1 Mrs J Leggett proposed, seconded by Mr T FitzPatrick, the following amendment to the recommendations set out in the report:

- Reserve the Council's position on legal action at this stage as to whether there would be full and effective consultation with the local community prior to a final decision on conversion being made;
- Request the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services to make a further report to the Children's Services committee once the actions and intentions of the Secretary of State become clearer; **and**
- **All Members of the Children's Services Committee to be kept fully informed of all events concerning the Hewett School at this crucial time.**

10.2 The Committee **agreed** the amendment.

10.3 On being put to the vote, the Committee unanimously **RESOLVED** to:

- Reserve the Council's position on legal action at this stage as to whether there would be full and effective consultation with the local community prior to a final decision on conversion being made;
- Request the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services to make a further report to the Children's Services committee once the actions and intentions of the Secretary of State become clearer; and
- That all Members of the Children's Services Committee to be kept fully informed of all events concerning the Hewett School at this crucial time.

The meeting closed at 4.25pm

**Chairman**



# Children's Services Committee

Item No 6

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Children's Services Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring report</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>12 May 2015</b>
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Sheila Lock Interim Director of Children's Services</b>
<p><b>Strategic impact</b></p> <p>Norfolk Children's Services continues its intensive and extensive improvement activities under the direction of the Children's Services Committee and the independently chaired Norfolk Education Challenge Board and Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board. Committee Members have stated that they wish to diligently oversee these improvements to ensure that all elements of Children's Services operations are increasingly evidencing greater effectiveness and efficiency.</p> <p>The increasingly sophisticated performance and challenge functions being put in place are ensuring that there is an array of detailed evidence available to ensure that Members are sighted on all aspects of Children's Services Improvement as they progress. Accordingly members will see progress on a range of indicator and trend data and areas of variance such as over or under performance. Alongside the Task and Finish Groups and fact-finding activities planned for Members, these reports are assisting Committee Members in their strategic decision-making.</p>	

## Executive summary

This report provides an update on operational performance within children's Services including Support for School Improvement, Social Care and Safeguarding and finance monitoring information for the 2014/15 financial year.

The report set out financial monitoring data for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

The report also sets out the variations between the approved budget for 2014/15 and the actual spending during the year. The paper comments on the Children's Services Revenue Budget, Capital Budget, School Balances and Children's Services Reserves and Provisions.

### What's going well

- Improvement predicted at every Key Stage
- Early Years Foundation Stage predicting outcomes above the 2014 national average
- Referrals to Norfolk Early Help Family Focus (NEHFF) have increased significantly
- LAC numbers have reduced from 1141 to 1067 across year 1 of the reduction strategy
- Allocations of Child Protection and LAC cases to qualified workers is fully embedded

### What are we worried about?

- The use of Family Support Plans (FSP) is uneven across the County
- Financial savings based on the LAC reduction strategy have not been realised in-year
- The cost of educating children with special educational needs and the costs of transporting them to their place of education
- The quality of care planning requires significant improvement
- Our ability to evidence impact

### What do we need to do about it?

- Continued management focus on individual and team performance
- Deliver on the planned roll-out of the new structure
- Maximise the opportunities afforded by the locality model
- Rebalance our focus between compliance and outcomes/impact

### Recommendation

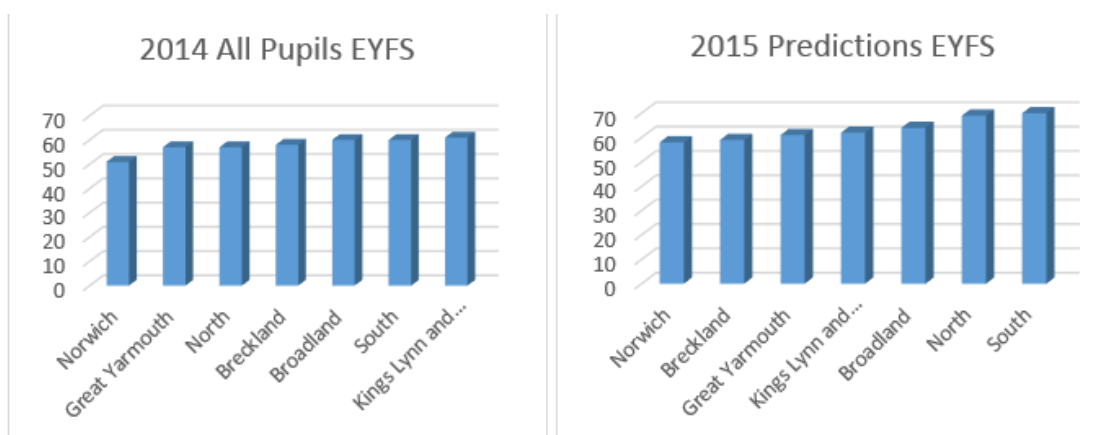
Children's Services Committee is asked to note and comment on the information contained in this report.

## 1. Impact of Support for School Improvement

### 1.1 Education outcomes

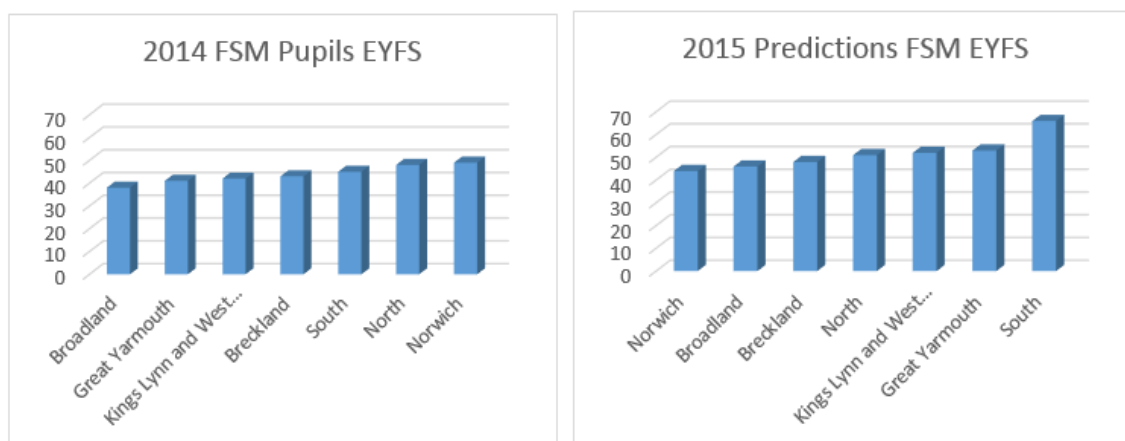
- 1.1.1 Predictions for performance in 2015 are now collected from every Norfolk school including Free Schools and Academies. The scorecard data for 'spring 1' is now an aggregated prediction for all Norfolk schools. 95% of predictions have been received from schools and outstanding predictions will be gathered by the end of April 2015. The data is followed up school by school for all schools of concern and those risked assessed as 'requiring improvement'. Good and outstanding schools receive a feedback letter showing the impact of their predictions on overall and district performance. The data is shared with key education officers to ensure follow up through our services to challenge under performance and to understand district variation.
- 1.1.2 For the Early Years Foundation Stage (Scorecard p.3) outcomes are improving in every district overall compared to 2014 outcomes. The predictions indicate that the Norfolk percentage achieving 'A Good Level of Development' would rise by 5% to 63% and this would be 3% above the 2014 national average. For children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) the predictions indicate a 9% improvement across the county which would be 7% above the 2014 national average for this group.
- 1.1.3 The district anticipating the biggest improvement for all pupils is the North at 12%. The least improvement overall is predicted in Breckland and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. The variation between districts will reduce significantly if predictions are met – from a 10% difference between the highest and lowest performing districts in 2014 to a 4% difference in 2015.

*Charts showing lowest to highest performing districts for all pupils*



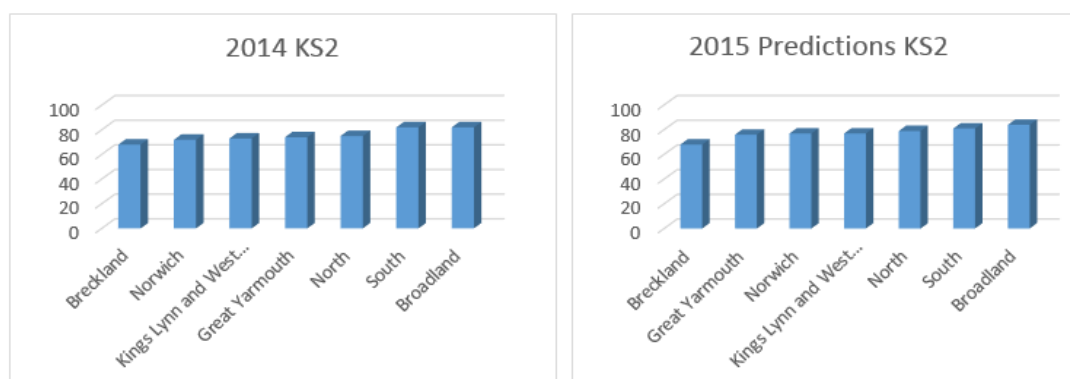
- 1.1.4 For Free School Meals pupils the greatest improvement is predicted in the South at 24% and the least is a drop of 5% in Breckland. Due to the significant improvement in predicted outcomes for FSM pupils in the South the difference between the highest and lowest performing district will increase from 11% to 22%.

*Charts showing lowest to highest performing districts for FSM pupils*



- 1.1.5 At Key Stage 2 predictions indicate a rise of 4% overall for pupils reaching the expected level of attainment. (Scorecard p.4) This would be 1 % below the national average for 2014. The district anticipating the biggest improvement for all pupils is Norwich at 5%. The least improvement overall is reflected in a predicted drop of 1% in the South. The difference between the highest and lowest performing district at KS2 (based on predictions for 2015 outcomes) indicates that the difference will remain 18%.

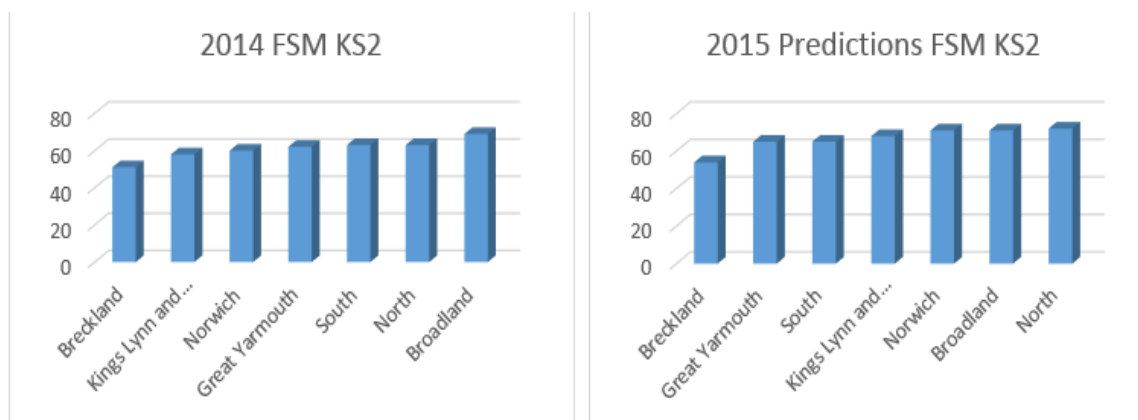
*Charts showing lowest to highest performing districts for all pupils*



- 1.1.6 For Free School Meals children at Key Stage 2, the predictions indicate an 8% improvement across the county, which would mean outcomes would be

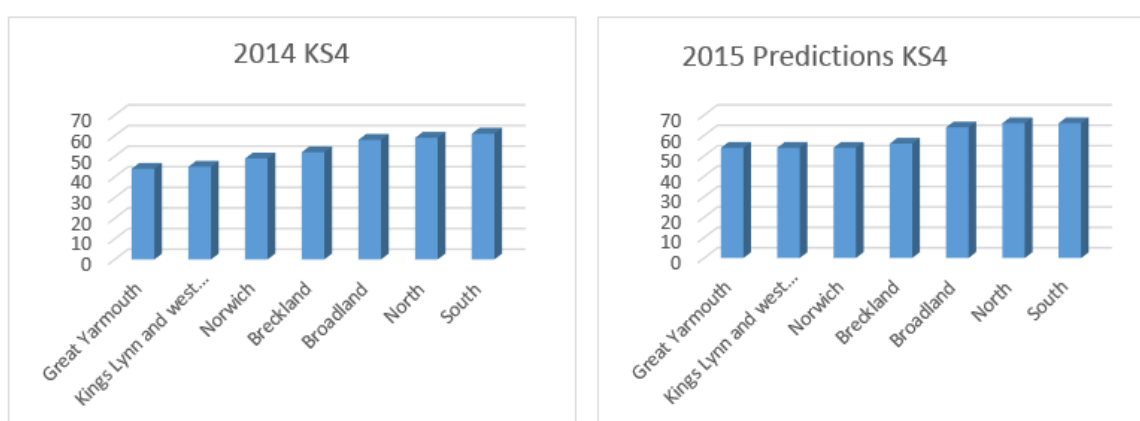
in line with the 2014 national average for this group. For Free School Meals pupils the greatest improvements are predicted in Norwich (11%) and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk (10%) and the least improvement is predicted is a 2% rise in the South and Broadland. The lack of predicted improvement in Breckland, which was the lowest performing district in 2014, means that the variation between the highest and lowest performing districts would increase slightly from 14% to 16%.

*Charts showing lowest to highest performing districts for all pupils*



- 1.1.7 At Key Stage 4 predictions indicate a rise of 7% overall for pupils reaching the expected level of attainment. (Scorecard p.5) This would be 4% above the national average for 2014. The district anticipating the biggest improvement for all pupils is Great Yarmouth at 10%. The least improvement overall is predicted in Breckland. The difference between the highest and lowest performing district at KS4 (based on predictions for 2015 outcomes) indicates that the difference will reduce from 18% to 12%.

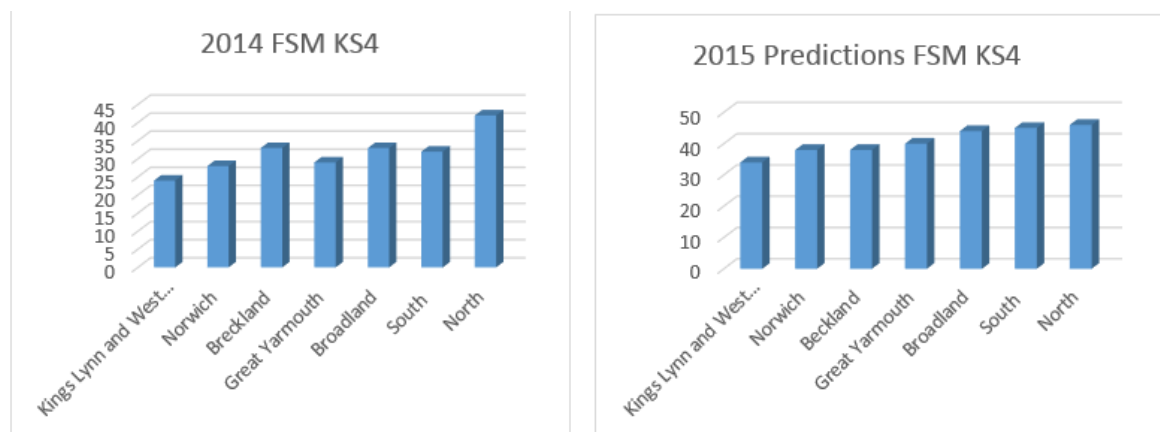
*Charts showing lowest to highest performing districts for all pupils*



- 1.1.8 For Free School Meals children at Key Stage 4, the predictions indicate a 10% improvement across the county which would be 4% above the 2014 national average for this group. The greatest improvements are predicted in the South at 13%, and the least improvement is predicted in the North at 4%.

This means that the variation between the highest and lowest performing districts would reduce from 17% to 12%.

*Charts showing lowest to highest performing districts for all pupils*



## 1.2 Inspection outcomes

- 1.2.1 Inspections of Norfolk Early Years settings has improved by 4% since July 2014 for the percentage judged good or outstanding. (Scorecard p. 6) This is 3% above the latest national average for settings, published in December 2014. For Child-minders there is an improvement of 9% and this exceeds the last published national outcome by 7%. Children's Centre inspection outcomes have dropped by 6%. This places us 2% below the most recent national average. Changes to the inspection framework have made it harder to achieve a good judgement.
- 1.2.2 Primary inspections have improved by 4%. (Scorecard p.6) This is 8% below the national average. There have been 23 primary inspections since January 2015. For secondary schools the percentage is improved by 3% since July 2013. Following a dip to 60% during the autumn term the percentage is now 65%. This remains below the national average for secondary schools. Special School outcomes at inspection remain in line with the national average. The percentage of schools judged to require an Ofsted category of inadequate is reducing and is now only 1% above the national average. The percentage of schools judged to require improvement is reducing but is still above the national average.
- 1.2.3 Overall since the beginning of A Good School for Every Norfolk Learner in spring 2013, 18,629 more Norfolk children now go to a good or better school.

## 1.3 A Good Education for Every Norfolk Learner

- 1.3.1 It is essential that all efforts by school leaders to maintain momentum continue. We are determined that best practice is shared across the education system. To enable this, a leaflet updating schools on the activity and successes of the Norfolk Strategy to support school improvement has been sent to every Norfolk school. It gives an overview of developments since summer 2014 and highlights

the partnership working with schools. It provides case study examples of improvement and how key approaches like 'Norfolk to Good and Great' are leading to better outcomes for schools in Ofsted inspection. (12 copies of the leaflet have been placed in the Members room).

- 1.3.2 From June 2015 the Education Scorecard will be developed to include a variety of additional measures such as attendance, exclusion and participation that will all focus on inclusion.

## **2. Impact of Early Help, Child Protection Services and Services for Looked After Children**

### **2.1 Dashboard**

- 2.1.1 At Appendix A is the dashboard of quantitative indicators showing the latest trends in statutory and non-statutory processes associated with children's social care as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. Members are asked to note:

### **2.2 Early Help**

- 2.2.1 The predominance of performance reporting for Early Help is still contained within the reporting of the Norfolk Family Focus programme. Work is underway to refresh the Early Help strategy for Norfolk, and develop an outcomes framework that reflects broader outcomes for children and families that can provide a clearer view of performance across the new Early Help teams that will be based within localities from July 2015.
- 2.2.2 The central recording and case management system is now being implemented, with super-user training currently taking place. This new system will enable FSPs and outcomes to be recorded to better effect.
- 2.2.3 Norfolk Family Focus, as a key component of the Early Help delivery model continues to perform well. Highlights in respect of the Norfolk Family Focus programme are that:
- Since the last report there has been a significant increase in the level of referrals to the NEHFF service with a total of 270 referrals received in March alone. We have the capacity to meet this increase currently and the new structural arrangements for Locality Teams will add further capacity to respond to further anticipated increase in referrals.
  - There are currently 497 active cases across Norfolk.
  - However, the use of the FSP for families needing early help to prevent risks escalating continues to remain uneven across the county. The new structural arrangements and the inclusion of the Commissioning, Partnerships and Community Capacity manager and teams will have a direct impact on ensuring that there is a clear understanding of the FSP process in each locality amongst partners and will also contribute to more consistent referral rates across the county
  - Schools continue to provide the majority of requests for support with concerns related to attendance, exclusions or an equivalent.
  - Of the 270 families referred in March 33% were a single parent family.
  - With regards to children's ages, March referrals have remained stable with the predominance being 0-5's, however that has been a sharp increase in teenagers within the East which now represent 42% of the East caseload.

- Families are continue to access on-going (monitoring) support once their agreed outcomes have been met. This support has led to a very low (1%) re-referral rate.
- 79% of the families who have benefitted from the programme in total have had their needs met and outcomes achieved

## 2.3 Social Care

### **Contacts, Referrals and Initial Assessments**

- 2.3.1 The overall number of contacts continues to rise steadily and this represents increasing pressure on the NCC social care system. The number of contacts from Police reduced significantly from February-March but was negated by a corresponding significant increase in referrals from schools across the same period. Sustained reduction in these numbers is identified as a key measure of the successful impact of our Early Help work going forward.
- 2.3.2 The overall number of Initial Assessments (IA) being completed continues to rise but the corresponding timeliness for completions remains a cause for concern having decreased further to 41%. Our current structures do not afford the capacity to meet demand and as a result we commissioned a third-party provider to increase that capacity. However, the quality of work subsequently produced did not meet our quality thresholds and as a result, we have terminated the contract which, whilst preserving the integrity of quality requirements, has impacted on capacity.
- 2.3.3 Given the imminent restructure, we do not propose to re-commission additional capacity re: IA. However, current action being taken to address timeliness includes:
- Performance management of under-performing staff.
  - Managing the roll-out of the initial cohorts of Norfolk Institute for Practice Excellence (NIPE) workers to match workers with demand.
  - Action planning around the new Managers to ensure they are receiving the support, advice and guidance they need.
  - Action planning around the teams to ensure we are clear and transparent about what the issues are and what we are doing about it.
- 2.3.4 The percentage of re-referrals has increased slightly but remains lower than the statistical neighbour average for 2013/14. A previous audit of re-referrals which looked at geography and referring agency did not identify specific trends and/or hot-spots. A further qualitative audit is due to be undertaken across April-June 2015. This will be a 'deep-dive' into 10 cases where there were 4 or more re-referrals in a 12-month period.

## 2.4 CIN

- 2.4.1 There has been a significant reduction in up to date CIN plans from February–March. Initial investigation has highlighted two areas requiring further attention:
- The extent to which CIN cases held by LAC and Safeguarding Teams receive the same level of focus/activity as Section 47 and Statutory LAC work. This will be addressed in the new structure as teams are being expanded to enable them to complete all work in a more-timely manner.
  - Evidence that some of the Section 17 CIN data wrongly includes children and young people who have recently stepped-down from Child Protection Plans.

The system is effectively counting them prematurely. This issue is being taken to the Design Authority with proposals to amend practice accordingly to eradicate the error.

- 2.4.2 CIN reviewed within timescale shows a marked variation in performance across teams. This reflects the bullet point above around the priority given to CIN activity versus Safeguarding and/or LAC activity.

## **2.5 Child Protection**

- 2.5.1 Allocations of Child Protection cases to Qualified Social Workers are consistently high and we consider this to be embedded practice.
- 2.5.2 SW visits to children subject to a child protection plan is too low and had been identified as 'stuck'. Investigation identified that many more visits than reported were taking place but the requirement for management sign-off of the visit on the system was skewing the data. To address this, a decision was taken at the design authority on 14<sup>th</sup> April that the data will be collated prior to management authorisation. As such, we expect performance in this area to rise markedly going forward.
- 2.5.3 Analysing the performance around completion of initial child protection conferences (ICPC) will be a specific area of focus for the new Head of Independent Statutory Services when she takes up her post. At present, performance does not appear to be closely related to demand and as such we need to fully understand the impactors on performance for this area of work.
- 2.5.4 The number Section 47 Core Assessments completed in timescale has increased from March-April. However, the total number of completions has also increased, which has resulted in a net decrease in percentage.

## **2.6 Looked After Children (LAC)**

- 2.6.1 Year 1 of the 3-year LAC reduction strategy closed with LAC numbers at 1067 against a year-end objective of 1065 (based on the highest achievable performance) from a starting point of 1141. Phase 2 of the strategy is currently being developed by Interim AD, Helen Wetherall, to ensure it is aligned with the underpinning principles of Signs of safety and the new operational structure.
- 2.6.2 As noted at 2.5.1 re: Safeguarding, LAC allocated to social workers are consistently high and we consider this to be embedded practice.
- 2.6.3 Completion rates of LAC Health Assessments (HA) is another area considered to be 'stuck'. Work is ongoing to understand why this is the case. However, having reviewed our own processes and performance, we are confident that delays in requests from social workers are not a significant impactor on performance. In relation to initial HAs Health colleagues have noted a national deficit in Paediatric-trained GP's and across all HAs, cited difficulties in establishing cooperative arrangements with other CCGs. A report on HA performance has been submitted to the Health & Wellbeing Board and we will continue to support and challenge health colleagues to improve the situation.
- 2.6.4 Completion rates of LAC care plans has now been above 94% for 5 consecutive months. However, we remain concerned that the quality and effectiveness of plans remains some way short of where it needs to be. This view is backed up consistently by audit activity around LAC cases. The new Tier 4 posts in social



work and independent statutory services will be tasked with ensuring there is a cohesive approach to care planning quality as our performance focus begins to move more towards qualitative analysis, with specific attention being given to impact and outcomes for LAC and their families.

- 2.6.5 Pathway plan completion averages at approximately 80% but analysis shows significant variation across teams and suggests that demand is not the primary impactor. Further team-by-team investigation will be undertaken to understand and address poor performance.
- 2.6.6 PEP completions appear to have plateaued in the mid-80%. Feedback from staff has suggested that the development of an electronic PEP would greatly improve the completion process. To that end, the Head of the Virtual school has undertaken to develop an e-PEP which will be rolled out in the next academic year.

### **3. Compliments and Complaints**

- 3.1 The number of compliments has risen from 148 for 2013/14 to 170 for 2014/15, an increase of 15%. Across the same period, the number of complaints received has fallen from 800 to 747 a decrease of 7%, mirroring a similar decrease experienced from 2012/13 to 2013/14.
- 3.3 The overall totals of upheld and partially upheld complaints are 6% and 9% respectively.
- 3.4 54% of complaints received relate to perceived standard of service and given the relatively low ratios of upheld/partially upheld cases, this infers that in many cases, service users are unhappy with outcomes rather than service.

### **4. Financial Implications**

#### **4.1 Revenue – Local Authority Budget**

- 4.2 The 2014/15 Children's Services revenue budget is £161.903 million. There is no Local Authority funding of schools as they are funded completely by the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 4.3 **As at the end of period 12, (March 2015) the year end monitoring report shows an overspend of £1.329 million for the year.**
- 4.4 The following summary table shows by type of budget, the actual spend for the year. The table shows the variance from the approved budget both in terms of a cash sum and as a percentage of the approved budget.

#### 4.5 Revenue – Local Authority Budget

Division of service	Approved budget £m	Outturn £m	+Over/- Underspend £m	+Over/ - Underspend as % of budget	Movement since last report £m
<b>Spending Increases</b>					
Looked After Children - Agency	23.307	26.157	+2.850	+12	+0.747
Adoption allowances	1.200	1.348	+0.148	+12	-0.037
Fostering recruitment	0.041	0.141	+0.100	+244	+0.085
Residence/ kinship payments	2.268	2.751	+0.483	+21	-0.013
OFSTED unregulated accommodatio n	0.335	0.713	+0.378	+113	+0.028
Leaving Care	1.008	1.781	+0.773	+77	+0.773
Home to School Transport	24.829	25.423	+0.594	+2	-0.176
Education Support Grant	(10.756)	(10.049)	+0.707	+7	+0.074
Agency social Workers and NIPE	2.300	5.025	+2.725	+118	+0.240
<b>Spending Reductions</b>					
School Pension /Redundancy costs	4.094	3.693	-0.401	-10	+0.083
Looked After Children Legal	4.053	3.312	-0.741	-18	+0.089
Looked After Children Transport costs	0.782	0.597	-0.185	-24	+0.005
Fostering allowances	8.373	8.223	-0.150	-2	+0.070
NCC run Children's Homes	3.436	3.305	-0.131	-4	+0.094
School Crossing Patrols	0.410	0.290	-0.120	-29	
Clinical Commissionin g	1.176	0.593	-0.583	-50	-0.039
Information, Advice and Guidance Service	1.761	1.475	-0.286	-16	-0.036

Early Years and Childcare Service	3.678	2.888	-0.790	-21	-0.270
Business Support	4.252	3.955	-0.297	-7	+0.013
Various staff vacancies			-0.200	n/a	
Disability Short term breaks	3.053	2.707	-0.346	-11	-0.346
Primary computing	0.401	0.030	-0.371	-93	-0.371
Locality Coordinators	0.418	0.258	-0.160	-38	-0.160
School Psychology Service	1.264	1.110	-0.154	-12	-0.154
Maximisation of grant	0.000	0.000	- 2.495	n/a	-0.680
<b>Total</b>			<b>+1.348</b>		<b>+0.019</b>

4.6 The main reasons for the variances are shown in the following table:-

Division of service	+Over/ Underspend £m	Reasons for variance
<b>Spending Increases</b>		
Looked After Children (LAC) - Agency placements	+2.850	The number of Looked After Children has reduced to the targeted number for the year, however the majority of the reduction took place in the latter part of the year which meant that there was not a full year financial effect, along with the reduction of LAC numbers being driven by LAC with lower cost packages (average LAC cost is £51,345 compared to £46,105 in previous year).
Adoption allowances	+0.148	Increased cost of adoption allowance payments as a result of more adoptions.
Fostering recruitment	+0.100	A greater number of fosterers recruited during the year.
Residence/ kinship payments	+0.483	Additional number of residence/ kinship payments due to a higher number special guardianship orders.
Ofsted unregulated accommodation	+0.378	Additional cost of Ofsted unregulated accommodation for 16/17 year olds
Leaving Care	+0.773	Additional cost of care leavers independent living support arrangements.
Home to School Transport	+0.594	Additional cost of school transport to Schools, Specialist Resource Bases and Short Stay Schools offset by lower home to school transport costs for mainstream.
Education Support Grant	+0.707	Reduced level of grant due to maintained schools becoming academies
Agency social workers and NIPE	+2.725	Additional costs of agency social workers and the Norfolk Institute of Private Excellence

<b>Spending Reductions</b>		
School Pension /Redundancy costs	-0.401	Reduced number of school teachers being made redundant
Looked After Children Legal	-0.741	Reduced cost of legal services, through a reduction in numbers and time required
Looked After Children Transport costs	-0.185	Tighter control on non-public transport use
Fostering allowances	-0.150	Reduced number of fostering payments
NCC run Children's Homes	-0.131	Reduced running costs of NCC Children's Homes
School Crossing Patrols	-0.120	Savings on staff vacancy costs
Clinical Commissioning	-0.583	Savings on therapy and assessment commissioned services
Information, Advice and Guidance Service	-0.286	Savings on staff vacancies and running costs
Early Years and Childcare Service	-0.790	Savings on staff vacancies, running costs and training of Early Years providers
Business Support	-0.297	Savings on staff vacancies and additional lettings income
Various staff vacancies	-0.200	Savings on staff vacancies across Children's Services
Disability Short term breaks	-0.346	Careful case management of entitlement
Primary computing	-0.371	Capitalisation of school broadband costs
Locality Coordinators	-0.160	Additional school attendance court fine income
School Psychology Service	-0.154	Savings on staff vacancies and additional traded income
Maximisation of grant	-2.495	Use of the troubled families grant and other miscellaneous grants and contributions

#### 4.7 Revenue – Schools Budget

4.8 The Dedicated Schools Grant funds the Schools Budget. The Schools Budget has two main elements, the amounts delegated to schools and the amounts held centrally for pupil related spending. The amount delegated to schools includes a contingency which was allocated to schools for specific purposes.

4.9 The Dedicated Schools Grant can only be used for specified purposes and must be accounted for separately to the other Children's Services spending and funding.

#### 4.10 Variations on Dedicated Schools Grant Funded Budgets

4.11 The variations are presented in the same way variations within the budget for Local Authority services are being reported. The following summary table therefore shows for budgets with an in year variances, the actual spend for the year. The table shows the variance from the approved budget both in terms of a cash sum and as a percentage of the approved budget.

#### 4.12 Revenue – Schools Budget

Division of service	Approved budget £m	Outturn £m	+Over/- Underspend £m	+Over/ - Underspend as % of budget	Variance in forecast since last report £m
School maternity staff costs	1.256	1.233	-0.023	-2	-0.141
School suspended staff costs	0.358	0.203	-0.155	-43	-0.064
3 and 4 year old Early Years places	18.713	18.864	+0.151	-1	+0.451
2 year old Early Years places	8.424	6.045	-2.379	-28	-0.044
2 year old Early Years infrastructure	1.036	0.247	-0.789	-76	-0.253
Special education non-maintained	12.003	13.107	+1.104	+9	-0.161
Special schools	20.900	21.249	+0.349	+2	
Alternative education provision	1.708	1.934	+0.226	+13	+0.036
Services to schools	0	0.150	+0.150	n/a	
Minority Achievement & Attainment Service	0.725	0.533	-0.192	-26	-0.052
Special Schools ASD unit	0	0.352	+0.352	n/a	
SEN Capacity and Development Fund	1.143	0.813	-0.330	-28	-0.330
School Post 16 Top Up Fund	2.365	1.965	-0.400	-17	-0.400
School de-delegated contingency fund	0.724	0.391	-0.333	-46	-0.333
Contribution to schools contingency reserve			+2.269	n/a	+1.291
<b>Total</b>			<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>

4.13 The main reasons for the variances are shown in the following table:-

Division of service	+Over/- Underspend £m	Reasons for variance
School maternity staff costs	-0.023	This is a centrally held budget that has been by the school's forum for the benefit of maintained schools. The lower cost is a result of a lower number of temporary staff required to cover maternity leave.
School suspended staff costs	-0.155	This is a centrally held budget that has been by the school's forum for the benefit of maintained schools. The decreased cost is a result of a lower number of temporary staff required to cover suspended staff.

3 and 4 year old Early Years places	+0.151	The overspend is as a result of a higher number of hours being claimed for 3 and 4 year old places than forecast through childminders netted of against some children not claiming their full entitlement. This isn't a reflection of the number of children that are accessing the service, it just represents the numbers of hours claimed by those children.
2 year old Early Years places	-2.379	The funding for 2 year olds was based on targeted numbers and the underspend represents the fact that the full year impact of the increased number of 2 year old places has not been seen, but will in the next financial year when the funding moves to actual places based on lagged figures.
2 year old Early Years infrastructure	-0.789	The underspend represents an agreement with a provider that has enabled external funding to be leveraged.
Special education non-maintained	+1.104	This represents additional requirement for places for Children with additional needs
Special schools	+0.349	This represents additional requirement for places for Children with additional needs.
Alternative education provision	+0.226	This represents additional requirement for places for Children with additional needs.
Services to schools	+0.150	This represents the support of an outreach service to reduce the pressure on places within special schools
Minority Achievement & Attainment Service	-0.192	This underspend is as a result of savings on staff vacancies
Special Schools ASD Unit	+0.352	This represents the support of an outreach service to reduce the pressure on places within special education non-maintained provision.
SEN Capacity and Development Fund	-0.330	Reduced spend against fund through better working with clusters
School Post 16 Top Up Fund	-0.400	Lower take up from fund for additional needs for post 16 pupils.
School de-delegated contingency fund	-0.333	Reduced use of contingency fund de-delegated for maintained schools due to less academy conversions with a deficit.
Contribution to schools contingency reserve	+2.269	Additional contribution to school contingency reserve as a result of the above variances

#### 4.13 School Balances

4.14 The Scheme for Financing Schools in Norfolk sets out the local framework within which delegated financial management is undertaken. Schools accounts have been closed and balances reconciled. This paragraph sets out in summary terms the position of Norfolk schools balances at 31 March 2015 and compares them with balances at 31 March 2014.

#### 4.15 Balance Redistribution Mechanism

4.16 Schools are able to hold revenue balances for:-

- School contingency funding, not exceeding 8% of the final budget share or £20,000 whichever is the greater.
- An exception based on a school by school justification.
- Surpluses derived from sources other than the budget share e.g. YPLA sixth form funding, contributions from parents for school trips where expenditure will not be incurred until the following year or surpluses arising from providing community facilities.
- Unspent cluster funding activities.
- In exceptional circumstances, with the authorisation of the Head of Schools Finance, where an individual allocation amounting to more than 1% of the final budget share was allocated after 1st February.
- Voluntary Aided schools are allowed to hold revenue monies to fund governors' liabilities towards DFE grant aided capital work.

The following is a clarification of the procedure that came into effect from 1 April 2014, whereby a balance analysis mechanism became applicable to ALL funds held by clusters.

The legitimate purposes that balances may be held for are:-

Cluster general funding:

- To allow clusters to make provision for general cluster staffing costs for the following Summer term.
- To allow clusters to retain funds for any future costs associated with staffing adjustments for general cluster-related posts e.g. cluster PSA, admin staff etc. The sums carried forward to be a reasonable estimate of the potential redundancy payment due if the post(s) were to be removed.
- To allow clusters to retain any general cluster-related funds earmarked for specific projects.
- Any balance of general cluster funds that cannot be justified should be returned to the member schools and would therefore be subject to the analysis of school revenue balances mechanism.

Cluster trading income:

- Surpluses derived from sources other than the cluster SEND budget share or from contributions from cluster member schools to fund general cluster posts e.g. income from provision of activities to other clusters or schools from other clusters etc. The sums retained to be no greater than that received during the year.

Cluster SEND funding:

- To provide the cluster with a SEND-related contingency funding, the amount not exceeding 8% of the delegated cluster SEND budget for the 2014/15 financial year, or £20,000, whichever is the greater.
- To allow clusters to make provision for SEND-related staffing costs for the following Summer term.
- To allow clusters to retain funds for any future costs associated with staffing adjustments for SEND-related posts, TUPE or contractual obligations to third parties e.g. cluster SENCo, etc. The sums carried forward to be a reasonable estimate of the potential redundancy payment, TUPE costs or contracted payments due if the post(s) or services were to be removed.
- To allow clusters to retain any SEND-related funds earmarked for specific projects linked to improving outcomes for identified pupils. This category can only to be used in exceptional circumstances.

Cluster additional in-year funding, outside the capacity and development fund:

- Any additional SEND funding allocated to clusters by the Local Authority after the 1 January each year is outside the balance analysis mechanism.

4.17 Table 1 compares the value of school balances at 31 March 2015 with 31 March 2014 .

**Table 1 – School balances – Value of balances**

School type	at 31/03/14			Academised during year - Balance at 31/03/14	at 31/03/15			Change between years	
	Balance (£000)	Overs pend (£000)	Total (£000)		Balance (£,000)	Oversp end (£000)	Total (£000)	Balance (£000)	Overs pend (£000)
Nurseries	70	0	70	0	103	-1	102	33	-1
Primary	14,796	-195	14,601	1,554	15,038	-644	14,394	1,797	-449
Secondary	7,537	-512	7,025	2,273	3,530	-302	3,228	-1,733	210
Special	1,089	0	1,089	0	1,213	0	1,213	124	0
Partnerships	251	0	251	0	5	4	1	-246	-4
Clusters	4,159	0	4,159	0	3,231	0	3,231	-929	0
Short stay school	0	-176	-176	-176	0	0	0	0	-176
<b>Totals</b>	<b>27,902</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>27,018</b>	<b>3,652</b>	<b>23,120</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>22,168</b>	<b>-954</b>	<b>-68</b>

4.18 Table 2 shows the average level of positive and negative balances held by Norfolk schools analysed by school type

Type of school	Balance (£000)	Overspend (£000)	Total (£000)
Nursery	52	1	51
Primary	53	31	22
Secondary	208	151	57
special	121	0	121
Partnerships	5	4	1
Clusters	66	0	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>57</b>

4.19 Table 3 shows by each type of school the level of balances compared with the overall budget.



**Table 3 – School balances– Comparison of budget share with balances at 31 March 2015**

Type of School	Position at 31/3/15
	(%)
Nursery	11.95
Primary	6.94
Secondary	4.59
Special	5.38
Partnerships	0.00
Clusters	33.87
<b>All Schools</b>	<b>7.13</b>

4.20 Table 4 compares the number of schools with surplus and deficit balances at 31 March 2014 with 31 March 2013.

School type	at 31/03/14			Academised during year	at 31/03/15			Change between years	
	Balance	Overs pend	Total		Balance	Overs pend	Total	Balance	Overs pend
Nurseries	3	0	3	0	2	1	3	-1	1
Primary	330	12	342	37	284	21	305	-9	9
Secondary	22	2	24	5	17	2	19	0	0
Special	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	0
Partnerships	2	0	2	0	1	1	2	-1	1
Clusters	49	0	49	0	49	0	49	0	0
Short stay school	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	-1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>10</b>

4.21 Schools with negative balances have received advice and support to help them recover their overspend in 2014/15. The level of school balances, both positive and negative, contributes to the overall assessment of the Local Authorities risk assessment of the school.

#### 4.22 Capital Programme

	2014/15	Future Years
	£m	£m
Approved Budget	37.390	107.346
Outturn	37.390	107.346
<b>Variation from Approved Budget</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>

4.23 The 2014/15 approved capital budget contained £83.066 million of estimated payments in 2014/15. Since approval the approved budget has decreased by £45.676 million to £37.390 million. This is due to re-profiling of spend across financial years.

- 4.24 The 2014/15 projected outturn as at the end of period 12 is £37.390 million.
- 4.25 **This projected outturn as at the end of period 12 shows a £0.000 million or 0.0% capital budget variance for the year..**
- 4.26 All funding has been committed to individual schemes and programmes of work.
- 4.27 **Children's Services Reserves and Provisions**
- 4.28 A number of specific reserves and provisions exist within Children's Services. The table in Appendix C sets out the balances on the reserve and provision in the Children's Services accounts at 1 April 2014 and the balances at 31 March 2015.
- 4.29 The table has been divided between those reserves and provisions relating to Schools and those that are General Children's Services reserves and provisions.

## **5. Issues, risks and innovation**

- 5.1 Appendix D shows the children's services corporate risks and mitigations. This is the latest version of the register.
- 5.2 These risks are regularly reviewed by both the CS Leadership Team and the Chief Officer group and are reported and reviewed at each Audit Committee meeting.
- 5.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**  
This report deals with equality issues throughout.

## **6. Background**

- 6.1 Improvement in Children's Services continues to be given a high priority by the Council with determined focus on safeguarding and support and challenge for schools. Our first priority is to make sure that all children are safe and achieve the best possible educational outcomes. We will then build dynamic, self-assured, forward thinking, sustainable services that are valued and recognised as outstanding by all service users, staff, auditors and inspectors. We will increasingly work with all our partners to ensure we provide a consistently high quality service that achieves the best possible positive outcomes and impact for children and families. We will get it right for every child every time.
- 6.2 This report summarises our improvement progress using performance measures contained in scorecards and associated information and data to demonstrate impact and highlight issues. The report also demonstrates mitigations against the four corporate risks that children's services are currently reporting which are shown above.

## Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained or want to see copies of any assessments, e.g. equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

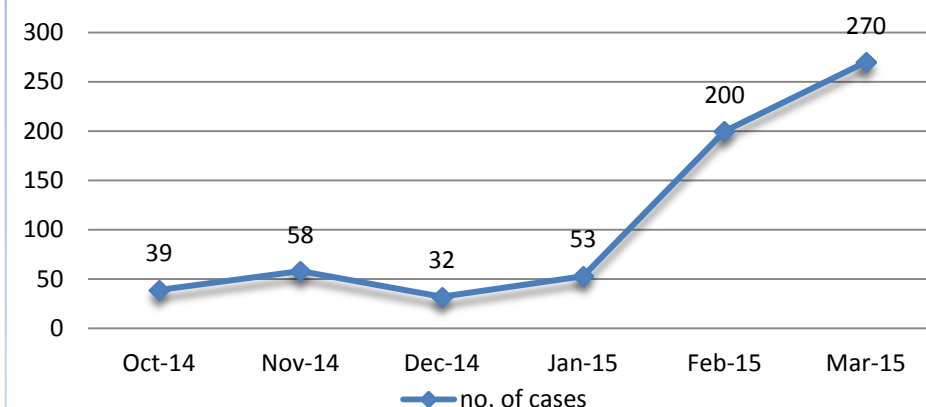
Don Evans	tel: 01603 223909	<a href="mailto:don.evans@norfolk.gov.uk">don.evans@norfolk.gov.uk</a>
Owen Jenkins	tel: 01603 223160	<a href="mailto:owen.jenkins2@norfolk.gov.uk">owen.jenkins2@norfolk.gov.uk</a>
Gordon Boyd	tel: 01603 223492	<a href="mailto:gordon.boyd@norfolk.gov.uk">gordon.boyd@norfolk.gov.uk</a>
Cathy Mouser	tel: 01603 217653	<a href="mailto:catherine.mouser@norfolk.gov.uk">catherine.mouser@norfolk.gov.uk</a>
Sal Thirlway	tel: 01603 223747	<a href="mailto:sal.thirlway@norfolk.gov.uk">sal.thirlway@norfolk.gov.uk</a>



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

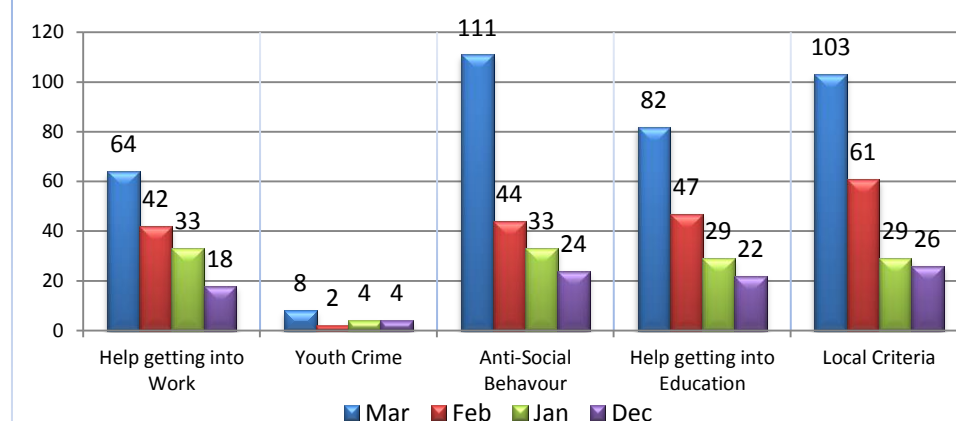
# Norfolk Early Help Family Focus Performance Overview Dashboard March 2015

## Referrals in - Requests for Support



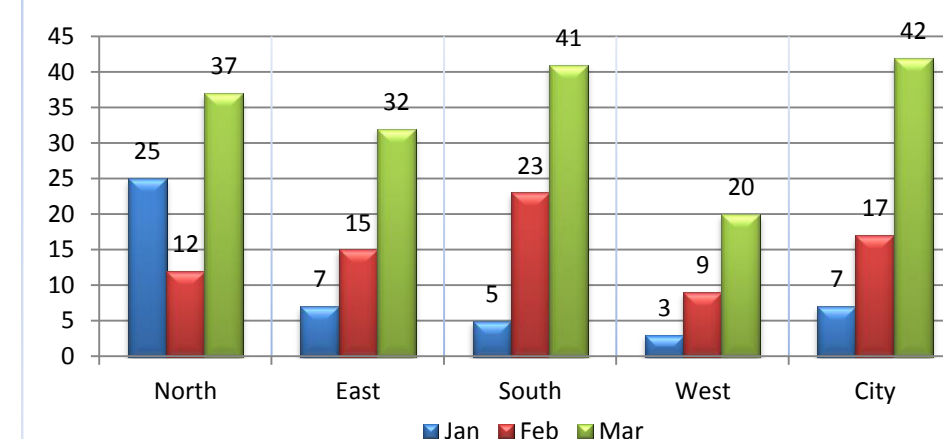
Demonstrates the requests for support into the team. Traditionally these have been via FSP, but increasingly these have come from the downloadable form. We now also include the step down cases within this group.

## Referrals in - Needs at point of entry



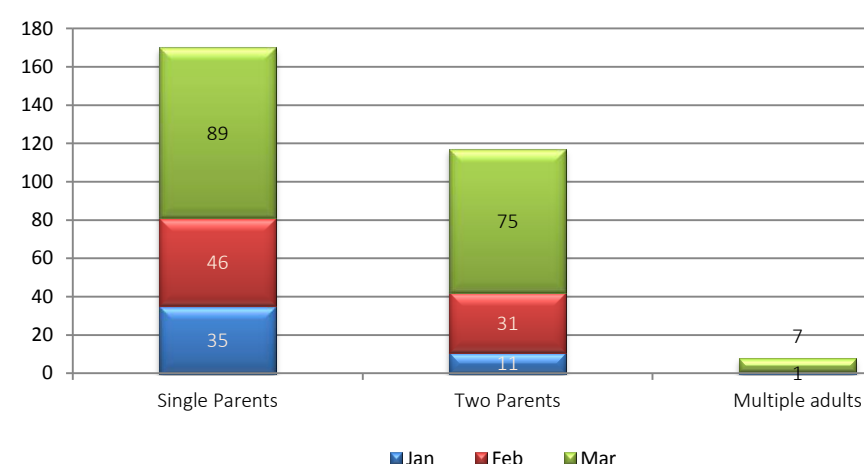
Demonstrates the needs split on entry to the programme, in line with Payment by Results outcomes. Local Criteria area will be expanding to include more indicators for Phase 2

## Referrals in - Area case allocation



Demonstrates the allocation and therefore the impact upon each operational area. A significant increase in caseload is seen across the districts.

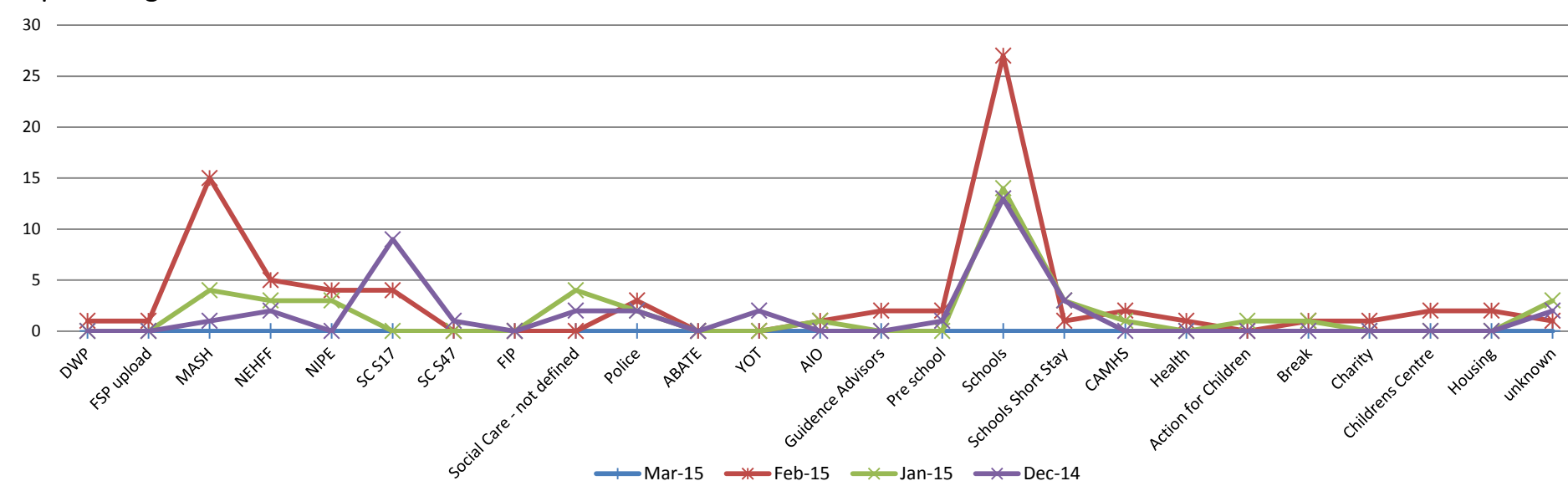
## Referrals in - Adults in Household



93% increase in single parent families and a 142% increase in households with 2 adults present.

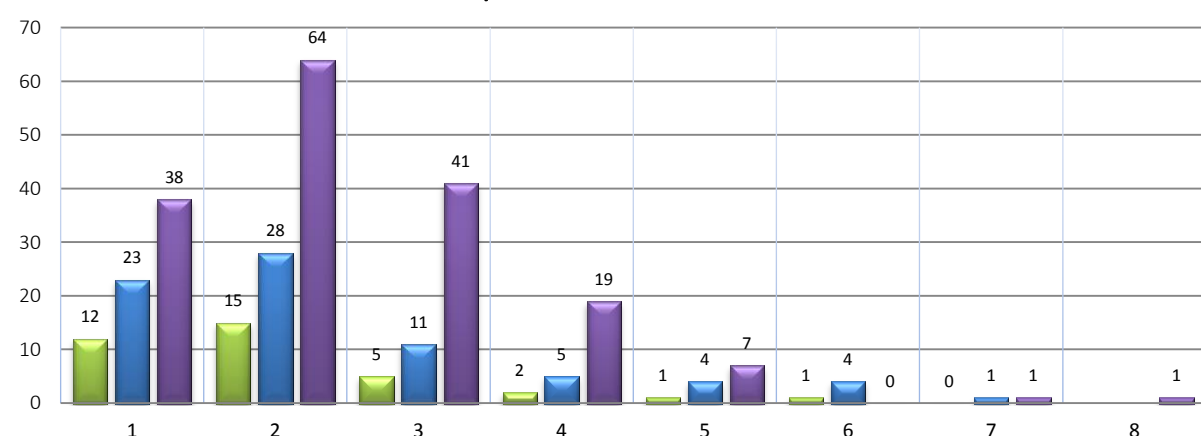
For the most part multiple adults refers to grandparents living in the family home

## Request Originators



Is the breakdown of the request for support originators. The analysis demonstrates that schools are the greatest originators, with Mash and step down being the next largest originator.

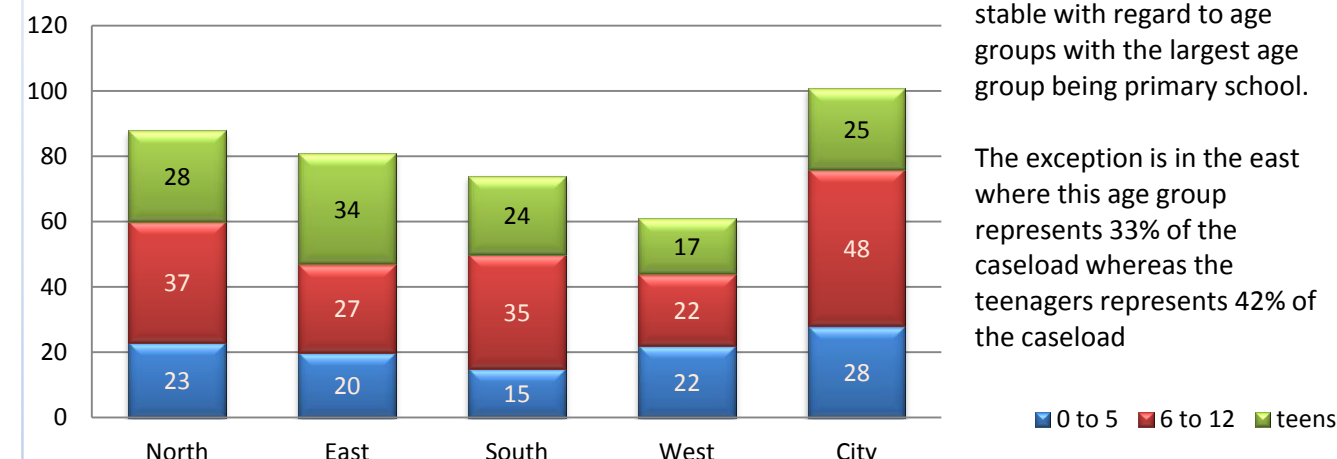
## Referrals in - Children in Family



The size of the family can have a significant impact upon the work required with the family.

We have an average of 2.4 children in each household throughout the county

## Referrals in - age split

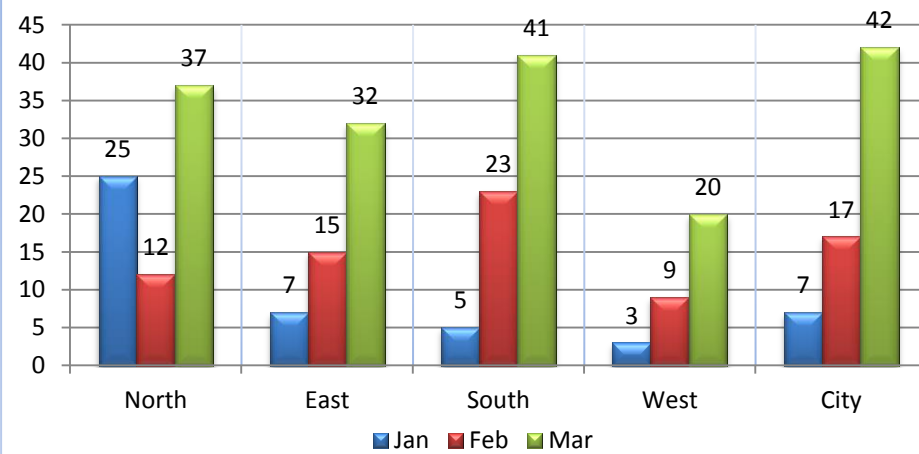


March referrals remained stable with regard to age groups with the largest age group being primary school.

The exception is in the east where this age group represents 33% of the caseload whereas the teenagers represents 42% of the caseload

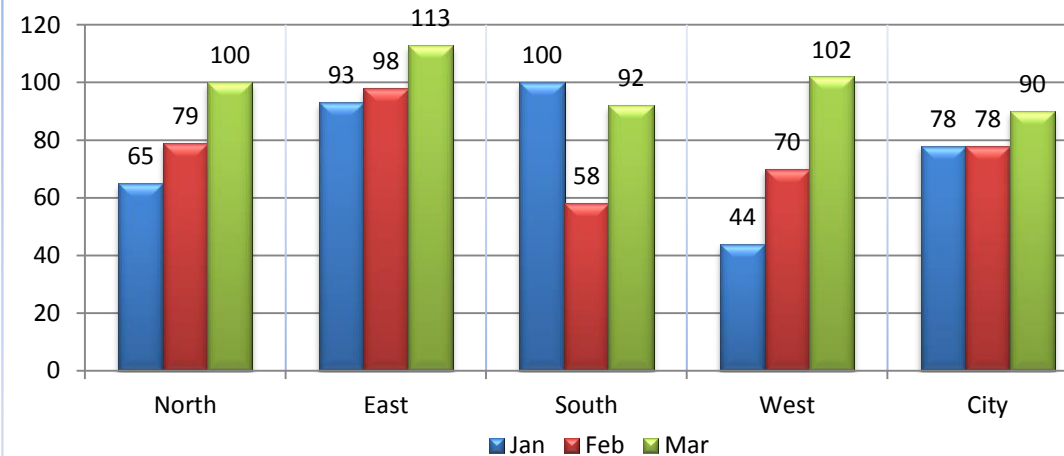
# Norfolk Early Help Family Focus Performance Overview Dashboard March 2015

## New Case Allocation



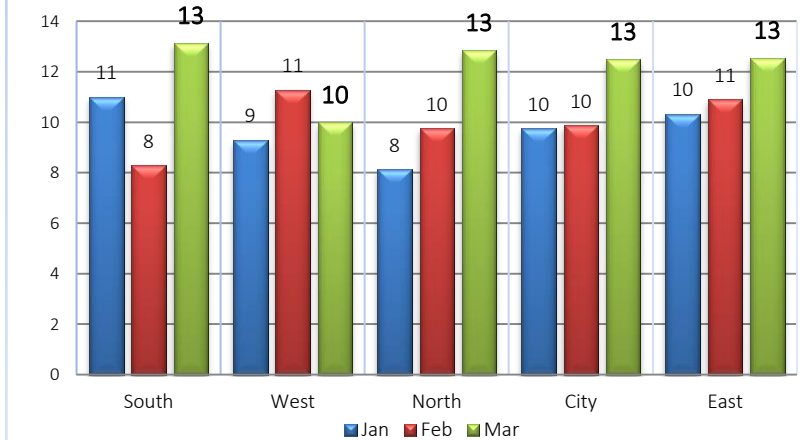
Of the 173 cases allocated out to the teams, 42% went to both the South and City NEHFF operational teams.

## Current Caseload splits



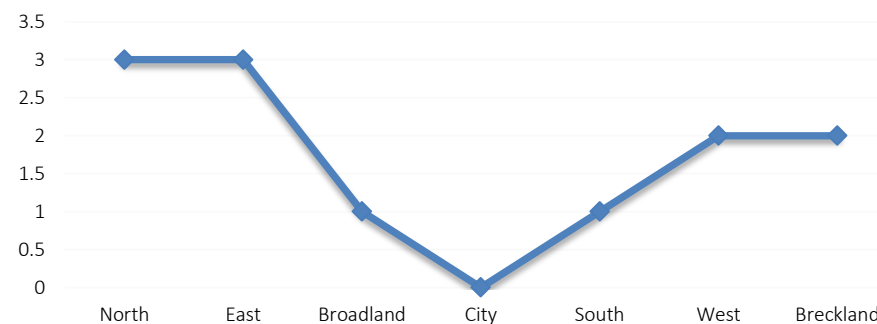
There are 497 active cases in Norfolk. In addition to the requests for support, the Duty Desks in each area, actions "Quick Cases" which effect all areas. The greatest geographical increase is within the South, where we see a 58% increase.

## Average caseload - per practitioner



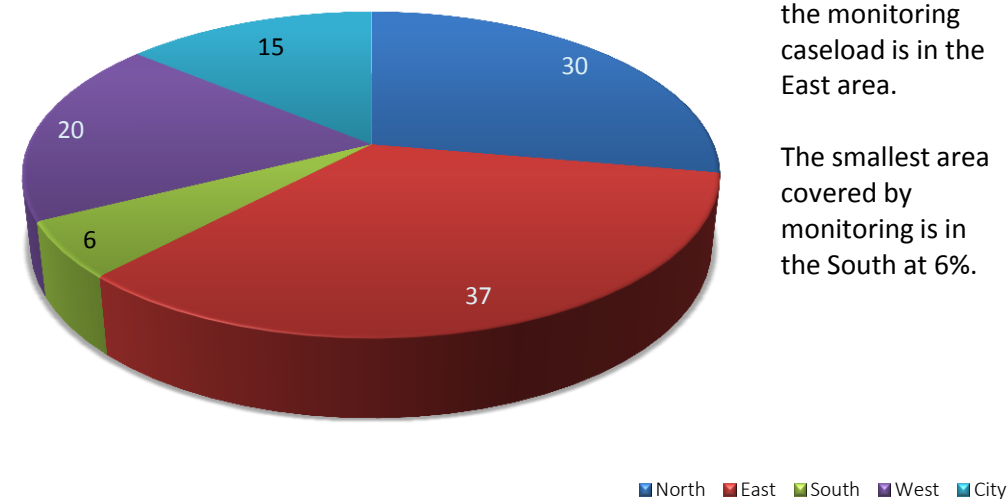
The average caseload per practitioner is 13 cases. In addition to this March, each area dealt with 8 duty desk cases, per team, per week.

## Number of referrals to monitoring



Referrals made to Monitoring with the North and East dominating. The city area has been quiet with monitoring referrals.

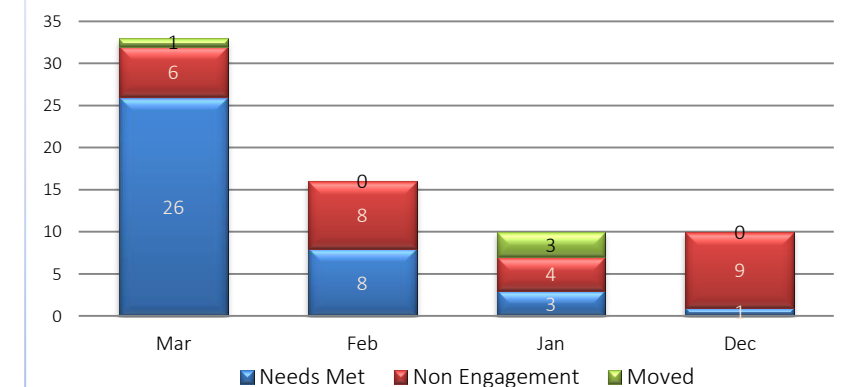
## Current Caseload in Monitoring



In march, 34% of the monitoring caseload is in the East area.

The smallest area covered by monitoring is in the South at 6%.

## Exit Profile



In March 79% of the families exited the programme in agreement that their needs had been met. 1 family moved from the area

	Identified	Active								Worked With	Families "Turned Around"		
	In March		Timeframe	No	No	No	Timeframe	No	No		As at 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2015 82%		
	Troubled Families Register: No of Families identified for Support	Family Support Process	Provider to NEHFF Referral In	Requests for Support	Cases Stepped down from Social Care (SC)	NEHFF cases referred back into the service for support	Central Referral In to Allocation	Cases waiting allocation to date	Cases Worked with by operational teams	Troubled Families Register: No of Families worked with by NEHFF/partners	Youth Crime/AS B/Education	Progress to Work	Full Employment
	Not exclusive												
County	174	1165	9 days	270	95	0	9.2 days	88	497	2330	0	0	0

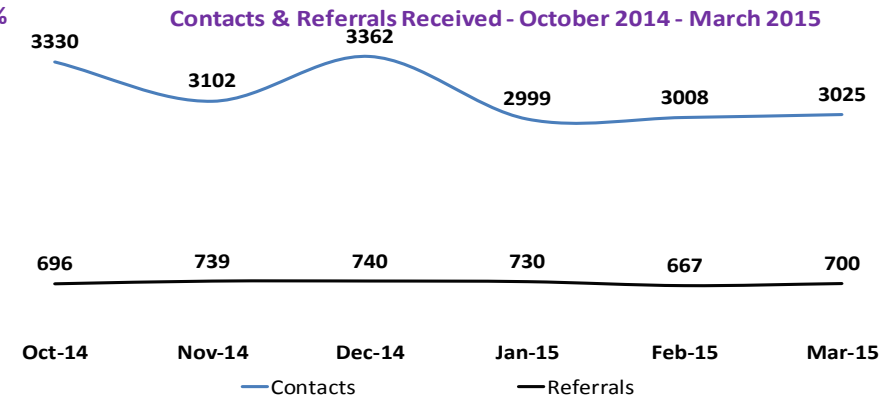
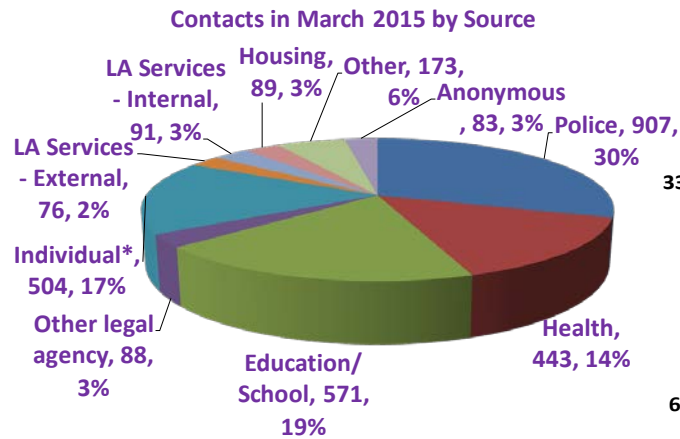
# Norfolk Children's Services Social Care Performance Overview Dashboard – March 2015 Data

## Contacts and Initial Assessments:

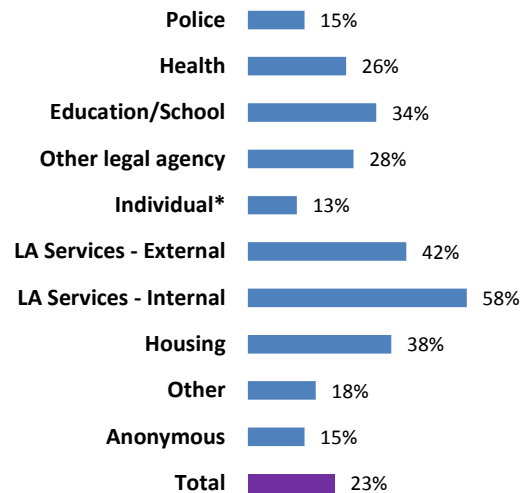
### Initial Contacts by Source:

	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
Police	1046	1063	907
Health	410	404	443
Education/ School	473	445	571
Other legal agency	39	59	88
Individual*	557	563	504
LA Services - External	76	69	76
LA Services - Internal	76	91	91
Housing	93	90	89
Other	172	148	173
Anonymous	57	76	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>2999</b>	<b>3008</b>	<b>3025</b>

\* Individuals are comprised of: Stranger/Family/Carer/  
Neighbour/Self



### Conversion of Contacts to Referrals by Source:

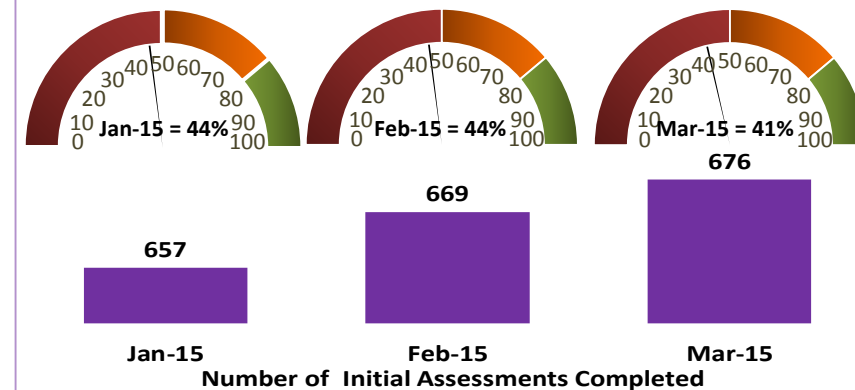


\* Individuals are comprised of: Stranger/Family/Carer/  
Neighbour/Self

### Percentage of Re-Referrals:

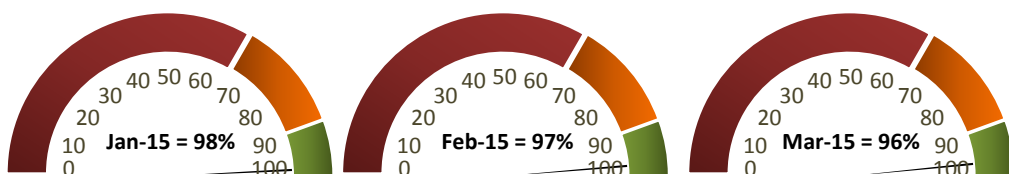
Re-Referrals	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
Norfolk	22.6%	20.1%	24.0%
England 2013/14		23.4%	
Statistical Neighbours 2013/14		26.1%	
East of England 2013/14		22.4%	

### Initial Assessments Completed in Timescales:



## Children in Need:

### Children in Need Allocated to a Qualified Social Worker:



### Ethnicity & Gender of Children in Need:

Ethnicity	Female	Male	Unborn	Total
Any other ethnic origin (please specify)	7	8	0	15
Any other mixed background	16	17	0	33
Arab	2	0	0	2
Asian - any other background	0	5	0	5
Bangladeshi	2	3	0	5
Black - any other background	3	9	0	12
Black African	13	14	1	28
Black Caribbean	0	0	1	1
Chinese	4	0	0	4
Indian	0	0	0	0
Not yet Available / Unknown	23	22	14	59
White - other background	67	64	1	132
White and Asian	2	1	0	3
White and Black African	1	11	0	12
White and Black Caribbean	4	7	0	11
White British	723	834	33	1590
White Irish	2	4	0	6
Total	871	1002	50	1923

### Section 17 Children in Need in CIN & CWD Teams with an up-to-date\* CIN Plan:

	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
No. s17 Children in Need	1157	1117	1063	1028	974	1004
No. s17 with CIN Plan	512	518	578	600	717	608
No. s17 without a CIN Plan	645	599	485	428	257	396
% with a CIN Plan	44.3%	46.4%	54.4%	58.4%	73.6%	60.6%
No. CWD Children in Need	317	304	299	292	286	277
No. CWD with CIN Plan	252	257	245	239	248	225
No. CWD without a CIN Plan	65	47	54	53	38	52
% with a CIN Plan	79.5%	84.5%	81.9%	81.8%	86.7%	81.2%

\* To count as having a CIN Plan, any existing plan must have been started or reviewed within the last 30 working days

### Rate of Children in Need per 10,000 Under-18 Population:

	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
Norfolk (Current)	336.3	300.5	288.3
England 13/14		346	
Statistical Neighbours 13/14		339.0	

### CIN Reviewed within Timescales:

	Reviewed in Timescales		
	In Time	Out of Time	% In Time
CIN Teams	641	363	63.8%
CWD Teams	229	48	82.7%
Other Teams	246	397	38.3%



# Norfolk Children's Services Social Care Performance Overview Dashboard – March 2015 Data

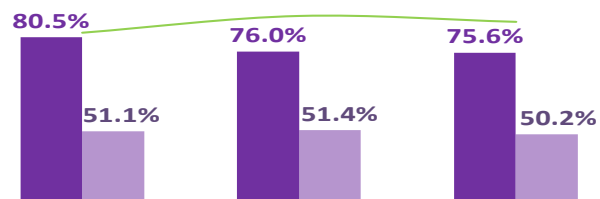
## Child Protection:

### Children in Child Protection Teams Allocated to a Qualified Social Worker:

	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
No. Children on CP Plan	558	595	582
No. Allocated to Qualified Social Worker	555	586	575
% Allocated to Qualified Social Worker	99.5%	98.5%	98.8%

99.5% 98.5% 98.8%

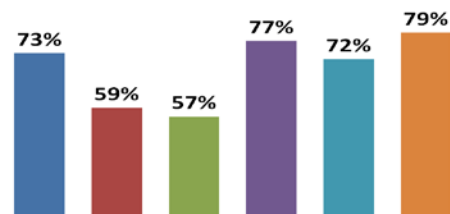
### Social Worker visits to Children on a Child Protection Plan in Timescales:



Jan-15 Feb-15 Mar-15  
 ■ % Seen in last 20 Working Days  
 ■ % Seen Alone in last 20 Working Days  
 — No. Children on CP Plan

	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
No. Seen in last 20 Working Days	449	452	440
No. Seen Alone in last 20 Working Days	285	306	292

### ICPCs within 15 Working Days of Strategy Discussion:

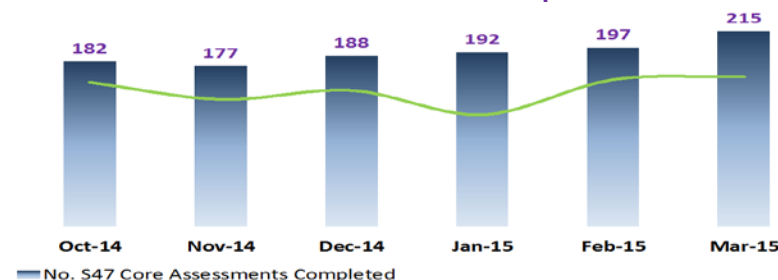


	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
Total ICPCs	101	90	113	64	113	80
Within 15 Working days	74	53	64	49	81	63
Over 15 Working Days	27	37	49	15	32	17

### Rate of Children on a CP Plan per 10,000 Under-18 Population:

	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
Norfolk (Current)	33.6	35.9	35.1
Norfolk 13/14		32.3	
England 13/14		42.1	
Statistical Neighbours 13/14		45	

### Section 47 Core Assessments Completed in Timescales:



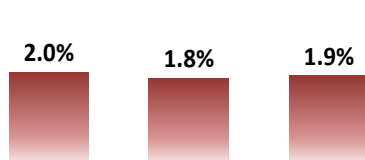
■ No. S47 Core Assessments Completed

■ No. S47 Core Assessments Completed within 35 Working Days

	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
No. Section 47 Core Assessments Completed	192	197	215
No. Section 47 Core Assessments Completed within 35 Working Days	123	162	165
% Section 47 Core Assessments Completed within 35 Working Days	64.1%	82.2%	76.7%

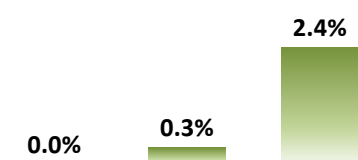
### Children on a CP Plan for 18 months & Over and Children Starting a CP Plan for a Second/Subsequent Time:

#### % Children on a CP Plan for 2+ Years

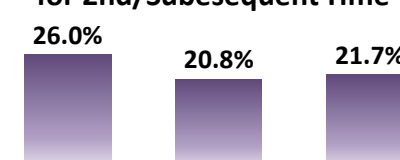


England 13/14 = 2.6%; Stat Nbr = 3.1%

#### % Children on a CP Plan for 18 months - 2 Years



#### % Children Starting CP Plan for 2nd/Subsequent Time



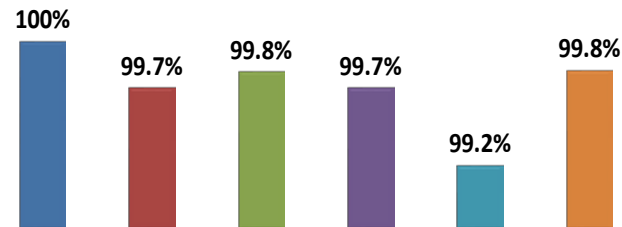
England 13/14 = 15.8%; Stat Nbr = 17.4%



# Norfolk Children's Services Social Care Performance Overview Dashboard – March 2015 Data

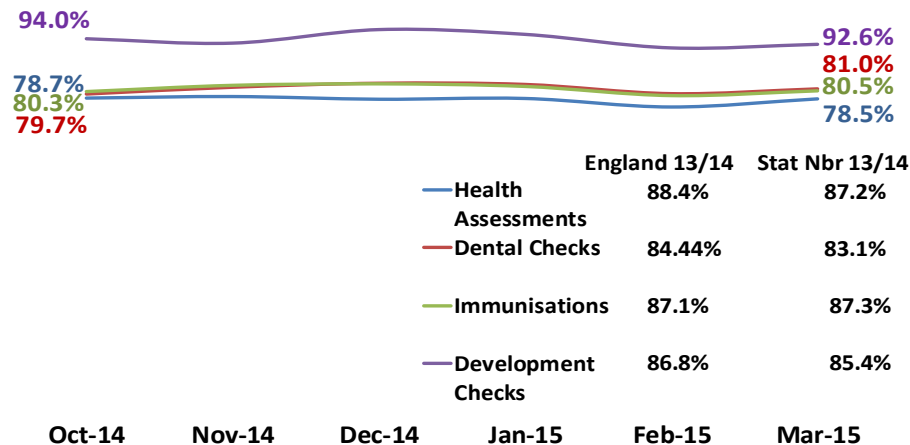
## Looked-After Children:

### Looked-After Children allocated to a Qualified Social Worker:

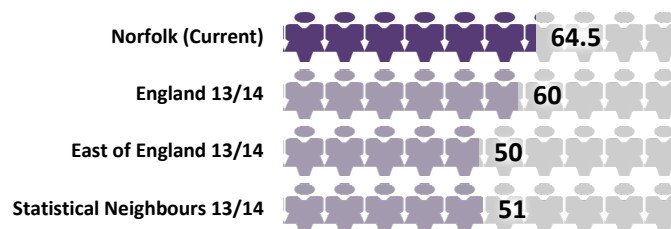


	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
Number	1118	1095	1061	1065	1067	1065

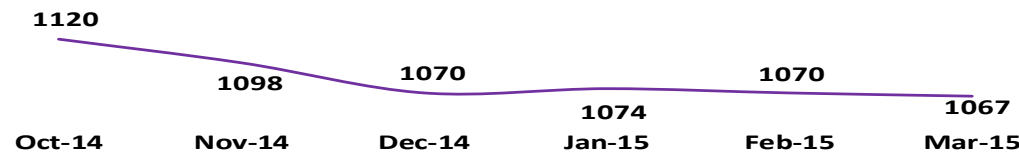
### Health of Looked-After Children:



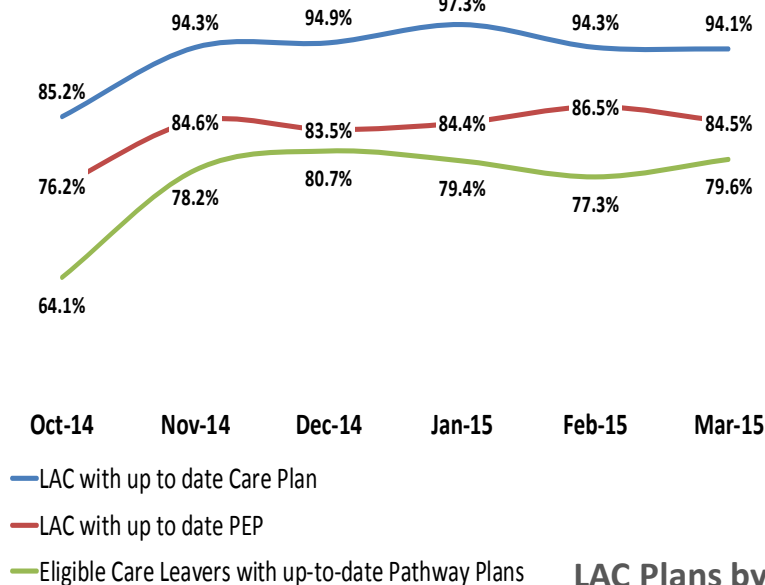
### Rate of LAC per 10,000 Under-18 Population



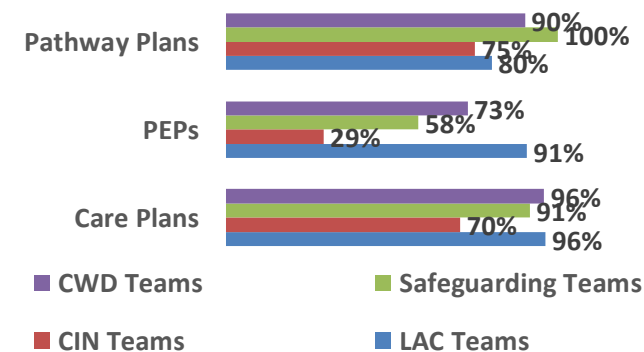
## Number of Looked-After Children:



### Care Plans, Pathway Plans & Personal Education Plans:



### LAC Plans by Area of Business - March 2015



## Appendix C: Reserves and Provisions

Title/description	Balance at 01-04-14 £m	Balance at 31-03-15 £m	Variance £m	Reason for variance
<b>Schools</b>				
Transport Days Equalisation Fund	0.249	0.655	+0.406	Reduced number of home to school/college transport days in the 2014/15 financial year as a result of the timing of Easter.
Schools Contingency Fund	9.315	10.227	+0.912	Investment in high need provision and net variances on DSG funded activities
Schools Non-Teaching Activities	1.170	1.355	+0.185	School balances related to non-teaching activities
Building Maintenance Partnership Pool	1.197	0.549	-0.648	Year-end balance on 5 year scheme to be reimbursed to participating schools
School Sickness Insurance Scheme	1.284	1.154	-0.130	Use of reserves in 2014-15
School Playing surface sinking fund	0.248	0.239	-0.009	Schools becoming academies
Education Provision for Holiday Pay	0.017	0.015	-0.002	Retirement of former staff
Non BMPP Building Maintenance Fund	1.034	1.044	+0.010	Net additional contributions from school
Norfolk PFI Sinking Fund	2.061	2.111	+0.050	Adjustment of profile for sinking fund
<b>Schools total</b>	<b>16.575</b>	<b>17.349</b>	<b>+0.774</b>	
Title/description	Balance at 31-03-14 £m	Balance at 31-03-15 £m	Variance £m	Reason for variance
<b>Children's Services</b>				
IT Earmarked Reserves	0.249	0.305	+0.056	Additional IT schemes
Repairs and Renewals Fund	0.179	0.153	-0.026	Use of reserves for renewal of equipment
Grants and Contributions	3.115	4.385	+1.270	Additional government grants received in 2014-

				15 but to be spent in 2015-16
Children's Services post Ofsted Improvement Fund	1.741	0.560	-1.181	Use of reserves to support Children's Services service improvement
<b>Children's Services total</b>	<b>5.284</b>	<b>5.403</b>	<b>+0.119</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.859</b>	<b>22.752</b>	<b>+0.893</b>	

Risk Register - Norfolk County Council																		Appendix D
	Risk Register Name		Corporate Risk Register													Red		
	Prepared by		Steve Rayner					High								Amber		
	Date updated		December 2014					Med								Green		
	Next update due		March 2015					Low								Met		
CDGSTP	Area	Risk Number	Risk Name	Risk Description	Date entered on risk register	Current Likelihood	Current Impact	Current Risk Score	Tasks to mitigate the risk	Progress update	Target Likelihood	Target Impact	Target Risk Score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date	Risk Owner	Reviewed and/or updated by	Date of review and/or update
C	Children's Services	RM14147	Failure to improve at the required pace.	CS Teams do not show the improved performance at the speed which is acceptable to DfE and Ofsted.	01/12/2013	2	5	10	Additional capacity in leadership and management in place with 'grow our own' model for sustaining social worker capacity in place. Additional social worker capacity in place. Robust and systematic performance management structures and processes established and beginning to embed. System leadership priorities to be agreed.	<b>SOCIAL CARE:</b> Improvement board has completed its work as part of NCC CS Phase 1 improvement. NCC and DfE are working together on the model for further challenge and support to assure and ensure pace and range of improvement activities. System leadership discussions are continuing with key partners' CEOs and are led by NCC MD. Signs Of Safety has been adopted as the philosophy of social work across NCC CS and partner services. Evidence from QA and Performance reports shows that improvements continue in the right direction. Recruitment to NIPE is complete and additional capacity is being offered through this initiative. NFF continues strong and rapid progress towards targets. SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: Ofsted inspection evidences that LASSI is effective. Overall - the restructure of children's services will ensure that structures are more strongly aligned with strategic priorities and new ways of working.	1	4	4	31/01/2016	Green	Sheila Lock	Helen Wetherall	01/12/2014
C	Children's Services	RM14148	Overreliance on interim capacity	Overreliance on interim capacity at leadership and management levels and in social worker teams leads to unsustainable performance improvement.	01/12/2013	3	5	15	Succession Planning. Skills and knowledge transfer from interim to permanent staff in place and showing positive impact. Need for permanent replacement to interim senior leadership team.	NIPE initiative is providing significant additional capacity and is showing signs of improving performance in teams were deployed. New structure has been published for consultation. Advertisements for DCS and ADs have been published and processes are moving forward to timescale and plan.	2	4	8	30/06/2015	Amber	Sheila Lock	Helen Wetherall	01/12/2014
C	Children's Services	RM13906	Looked After Children overspends	The number of LAC continues to increase so that the Looked After Children's budget could result in significant overspends that will need to be funded from elsewhere within Children's Services or other parts of Norfolk County Council	18/05/2011	5	5	25	LAC Reduction Strategy agreed by CSLT and being applied. LAC Panel now in place, chaired by DCS. Target reunification given to all LAC Teams and IRO's	Interim team targets have been profiled over the next year and a tracker to be produced. Interim additional management in place to drive performance to achieve targets. Private sector (Ingson's) reviewing every LAC case to address performance issues and identification of re-unification opportunities. work etc	2	4	8	30/06/2016	Amber	Sheila Lock	Helen Wetherall	01/12/2014
D	Children's Services	RM14157	Lack of Corporate capacity and capability in particular ICT and BIPS reduces the ability of Children's Services to	Lack of NCC capacity and infrastructure to support the back-office functions that Children's Services needs in particular ICT is becoming a limiting factor for improvement as DNA improvements are awaited.	13/03/2014	5	5	25	COG involvement to ensure pace of improvement is maintained over protracted timescale. Decentralisation of services for schools report to Education Challenge Board. More robust client side function.	Restructure brings a new post and team 'Clientside manager and team' - will ensure that the needs of the service are strongly expressed as part of all shared services planning in the future.	4	5	20	31/03/2015	Red	Sheila Lock	Helen Wetherall	01/12/2014

# Children's Services Committee

Item No 7

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Signs of Safety Policy Statement and Outcome framework update</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>12 May 2015</b>
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Sheila Lock</b>
<b>Strategic impact</b> Committee have previously received reports on the implementation of the Signs of Safety and agreed that Signs of Safety will form a central tenet of Children's Services improvement plan.  Adoption of this policy statement by Children's Services will formally bring us into alignment with congruent statements from the NSCB and the Children's Strategic Partnership Board.  The Outcome framework for measuring the impact of implementation of signs of safety has been tabled at the Partnership Board and continues to be under development.	

## Executive summary

**Committee are asked to consider and if in agreement, formally adopt the Signs of Safety policy statement.**

**Committee are also updated on the current position regarding the signs of safety Outcomes framework.**

## 1. Proposal

### 1.1 Norfolk County Council Children's Services Policy Statement

- 1.1.1 Norfolk Children Services have adopted Signs of Safety as the basis of work with children and families. Signs of Safety has also been adopted by the Norfolk Strategic Partnership Board as well as Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) as the core philosophy for working with children and families across Norfolk. This is significant because it signals a 'whole system change'.
- 1.1.2 The adoption of Sign of Safety ensures that a proven, evidence-based practice framework is used across all services creating consistent and inclusive experience across Norfolk for children and families in receipt of services. Families will become increasingly familiar with the concepts and vocabulary of Signs of Safety as it is used routinely in all our work with children and families from their first contact with practitioners in universal services and where necessary right through to child protection, children in public care and back to universal services.
- 1.1.3 Central to this approach is the use of specific practice tools and processes where professionals and family members can engage with each other in partnership to address and work together on solutions to meet the needs of children. Children's Services will use Signs of Safety as the basis of case discussions in multi-agency

fora such as Child Protection Conferences, Child in Need planning meetings and Looked After Children's Reviews.

## **1.2 Other assessment tools**

- 1.2.1 Signs of Safety does not preclude the use of other well tested evidence based theories and assessment tools used by a wide spectrum of professionals, indeed it complements them."

## **1.3 Outcome framework**

- 1.3.1 The outcome framework seeks to measure the impact of the implementation of signs of safety on children and their families. We are in the process of refining the framework following feedback from the Partnership Board, Mark Gurrey (DfE challenge partner) and others.
- 1.3.2 There are many variables at work in the delivery of services and the framework will seek to differentiate between those measures where signs of safety (SofS) is a significant (but not sole) factor, such as the number of Looked after Children, and those where there is a direct causal link between signs of safety and the outcome of the case. This will be predominantly measured by audit and customer survey undertaken in conjunction with Professor Eileen Munroe and Dr Mary Baginsky from Kings College London.
- 1.3.3 It should be noted that there are arrangements in place to facilitate a member workshop and that dates will be canvased following the elections. This will be a two hour introductory session, giving members an oversight of the changes this will bring.

## **1.4 Recommendation:**

- 1.4.1 Committee are asked to formally agree adoption of the Signs of Safety Policy Statement and note that work is underway on the outcome framework which will be reported in due course.

## **Officer Contact**

If you have any questions about matters contained or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with: Phil Holmes.

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# Children's Services Committee

Item 8

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Working together to support young carers and families</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>12 May 2015</b>
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Sheila Lock, Interim Director of Children's Services</b>
<b>Strategic impact</b>  As of 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2015 The Children and Families Act 2014 and The Care Act 2014 introduced new duties for Local Authorities to adopt a whole family approach to the identification, needs assessment and provision of support to young carers, young adult carers and their families.  Children's Services and Adults Social Care share legal duties with Schools, Colleges NSCB and Health partners to reduce inappropriate and excessive caring by children and young adults.  This report sets out the progress made to date in responding to these new duties and makes proposals to support the strategic plans for ongoing implementation.	

## Executive summary

### Recommendations:

The Children's Services Committee are asked to consider the report and agree that;

- The Committee endorses the principles of the approach set out.
- The Director of Children's Services ensures that young carers, young adult carers and their families are a specific twelve month focus in the plans of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board and its sub groups,
- That there is a similar discussion with the Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board as to how they will prioritise the needs of young carers in their respective plans.
- The Chair of Children's Services Committee works with the Chair of Adult Social Care Committee to improve joint working across Directorates in respect of young carers and families.
- The Assistant Director for Early Help engages in a review of multi-agency commissioned services for young carers and their families.
- The Assistant Director for Education provides a strategy and action plan to achieve the improved identification, attendance, attainment, achievement and support of young carers by Norfolk's Education Service, Early Years providers, Schools and Colleges as part of the new inclusion service
- Public Health be asked to update the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in respect of young carers and families.
- The Director of Children's Services works with the Chair of NSCB to deliver a programme of specialist multi agency training and workforce development activities in 2015
- Appoint a Task & Finish Group to consider the recommendations made by Norfolk Young Carers Forum "Getting our voices heard" (link in Section 5 to this report as a background paper).

## **1. Proposal (or options)**

- 1.1 In January 2015 Children's Services Committee endorsed the project objectives to integrate and align the implementation of the new duties into our existing and developing services. The principle of 'No Wrong Doors for Young Carers' was accepted requiring the Council to 'Think Young Carer and Family' in all of our decision making and actions both strategically and in our commissioning and delivery of services. The project will continue to adopt this evidence based approach to proactively influence all stakeholders to prioritise and integrate duties to young carers and families in their core and additional activities.
- 1.2 We have continued to work in partnership and consultation with key multi agency stakeholders ensuring that the aspirations, views and needs of young carers and their families are at the centre of our implementation and delivery of the new statutory duties. We are co-producing policy, integration pathways, process maps, practice guidance, assessment tools and information with young carers through Norfolk Young Carers Forum, The Young Adult Carer Reference Group, Carers Council and the with key statutory and third sector partners through the Projects Advisory Group chaired by Children's Services. Councillor James Joyce has been consulted in the preparation of this report through the Project Lead's representation to Children's Services Leadership Team.
- 1.3 In the current 'Getting in Shape' proposals for a restructure of Children's Services we have integrated the new young carer's needs assessment and whole family practice duties into the family support process and invested in our Norfolk Early Help and Family Focus Service to respond to the initial increased demands on services.
- 1.4 Children's Services are monitoring and analysing our existing commissioned young carers' individual support and positive activities services in light of these new duties. We recommend that The Assistant Director for Early Help is requested to engage in a review of the multi agency commissioned services to ensure our shared priorities and duties to young carers and families are included where appropriate.
- 1.5 Children's Services Committee endorsed the project decision to refresh the 'Working Together to Support Young Carers and Families in Norfolk' 2013 joint protocol between Children's and Adult's Services as the framework for this partnership work. This work stream is being progressed strategically at Director and Assistant Director level in Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Adult Mental Health Services supported by the Project Lead. We have also progressed joint development work with integration pathways, recording and case management, tracking and performance and outcome measurement systems.
- 1.6 The support of the Chair of Children's Services Committee and the Chair of Adult Social Care to improve joint working between the Directorates would be welcomed as a significant driver for achieving best practice in delivering against our shared duties. The DfE are due to publish a revised 'Working Together to Support young Carers' template for Local Authorities along with statutory guidance in May 2015



which will enable us to finalise key decisions required by the refresh of the protocol.

- 1.7 Children's Services have prioritised influencing and raising the profile of young carers in Schools and Colleges. A series of young carer awareness raising workshops and support to Schools was delivered by Healthy Schools Norfolk, NYCF and Norfolk Children's Services to over 50 Schools and at the University of East Anglia and City College in 2014. Follow up work offers a resource pack, support to achieve Healthy Schools Enhanced Status and/or NYCF Quality Standards. More workshops, INSET and other activities with Schools, Colleges, UEA, training providers and employers is planned for 2015 by the Council and partner agencies.
- 1.8 Children's Services are working with our Education Department's Attendance and Attainment Services and Schools and Colleges to explore adopting the principles of the Virtual School for Looked After Children to young carers. In particular we are looking at adopting a Designated Teacher or lead professional for young carers in Schools and Colleges. In order to drive this it is recommended that the Assistant Director for Education provide a strategy and action plan to achieve the improved identification of young carers, improved attendance, attainment, achievement and support of young carers by the Council's Education Service and Schools and Colleges.
- 1.9 Our Health partners including GP's, Nurses, Hospital staff and School Nurses have a vital role in the identification, assessment, prevention and support of young carers and their families. Children's Services and NYCF have been involved in the re-commissioning and training of Norfolk's School Nursing Service and this is a priority partnership to nurture and develop as the new service evolves. We are actively engaging with our partners in Clinical Commissioning Groups, the Child Health and Maternity Commissioning Services Network, the Health and Wellbeing Boards, Designated GPs and Nurses to agree how we work together. An update of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in respect of young carers and families by Public Health will be essential in enabling us to identify needs, target resources, and measure improvement.
- 1.10 We share multi agency duties to ensure that our staff are sufficiently knowledgeable and appropriately trained in identifying, assessing and supporting the needs of young carers, young adult carers and their families. In March 2015 Children's Services offered a series of awareness raising workshops in all 6 localities across Norfolk and to targeted teams. Over 200 Children's Services staff attended the workshops in the initial month of the programme. Further briefings are planned for Children's and Adult's Services staff and multi agency partners over the Summer to align with the new Children's Services structure. Adult Services have been delivering an extensive programme of training on the Care Act to key staff and were unable to take up the offer of initial joint training this Spring. In addition to adopting the principle of 'Think Young Carer and Family' to the development and commissioning of all of our workforce development activities including training and 'e' learning, we also need to deliver a specialist targeted programme to support working together with young carers and families. It is recommended that the NSCB deliver this programme.
- 1.11 In order for the Council to continue to deliver against our duties effectively we must strengthen our strategic and delivery partnership work across Children's and Adult Services and with Health Services, Schools, Colleges and the third sector. Prioritising young carers and their families as a twelve month focus of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board and sub groups, the Norfolk

Safeguarding Children's Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board will assist in ensuring we deliver against the new duties and strive to continue to build on our national reputation of being a progressive and innovative Local Authority showcasing evidence based good practice in our partnership work in supporting young carers and families in Norfolk.

## **2. Evidence**

- 2.1 The recommendations in this report have been developed in response to the implementation of the approach agreed by Children's Services Committee in January 2015. Committee received a full report evidencing the need for change and the proposed approach at that meeting. These papers are available via the link in Section 5.
- 2.2 The Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 introduced new Local Authority duties on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to improve how young carers, young adult carers and their families are identified, assessed and supported. The aim of the legislation is to reduce inappropriate and excessive caring by children and young adults. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) includes the duty to assess the needs of young carers. Our partners including Health, Schools and Colleges also have duties to reduce inappropriate and excessive caring by children and young adults.
- 2.3 The Children and Families Act gives the Local Authority an overarching duty to take reasonable steps to identify the extent to which there are young carers within their area who have needs for support. The Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. Statutory guidance is due from DfE in May 2015.
- 2.4 The regulations extend the right to an assessment of need for all young carers regardless of who they care for, or what type of care they provide. A Local Authority must carry out an assessment of a young carer's needs for support on request or on the appearance of need and the regulations prescribes the detail of the assessment and support requirements. The guidance states the cared for person's eligible needs should be assessed first and consider if any of the young carer's needs for support could be prevented by providing support to the person cared for or to another member of the family. The regulations link to the duties in the Care Act 2014 to consider the welfare of children in assessing an adult's needs for support and to reduce inappropriate and excessive caring by children and to consider a child carer's needs in the transition to adulthood and services at 18. The regulations also require Local Authorities to ensure that individuals carrying out needs assessments on their behalf must have sufficient knowledge and appropriate training.
- 2.5 Young carers often experience poorer outcomes than children without caring responsibilities. Young carers can often be late for School, or absent, fail to achieve their academic potential, miss out on extra-curricular, social and leisure activities due to their caring responsibilities. Carers Trust research 2014 found that two thirds of young carers were bullied at School because of their caring role. Young carers are twice as likely to experience physical and mental ill health in adulthood. Young adult carers are twice as likely not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) as their peers and four times as likely not to finish a University degree because of their caring duties.

- 2.6 Norfolk County Council Children's Services commission specialist and dedicated services to over 500 young carers annually. The young carer's individual support service delivered by Families House-Break is 40% joint funded by our Health partners and has an initial target to support 165 young carers annually. Children's Services additionally commissions Positive Activities services for young carers with all 8 contracts delivered by the Benjamin Foundation providing 26 age and stage groups across all localities in Norfolk with an annual capacity of 390 group places leading to an estimated 500 young carers accessing these specialist services. Our partners in the Projects Advisory Group reports that there are hundreds more young carers and their families being supported in Norfolk by a proactive, vibrant and diverse third sector. The Carers Agency Partnership (CAP) is jointly commissioned by the Council with Health to deliver a range of services for carers of all ages including information, advice and guidance services. (Link to CAP website in Section 5 of this report.)

### **3. Financial Implications**

There are no new external funding streams for this work. These legal duties have, and will continue to, contribute to an increase in the demand and need for services to young carers and their families. The Council needs to continue to prioritise and resource strategic development, partnerships and operational delivery to sustain the implementation of these duties and reduce inappropriate and excessive caring responsibilities of Norfolk's children and young adults. Costs will be met within existing agreed budgets and will require some reallocation of resources within direct and commissioned services. This delivery may reduce the provision for some existing service users.

### **4. Issues, risks and innovation**

- 4.1 The Big Lottery funded Norfolk Young Carers Forum (NYCF) is hosted by Crossroads Care East Anglia and promotes the voice of young carers and young adult carers in Norfolk. NYCF has been consulted by Council Officers as key stakeholders in the preparation of this paper and in the overarching planning for implementation of the new duties. NYCF completed a pioneering consultation programme with key stakeholders throughout 2014, including over 150 young carers aged between 6 and 20 years, published earlier this year in the NYCF report *'Getting Our Voices Heard'* (Link in Section 5 of this report.) Their views and proposals to the Council and other agencies have been incorporated into the development and recommendations in this report to Children's Services Committee. NYCF are currently working with Council Officers to co-produce information leaflets, practice guidance, assessment tools and multi-disciplinary training resources to promote good practice in supporting young carers and their families.

### **Key issues**

- There are multi-disciplinary workforce development and training resource implications internally, and with key multi agency stakeholders, to ensure effective multi agency identification and support of young carers and families. Given the multi-agency challenge the Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Board (NSCB) is best placed to be the key delivery partner in this area.

- The challenge for Norfolk County Council in delivering against these new duties to young carers, young adult carers and their families is complex and there are multiple cross directorate and external stakeholders including Children's Services, Adult Social Services, Health Services, Schools, Colleges, the third sector and most importantly young carers themselves and their families.
- No property implications identified.
- The Council is delivering against the new legal duties toward young carers, young adult carers and their families in the Children and Families Act and Care Act. The Council needs to ensure legal reform implementation is effective and compliant with performance measurement and inspection requirements. The proposals to Committee ensure the legal implications are addressed.
- A key risk is that demand for services may exceed resources. This will require clear thresholds for assessment and service access and robust performance monitoring and business analysis.
- Young carers are often disadvantaged and have poorer outcomes than their peers. By meeting these statutory duties the Council will also meet it's duties to reduce inequalities.
- Young carers have rights as children under the United Nations Convention 1989 including the right to privacy and family life, healthy development, to be protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and work that is dangerous or might harm their health or education, to relax, play and join in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities and the right to freedom of thought, belief, religion and expression. Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

In March 2015 the DfE published a response to the consultation on young carers' draft regulations undertaken earlier this year;

*"Government wants to see children and young people protected from inappropriate and excessive caring responsibilities so they have the opportunity to thrive and reach their potential in the same way as other children who do not have caring responsibilities.... We agree with the response submitted by ADASS/ADCS that no care or support package for a parent or sibling should rely on excessive or inappropriate caring by a young carer."*

A Norfolk child or young person has as much right to be educated in a 'good' school as a child or young person growing up in other parts of England. Norfolk County Council has pledged to accelerate the pace of educational improvement so that every Norfolk child or young person is entitled to a 'good' school place.

- No environmental implications identified.
- No health and safety issues identified.

## 5. Background

Information and services to young carers and families in Norfolk  
[www.carersagencypartnership.org.uk](http://www.carersagencypartnership.org.uk)

Norfolk Young Carers Forum (NYCF) 'Getting Our Voices Heard' consultation report;  
<http://www.crossroadseastanglia.org.uk/our-services/young-carers/norfolk-young-carers-forum/>

The Young Carers (Needs Assessments) Regulations 2015  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/527/contents/made>

Department for Education's response to the young carer's draft regulations consultation  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/young-carers-draft-regulations>

Previous project Report to Children's Services Committee 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015  
[http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Committees/tabid/62/ctl/ViewCMIS\\_CommitteeDetails/mid/381/id/8/Default.aspx](http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Committees/tabid/62/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/381/id/8/Default.aspx)

No appendices have been submitted with this report.

## **Officer Contact**

If you have any questions about matters contained or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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# Children's Services Committee

Item No 9

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Developing the children's system in Norfolk – working across the partnership</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>12 May 2015</b>
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Sheila Lock</b>
<b>Strategic impact</b> <p>To deliver a strong Children and young people service it is important that the partnership of agencies involved in Children's lives works together effectively. In order to continue to improve services in Norfolk it is important that agencies effectively plan, monitor activity, deliver improved performance and jointly commission together.</p> <p>This report sets out how existing arrangements will be strengthened, recommending the streamlining and refocusing of the work of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board, specifying its relationship with the Health and Wellbeing Board and clarifying the accountability and oversight provided by the Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Board. It also sets out to identify the links with other key Boards which have a role to play in ensuring that all children's needs are addressed effectively.</p> <p>The report suggests a methodology for continuous improvement that develops from effective planning for children as a whole partnership system.</p> <p>This report sits alongside the Signs of Safety work and supports the delivery of new approaches.</p>	

## Executive summary

As a key leader in children's services and with key statutory functions, the committee is asked to endorse and support the developments of the children's partnership and to recognise the improvements this will bring in considering children and young people holistically.

### Recommendations:

- 1. Members are asked to support the partnership developments outlined in this report and in particular to endorse the sub group structure outlined at Appendix 1**
- 2. Members are asked to decide how they would wish to receive regular updates on the work across the partnership.**

## 1. Proposal (or options)

- 1.1** In order to work effectively the Children and Young Peoples Board must work with a range of organisations and partnerships. This must not only focus on safeguarding but on the wider aspects of promoting cooperation to improve the

wellbeing of children. This is set out clearly in Working Together and the Children Act 2004. As well as developing the children's partnership, it is important that there is a clear relationship with other Boards across the county, whose prime responsibility might not be solely children but where the role is influential in improving outcomes for children. This includes the Health and Wellbeing Board.

- 1.2 It is clear that by refocusing on a shared vision, needs analysis, priorities and joint investment plans this will give greater clarity to the partnership and create clarity regarding priorities and investment in future years. This has been the experience of other Authorities whose partnership arrangements for children and young people have been considered in the development of this report.
- 1.3 Clarifying the arrangements for partnership is a key building block in delivering a sustainable model for the Children's system.
- 1.4 The framework for the partnership and the improvement mechanism are contained at Appendix 2.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Recent discussions between senior members of key partner organisations have reinforced the following:
  - A shared and collective vision to improve outcomes for Norfolk children
  - A recognition that it will take more than improvement in Children's Services within the council to drive improvements in outcomes across the county
  - A sense of recognising and wanting to collaborate for the greater good of Norfolk's children
  - Recognition that governance and the way our partnership structures work will be important
  - The Children's Services restructuring is a good catalyst for change
- 2.2 Improving the Children's Strategic Partnership will help to achieve the above and help the coordination of commissioning for the efficient and effective outcomes for Norfolk's children. By tackling the above and by aligning the sub groups to the Board it is an opportunity to enable the strategic leaders to influence and guide the delivery of work streams across the county. It will further enhance the involvement of a wider contribution to Board discussion rather than be focused, as at present, to a Norfolk Children's Services centric agenda.
- 2.3 The importance of the relationship with the Health and Wellbeing Partnership and other key partnership boards needs to be developed further. For example, there is a current priority of the H&WB Board to improve 0-5 emotional health and wellbeing and yet many of the determinants of good health are outside the gift of the Health Family. In addition there is no adequate coverage of other health inequality issues, such as obesity, dental health and teenage pregnancy. The terms of reference of the H&WB Board are amended to reflect the significance of the Children's agenda and the role of the CYPSP this so that the expectations and accountabilities are made explicit.
- 2.4 The establishment of a Health and Wellbeing group with a concentrated focus will assist in undertaking the delivery aspects of the children's agenda.

- 2.5 It is also clear that the development of an Early Help offer is critical to demand management across all organisations. It is also a vital part of improving the support network for families and their children earlier, locally in their communities. To deliver this approach there has to be a shared ambition for early help that extends beyond the Early Help Board and which is embedded in the strategic thinking of the system.

## Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

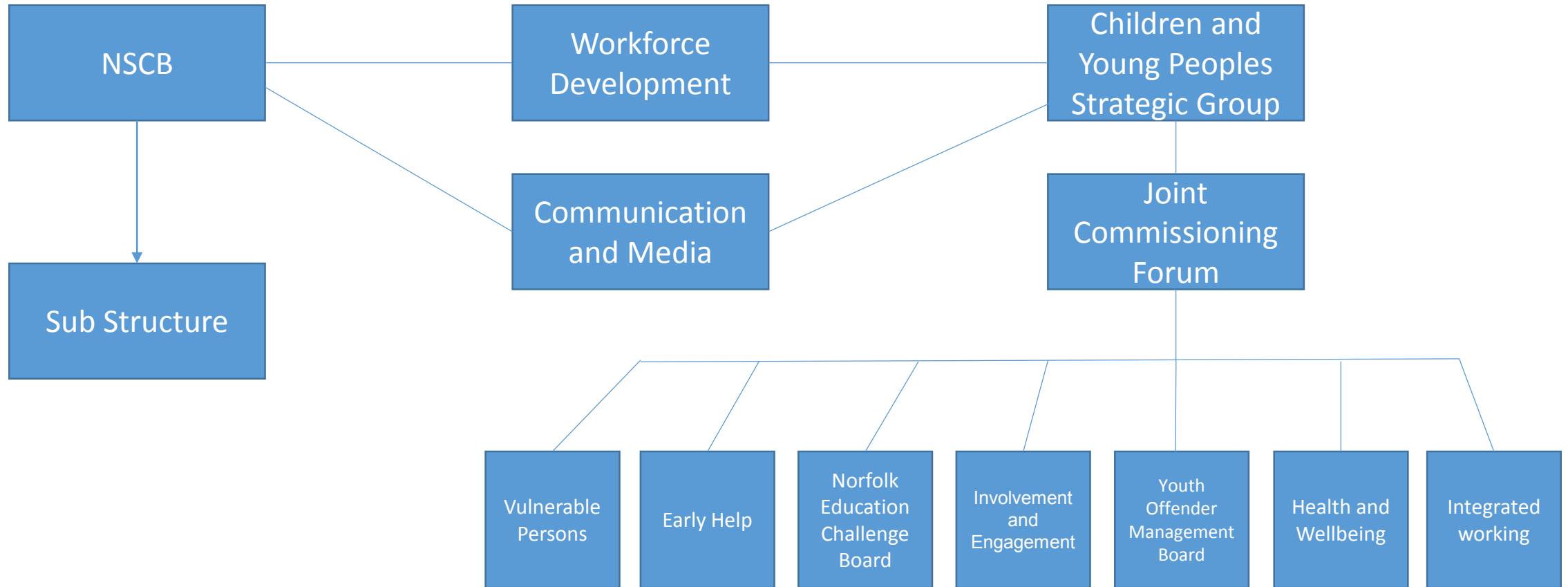
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## Continuous Service Improvement Framework

### Introduction

This document sets out an approach post the restructure to deliver improvement in a sustainable way. It links to the performance expectations of individuals and to the service planning process of the council.

The system that delivers to children, young people and families is increasingly complex. Complexity arises from a number of factors; the number of partners with responsibilities for commissioning and/or delivering services to vulnerable children; the changing legislative, policy and financial landscape; the different mechanisms for partnership working to align delivery and test the effectiveness way of services; the potential for changes within the workforce at operational levels and strategic levels.

This framework is designed to secure continuous service improvement in Norfolk. It sets out how the partnership will continue to work together to improve the effectiveness of services for vulnerable children, young people and families in the county.

There are a number of key elements that combine to form a continuous service improvement system and the purpose of this framework is to be specific about them, so that they are collectively understood and effectively used.

## Our shared ambition

The Ofsted Inspections in 2013 judged that the overall effectiveness of services in Norfolk for children, young people and families inadequate'. The shared ambition of the partnership is to go beyond 'requires improvement' to deliver the best possible outcomes for local children, young people and families. This means collectively working together to deliver services that are judged to be at least 'good'. In order to deliver our ambition, the framework for the next three years is designed to be sustainable and effective.

## Elements of the Continuous Improvement Framework

The continuous service improvement framework is the scaffolding constructed around the children, young people and family services system. It is designed to enable the partnership to develop and deliver services to the highest of standards so that the very best outcomes for children and young people are achieved.

The framework is made up of a number of dynamic elements. It is understood that it is the people (officers, elected members; non-executive officer; independent chairs) operating at different levels, with different functions in their organisations who will make the children's system work effectively. This requires everyone operating within the system to discharge their responsibilities effectively and to be held to account. These elements include:

- The Children's Partnership
- The Safeguarding Children Board
- Elected Member led challenge
- The performance and challenge board and its constituent parts
- A service plan that reflects the Children's service restructure
- External review and challenge
- Culture of respectful challenge
- The voice of the child
- Joint review of the framework

# Children's Services' Committee

Item No 10

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Schools Capital Programme 2015-18</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>12 May 2015</b>
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Interim Director of Children's Services</b>
<b>Strategic impact</b> The County Council has a duty to secure sufficient pupil places to meet the demands of the school-age population. It receives schools' capital allocations to support its strategic plans for the provision of additional places (Basic Need) and for improving the quality of existing provision (Capital Maintenance). The provision of high-quality places is central to meeting the County Council's objective of ensuring high standards of achievement in schools – Excellence in Education and the Council's strategy 'A Good Education for Every Norfolk Learner'.	

## Executive summary

This report proposes the annual revision of the schools capital programme, originally approved by Cabinet in April 2014. It details the new funding allocations received from the Education Funding Agency, some £17.7m confirmed for 2015/16 with indicative allocations to 2017/18. The 2015/16 allocation, together with unallocated sums from previous years, is allocated to approved priorities; a small number of new schemes, based on the corporate capital prioritisation mechanism are introduced. Pressures for future programmes are identified.

The report is based upon the advice and recommendations of Capital Priorities Group at their meetings in January and March 2015.

### Recommendations:

- To approve the proposed revision of the 2014-17 schools capital programme as set out in Annex A, to become the working 2015-18 programme
- To approve the overall direction of travel for capital prioritisation in forward years (section 3).

## 1. Proposal and Background

1.1 This report proposes the annual revision of the schools capital programme, originally approved by Cabinet in April 2014. It forms part of an annual Committee reporting cycle as follows:

- November – identification of emerging capital pressures and priorities for the forward years
- January - Growth and Investment Plan (summary of strategic pupil place pressures)
- May – proposed revisions to capital programme in the light of funding allocations

- 1.2 Committee has agreed the terms of reference and working basis for Capital Priorities Group (CPG), whose work supports and monitors the progress of the capital programme between these Committee dates, with delegated powers of decision-making to the Director of Children's Services as required, as advised by CPG. The new arrangements for CPG enable a stronger role for the group within the partnership framework of our overarching strategy for high educational achievement in the County.
- 1.3 This report is based upon the revised Growth and Investment Plan approved by Committee in January 2015, which approved the strategic direction for the medium/long-term provision of school places. It also draws upon the decisions of Policy and Resources Committee in January 2015 which approved the County Council's overall capital programme and in particular concluded the first annual process by which capital bids were scored and ranked corporately.
- 1.4 The revised programme in this report covers only the schools capital programme element of the Children's Services budget approved in January and includes the financial allocations received from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) in January 2015. These were reported to Capital Priorities Group in March 2015
- 1.5 With this background, and based upon the advice and recommendations of Capital Priorities Group at their meetings in January and March 2015, this report:
- Details the financial allocations received from the EFA
  - Details previously unallocated sums brought forward for reallocation
  - Presents a refreshed capital programme for the period to March 2017, using those allocations where required
  - Identifies the scale of currently unallocated funding, to form the basis of scheme prioritisation in the next annual cycle and of contingency calls.
- 1.6 It is relevant to note that the ability to undertake a planned, more strategic process in this way has only been possible with the advent of three-year rather than annual capital allocations from the EFA.

## 2. New financial allocations sums available for allocation

- 2.1 The following table shows the capital allocations received from the Education Funding Agency and which, from 2015/16, are able to be added to the existing schools capital budget:

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
<b>Basic Need</b>	£16,135,000	£16,135,000	<b>£8,519,782</b>	£8,945,771 *	£25,929,398*
<b>LA Capital Maintenance</b>	£12,275,688	£11,508,000	<b>£9,240,950</b>	£9,240,950*	£9,240,950*
<b>VA Schools**</b>	£1,481,777	£1,811,451	<b>£1,304,245</b>	£1,304,245*	£1,304,245*

\*indicative sums only

\*\*Voluntary Aided allocations are not controlled by NCC and do not feature further in this report.

- 2.2 The following table shows the new allocations to the end of the financial year 2016/17 alongside unallocated or unspent sums from previous years' EFA grant. All these sums are now available for reallocation.

<b>Budget Allocation</b>	<b>Funding to 31/03/2015 (£m)</b>	<b>New Funding 2015/16 (£m)</b>	<b>New Funding 2016/17 (£m)</b>
Basic Need 15-16 Unallocated	1.039		
Land Purchase	0.543		
Early Years Capacity	0.783		
Temporary Classroom Movements	1.447		
Capital Maintenance Funding Unallocated	6.006		
Capital Maintenance Funding 15/16		9.241	
Capital Maintenance Funding 16/17			9.241
Capital Maintenance Funding 17/18			
Capital Maintenance Contingency	1.000		
Capital Receipt	0.700		
<b>Total of Budget Allocation</b>	<b>11.518</b>	<b>9.241</b>	<b>9.241</b>
<b>Total Funding Available to 31/03/2017</b>	<b>£30.000m</b>		

### 3. Policy and operational basis for the programme

Financing the revised programme

- 3.1 The policy basis for the programme remains as approved in April 2014:

- A - Growth – developing the capacity of the estate to meet pupil number growth
- B - Implementing specialist, targeted and improvement strategies
- C – Improving the condition and efficiency of the estate.

For planning and monitoring purposes each category is broken down into a series of sub-categories, identifying areas of capital intervention which can be made to support improvement to the operational quality of schools. Schemes seek to address any combination of sufficiency, suitability and condition need, according to the specific case.

- 3.2 In revising the April 2014 programme we have, with the support of Capital Priorities Group at their March meeting:

- Incorporated cost estimate revisions as schemes have become clearer in scope and cost;
- Removed all block funding so that every project is identified by name
- Included only standard initial fee allocations of £50k for new schemes
- Shown the planned growth at individual schools, by Form of Entry

For the sake of clarity, we have excluded schemes where the whole budget has been allocated from funding granted in years prior to 2015/16. Most of these are nearly complete.

- 3.3 The proposed revision to the programme is shown at Annex A, showing existing and new allocations to each scheme.

## Remaining unallocated funding

3.4 The following table shows the remaining unallocated funding once this revision has been made:

<b>Current Funding Position (including indicative 2017/18 allocations from EFA)</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>% against programme budget</b>
<b>2015/16</b>		
New Capital Maintenance Funding 15/16	9.241	
Plus Previous Funding Available as at 31/03/2015 (approx)	11.518	
Minus Funding Needed for 2015/16 schemes	6.882	
Funding Remaining at 31/03/2016 (approx)	13.877	9.61%
<b>2016/17</b>		
New Capital Maintenance Funding 16/17	9.241	
Plus Previous Funding Available as at 31/03/2016 (approx)	13.877	
Minus Funding Needed for 2016/17 schemes	21.431	
Funding Remaining at 31/03/2017 (approx)	1.687	1.17%
<b>2017/18</b>		
Approx Funding Available 2017/18 (remaining funding at 31/03/2017 plus new 17/18 funding of £35.17m)	36.857	100%

3.5 The next annual cycle of identifying need and priorities will be begun by Capital Priorities Group at their May meeting, leading to further prioritisation in November (see para 1.1 – annual cycle)

3.6 In particular, CPG have already acknowledged the need to take account of the following:

- Priority mobile replacement schemes where further repair is unsustainable
- Growth area major schemes
- Response to structural changes to school and early years organisation in local areas
- Capital/accommodation response to the developing Inclusion strategy
- Emerging admission pressures for school entry in September 2016.

3.7 Meeting pupil number growth pressures will remain the overarching priority. The overall medium term picture for the primary phase in Norfolk suggests a levelling off of recent increases in the birth rate, but clearly forecasts can only offer a five year forward picture. There is considerable variation locally in the extent to which primary school capacity meets demand. Pressure is likely to remain in urban areas but there can also be very intense pressure on individual schools in more rural areas, sometimes in respect of single age-cohorts. In contrast there are issues around unfilled places in some rural areas and, for small schools, particular challenges arising from long-term changes in population patterns. Longer-term demand in the secondary phase is already the subject of strategic planning and will be the focus for the allocation of the 2017/18 Basic Need capital funding, currently unallocated.

3.8 Our forward programmes must therefore be flexible as pupil number pressures change and new ones emerge. All schemes in the programme funded as Growth schemes are kept under review so that if numbers do not materialise as anticipated, funding can, with CPG advice, be reallocated to other growth areas.

Specific schemes in the revised programme

- 3.9 Capital Priorities Group has considered in detail a number of growth schemes in the programme where additional funding has been necessary to meet increases in the project scope. For instance, Roydon Primary, where a proposed expansion to support growth in the Diss area has evidently become a more strategic requirement. Emerging strategic priorities identified to Capital Priorities Group include the response to the new housing proposed in North Lynn, around the Lynnsport complex. This has been included for the first time in the programme in the form of an initial allocation to permit feasibility work.

#### West Norfolk Specialist Academy

- 3.10 The largest new project in the programme by cost is the new specialist academy in West Norfolk, with an overall capital cost of £7m.
- 3.11 The decision to commission a new specialist academy in West Norfolk was taken by Cabinet in November 2013 as part of an overall £10million investment in specialist provision. This investment was informed by the SEN strategy and on a clear business case regarding the need for further provision and the benefits this would bring to children and young people and also to funding pressures within the Dedicated School Grant and associated NCC SEN Transport costs. Critically this project will now also contribute strongly to Norfolk's emerging work on inclusion, through our new Education Inclusion Service.
- 3.12 Norfolk's current SEN strategy was established, through Cabinet approval, in 2009 and was refreshed in 2012 and again in November 2013; the latter Cabinet decision was to approve the basis for the expenditure of additional funding to:
- Build capacity in mainstream schools and clusters;
  - Build capacity in Norfolk's own specialist provision
  - Support early identification, provision and transition to school for learners with SEN with Early years settings
- 3.13 The SEN strategy over the past six years has been based on the change in model of special schools to complex needs schools, the change from learning support centres to specialist resource bases and the establishment of formal procurement processes to secure other specialist / alternative provision within the non-maintained and independent sector in Norfolk; a clear focus being to reduce expenditure on high cost 'out of county' placements.
- 3.14 This SEN Strategy will now be superseded with a broad and overarching Inclusion Strategy as part of the establishment of the Education Inclusion Service. Aspects of the current SEN strategy will be embedded in the new, broader approach to ensure that we secure a sufficiency of specialist provision. In particular the focus now will be on securing sufficient specialist provision within key geographical locations to ensure that we can provide an equitable 'Offer' across Norfolk and we can reduce travel time and travel costs. An associated focus within the specialist provision element of the broader Inclusion strategy will be the need to ensure that specialist providers assist our plans to include more children and young people in their local mainstream schools where appropriate.
- 3.15 The commissioning of a new specialist academy in Kings Lynn fulfils the requirements of both the established SEN Strategy and also the vision within the emerging Inclusion Strategy. It is designed to address the pressure in both the High Needs Block (Dedicated Schools Grant) and the NCC SEN Transport



budget, through long-term sustainable solutions, enabling current cohorts and future new admissions to be accommodated closer to their home addresses.

- 3.16 Norfolk is experiencing significant population growth and this is expected to continue. The County Council may need up to 20 schools by 2021 to cater for the predicted rise in demand for school places, including in the King's Lynn and West Norfolk area. It is reasonable to assume that the number of children requiring specialist education will also rise proportionally, hence the need to future-proof provision of specialist expertise and limited opportunity for placements.
- 3.17 The DfE's 'Academy/ Free School Presumption Process' has been followed in order to commission the required new provision. A robust 'competitive dialogue' approach has been used to assess applications from potential academy sponsors and a decision has been made by the Regional Schools Commissioner, endorsing our local recommendation for 'Catch 22' as the provider. This decision is now awaiting endorsement by the Secretary of State
- 3.18 A site in NCC's ownership at Bryggen Road Kings Lynn was identified as suitable in size and location for this scheme. At its meeting in March 2015, Capital Priorities Group considered the financing options for the whole developing schools capital programme, taking into account new capital allocations from Government for 2015-17. The assessment of the Specialist Academy project was based on the, by then, more developed proposals presented by NPS. Options considered in detail were
- Refurbishing the existing buildings;
  - Partial refurbishment (retaining hall and kitchen of existing building)
  - New build but with specification reduced from Building Bulletins/reduced pupil numbers;
  - Phased construction
- 3.19 CPG supported this proposal in full, concerned that compromises on e.g. classroom size, age range and pupil capacity number would impede the achievement of the key aims of the project and the underpinning policy.
- 3.20 The proposal in the appended capital programme is that the £7m project be funded £5m from the main capital budget and £2m from funding available by permitted virement to capital from the High Needs Block of the Direct Schools Grant.

## **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The financial position is set out above, including reference to previous approvals. As the revised programme is based entirely on grant funding, there are no revenue implications for the County Council.
- 4.2 Savings that accrue through the more efficient provision of school buildings can be applied by the individual school to teaching and learning.
- 4.3 Where projects will be part or fully-funded by developer contributions, the County Council has to underwrite the risk of payment triggers not being reached by the developer but pupil yield being sufficient to require the new school places. As developer contribution comes through, so funding is released back into the budget for reallocation to other priorities.

- 4.4 There is a small risk attached to the future indicative capital allocations, in that the EFA may adjust the Capital Maintenance allocations in future to take account of pupils in schools transferring to the academy sector. However the LA retains responsibility for Basic Need allocations.

## **5. Issues, risks and innovation**

- 5.1 Some projects remain at scoping stage so all sums allocated are subject to change as projects develop; a number of risks will be mitigated by the improved decision-making mechanisms in place, through Capital Priorities Group, about when a project is permitted to proceed from its scoping stage to feasibility and greater cost-certainty. This will provide controls for the programme costs as a whole.
- 5.2 There are a number of time and financial risks in planning the growth of pupil places to meet changing demand. They include the impact of the economic situation on the housing market, the availability of full funding under the new CIL arrangements, the need to accommodate children from the early phases of new housing before a new school comes into operation and the revenue sustainability of a new school in the first years of operation. At present a key risk is securing land for necessary expansion and the ability to secure planning consents on expanding the building footprint on constrained school sites.
- 5.3 The Place Planning and Organisation Service works to control risks in partnership with other departments, particularly through the project management service within NPS Property Consultants, the Development Control section and the recently-established Corporate Property Team. There is also continuing work on innovation within projects to control time and cost factors.

## **6. Background**

- 6.1 The background has been set out earlier in this report, together with relevant prior Committee approvals for this direction of travel.
- 6.2 Committee papers:
- Cabinet – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014, Item 11:
  - Children's Services Committee – January 2015, Item 9:
  - Policy and Resources Committee – January 2015, Item 9 vi:

## **7. Recommendation**

### **Recommendations:**

- To approve the proposed revision of the 2014-17 schools capital programme as set out in Annex A, to become the working 2015-18 programme
- To approve the overall direction of travel for capital prioritisation in forward years (section 3)

## Officer Contact

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Scheme - Land Purchase (Growth)	Allocations in Previous Years	2015/16		2016/17		Total Project Budget £m
		Previously Allocated	New	Previously Allocated	New	
Land Block Allocation	0.050	2.879	0.064	0.000	0.000	2.993

Scheme - Growth	Allocations in Previous Years	2015/16		2016/17		Total Project Budget £m
		Previously Allocated	New	Previously Allocated	New	
Attleborough Junior Remodelling - 2FE primary	0.050	0.000	0.250	0.000	1.700	2.000
Attleborough new school - re-organisation of Infant to Primary	0.015	1.485		5.000	1.500	8.000
Bignold Primary - to 3FE	0.101	0.800		1.779		2.680
Catton Grove Primary - to 3FE	1.951	0.079		0.000		2.030
Cawston Primary - to 1FE	0.000	0.279	0.121	0.000		0.400
Costessey, St Augustine's RC - to 1.5FE	0.076	0.794		0.000		0.870
Drake Infant - to 2FE Primary, Thetford	0.430	2.685		2.685		5.800
Dussindale - to 2FE	0.637	0.269		0.000		0.906
Gt Yarmouth Primary Academy - to 2FE	0.050	2.350		0.600		3.000
Heartsease Primary - to 2.5 FE (modular)	0.139	0.237		0.000		0.376
Heartsease Primary permanent	0.025	0.050		1.925		2.000
Henderson Green - to 1FE	0.091	1.359		0.550		2.000
Hethersett Woodside Infant- to 2.5FE	0.030	0.342		0.000		0.372
King's Lynn, St Martha's RCP - 2FE	0.242	1.695		1.057		2.994
Mulbarton - consolidate 2FE	0.058	0.988		0.614		1.660
North Walsham Junior - to 3FE	0.020	0.740		0.000		0.760
Poringland Primary - 1.5FE permanent	0.785	0.100		0.000		0.885
Pulham Market Primary - 180 place permanent	0.113	0.537		0.000	0.182	0.832
Queen's Hill - to 3FE	0.448	2.951		2.401		5.800
Raleigh / Admirals, Thetford - to 3 FE	0.056	0.456		0.605	2.000	3.117
Roydon Primary - to 1.5FE	0.060	0.564		0.376	2.039	3.039
Sparhawk Infant - to 2FE	0.262	0.685		0.000		0.947
Suffield Park - to 3FE permanent	0.050	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.800	2.850
Swanton Morley - replacement modular	0.050	0.800		0.000		0.850
Trowse Primary - new 1FE building	0.000	1.500		1.500	2.000	5.000
West Lynn Primary - to 1FE	0.100	0.500		0.000		0.600
Westfield Infants - to 3FE	0.248	1.508		1.026		2.782
Wymondham High Academy - add 152 places	0.040	0.920		0.000		0.960
<b>Sub total Growth</b>	<b>6.127</b>	<b>24.673</b>	<b>1.371</b>	<b>20.118</b>	<b>11.221</b>	<b>63.510</b>

Scheme - Targeted	Allocations in Previous Years	2015/16		2016/17		Total Project Budget £m
		Previously Allocated	New	Previously Allocated	New	
Ashwicken - 105 place new build	1.868	0.741		0.000		2.609
Bawdeswell	0.030	0.150		0.000		0.180
Chapel Road - replacement of complex needs school	1.091	10.250		1.109	0.700	13.150
Gayton - 150 place new build	0.206	2.788		1.000	1.506	5.500
Great Yarmouth re-organisation of Early Years	0.096	0.744		0.000		0.840
Great Yarmouth re-organisation block	0.550	7.815		2.000		10.365
Hunstanton Amalgamation	0.210	0.590		0.000	0.323	1.123
Lingwood - new building	3.873	0.000	0.080	0.000		3.953
Looked After Children	2.157	0.390		0.000		2.547
Norwich Compass	0.050	0.650		0.000		0.700
St Michaels Hospital	0.067	0.043		0.000		0.110
SEN Strategy (Special Educational Needs)	4.207	0.000	0.014	0.000		4.221
Sidestrand Hall - new primary & secondary provision	0.190	0.190	0.125	0.000		0.505
Sidestrand Hall - new sixth form	0.070	0.606	0.048	0.000		0.724
Southtown Infants re-organisation - to 1FE primary	0.100	1.900		0.000		2.000
Thorpe St Andrew Sports Hall	0.200	1.800		0.000		2.000
West Norfolk Specialist Academy	0.080	0.750	2.000	0.875	1.295	5.000
Woodside One Pre school	0.029	0.231		0.000		0.260
Wymondham re-organisation block	0.200	3.800		0.000	1.000	5.000
<b>Sub-total targeted</b>	<b>15.274</b>	<b>33.438</b>	<b>2.267</b>	<b>4.984</b>	<b>4.824</b>	<b>60.787</b>

Scheme - Condition	Allocations in Previous Years	2015/16		2016/17		Total Project Budget £m
		Previously Allocated	New	Previously Allocated	New	
Astley Primary School - permanent	0.025	0.025		0.000	1.950	2.000
Attleborough Sports Hall - joint use liability	0.000	0.000	0.020	0.000		0.020
Blenheim Park - rationalisation scheme and energy reduction	0.050	0.000		0.000	0.150	0.200
Brooke VCP - replacement school	0.002	1.498		1.500	1.500	4.500
Compass Centre, Belton - toilet improvement scheme	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.000		0.070
Fakenham Junior School - demolition of pool	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.000		0.050
Old Buckenham High School - site safety	0.000	0.000	0.040	0.000		0.040
Equalities Act	0.224	0.120		0.200		0.544
Sites Condition 2011/12	0.699	0.154		0.100		0.953
St Edmunds Primary School, Kings Lynn - safety repairs to external fabric	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.000		0.050
Sustainability/Energy Busters	0.788	1.400		0.000		2.188
Swaffham Sports Hall	0.622	0.078		0.000		0.700
Thorpe Hillside (Dining Hall)	0.050	0.000		0.000	1.150	1.200
<b>Sub-total condition</b>	<b>2.460</b>	<b>3.275</b>	<b>0.230</b>	<b>1.800</b>	<b>4.750</b>	<b>12.515</b>

New schemes	Allocations in Previous Years	2015/16		2016/17		Total Project Budget £m
		Previously Allocated	New	Previously Allocated	New	
Blofield Primary - growth requirements	0.010	0.040		0.000		0.050
Diss Junior / Infant Schools - feasibility	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.000		0.050
Earlham Childrens Centre - possible reprovision of accommodation	0.000	0.000	0.721	0.000		0.721
Hillcrest Primary, Downham Market - modular	0.000	0.000	0.350	0.000		0.350
Litcham - modular (subject to statutory notice)	0.000	0.000	0.350	0.000		0.350
Lyng CE VC Primary School	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.000		0.050
North Lynn / Lynnsport Development	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.000		0.050
Raleigh Nursery - modular	0.000	0.000	0.400	0.000		0.400
Sparhawk Infant & Nursery - modular	0.000	0.000	0.450	0.000		0.450
St Michaels Junior - to 4FE	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.000	0.606	0.656
Tuckswood Primary - modular	0.000	0.000	0.300	0.000		0.300
<b>Sub Total new schemes</b>	<b>0.010</b>	<b>0.040</b>	<b>2.771</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.606</b>	<b>3.427</b>

#### Programme Management

Closed Schemes	0.000	0.000	0.149	0.000		0.149
Feasibility studies	0.123	0.000	0.030	0.000	0.030	0.183
Programme Management	0.512	0.200		0.200		0.912
<b>Programme Mangement sub-total</b>	<b>0.635</b>	<b>0.200</b>	<b>0.179</b>	<b>0.200</b>	<b>0.030</b>	<b>1.244</b>

	Allocations in Previous Years	2015/16		2016/17		Total Project Budget £m
		Previously Allocated	New	Previously Allocated	New	
<b>Total Funding Allocated</b>	<b>24.556</b>	<b>64.505</b>	<b>6.882</b>	<b>27.102</b>	<b>21.431</b>	<b>144.476</b>

# Children's Services Committee

Item No 11

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Consultation on a major change to School Organisation requiring the publication of a Statutory Notice</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>12 May 2015</b>
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Sheila Lock</b>
<b>Strategic impact</b> Changes to the organisation of schools are made as part of our overall strategy for there to be 'A Good School for Every Norfolk Learner'.  Following discussions with the school's governors and the Diocese of Ely, the Local Authority is consulting on a proposal to close William Marshall Voluntary Controlled Primary School. The Local Authority is responsible for leading the statutory consultation, for publishing any statutory notice and for making the final determination.  At its meeting on 10 July 2014, Children's Services Committee agreed the process for fulfilling the LA role, namely that, unless the Committee Spokespersons agree that inclusion in the Committee agenda is unnecessary, the Committee should be asked to comment on any proposed school closure, before the Director of Children's Services publishes any statutory notice.  Relevant regulations - School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 came into force on 28 January 2014.	

## Executive summary

This report informs Members about the reasons behind and the current progress of a statutory consultation on a proposal by Norfolk County Council, in agreement with the Diocese of Ely and the governors, to close William Marshall Voluntary Controlled Primary School In Welney.

### Recommendations

**Children's Services Committee is asked to consider this report in order to help inform the Director of Children's Services reach a decision on whether or not she should agree to publish a statutory public notice on the closure.**

## 1. A proposal by Norfolk County Council to close William Marshall Voluntary Controlled Primary School in Welney

A statutory consultation is required before the Local Authority can publish a public notice proposing closure of a school. Consultation documents were issued to all staff and governors at the school, and posted to all parents/carers and parishioners. An online survey was placed on the NCC Consultation hub (Citizen Space). The consultation period closes on Friday 25 May. The list of consultees is attached as Appendix A.

To date (23/04/15) we have received 13 responses, 4 in favour of the proposal, and 9 against.

Current guidance on proposals for school closure published by the Department for Education states that a statutory notice must be published within 12 months of a consultation being concluded. The statutory notice must be published on a website (school and/or Local Authority), along with a statement setting out:

- How copies of the proposal may be obtained
- That anybody can object to, or comment on, the proposal
- The date that the representation period ends (4 weeks from publication)
- The address to which objections or comments should be submitted.

At the end of the representation period, a final determination will be made by the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children's Services Committee. In reaching a decision, s/he must have regard to the statutory 'Decision-makers' Guidance'. In considering a closure of a small rural school the Local Authority must pay particular attention to:

- The likely effect of closure of the school on the local community
- The availability and likely cost to the Local Authority of transport to other schools
- Any increase in the use of motor vehicles and the likely effects of any such increase
- Any alternatives to the closure of the school

### **1.1 Background to the proposal regarding William Marshall Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

William Marshall Voluntary Controlled is a primary school taking pupils from the age of 4 through to 11. It was designated by the Department for Education in October 2013 as a rural primary school serving a village. The school has 6 places available in each year group, but is regularly undersubscribed. For the last 10 years, the number of pupils on roll has remained below 40, and has further declined in recent years:

September 2011	32
September 2012	29
September 2013	19
September 2014	24

In September 2014, there were 24 pupils on roll, of whom 21 live within the designated catchment area of the school. A further 7 children eligible to attend the school are choosing to go to schools elsewhere. 4 children have applied to join the school in September 2015 which represents a further dip in numbers as 6 children will leave the school to transfer to High School.

Since January 2004, leadership of the school has been provided through a partnership with Upwell Community Primary School, whose headteacher spends one day a week at William Marshall. Such leadership arrangements are no longer sustainable, and governors at Upwell do not feel that they have the capacity to pursue a more permanent federation at this time.

Because of the declining roll and the lack of sustainable leadership, William Marshall Primary is a school of concern for the Local Authority. It was deemed Satisfactory by Ofsted in 2006 and in 2010, and the most recent inspection in 2013 judged the school to Require Improvement. Standards remain unacceptably low, and governors have



reluctantly acknowledged that they do not have the capacity to bring about the very significant improvement needed in the school to guarantee a good enough education for the children of Welney. The school therefore remains vulnerable to an adverse inspection.

The Local Authority is concerned about the performance of very small schools which perform well below larger schools

Performance data related to size of school – Key Stage 2% level 4 reading, writing and maths combined:

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Schools < 50 pupils	<b>60.4%</b>	<b>61.8%</b>	<b>67.6%</b>
Norfolk average	69%	71%	74%
National average	75%	75%	79%

The consultation document states that the earliest closure could take place would be the end of August 2015. The Public Notice will propose a formal closure date of 31 December 2015. However, in order to minimise disruption, the intention is to transfer the children and staff to Upwell Primary School for the start of the Autumn Term. For this one term, transport will be provided free of charge for all pupils on the roll of William Marshall VC Primary School.

From January 2015, the usual transport rules will apply, providing free transport to Upwell Primary School for all pupils who live in the William Marshall catchment area.

## **2. Financial Implications**

As a school that is very small and likely to remain so, it is difficult to plan a viable future for the school. The new national funding policy for schools is moving towards a national per pupil rate. This limits the way in which funding is allocated to schools through the locally agreed formula. In the past financial year, William Marshall Voluntary Controlled Primary School received just over £8,839 per pupil, compared with the Norfolk primary school average of £4,500, but this level of support may not be possible in the future. The continuing decline in pupil numbers and these changes to the way that schools are funded, are making it increasingly difficult to manage the budget, and it is likely that the school will be in deficit by the end of next year.

Any revenue savings brought about by a school closure are added to the Norfolk schools budget to benefit all Norfolk schools. However, closure of a rural school will inevitably lead to increased transport costs.

Some capital investment will be required at Upwell Primary School to ensure that the additional pupils displaced by the closure of William Marshall Voluntary Controlled Primary School can be accommodated.

## **3. Issues, risks and innovation**

In coming to a final determination on school closures, as well as the factors specific to rural schools, the decision-maker will take into account:

- Consideration of consultation and representation period
- Education standards and diversity of provision
- Demand
- School size

- Proposed admission arrangements
- National Curriculum
- Equal opportunity issues
- Community cohesion
- Travel and accessibility
- Capital
- School premises and playing fields

## 4. Background

“Sustaining high quality leadership in Norfolk Schools” (report to Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel 13 April 2014.

[http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Council\\_and\\_democracy/Your\\_Council/Committees/Committees\\_Archive/index.htm?searched=true&SS\\_Year=2014&SS\\_PaperType=0&SS\\_Committee=Childrens+Services+Overview+and+Scrutiny+Panel&Submit=Search](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Council_and_democracy/Your_Council/Committees/Committees_Archive/index.htm?searched=true&SS_Year=2014&SS_PaperType=0&SS_Committee=Childrens+Services+Overview+and+Scrutiny+Panel&Submit=Search)

“Sustaining high quality leadership in Norfolk schools – progress report (report to Children’s Services Service Committee 17 June 2014.

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/NorfolkCC/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=j37DmJOVK8ogXQQR7J8nggjhZgWpCytLFD6TBsEMhjvwn6D7fryQcw%3d%3d&rUzwRPf%2bZ3zd4E7lkn8Lyw%3d%3d=pwRE6AGJFLDNIh225F5QMaQWCtPHwdhUfCZ%2fLUQzgA2uL5jNRG4jdQ%3d%3d&mCTIbCubSFfXsDGW9IXnlq%3d%3d=hFfIUdN3100%3d&kCx1AnS9%2fpWZQ40DXFvdEw%3d%3d=hFfIUdN3100%3d&uJovDxdjMPoYv%2bAJvYtyA%3d%3d=ctNJff55vVA%3d&FgPIIEJYlotS%2bYGoBi5olA%3d%3d=NHdURQburHA%3d&d9Qjj0ag1Pd993jsyOJqFvmyB7X0CSQK=ctNJff55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNR9xqBux0r1Q8Za60lavYmz=ctNJff55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNQ16B2MHuCPMRKZMwaG1PaO=ctNJff55vVA%3d>

School Organisation (Maintained School) January 2014 – Guidance for proposers and decision-makers – Department for Education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-organisation>

## Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with: **Officer Name: Alison Cunningham**

**Telephone Number: 01603 223480**

**Email address:** [alison.cunningham@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:alison.cunningham@norfolk.gov.uk)



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

Consultees	Number issued
Governors of William Marshall VC Primary School	8
Staff and parents/carers of pupils attending William Marshall VC Primary School	25
Governors, staff and parents/carers of pupils attending Upwell Primary	200
All residents of Welney Parish	320
Denver CE VC Primary School	1
Hilgay Village VC Primary School	1
Hillcrest Primary School	1
Magdalen Village School	1
Nelson Academy	1
Runcton Holme CE Primary School	1
Southery Primary School	1
St Martin at Shouldham CE VA Primary School	1
Ten Mile Bank C Primary School	1
Upwell C Primary School	1
Watlington C Primary School	1
Wimbotsham & Stow Community School	1
Wormegay CE Primary School	1
Downham Market Academy	1
Welney Parish Council	1
Upwell Parish Council	1
Nordelph Parish Council	1
Hilgay with Ten Mile Bank Parish Council	1
Littleport Parish Council	1
Manea Parish Council	1
Downham Market Town Council	1
Downham West Parish Council	1
Christchurch Parish Council	1
East Cambridgeshire District Council	1
Chief Executive, West Norfolk & King's Lynn BC	1
Cambridgeshire County Council (Schools)	1
Local Member, Harry Humphrey	1
Norwich Diocese	1
Ely Diocese	1
Roman Catholic Diocese	1
Parliamentary Candidate Elizabeth Truss	1
Parliamentary Candidate Paul Smyth	1
Parliamentary Candidate Rupert Moss-Eccardt	1
Parliamentary Candidate Peter Smith	1
Parliamentary Candidate Sandra Walmsley	1
Councillor Vivienne Spikings	1

Councillor David Pope	1	Appendix A
Mrs C Gibson, NAHT	1	
Mike Smith, NUT	1	
Chrissie Smith, NUT	1	
Collin Collis, NAS/UWT	1	
Jonathan Dunning, Unison	1	
Ivan Mercer, GMB	1	
Bridget Carrington, JCC	1	
Andrew McCandlish, ATL	1	
Michael Sadler, VOICE	1	
George Denby, NSEL	1	
Beaupre Community Primary School, Outwell, Cambs	1	
Townley Primary School, Cambs	1	
<a href="mailto:Hazel.Belchamber@cambridgeshire.co.uk">Hazel.Belchamber@cambridgeshire.co.uk</a>		
	<b>601</b>	
Online - NCC Internet School organisation site	online	
Online - Norfolk Schools School organisation site	online	
Online - NCC Citizen Space	online	

# Children's Services Committee

Item No 12

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2015-17</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>12 May 2015</b>
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Sheila Lock</b>
<b>Strategic impact</b> This report represents the councils response to the statutory Duty to ensure sufficient places for children who come into the care system .This strategy document sets out how we intend to meet the Sufficiency Duty as laid down in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. In preparing this document consideration has been given to the Draft Statutory Guidance Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children (2009).	

## Executive summary

This strategy sets out how we intend not just to ensure compliance with the sufficiency Duty, but how we intend to develop the system to support Children and their families more effectively. So long as it is consistent with their safety, well-being and their expressed view, we believe a child or young person should be brought up within their own family or the extended family network. As such, our primary focus will be on the provision of services which support families to stay together.

We recognise that it will not always be possible or desirable for children to stay with their families and where it is appropriate and necessary for a child to enter care, we will ensure that we only accommodate the right children, at the right time for the right duration.

We believe that foster care is the next best alternative to children living with their own families, because this best replicates the home experience. Residential provision should only be used in exceptional cases and will usually be a short-term, crisis intervention solution pending reunification, or a move to a foster placement.

We realise the importance of understanding children's needs, planning to meet those needs within meaningful timescales and continuously reviewing how well plans are working.

We believe that the placements we offer should be of high quality, should be able to meet the needs of children placed in those services and should be accountable for delivering against the objectives detailed in care/pathway plans.

We believe that a relentless, proactive approach to reducing children in the Looked After system is a key element in realising our ambition and ensuring the best possible outcomes for all Norfolk's children and young people. We intend to do this by enhancing our Early help work, implementing a Signs of Safety approach to planning and by supporting parents to discharge their parenting responsibilities where it is the right thing to keep children safe and protected.

### Recommendations:

- 1. Members are asked to endorse the Children in Care Sufficiency strategy as part of the policy framework for Children in Care in Norfolk and recognise the links to the Early Help Strategy**

## 1. Background

This report fulfils the council's responsibilities and duty to have in place a Children in care sufficiency strategy. It links closely with the work on the journey of children in Norfolk and our efforts to try and offer help earlier, but it also recognises that for those children who come into care that it will be a well-planned, quality pathway.

### Officer Contact

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If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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

# Children and Young People in Care Sufficiency Strategy – 2015-17

“Providing Sufficient Accommodation for Children  
in Care and Care Leavers”

## Children Services

This document sets out how Norfolk County Council intends to meet the Sufficiency Duty as laid down in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989.

# Norfolk County Council

## VERSION CONTROL

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This strategy document sets out how we intend to meet the Sufficiency Duty as laid down in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. In preparing this document consideration has been given to the Draft Statutory Guidance Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children (2009).

The strategy takes into account the trends in the number of children looked after by Norfolk County Council. Numbers were steadily increasing, from 1077 as at the end of 31 March 2013 to 1148 at the end of March 2014. Between March 2014 and December 2014 the number of children looked after by us has decreased to 1074. We are planning to reduce the number of Children and Young people in care to 770 by March 2017, and are currently on target to meet this.

This strategy needs to be read in conjunction with the Statements of Purpose and Function for each Residential, Fostering and Adoption services. It also needs to be considered alongside the performance information which provides monthly updates on numbers and trends.

The Norfolk in Care Council have advised that their preferred term is children and young people in care, rather than the statutory term Looked After Children. We will use this term throughout the strategy.

## 1.1 Vision

We believe that the views of children and young people should be central to everything we do and will work tirelessly to ensure those views are heard and acted upon.

So long as it is consistent with their safety, well-being and their expressed view, we believe a child or young person should be brought up within their own family or the extended family network. As such, our primary focus will be on the provision of services which support families to stay together.

We recognise that it will not always be possible or desirable for children to stay with their families and where it is appropriate and necessary for a child to enter care, we will ensure that we only accommodate the right children, at the right time for the right duration.

We believe that foster care is the next best alternative to children living with their own families, because this best replicates the home experience. Residential provision should only be used in exceptional cases and will usually be a short-term, crisis intervention solution pending reunification, or a move to a foster placement.

We realise the importance of understanding children's needs, planning to meet those needs within meaningful timescales and continuously reviewing how well plans are working.

We believe that the placements we offer should be of high quality, should be able to meet the needs of children placed in those services and should be accountable for delivering against the objectives detailed in care/pathway plans.

We believe that a relentless, proactive approach to reducing children in the Looked After system is a key element in realising our ambition and ensuring the best possible outcomes for all Norfolk's children and young people.

## 1.2 Key Statements

- The views and meaningful participation of children and young people will be sought wherever possible.
- We are implementing a LAC reduction strategy which is integral to our approach to improving the quality of planning for all children. There is an ambitious objective to reduce our numbers of children and young people in care to 770 by March 2017. The ethos is about Right Child, Right Place, for the Right Duration.
- The priorities identified in the LAC Reduction Strategy compliment Norfolk's approach to sufficiency as they reflect its commitment to only accommodate the right children, in the right placements at the right time and for the right duration
- To achieve this we will build on existing provision to develop the required range of services across the County.
- We will adopt an outcomes focus across our services for children and young people in care and embed that focus into our own and externally commissioned services.
- We will ensure there is a coordinated commissioning approach to meeting the needs of children and young people in care with complex health and/or emotional needs.
- Placements will always be sought from internal resources in the first instance (this includes SLA provision). Placements from the independent and voluntary sectors will only be sought when no appropriate internal vacancy is available or on the rare occasions when the specific needs of a child are such that they can only be met outside of our provision.
- We will remain the main provider of fostering, increasing overall numbers of carers and our share in the placement mix. The increase in provision will also reflect the impacts of 'Staying Put'.
- We will always seek to minimise placement disruption, but will plan for and proactively pursue step-down opportunities in line with care plans.
- All of our internal services will work towards obtaining, or remaining, "good" to "outstanding", as judged by Ofsted.
- We will only place children and young people in care in external placements rated as "good" or "outstanding" by Ofsted.
- Medium to long term placements with Independent Fostering Agencies and the private residential sector will only be commissioned when the specific needs of the child or young person require a specialist placement that cannot be achieved from within our own provision.
- We will seek opportunities to jointly commission services/placements with other Local Authorities in the pursuit of improved outcomes for our children and young people, and best value.
- Permanence placements will be delivered via adoption, special guardianship and residence orders, with appropriate financial and aftercare support as appropriate and applicable.
- Where it reflects their wishes and best interests, children and young people in care will be supported to remain in their foster home until they reach 18 and where appropriate, beyond, through 'Staying Put'.
- Since Norfolk sees residential placements as primarily short-term, it will not normally be the case that children and young people in care will be encouraged to remain in residential placements to 18. However, children and young people will be supported to do so in the rare circumstances where this reflects their wishes and best interests.
- A range of other semi-independent living arrangements such as supported lodgings, hostels and semi-independent supported housing will be commissioned where young people choose not to, or are unable to remain in their foster home or residential unit until 18.

- We will develop relationships with Local Housing Authorities, Housing Associations and Private Landlords, to open up routes to tenancies for Care Leavers.
- This strategy is intended to be a dynamic document which will be subject to ongoing updates and an annual review in order to ensure it continues to reflect developing demand and best practice.

### 1.3 Key Targets

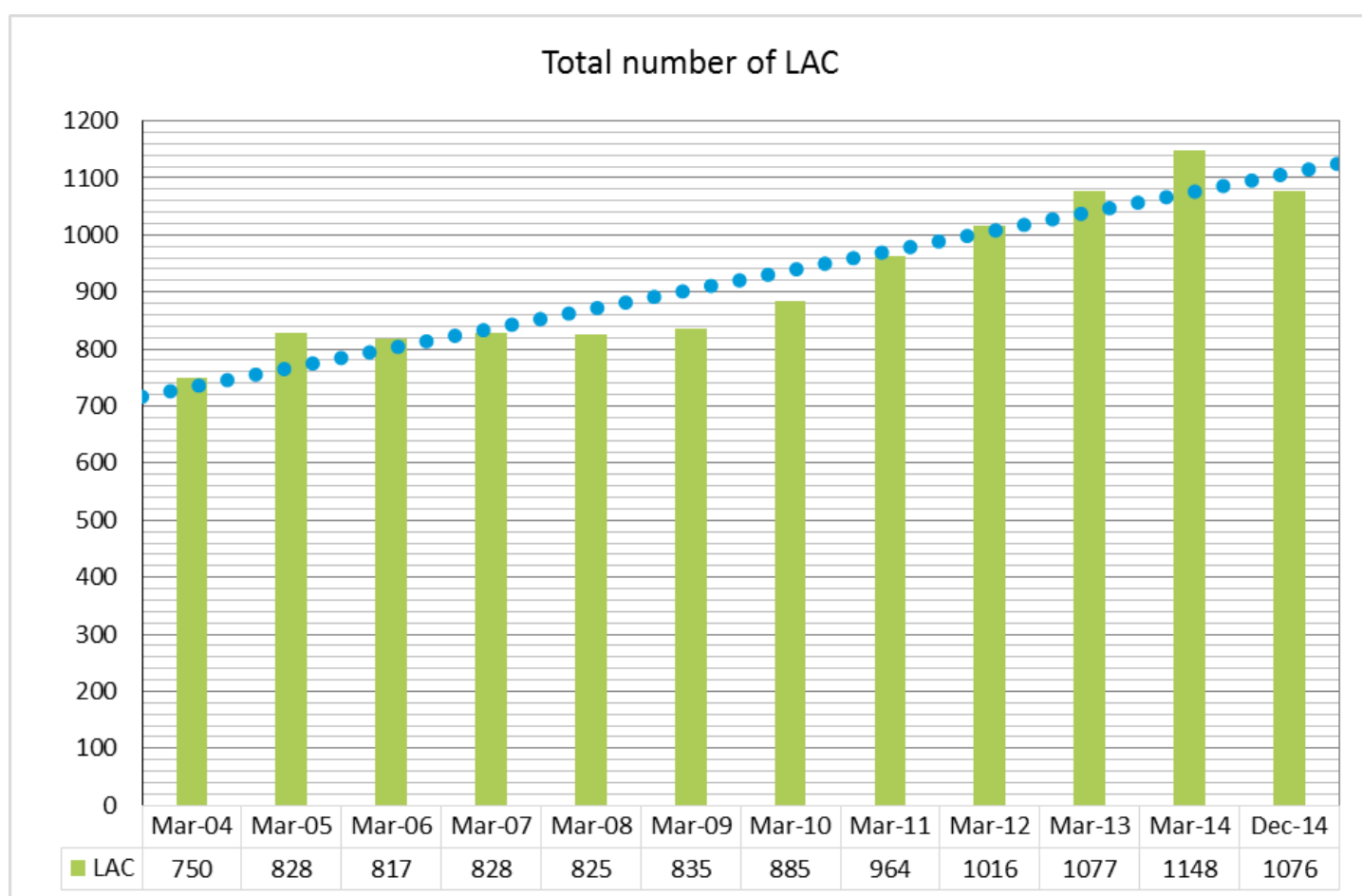
- To reduce the number of children and young people in care to 770 by 31 March 2017.
- To reduce the number of children and young people in residential care to less than 7% of the total population.
- To increase the market share of in-house foster care so there are more young people in in-house foster care than in independent fostering agencies.

## 2 NEEDS ANALYSIS

### 2.1 The Number of Children and Young People in Care

#### 2.1.1 Children and Young People in care since 2004<sup>1</sup>

The number of children and young people in our care has risen over the past ten years from 750 at the end of March 2004 to 1148 at the end of March 2014, which is a 53.07% increase. The total number of children and young people in care peaked at 1154 in June 2014, and has been steadily decreasing since then. There is an average decrease of 2.01 children and young people in our care each week between 4 April 2014 and 26 December 2014. This is compared to an average increase of 2.08 children and young people in our care each week between 5 April 2013 and 27 December 2013. As at 26 December 2014, the total number of children and young people in our care was 1074.



We have been working to reduce our LAC population safely and appropriately, to 770 by 31 March 2017, in line with our vision statement. We are currently on track to meet this target.

The increase in numbers of children and young people in care has not been unique to Norfolk. Both nationally and within three of Norfolk's statistical neighbour group of Local Authorities, increases in the number of children and young people in care have been seen.

<sup>1</sup> This information was taken from Norfolk's case recording system, CareFirst, by our Business Improvement team.

Other statistical neighbours had increasing numbers of children and young people in care in recent years, but have turned the curve and now have decreasing numbers. This is the curve that Norfolk is beginning to turn with decreasing numbers of children and young people in care since June 2014.

## 2.1.2 Children and Young People in Care per 10,000 population under 18<sup>2</sup>

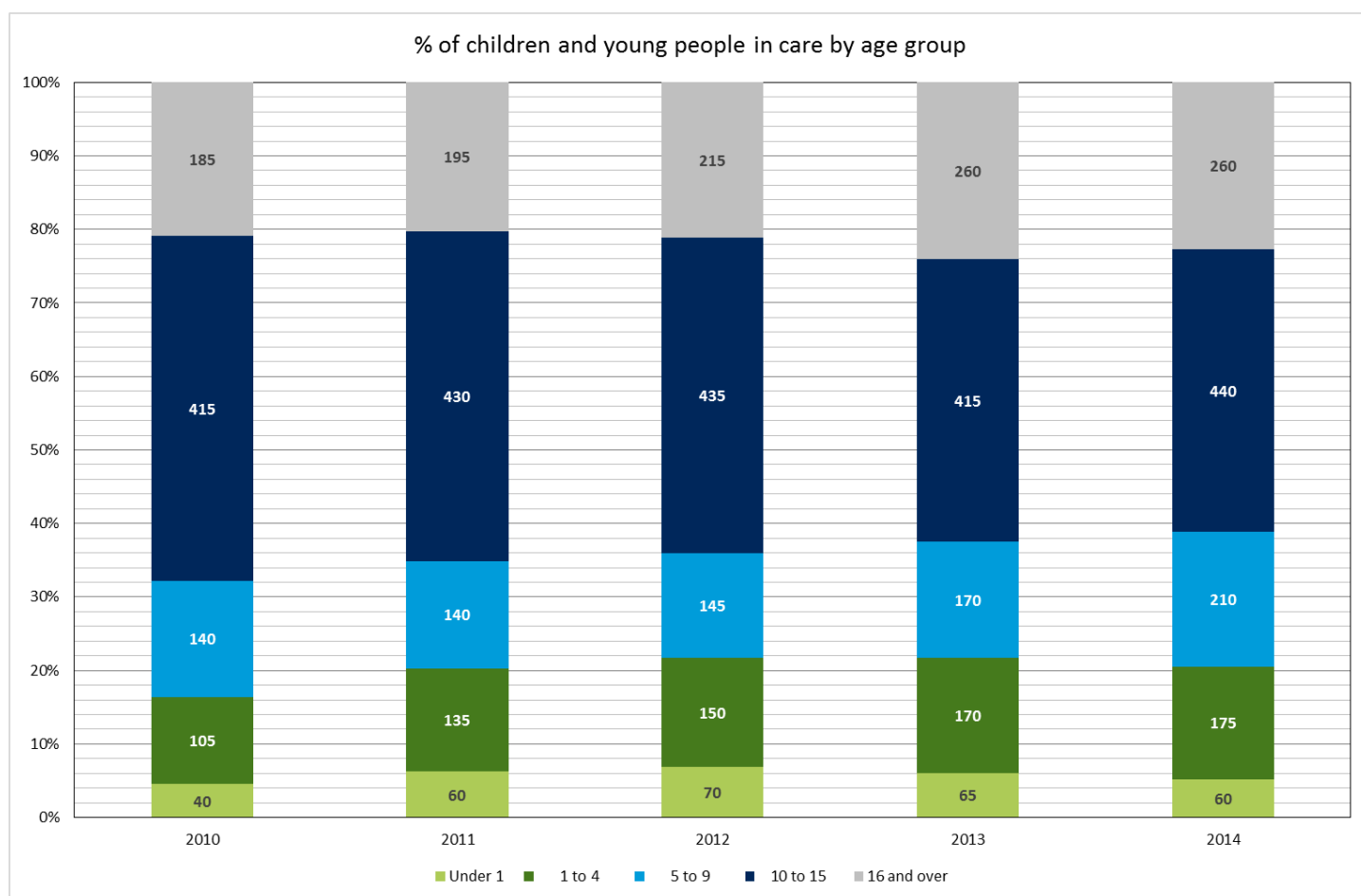
As at 31 March 2014, Norfolk remained above both the statistical neighbour and England averages for number of children in care per 10,000 population aged less than 18. The statistical neighbour average is 52.82 as at 31 March 2014.



The increase of children and young people in care in Norfolk has been mirrored both by statistical neighbours and nationally, however the rate of increase is much higher in Norfolk. Compared to 31 March 2010 Norfolk had an increase of 28% children and young people in care by 31 March 2014. The average increase for our statistical neighbours was 10% in the same time period, and nationally was just 5%. The only statistical neighbour with a larger percentage increase in this time period was Cumbria, which had a 37% increase in children and young people in care per 10,000 under 18 population.

<sup>2</sup> This information has been taken from the Department for Education (DfE) National Statistics on children looked after in England, including adoption. It was downloaded from (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption--2>) on 5 January 2015. Please note, some of the figures used by the DfE are rounded to the nearest five or ten.

### 2.1.3 Children and Young People in Care by Age Group<sup>3</sup>

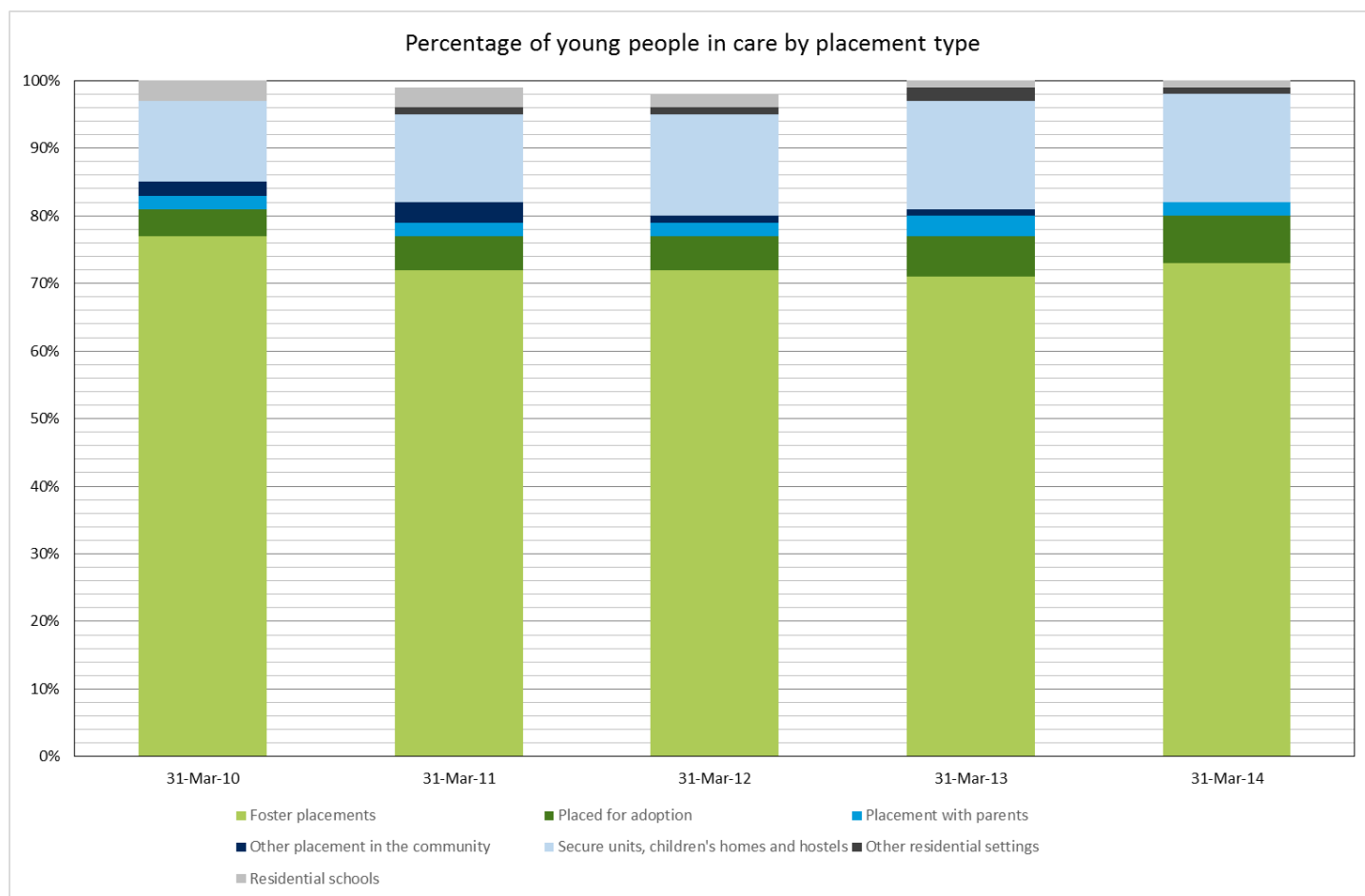


The data labels on this graph show the actual number of children and young people in care, by age group.

The breakdown of young people in care by age group shows that the age profile of our children and young people in care population has remained largely static over the past five years. As at 31 March 2014 a proportionally greater number of children and young people in care are aged 5 to 9 when compared to the information as at 31 March in previous years. This is mirrored by a proportionally smaller number of children and young people in care aged 10 to 15.

<sup>3</sup> This information has been taken from the Department for Education (DfE) National Statistics on children looked after in England, including adoption. It was downloaded from (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption--2>) on 5 January 2015. Please note, some of the figures used by the DfE are rounded to the nearest five or ten.

## 2.1.4 Children and Young People in Care by Placement Type<sup>4</sup>



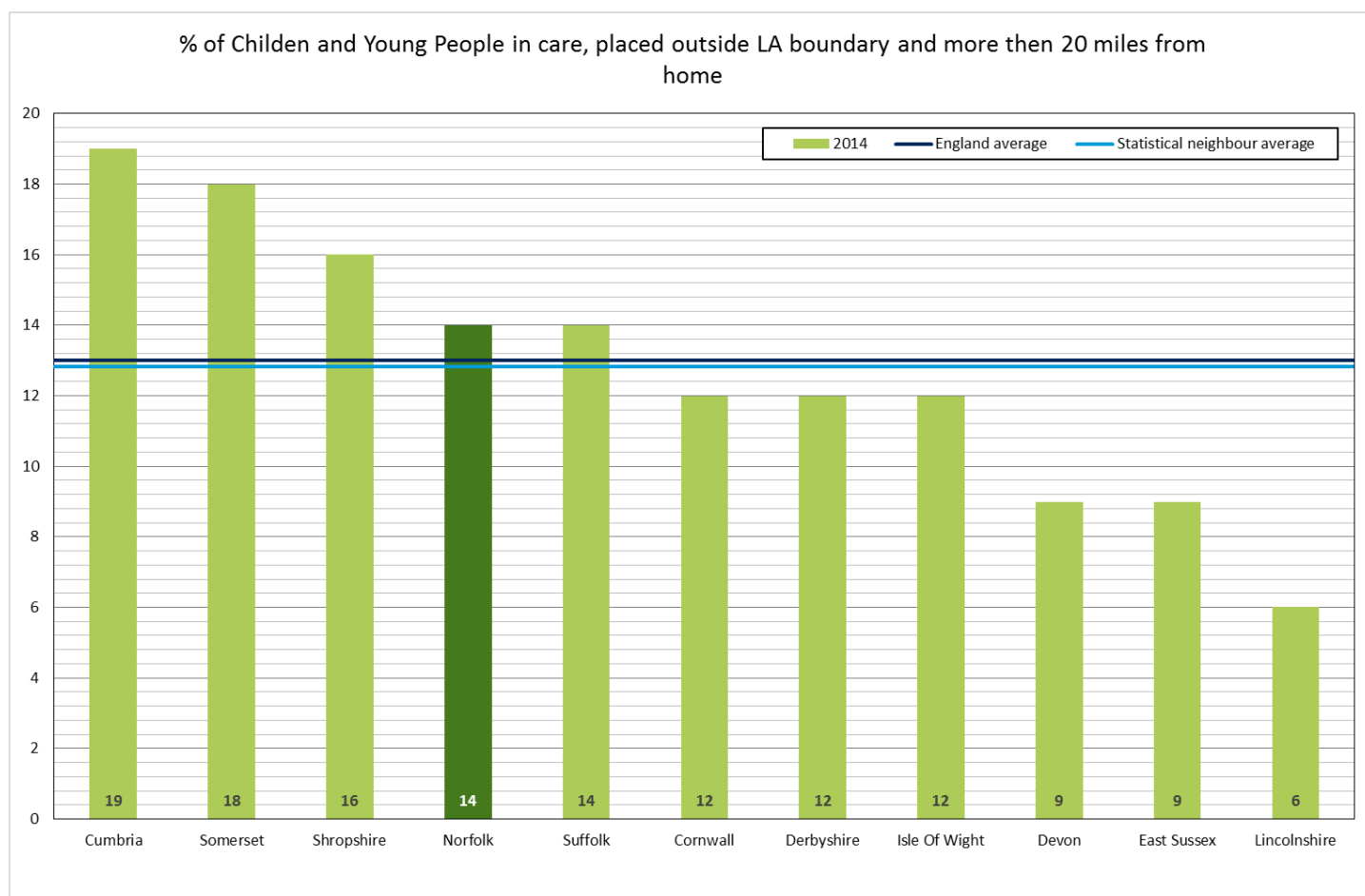
Consistent with our belief that foster care is the next best alternative to children living with their own families, the majority (73%) of our children and young people are placed in foster care. The percentage of young people placed for adoption has increased from 4% on 31 March 2010 to 7% on 31 March 2014.

<sup>4</sup> This information has been taken from the Department from Education (DfE) National Statistics on children looked after in England, including adoption. It was downloaded from (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption--2>) on 5 January 2015. Please note, some of the figures used by the DfE are rounded to the nearest five or ten.



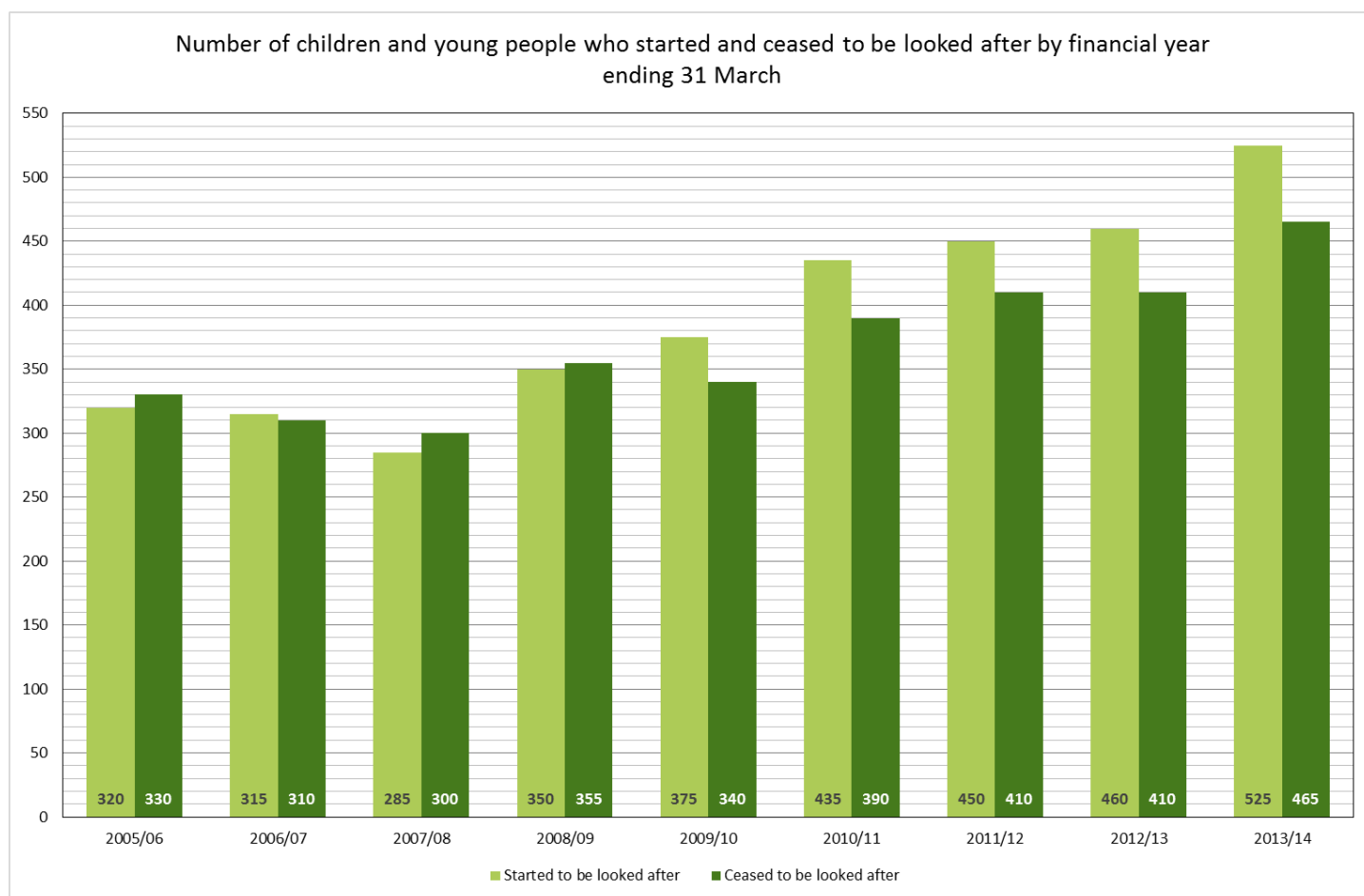
## 2.1.5 Children and Young People in Care placed outside of Norfolk and more than 20 miles from home<sup>5</sup>

As at 31 March 2014, 14% of children and young people in the care of Norfolk County Council were placed outside of Norfolk and more than 20 miles from their home. This is higher than both the England average of 13% and the statistical neighbour average of 12.82%.



<sup>5</sup> This information has been taken from the Department for Education (DfE) National Statistics on children looked after in England, including adoption. It was downloaded from (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption--2>) on 5 January 2015. Please note, some of the figures used by the DfE are rounded to the nearest five or ten.

## 2.2 Starts and Ceases Activity<sup>6</sup>



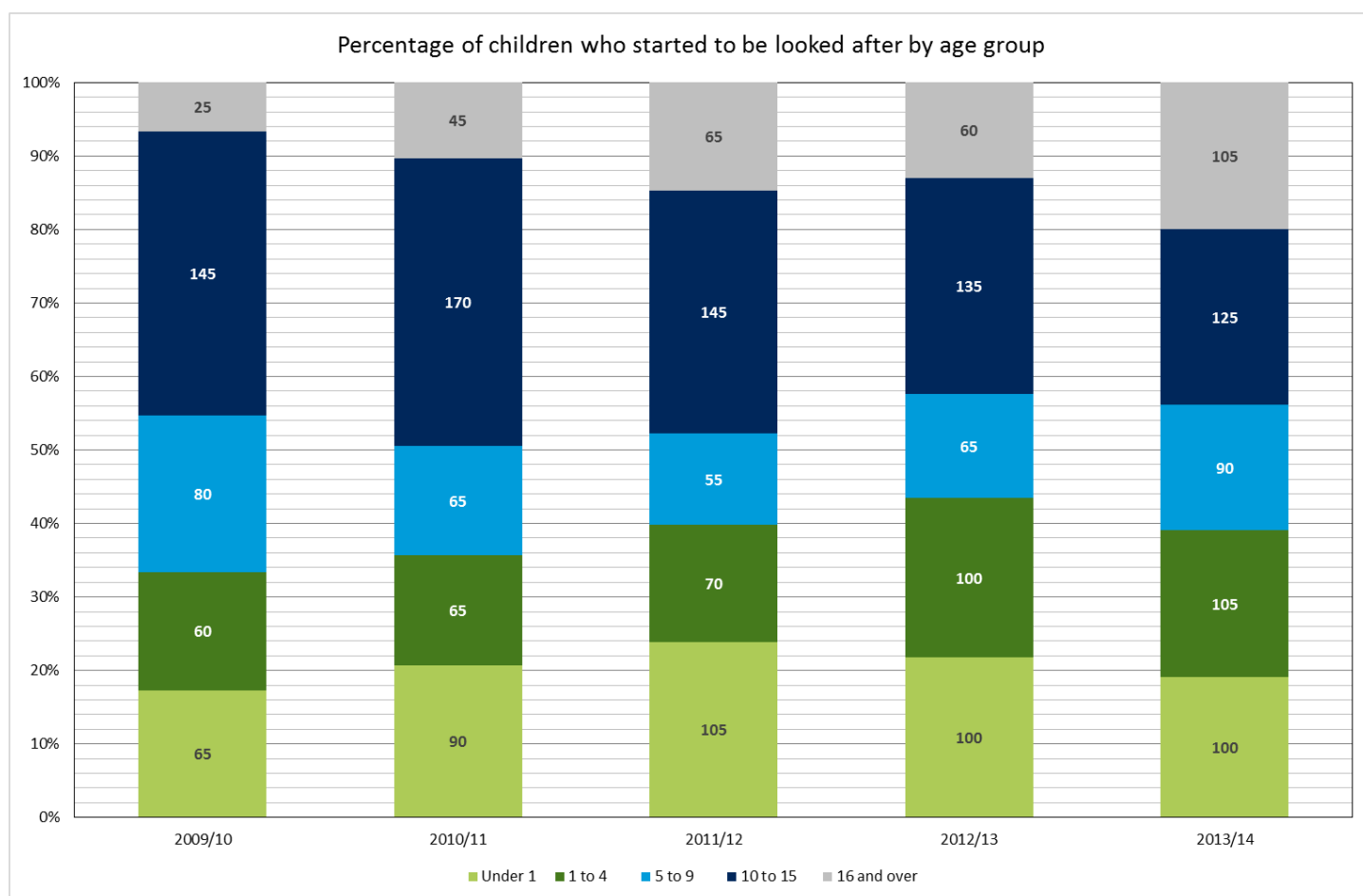
The numbers of children and young people in care has been increasing steadily since 2008, a trend which is reflected by our starts and ceases information. Since 2009/10 starts in the year have been higher than ceases in the year by at least 35. In 2013/14 there was an increase of 65 starts from 2012/13, the largest increase in starts since 2008/09.

Whilst a rise in both the number of starts and ceases has been seen nationally, Norfolk's increase in both of these is far above the national picture. Compared to 2007/08, there was an 84% increase in Norfolk starts in 2013/14, nationally there was a 31% increase in 2013/14 compared to 2007/08. Compared to 2007/08, there was a 55% increase in Norfolk ceases in 2013/14, nationally there was a 24% increase in 2013/14 compared to 2007/08. In 2013/14 nationally the number of starts and ceases was equal.

<sup>6</sup> This information has been taken from the Department for Education (DfE) National Statistics on children looked after in England, including adoption. It was downloaded from (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption--2>) on 5 January 2015. Please note, some of the figures used by the DfE are rounded to the nearest five or ten.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
<b>Norfolk Starts</b>	285	350	375	435	450	460	525
<b>% increase from 2008</b>	100%	123%	132%	153%	158%	161%	184%
<b>England Starts</b>	23,300	25,700	28,090	27,510	28,390	28,960	30,430
<b>% increase from 2008</b>	100%	110%	121%	118%	122%	124%	131%
<b>Norfolk Ceases</b>	300	355	340	390	410	410	465
<b>% increase from 2008</b>	100%	118%	113%	130%	137%	137%	155%
<b>England Ceases</b>	24,500	25,000	25,300	27,110	27,510	28,640	30,430
<b>% increase from 2008</b>	100%	102%	103%	111%	112%	117%	124%

## 2.2.1 Numbers of Admissions to Care by Age Group<sup>7</sup>



The data labels on this graph show the actual number of children and young people who started to be looked after, by age group.

The graph shows a large increase in both the actual number of children and young people who started to be looked after in the 16 and over age group, and also the percentage of our

<sup>7</sup> This information has been taken from the Department for Education (DfE) National Statistics on children looked after in England, including adoption. It was downloaded from (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption--2>) on 5 January 2015. Please note, some of the figures used by the DfE are rounded to the nearest five or ten.

cohort that is 16 and over since 2009/10. The Southwark Judgement, made into law in May 2009, may account for this increase in young people being taken into care.

There has been a corresponding decrease in the percentage of children taken into care in the 10 to 15 age group, between 2009/10 and 2013/14.

## 2.2.2 Numbers of Children Discharged from care by Reason for Discharge<sup>8</sup>

Reason for discharge	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Moved into independent living (with supportive accommodation)	8.82%	5.13%	12.20%	24.39%	30.11%
Returned home to live with parents or relatives	45.59%	48.72%	34.15%	45.12%	25.81%
Adopted	17.65%	7.69%	15.85%	14.63%	17.20%
Residence order granted	2.94%	3.85%	4.88%	3.66%	9.68%
Special guardianship order	x	1.28%	4.88%	6.10%	7.53%
Moved into independent living (with no formalised support)	x	x	x	2.44%	4.30%
Transferred to residential care funded by adult social services	x	1.28%	x	x	2.15%
Died	0.00%	x	0.00%	x	x
Care taken by another LA	x	x	0.00%	x	x
Sentenced to custody	x	x	1.22%	0.00%	x
Care ceased for any other reason	22.06%	24.36%	23.17%	x	x

In 2013/14 the most common reason for discharge was move to independent living (30.11%), the first time that is was higher than returned home to live with parents or relatives. Returned home to live with parents or relatives dropped to 25.81% in 2013/14 from 45.12% in 2012/13 and a high of 48.72% in 2010/11.

In 2013/14 there was also a notable increase in the number of Residence Orders granted, with 9.68% of the cohort ceasing for this reason compared to 3.66% in 2012/13 and a previous high of 4.88% in 2011/12.

<sup>8</sup> This information has been taken from the Department for Education (DfE) National Statistics on children looked after in England, including adoption. It was downloaded from (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption--2>) on 5 January 2015. Please note, some of the figures used by the DfE are rounded to the nearest five or ten.

## 3 CURRENT PROVISION

### 3.1 Early Help

We are committed to developing a locally based Early Help offer for Families to prevent problems becoming deeper rooted and long term and to ensure that we work with families to keep them together. The Early Help Strategy which is a core strategy of the work we undertake with our partners is reflective of the Children's services restructure and will be delivered locally in communities. A core objective is to reduce numbers in the care of the Local Authority by enabling parents and carers to deal with problems in a non-dependent way.

### 3.2 Alternatives to Care

In understanding sufficiency of placements it is important to understand the alternatives to care used by Norfolk to help keep families together? Whilst there will be a reduction in the number of placements we need for our population of children and young people in care as it gets smaller, many of our alternatives to care require sufficient numbers of foster carers and residential placements to offer a different type of service.

Norfolk's Edge of Care Strategy, identifies children on the edge of care as children and young people for whom entry into care has been seriously considered by the local authority (either on a voluntary basis or through legal proceedings), but where it has been decided to support the family through alternative services. Some young people will enter care with an identified care plan objective of reunification, and Norfolk considers that these young people are also on the edge of care.

To support families to stay together it is vital Norfolk supports them with a variety of programmes and interventions offering simple solutions but also creative and innovative ways to work differently. We must offer services which are family friendly, meet individual needs, are sensitive to a family's identity, raise aspirations and ensure they are offered life enhancing opportunities. These services need to offer flexibility and provide a range of services at the right time.

Part of the Alternatives to Care offer is the introduction of the Clinical Case Advisory Service (CCAS) which case holders can bring cases to in order to get additional support for the families they work with, where the children are on the edge of care. 88% of children on the edge of care remained with their families if their case went to CCAS before going to Admission to Care Panel.

#### 3.2.1 Short Breaks

Short Breaks are day, evening, overnight and weekend activities provided for a child or young person, which take place in the child's home, the home of an approved carer, or in a residential or community setting. They offer the opportunity for children to enjoy new experiences and develop relationships beyond the family as well as allowing the child's carer to gain a break from their caring obligations. This will normally mean the child and the main carer spending a short period away from each other, although some carers may prefer to gain a break without being in different location from the child. Short breaks should be used in conjunction with other Universal services and Alternative to Care services, to become a holistic package of support to keep families together. In Norfolk families will also be

expected to take part in a Family Group Conference, to help them consider how best to use short breaks to build family resilience.

As this is the first time Short Breaks have been used in this way in Norfolk, it is difficult to predict the level of take up expected. The expectation is that one family per week will be referred to Short Breaks, with approximately 60-90 nights being allocated to a family.

### 3.3 Internal Fostering

**Norfolk Fostering Service comprises four teams plus two resource centres which offer short-term breaks to children with a disability:**

- The Fostering Recruitment Team takes the lead in recruiting and assessing new carers and Family and Friends Carers County wide.
- Three Family Placement Supervision Teams supporting foster carers. These teams each service a geographical area.
- The Children with Disabilities Family Service workers are based in resource centres, this team also recruits and supervises carers offering short-term breaks for children with a disability.

**Foster carers are approved to offer:**

- Foster placements to meet the objectives of a child's care plan
- Parent and child placements
- Connected Persons (Kinship Care) approved as foster carers in order to offer a placement to a specific child or children known to them
- Short Term Breaks / Short Breaks Plus for children who have a disability
- Targeted recruitment for carers offering police and criminal evidence (PACE) beds.

At 31 March 2014, Norfolk County Council supervised and supported 359 foster carer households.

In the year 2013/2014, Norfolk County Council recruited 44 new foster families, 11 of which were kinship foster carers.

At the end of March 2014, there were 432 children living in Norfolk County Council foster homes. The short term break scheme and short term plus scheme for children with disabilities offered placements to 26 children and young people.

**The Fostering Service aims:**

- Whilst there has been a small net increase in the amount of in-house placements available, the service has seen a reduced market share. We are committed to increasing the net number of in-house carers and re-establishing the market share previously held by the service, which was more than 70% as recently as 2008.
- To increase our percentage share of the looked after children population placed with foster carers.
- To recruit 40 foster families each year (including connected person carers).
- To recruit additional Police and Criminal Evidence placements.
- To further develop our offer to staying put placements, enabling young people to remain living with their foster carers into adulthood.
- To provide Support Foster Care – Short Breaks to families where children are on the edge of care, using existing vacancies within our fostering service, where a suitable match is identified.
- To fast track applications from experienced foster carers who have applied to foster for us.

- To target recruitment of foster families who can offer accommodation to siblings groups and children of high school age.
- To introduce recruitment open evenings co-presented by experienced foster carers and social workers.
- To develop and maintain a diverse and experienced staff team which includes qualified social work practitioners and administrative support.
- To raise awareness of fostering with the general public, conducting specific publicity campaigns and promoting fostering as a rewarding and worthwhile activity.
- To support the retention of current carers by including them and their children in the recruitment and training process of applicants to foster.
- To regularly reflect on our practice and from our learning ensure change is managed swiftly and decisively if required.
- To ensure the quality of assessments of applicants to our service and the supervision delivered to foster carers registered with our service is of the highest possible standard.
- To continue with our excellent training programme, utilising the long courses for carers – Fostering Changes and Fostering Attachments – so that foster carers can experience meaningful hands on training in small groups

### 3.4 Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA)

In line with the increase in total children and young people in care numbers, the IFA sector has expanded its market share significantly from 29% of total children and young people in care provision and 40% of all fostering placements in 2011 to 35% of total children and young people in care and 48% of all fostering placements currently.

Initial discussions with key IFA partners suggests the market is geared up to respond positively to our children and young people in care reduction objectives through, for example, increasing the number and range of specialist foster placements and engaging in outcomes-based contracts. It is also clear that the market is ready for the challenge of new and innovative services that adapt and are flexible to emerging local need.

We will seek to reduce the total number and market share of IFA placements, and will investigate the use of outcomes based frameworks to further increase value for money. Our contracts with IFA's are due for review in 2015/16.

### 3.5 Norfolk Residential Children's Service

**Norfolk Residential Children's Service currently has seven children's homes, two residential short-term breaks children's homes and four supported flats:**

- The service works alongside other services supporting children who are no longer able to live at home.
- Accommodating children is always a last resort and the authority has to be satisfied that the care threshold is met.
- Over the past year the service has rarely refused to place a young person (fewer than 5 occasions) and only does so when their needs and risk assessment identifies that the placement in Norfolk Residential Children's Services would not be suitable.
- We have reviewed and changed the services provided to ensure they meet the needs of all young people including those with challenging behaviours.

Working with the young people in partnership with families and professionals, we promote alternative long-term solutions which are in the best interests of the young people. In order to build on our young people's self-esteem the Service has encouraged the young people's

activities, networks and interests. Investing their time and energy into something they enjoy has promoted positive behaviours. These routines can be carried through to future placements or when they return home.

**The following units deliver interventions to reduce the duration of time that young people spend in residential care:**

- **Norwich Road** and **The Lodge** provide 8 beds, offering emergency accommodation, for children where there is an immediate need for accommodation following a crisis breakdown either at home or at their placement. This accommodation is used while an alternative, appropriate placement is sourced.
- **Waterworks Road** and **Well Green** both provide 2 beds which offer intensive support to young people in a period of transition. This may be to support a young person return to Norfolk and live independently or support a child who has serious health or social needs for example an eating disorder. These are used as care planning placements whilst suitable long term placement options are identified.
- **Aylsham Road** was a 4 bedded unit with a focus on the reunification of young people with their families either as new entrants to care or young people returning to Norfolk to live with their family. The new remit of Aylsham Road is to provide short-term breaks to assist in meeting the needs of the Department in reducing its looked after population.
- **Loki House** is a 4 bedded unit offering crisis intervention and short term placements specialising in young people returning from out of county placements.
- **Easthills** is a long term unit with 6 beds where the service assists young people during the transition to post-16 accommodation.
- **Foxwood** and **Marshfields** offer short term breaks to children and young people with severe and complex disabilities some of whom have a life limiting condition.
- There are also four supported flats available which are managed in partnership with Broadland Housing. These provide accommodation for 16 and 17 year-olds and help them prepare for independent living with 37 hours of support provided each week by Children's Services staff with 24 hour (seven days per week) telephone support available. This has helped to lower the amount of residential placements and has proved to be a cost effective resource.
- **Outreach and out of hours:** This is a team consisting of four workers covering the county providing outreach and out of hours support for a time limited period to assist families in crisis, keeping young people at home.

At 28 March 2014, there were 27 young people in Children's Services Residential Homes, not including Foxwood, Marshfields and the Broadland Housing flats.

**The Residential Service aims:**

- Within the LAC Reduction Strategy, a specific objective has been set to reduce use of residential to below 7% of total children and young people in care. The intention is to achieve that overall reduction primarily, in the first instance through reducing third party placements, with specific focus being given to reducing out of County placements, in line with our out of County policy.

### 3.6 Other Residential Provision

**Norfolk contracts 25 residential placements from a voluntary sector partner (Break), with provision as follows:**

- Yarmouth Road: 4 beds, offering long term care 8 to 17
- Cromer Road: 4 beds, offering long term care 8 to 17
- North Street: 4 beds, offering long term care 8 to 17
- Tennyson Avenue: 4 beds, offering long term care 8 to 17



- Rosedale: 4 beds, offering long term care 7 to 17
- Trafalgar Lodge : 4 beds, offering long term CWD care 8 to 17

Norfolk maintains a rolling select list currently containing 22 providers (57 individual units) covering Norfolk and surrounding counties. 16 of these units are in Norfolk itself.

As at 4 March 2015 there were 14 children and young people in care placed in spot purchase outside of select list since tender commenced.

A number of children and young people in care are placed out of county:

- 28 children and young people in care placed in out of county residential units..
- Largest concentration is in Cambridgeshire (4) and Suffolk (4) and Hertfordshire (3)
- 9 out of county residential placements are allocated to CWD

Norfolk has historically had an overreliance on residential provision with approximately double the national average usage. As such, reducing the amount of residential use, to below 7% of placements, is seen as a priority.

### 3.7 Adoption & Permanence

**Norfolk Adoption Service consists of three social work teams which deliver the following:**

- The recruitment, training and assessment of prospective adopters, including inter-country and in-family applicants
- The preparation of children when required for an adoptive placement
- Placement of children with approved prospective adopters
- Counselling for birth families relinquishing a child for adoption
- Consultation to child care social work teams in respect of adoption issues
- Services to other professionals including facilitation of the independent Adoption and Permanence Panel and completion of reports for Courts; participation in the Eastern Region Adoption Consortium
- Provide a range of helpful support to adoptive families
- An assessment of need post adoption and planned services in consultation with the family
- A Letterbox contact arrangement for exchange of information between adoptive and birth families
- Facilitation of any arrangements for direct contact between adoptive and birth families as appropriate for the child
- Access to birth records and information for Adopted Adults
- Intermediary services for birth families and Adopted Adults
- Therapeutic provision for children where required pre and post adoptive placement.

**In 2013/14 the Norfolk Adoption Service:**

- Completed 69 assessments of prospective adopters, the highest number of completed so far.
- Matched 109 local children with adoptive families, again the highest number matched in a year so far.
- Achieved Adoption Orders for 85 children.
- The number of enquiries about adoption also rose to 424 in 2013/14.

**The Adoption Service aims:**

- Maintain level of prospective adopters so that the majority of Norfolk children with plans for adoption can be placed in Norfolk. We do not aim to increase the numbers of

prospective adopters year on year but to balance our recruitment strategy on being sensitive to the changing needs of children with plans for adoption. The number of children has been variable and it fell in 2014 but there are signs that this trend may be starting to reverse.

- There will be close monitoring of the children with plans for adoption in order to aim to meet the needs in house primarily.
- Our aim is to reduce the number of out of county placements for children. We hope to do this by increasing the capacity of prospective adopters to widen their offer with improved preparation and training.
- The aim of increasing the number of flexible offers from adopters will also mean that the more complex children who are older than average, in sibling groups and with complex needs can be met in house.
- We are reviewing our support to adopters in the early days of the placement and how this could be improved, and are reviewing our support plan processes.
- Our main focus will be 'foster to adopt' rather than concurrency planning however in a small number of cases we may consider concurrency if it fits with the child's needs.
- We anticipate that the demand for adoption support services will increase and we are keen to apply to the Adoption Support Fund to increase the likelihood that adoptive children can remain in their adoptive homes without disruption.

### 3.8 Leaving Care Provision

**Currently the Leaving Care function is being undertaken by, predominantly, six Corporate Parenting Teams.**

Recent figures indicate Norfolk has approximately 440 Former Relevant Care Leavers, 260 Eligible Care Leavers and around 20 Relevant Care Leavers. Norfolk currently does not have a dedicated Leaving Care Service, the Personal Advisor function is being carried out to varying degrees of compliance by a whole host of workers across different disciplines in Children's Services. Whilst the majority of Care Leavers are allocated to Corporate Parenting Teams, there are also Care Leavers in CWD, Diverse Communities teams, CIN Teams and Safeguarding Teams.

A result of Care Leavers being allocated to a variety of teams is that the quality of service has been negatively impacted when compared to Care Leaver experiences under the previous Leaving Care Service. Whilst over the last few months there has been an improvement in the number of Pathway Plans being completed, and being completed in a timely manner (approx. 40% completed within timescales in August 2014 to 85% completed with timescale in January 2015) it has been recognised that Leaving Care Services would be better delivered by dedicated staff teams.

**During the first half of 2014 a decision was made to create a stand-alone Leaving Care Service with dedicated Leaving Care Teams:**

- A Leaving Care Project began in August 2014 with an aim to create a Leaving Care Service before the end of December 2014.
- That timescale has had to be moved back as it soon became apparent that Leaving Care Teams were dependent on other parts of Children's Services in particular LAC teams.
- The new Leaving Care Service would only be able to go live in line with the rest of the Children's Services re-organisation.
- There will be five Leaving Care Teams across Norfolk, which will broadly align themselves with the six areas identified for Children's Services delivery; Kings Lynn and Breckland will merge to create one team straddling two divisions.

After much consultation with Care Leavers and practitioners the model agreed by Children's Services Leadership Team is a co-working model. The Leaving Care teams will be solely responsible for all Former Relevant Care Leavers. The Leaving Care Teams will provide a Personal Advisor for all Eligible Care Leavers by their 16 birthday. These PA's will co-work alongside the qualified Social Worker (mainly LAC but sometimes other teams).

The PA/Leaving Care focus will be preparing young people for successful transition to adulthood and this will include focus on suitable accommodation including 'Stay Put', a focus on making sure all are in employment, education or training, and a focus on health. The PA will also assist the SW in making sure Needs Assessments and Pathway Plans are completed on time and to a high standard. Whilst statutory duties are carried out by the qualified SW the co-working PA will play a vital role in making sure there is effective and early Leaving Care planning.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

In Norfolk the picture is improving, with a decrease in the number of children and young people in our care, since June 2014. Currently this is decreasing in line with our expectations for a high performing Local Authority, which means we expect to meet our target of 770 children and young people in care by 31 March 2017.

This must be seen in the context of the children's system which is being reshaped to drive improvements in the quality and timeliness of planning.

The age profile of the children and young people in care has remained steady, however admissions to care for 16 and 17 year olds increased dramatically in 2013/14 compared to previous years. This has been matched by an increased effort by Norfolk to meet the needs of older children and young people in care. This includes better planning for their move on through the Care Leavers Transitions Panel and better accommodation options, developed through the 16+ Accommodation Transitions Strategy. It is this older age group that will also benefit from the new dedicated Leaving Care teams.

In previous years we have been unable to meet demands made on our services, which had resulted in a high out of county population, including children being placed in expensive residential placements. A combination of reducing numbers of children and young people in our care, a capital grant to increase in county residential provision and work to improve the market of in county placements means that the number of children we have placed out of county has reduced to near the statistical neighbour average.

This reduction in our numbers of children and young people in care means we expect to see an increase in the average needs profile of the cohort. We need to ensure that the workforce involved in working with and caring for these children and young people have sufficient skill and training in working with these more complex needs.

We have worked to stimulate the market in Norfolk to increase the number and type of placements available. With a reduction in the number of children and young people in care, an increased focus on providing placements in house and an aim to reduce the number of young people in residential care, the market is going to change. This may mean we lose some providers, particularly independent fostering agencies and residential homes. We will need to monitor this to ensure that we retain sufficient placements across Norfolk, including placements for children and young people on the edge of care in short break type services.

As we plan for the future we need to shift our focus from increasing numbers of placements for children and young people in care, to ensuring children and young people on the edge of

care are supported to remain at home with their family, or extended family. We will also need to bring our providers on this journey, enabling them to offer support and placements to young people either as a short break, or offering very short term, reunification focused, placements.

A central tenet of this approach is to get help to families earlier, to work with them to tackle issues and to ensure that ultimately they feel enabled to discharge their parenting responsibility effectively.

# Children's Services Committee

Item No 14

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Update to Committee on Norfolk Fostering</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>12 May 2015</b>
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Sheila Lock</b>
<b>Strategic impact</b>  Following recent publicity concerning children being removed from foster care, an external review, led by Ian Parker, has been commissioned. At the same time, an internal review including legal advice has been taken. This report updates Children's Services Committee of the work of the internal review and actions that have resulted.	

## Executive summary

This paper will update committee members detail actions taken regarding legal advice and implementation of the signs of safety approach to improve practice and prevent disruptions in foster care.

This approach to revising the procedures is wholly in line with a sequenced piece of work across the Directorate to bring our procedures in line with Signs of safety approaches

**Recommendations: For committee to make comment and recommendations in relation to this update**

## 1. Proposal

### 1.1 Legal advice / procedural changes

Legal advice was sought from Queen Counsel regarding Norfolk Children's Services Fostering allegation and concerns procedure. **We were given clear legal advice that our procedures were legal and compliant with national regulation and guidance.**

In discussion with counsel and through consideration of best practice following our Signs of Safety work some minor amendments are proposed to policy and procedures. The following points cover this in broad detail.

- To provide a preamble to provide external parties with a better understanding of the competing rights and duties that the local authority is required to meet
- Strengthen the reference in the procedure to consult with interested parties including foster carers in most cases
- Strengthen reference to national guideline timescales
- ensure decisions are made in the best interests of the child , particularly where there is a police investigation
- Be clear within the fostering procedure that due to national guidance Norfolk Children's Services under Section 47, in relation to fostering, must act when it

has reasonable cause to suspect, not as in other situations reasonable cause to believe, accordingly the threshold is quite low.

The above recommendations have been implemented and a hyperlink is available to the fostering allegations procedure at the end of this paper.

**1.2** As a result of issues being raised by foster carers, we are also standardising our practice between in-house and agency foster carers. Amending the procedure so after a final strategy meeting, a meeting to inform the foster carers of the outcome of this meeting, is held within two working days. The foster carer will have the right to appeal if new facts come to light or procedures were not followed. It should be borne in mind that foster carers have not been treated any differently to other professionals about whom allegations are made.

### **1.3 Signs of Safety**

The following practice guidance, which was implemented on 16 April 2015 following a briefing with team managers and independent foster agencies. This guidance allows the child, young person, foster carers or team managers to call a Signs of Safety meeting to prevent placement disruption if they are worried about a placement ending.

“Within Norfolk we are examining the way we approach our work with children their families, partner agencies and foster carers and looking at how we can make it the best it can be. This has included signing up to the Signs of Safety. We are committed to using this approach across all of our work including the way that we work with Looked after Children and their networks including their foster carers. The aim of this different approach is to ensure that we are doing all that we can to listen to children and carers to ensure we are offering support and help at the point the child and carer need it.

Disruptions to foster placement occur for many different reasons. Research tells us that some of the factors that affect the likelihood of a disruption are:

- The stage of the placement (i.e. a disruption is more likely early in the placement)
- The age of the child (risk increasing with age)
- A child who has had previous moves
- Poor placement planning and poor matching
- Poor levels of support to the child and \ or carer.

When foster placements disrupt, research tells us that foster carers and social workers frequently disagree about who was mainly responsible for the disruption, which problem combined to end the placement and over which course the troubled waters ran. The various parties in disrupted placements also disagree, on many occasions, as to what should have been done to prevent the final split up of children and their foster carers.

For the child who may feel powerless and very scared within such a scenario professional disagreement does not assist them to feel secure and stable.

#### Signs of Safety support planning meetings

Signs of safety can be used in all our work and should inform all planning and assessment.

To ensure that we are working in the best possible way to support children within their placements which will in turn avoid disruptions, a Signs of Safety approach should be used to engaging with the foster family and the child. If there is concern that the placement may be at risk of breaking down a piece of work will take place between the foster carer, the child and key agencies including the child and carer's social workers taking a signs of safety approach.

### Signs of Safety Practice tools

It is critically important to understand the voice of the child and to this end, the direct work tools in Signs of Safety (the 3 houses etc.) should be used to ensure the child's voice is heard.

To ensure that placements are given the best possible chance of being appropriately supported the relevant Head of Social Work for the area will chair a planning meeting which will use the signs of safety approach. This will be recorded on the mapping template. Only in very exceptional circumstances (which may include where allegations have been made but this will depend on the seriousness, nature and complexity of the allegation \ situation) will children and young people be moved without a planning support meeting.

If a child needs to be moved from a long term/permanent foster placement without a planning meeting as outlined above the disruption meeting will take account of the information using a signs of safety approach.

The support planning meeting can be instigated by either the child's social work team, the fostering team, the IRO or by request of the child/young person or foster carer.

The timescale for the meeting will be set by the child's social work team manager and should be completed within a maximum of 30 days. The planning meeting will take place at the end of the work but can be called at any time during the process if the matter becomes urgent.

Discussion and thought should be given to the 'What needs to happen' section and scaling but this will be the focus of the meeting.

### LAC Reviews

This process does not interfere with the statutory requirements in relation to LAC reviews. Children should not be moved from placements without a LAC review and the IRO should always be consulted within the process.

### Planning

The meeting agenda will be as follows:

- Introductions
- What's working well
- What are we worried about
- Scaling. On a scale of 0 – 10. 0 being that the placement is at high risk of disruption. 10 being the child's needs are being met, the placement is stable and will continue with all parties' agreement

- The Chair will use the EARS (Elicit, Amplify, Reflect, and Start Over) conversation to assure an appreciative meeting. At the end of the meeting, the planning meeting will be recorded by the chair on the mapping template. Where possible, copies should be distributed at the meeting or within two working days by the Chair
- The meeting will focus on what additional support can be offered in order to assist this child and foster family within this placement
- There needs to be a clear note of all decisions and of any dissenting opinions

Please note, no placement can be ended by Children's Services without a Planning meeting, appropriate consultations and a LAC review. The final decision to end a placement rests with an Assistant Director. Where a placement needs to end in an emergency (whether an allegation has been made or not) the relevant Assistant director should be consulted."

## **2. Evidence**

The proposals within this paper are based on legal advice, and best practice evidenced within the signs of safety approach.

## **3. Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications to this paper.

## **4. Issues, risks and innovation**

This paper proposes changes to increase clarity and legal compliance and improve practice.

## **5. Background**

Link to practice guidance for Signs of safety and foster care:

[http://www.proceduresonline.com/norfolk/user\\_controlled\\_lcms\\_area/uploaded\\_files/Practice%20Guidance%20-%20Signs%20of%20Safety%20and%20foster%20care%20v1.docx](http://www.proceduresonline.com/norfolk/user_controlled_lcms_area/uploaded_files/Practice%20Guidance%20-%20Signs%20of%20Safety%20and%20foster%20care%20v1.docx)

Link to updated 'Allegation against foster carer' procedure:

[http://www.proceduresonline.com/norfolk\\_cs/chapters/p\\_alleg\\_foster.html](http://www.proceduresonline.com/norfolk_cs/chapters/p_alleg_foster.html)

## **Officer Contact**

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