



Norfolk County Council

Children's Services Committee

Date: Tuesday, 13 November 2018

Time: 10:00

Venue: Edwards Room, County Hall,
Martineau Lane, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 2DH

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

Membership

Mr S Dark - Chairman

Mr D Collis	Mr J Mooney
Ms E Corlett	Ms J Oliver - Vice-Chairman
Mr J Fisher	Mr M Smith-Clare
Mr R Hanton	Mr B Stone
Mr H Humphrey	Ms S Squire
Mr E Maxfield	Mr V Thomson

Church Representatives

Mrs H Bates Mr P Dunning

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Nicola LeDain on 01603 223053 or email committees@norfolk.gov.uk

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A g e n d a

1. To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2018

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3. **Declarations of Interest**

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, to a greater extent than others in your division

- Your wellbeing or financial position, or
- that of your family or close friends
- Any body -
 - Exercising functions of a public nature.
 - Directed to charitable purposes; or
 - One of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union);

Of which you are in a position of general control or management.

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

4. **Any items of business the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency**

5. **Public QuestionTime**

Fifteen minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given.

Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by **5pm Thursday 8 November 2018**. For guidance on submitting a public question, view the Constitution at www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/councillors-meetings-decisions-and-elections/committees-agendas-and-recent-decisions/ask-a-question-to-a-committee

6. Local Member Issues/ Member Questions

Fifteen minutes for local member 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) by **5pm on Thursday 8 November 2018**.

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| 7. Performance Monitoring report
Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services. | Page 17 |
| 8. Budget Monitoring Report Period 6 (September)
Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services. | Page 29 |
| 9. Schools' Capital Programme 2017-2020
Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services. | Page 49 |
| 10. Annual Review of the Norfolk County Council Adoption Agency
Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services. | Page 59 |
| 11. Statement of Purpose of Norfolk's Fostering Services Annual Review
Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services. | Page 99 |
| 12. Annual Review of Norfolk's Residential Children's Homes
Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services. | Page 123 |
| 13. Recruitment & Retention - Social Workers
Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services. | Page 139 |
| 14. Committee Forward Plan and update on decisions taken under delegated authority
Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services. | Page 149 |

Group Meetings

Conservative	9:00am Conservative Group Room, Ground Floor
Labour	9:00am Labour Group Room, Ground Floor
Liberal Democrats	9:00am Liberal Democrats Group Room, Ground Floor

Chris Walton
Head of Democratic Services
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
NR1 2DH

Date Agenda Published: 05 November 2018



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Children's Services Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Tuesday 16 October 2018
10am, Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich

Present:

Mr S Dark - Chairman

Mr R Brame
Ms E Corlett
Mr P Duigan
Mr J Fisher
Mr R Hanton
Mr H Humphrey

Mr E Maxfield
Ms J Oliver – Vice-Chairman
Mr M Smith-Clare
Mrs S Squire
Mrs C Walker
Mrs S Young

Church Representatives:

Mr P Dunning

Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair paid tribute to the former Chair and member of Children's Services Committee, Mrs Penny Carpenter, who had recently resigned from the Committee. She had been a passionate advocate for the children of Norfolk and always had time to listen. The sentiments were echoed by other Members of the Committee.

The Chairman reported that at the full Council meeting, held on 15th October 2018, members had voted for the consultation on Children's Centres to continue. In light of this decision the Chairman had spoken to the Labour and Liberal Democrat Group Spokesmen and agreed that a full discussion would be held at the Children's Services Committee in January 2019, as per the forward plan, when Officers would bring their full, detailed report for consideration.

1. Apologies and substitutions

1.1 Apologies were received from Mr Joe Mooney, Mr Barry Stone, Mr Vic Thomson and Mr David Collis; substituted by Mr Roy Brame, Mr Philip Duigan, Mrs Sheila Young and Mrs Colleen Walker respectively. Apologies were also received from Helen Bates.

2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2018

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the deletion of Mr M Smith-Clare's interest of being a Governor at Alderman Swindell School.

3. Declarations of Interest

Mr R Hanton declared an 'other' interest as his daughter-in-law was a teacher.

Mr S Dark declared an 'other' interest as his sister was a Headteacher at Swaffham and he was a Governor at the West Norfolk Academy.

Mr E Maxfield declared an 'other' interest as he was a Trustee at the Hamlet Charity in Norwich which provides services under contract to Norfolk County Council and was a Governor at two schools.

Mrs S Squire declared an 'other' interest as her sons had Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) administered by Norfolk County Council.

Mr H Humphrey declared an 'other' interest as he was a Governor at Emneth School.

Mr R Brame declared an 'other' interest as he was a Governor at a school Charity and a school.

4. Items of Urgent Business

4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

5. Public Question Time

5.1 There were four public questions submitted, which are attached at appendix 1.

5.2 A supplementary question was asked by Mr Jimmy Sayle regarding impact assessments on the Children's Centres and if they would be in the public domain. Officers confirmed that impact assessments would be carried out and they would be in the public domain once they had been completed.

5.3 A supplementary question was asked by Maxine Webb regarding the attention being paid to those children who were being home-schooled. Officers answered that those who are being home-schooled were closely monitored. There were regular officer meetings regarding children who were not on a school roll, but Officers were confident they knew where those children were.

6. Local Member Issues/Member Questions

6.1 There were three local member questions submitted, which are attached at appendix 1.

6.2a. Cllr Brociek-Coulton asked a supplementary question; 'Have all of the different taxi firms that NCC use for school transport provided their drivers with safeguarding

training. Is this training the same for all companies, who provides it and how do we monitor the quality and impact of any training?’

6.2b In response to Cllr Brociek-Coulton’s supplementary question, Officers explained that the oversight of the transport policy sat with travel and transport. Every driver received robust training and is monitored, and if any issues arose, swift action was taken. It was agreed that an update on the situation alluded too would be given to the Chairman and Cllr Brociek-Coulton.

7. Budget Monitoring Period 5 (August)

7.1 The Committee received the annexed report (7) which set out the period 5 financial forecast for Children’s Services, and the programme of transformation and improvement that was continuing. It included the financial resources to deliver the Safer Children and Resilient Families Strategy of Norfolk Futures and the forecast revenue expenditure for 2018/19.

7.2 Officers explained that the legal costs identified in the report were primarily around legal proceedings which were initiated to bring children into the care of NCC. It was recognised that legal costs were nationally high but there were discussions taking place to try and reduce the costs.

7.3 With regards to SEND provision, there were two transformation projects currently being undertaken. One related to the capital provision for SEND children, and a report would be going to Policy and Resources Committee later this month to request capital funding for new infrastructure. Additionally, there was culture change being implemented to drive down the level of demand. This would encourage needs to be caught earlier and locally.

7.4 Work had been carried out on the semi-permanent accommodation, as mentioned on page 7 of the report. It was hoped that they would be available from 2019, and staff were being recruited and trained so they can be staff as soon as the buildings were ready.

7.5 The Committee heard that the agency staff budget had to be increased due to staff pressure, but there had been an overspend on this budget due to the success of the recent recruitment campaigns. It was projected that it would continue to be an underspend as more cost-effective staff were being recruited. The Executive Director confirmed that they had recruited some high calibre newly qualified social workers and the campaign had received national recognition.

7.6 The Committee noted that the overspend on alternative provision was largely due to the significant pressures on short stay schools. A strategy was in place to reduce demand on this provision as there were too many exclusions and too many were continuing their education in alternative provision.

7.7 The Committee asked what percentage of the legal costs mentioned were part of EHCP tribunals. Officers would provide this information after the meeting and would circulate to all Committee.

- 7.8 The Committee asked if they could have information about what alternative provision exists in what part of the County. This would be provided.
- 7.9
- i. The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
 - ii. Note the forecast overspend of £3.958m for General Fund Children's Services
 - iii. Note the forecast use of Children's Services General Fund reserves and provisions
 - iv. Note the forecast overspend of £6.389m for Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Children's Services that would need to be offset by
 - a £4.268m against DSG balances and recovered in future years
 - b £2.121m against the General Fund
 - v. Note the amendments to and reprofiling of the Children's Services Capital Programme.

8. Strategic and Financial Planning 2019-20 – 2021-22

- 8.1 The Committee received the annexed report (8) which provided an update on the Service Committee's detailed planning to feed into the Council's budget process for 2019-20. The report included Children's Services Committee's specific proposals for savings in the context of the approach to developing options that was agreed at the Committee's meeting in September. The report also provided the latest information about the Council's overall budget planning position, including the forecast budget gap for 2019-20 to 2021-22.
- 8.2 The Committee heard that resource bases were attached to mainstream schools. It would be the intention with capital released by Policy and Resources Committee to provide more resource bases as currently people must travel too far to access the provision.
- 8.3 The sufficiency plan that had been devised identified where the geographic need for SRB bases was, however a wider consultation would be undertaken. Work would begin in the Spring term, subject to the approval of the capital funding.
- 8.4 The Committee heard that it was within the gift of the Schools Forum to move 0.5% of the schools needs block annually to another block. With a written request to the secretary of State, it was now possible to move more than 0.5%. This had been done by other Local Authorities and would be undertaken by NCC. If the approval wasn't granted, a request would have to be prepared for Policy and Resources.
- 8.5 The edge of care savings model was projecting a step change approach to the number of children in care. It was absolutely realised that there were children that needed to be there. It was proposing that there would be 2.5% less in the first few months building to 5% less, but this was not disproportionately different to the current position.
- 8.6 It was clarified that the £2m in year savings as mentioned in 5.4, was made up of underspend of providers, and there was no feedback of detrimental impact.

- 8.7 It was explained that the report to Policy and Resources regarding the capital funding would include details of the investment, impact of the capital and how the loan would be paid. There was concern expressed that the loan would not be paid in time.
- 8.8 Concerns raised around the risk in relation to the 2019-2022 budget planning were the high needs block, the timeliness of transformation and the timescales in relation to the SRB block.
- 8.9 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- 1) Consider the content of the report and the continuing progress of change and transformation of Children's Services
 - 2) Note the Council's latest budget assumptions and pressures, and the resulting revised forecast budget gap of £45.322m, which had been updated by Policy and Resources Committee to reflect the latest available information and following Service Committee input in September (paragraph 4.3 and table 1).
 - 3) Note the revised council tax planning assumptions set out in table 2;
 - 4) Approve the proposed savings for the 2019-2020 budget round for recommendation to Policy and Resources Committee in October (table 7), in particular, confirming those savings that are recommended to require consultation as set out in paragraph 6.13.
 - 5) Consider and identify any further key areas of risk in relation to 2019-22 budget planning for the Committee's budgets, including any additional pressures and the robustness of existing planned savings as set out in table 4, noting that any changes may impact on the overall budget gap and will require additional offsetting savings to be found;
 - 6) Note the budget planning timetable (section 7).

9. Exclusions in Norfolk Schools

- 9.1 The Committee received the annexed report (9) which identifies data as collected in Norfolk and make some comparisons with the most recent national data where possible.
- 9.2 The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Education Achievement and Early Years' Service and Head of Education Vulnerable Groups Achievement and Access Service which is attached at appendix 2.
- 9.3 The Committee heard that new Headteachers were monitored. There was no significant pattern between a change of senior leadership and the numbers of exclusions.
- 9.4 It was doubtful that schools were using an exclusion to gain more support for a child with SEND but who didn't have an education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place,

as it wouldn't lead to more resources. Schools excluded when they felt they had no other option.

- 9.5 The long term educational outcomes for those in Norfolk who had been excluded were better than those nationally but still not as good as those who do not get excluded in their schooling lifetime.
- 9.6 There tended to be peaks of exclusions across the school year for years 9, 10 and 11 with the Autumn term seeing more exclusions as well as the later part of the Summer term. The spring term tended to see less exclusions.
- 9.7 The Committee asked if the recent change to the curriculum had affected the number of recent exclusions as there were now less vocational course on offer. It was explained that the constant change of the curriculum was always challenging but this was not necessarily a reason for an exclusion as there were examples of schools with high outcomes which were well inclusive.
- 9.8 The Committee expressed concern at the number of primary exclusions which had taken place but noted that there were reducing. Officers explained that they would know if there was any family related or early help engagement involved and once excluded would know if they were involved in a referral process. It was noted that the primary exclusions were higher than hoped, and there would be engagement taking place with the 47 primary schools that needed to exclude.
- 9.9 The Committee heard that the school had a duty to provide work for a student who had been excluded for a fixed term. Very few students were excluded for more than 2 days.
- 9.10 The Committee heard that the data would be shared with the Governors network to encourage Governors to scrutinise the exclusions number in their school when they receive the data on the Headteacher's Report.
- 9.11 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- Note the contents of the report and the associated presentation
 - Provide comments, as detailed above, to steer the direction of the Local Authority work to support the education system in Norfolk in being more inclusive and meet the needs of all pupils.

10. Social Work Assessment Performance

- 10.1 The Committee received the annexed report (10) which summarised how the new Children's Services and Social Work Senior Leadership Teams' concerted focus, working alongside frontline teams and managers, and despite continued significant operational pressures, has resulted in recent improvements in assessment being completed in time.
- 10.2 The Committee were reassured that teams would not suffer as focus had been put elsewhere. Strategies in place would prevent this and help bring the overall performance up to 80%.

- 10.3 The Committee expressed aspiration that as the 80% target had been achieved, a further higher target should be aimed for. Officers explained although this was definitely the intention, it was necessary to see a period of sustained performance at this level, and at the end of the financial year the target would be reviewed.
- 10.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to;
- **NOTE** the recent improvements in Social Work assessment timescales and actions taken to achieve and sustain this improvement going forward.

11. Joint Consultative Committee revision to terms of reference

- 11.1 The Committee received the annexed report (11) which set out the proposals to amend the terms of reference of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) which reflect the changing education landscape, and the complexities of the LA as employer within that context.
- 11.2 The Committee suggested that the Chair of the JCC should alternate between elected members and other members, and this would be discussed at the first meeting of the JCC.
- 11.3 It was also confirmed that the JCC could be used as a mechanism for providing a united front and for airing issues that affected teachers, dependant on the issue.
- 11.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** that;
- The terms of reference were approved for consideration at the first revised JCC.
 - That membership of the revised JCC is made up of four members of Children's Services Committee.
 - That the Chair of Children's Services Committee continues to be one of the four members of the revised JCC arrangement and that three other members are nominated for membership. These would be Judy Oliver and Ron Hanton, with one to be decided.

12. Risk Management

- 12.1 The Committee received the annexed report (12) which provided the Committee with the Children's departmental risk register, as at October 2018, following the latest review conducted in September 2018. The reporting of risk is aligned with, and compliments, the performance and financial reporting to the Committee.
- 12.2 The Committee **AGREED** to defer the report until the January meeting. Cllr Corlett agreed to raise her item on digital exclusion with the Executive Director, at Cllr Dark's suggestion, outside of the meeting.

13. Committee Forward Plan and update on decisions taken under delegate authority

13.1 The Committee received the annexed report (13) which set out the forward plan for the Committee to enable Members to shape future meetings, agendas and items for consideration.

13.2 The Committee **AGREED** the Forward Plan.

The meeting closed at 2.11pm.

Chairman



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CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE QUESTIONS
16 October 2018

5. Public Question Time

Paula Waters-Bunn (not attending)

The funding, erection and running costs for 10 years for the 20mph traffic signs on Keyes Avenue was organised by PoNY. These were paid for by local ward councillors and the local community. The local residents do not want these to go to waste. If the building is to continue as a school, they are happy that the signs remain where they are. But if not, they would like the signs reused at another suitable location within North Yarmouth ward at either Northgate Primary or North Denes Primary.

Could the Committee please advise on the future of the signs?

Supplementary question:

The Castle Centre was paid for by grants for community use. It's a resource for various community groups who are NOT able to continue using it now. There are no other centres of this size in the North of the borough and residents want assurances that the centre will continue as the community asset it was intended for, available to local groups for the future, as agreed by the funders.

Response: There are traffic calming requirements in place as part of the plans for North Denes. There is a firm intention that the 20mph signs would accompany the children and be reused on Jellicoe Road as part of this proposal along with other measures funded by the NCC schools' capital project.

The CASSTLE building project was a Norfolk County Council project funded by mainstream schools' capital funding with the remainder part of the original SureStart programme. It was taken out of the Surestart use by the Governors of the school in 2014, and this is recorded as a governing body decision at the time. As part of the closure of Alderman Swindell Primary the school shared the details of the five community groups using the hall in January 2018 with North Denes Primary. All were offered alternative bookings at North Denes Primary School, and with the exception of one have been successfully accommodated. The one that could not be accommodated was resolved amicably to our knowledge.

There will be facilities in the new school building at North Denes to let to community groups. The decision of whether to let the Hall in the CASSTLE building out of school hours in the same way as Alderman Swindell School did in the past will be for the future Academy Trust. The process to identify the future sponsor has not yet started.

Ruth Makoff & Jimmy Sayle (attending)

As Norwich-based parents of a pre-school child, we are concerned about the potential impacts of the proposed cuts to the Children Centres budget on early years nursery provision. Some of the children's centres whose running costs would no longer be funded currently share premises with early years nurseries. This suggests that some of these nurseries will in effect lose part of the funding that currently covers their buildings and staffing costs. Could you confirm how many, if any, nursery facilities would be in this position, and what proportion of their buildings and staffing budget is currently funded through the Children Centres budget that is due to be cut?

Response: Funding for early years education and childcare is separate to funding for children's centres and is not affected directly by changes to the children's centre funding. Where early years providers operate from a children's centre, there will already be a lease arrangement in place, so providers will already be contributing to the building costs. We will support all early years

providers who are affected by any changes to the buildings from which they operate, to ensure that sufficient early years places remain available to parents.

Maxine Webb, SENSational Families:

Given Norfolk's exceptionally long autism diagnosis waiting times, as identified by Norfolk Healthwatch in their report published this month, along with the ongoing NCC EHCP problems and many schools' refusal to recognise some children as having difficulties and therefore may not even be on their SEN register, what consideration has been given to the fact that there could be large numbers of pupils with SEND left out of the SEND exclusion figures and what attention is being paid to the children in unsuitable provision who have been removed from a school by their family and forced into home-schooling, before an exclusion takes place?

Response: Diagnosis for autism, as with all health-related conditions, is the responsibility of Norfolk's Clinical Commissioning Groups; we are working with them, however, on overall review and improvement of ASD issues across the County.

With regard to the issue of permanent (and other) exclusions from Norfolk mainstream schools we are confident that our published figures for exclusions are accurate and can, therefore, be compared confidently with national comparator data because permanent exclusions are made by schools and then NCC has the responsibility to meet needs after the exclusion we know clearly who these children are. The figures are fully accurate for SEND and other categories of need. With regard to issues relating to whether or not all schools accurately record SEN incidence that is primarily a matter for individual schools.

Alan Webb

What did the 'Member/Officer deep dive within Children's Services in August 2018' consist of and what are its conclusions?

Response: A number of meetings and discussions took place across the summer as part of budget preparation. Any conclusions will feed into the service committee budget process.

6. Local Member Issues / Member Questions

Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton, Sewell Division (attending):

I was extremely concerned to learn that a child in my division who has Special Educational Needs was taken by NCC funded transport to the wrong house, subsequently arrived home 30 minutes late and was left unattended in the garden until his parent returned from collecting his siblings. How are safeguarding issues such as this recorded and investigated by the county council?

Response: This is of concern to us also and we have robust procedures in the event of this kind of incident. Children's Services is the 'client' department and NCC's Travel & Transport Services operate SEN Transport provision on the departments' behalf.

When any issues are raised, regarding transport provision of this nature, Travel & Transport Services make direct, and immediate, contact with the individual transport provider; suspension of the driver and/or passenger assistant takes place pending an investigation. In addition, the incident is reported to the LADO service as a serious safeguarding breach. Outcomes following investigations of this type can lead to permanent withdrawal of authority for those staff to work on any NCC contracts and/or action taken against the operator e.g. termination of contract.

All transport staff receive safeguarding training every 3 years. They must pass the course before they are issued with an NCC identity badge which allows them to work on our transport contracts.

Cllr Mike Smith-Clare:

With the unacceptably high number of exclusions across Norfolk's schools - can we be assured that the reasons for these exclusions are being appropriately recorded and justified and that high instances within particular schools are being investigated?

Response: All permanent exclusions are notified to an Exclusion Officer and are recorded with the reasons given by the school. Trends are analysed by Children's Services. There is contact from the Vulnerable Groups Achievement and Access Service as soon the permanent exclusion is notified, to support and influence the school in taking different action where we can. It is for the local Governing Board or Board of Trustees to scrutinise the decision to exclude by the Headteacher and there is the right of appeal open to a parent to an Independent Appeals Panel. Only the Governing Board can direct reinstatement. An Independent Appeals panel can direct reinstatement but schools can refuse to comply and there is no longer a method of recourse. We follow up high incidents of school exclusion through CEO's, and school leaders. This term all will be invited by recently recruited Inclusions Challenge partners. We are about to consult on establishing Fair Access Panels for Sept 19 at primary and secondary level in all areas of the county (they exist for secondary in some areas) to support schools in a local area to avoid exclusion by managed moves, temporary placements in neighbouring schools and joint decisions about the fair sharing of hard to place youngsters.

Supplementary question:

Are school's bullying policies being monitored effectively and what measures are being considered to ensure that a cross Norfolk zero tolerance approach is being delivered?

Response: By law (Education and Inspections Act 2006: Section 88 and 89), all state (not private) schools must have a Behavior statement/policy in place that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. This policy is decided by the school and approved by the school governors. All teachers, pupils and parents must be told what it is, and it must be published on the school website. The Local Authority does not have a role in monitoring policies, Ofsted regulates this and the inspection regime is rigorous.

Cllr Edward Maxfield:

You will be aware that one of the Children's Centres due to close under the planned recommissioning of Children's Centre Services is in Mundesley. At a recent meeting of Mundesley Parish Council, concern was expressed about the impact of the closures on services delivered to families in rural areas. How will community representatives such as Parish Councils be able to engage with commissioners and those bidding to provide the service under the new contract after the formal consultation has closed so that a full picture of local need and existing community assets can be built up to inform the tendering process?

Response: Parish councils have been informed about the current children's centre consultation via the Norfolk Association of Local Councils and will be aware of the opportunity to engage with NCC, including attending any of the public drop in events taking place across the county. Feedback from the current consultation will shape final recommendations that go to CSC in January 2019 and inform any decisions being made by Members about future service arrangements. There will be opportunities for continuing engagement with community stakeholders, including parish councils, to inform the detail and development of any future service specification.

Children's Services Committee

Report title:	Performance Monitoring 2017-18
Date of meeting:	13 November 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Sara Tough Executive Director Children's Services
Strategic impact Robust performance and risk management is key to ensuring that the organisation works both efficiently and effectively to develop and deliver services that represent good value for money and which meet identified need.	

Executive summary

Performance is reported on an exception basis, meaning that only those vital signs that are performing poorly or where performance is deteriorating are presented to committee. Those that do not meet the exception criteria will be available on the Performance section of the Norfolk County Council web site. The measure which are currently rated as Red (the rate of LAC per 10k of under 18s), is discussed later in this report.

This report focusses primarily on data as at end of September 2018.

Locality-level performance information is available on the Members Insight area of the intranet.

Recommendation:

Review and comment on the performance data, information and analysis presented in the vital sign report cards and determine whether the recommended actions identified are appropriate or whether another course of action is required.

1. Introduction

1.1 Performance dashboard

1.1.1 The performance dashboard provides a quick overview of Red/Amber/Green rated performance for our vital signs over a rolling 12 month period. This then complements that exception reporting process and enables committee members to check that key performance issues are not being missed.

NOTES:
 Green is in line with high performing authorities; Amber within 10% (not percentage points) of high performing authorities; Red being more than 10% worse than high performing authorities.
 'White' spaces denote that data will become available; 'grey' spaces denote that no data is currently expected, typically because the indicator is being finalised.
 The target value is that which relates to the latest measure period result in order to allow comparison against the RAG colours. A target may also exist for the current and/or future periods.

Monthly	Bigger or Smaller is better	Sep 17	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18	Target
{ChS} Percentage of Referrals into Early Help Services who have had a referral to EH in the previous 12 months	Smaller	11.2%	6.8%	9.4%	10.2%	6.5%	3.0%	6.3%	5.4%	6.1%	7.6%	3.6%	2.5%	2.2%	20.0%
		12 / 107	9 / 133	15 / 160	13 / 127	11 / 168	4 / 132	9 / 144	8 / 147	7 / 114	12 / 157	6 / 169	3 / 122	2 / 90	
{ChS} Percentage of Referrals into Section 17 CIN Services who have had a referral to S.17 CIN in the previous 12 months	Smaller	23.7%	23.7%	23.5%	23.8%	23.9%	24.2%	24.1%	24.2%	20.8%	21.3%	21.6%	22.6%	22.8%	<20%
		2101 / 8881	2156 / 9109	2189 / 9320	2252 / 9482	2233 / 9341	2240 / 9245	2173 / 9001	2173 / 8963	2162 / 9030					
{ChS} Percentage of Children Starting a Child Protection Plan who have previously been subject to a Child Protection Plan (in the last 2 years)	Smaller	8.6%	8.4%	8.3%	8.1%	8.1%	8.2%	8.2%	7.5%	8.8%	8.5%	7.9%	8.7%	9.0%	<15%
		70 / 810	69 / 821	67 / 809	66 / 814	70 / 859	71 / 869	69 / 844	66 / 875	67 / 888					
{ChS} Child in Need (CIN) with up to date CIN Plan	Bigger	75.1%	71.5%	64.7%	62.4%	58.9%	59.1%	65.8%	81.7%	87.4%	87.1%	82.7%	82.4%	84.2%	100%
		1022 / 1361	999 / 1397	973 / 1505	979 / 1570	909 / 1544	850 / 1439	917 / 1393	785 / 961						
{ChS} Child Protection (CP) - % children seen	Bigger	88.8%	90.6%	80.9%	84.7%	82.7%	89.1%	87.3%	83.6%	89.0%	85.0%	86.5%	80.0%	82.3%	100%
		336 / 499	338 / 501	295 / 508	354 / 504	440 / 532	521 / 585	508 / 582	498 / 596						
{ChS} LAC with up to date Care Plan	Bigger	96.8%	97.0%	95.3%	95.6%	94.3%	96.0%	95.7%	94.0%	91.5%	93.2%	94.5%	94.6%	95.7%	100%
		1076 / 1111	1082 / 1115	1078 / 1131	1076 / 1125	1085 / 1151	1118 / 1164	1127 / 1178	1108 / 1179	936 / 1184					
{ChS} LAC with up to date Health Assessment (HA)	Bigger	79.6%	79.1%	78.0%	76.2%	75.1%	76.5%	74.2%	77.4%			80.6%	80.4%	87.5%	100%
		611 / 768	613 / 775	610 / 782	604 / 793	604 / 804	613 / 801	596 / 803	627 / 810					722 / 825	
{ChS} Eligible Care Leavers with up to date Plan	Bigger	84.8%	84.9%	83.5%	82.3%	83.1%	79.7%	75.6%	76.3%					95.6%	
		179 / 211	180 / 212	177 / 212	181 / 220	187 / 225	189 / 237	183 / 242	183 / 240					217 / 227	
{ChS} Percentage of all young people in EET	Bigger	84.6%	88.1%	91.6%	91.5%	91.1%	91.0%	90.8%	90.4%		93.9%	92.5%			92%
{ChS} Percentage of Relevant and Former Relevant Care Leavers in EET	Bigger	62.9%	62.8%	62.6%	61.2%	59.2%	58.2%	58.3%	58.4%			55.8%	54.1%	56.3%	70%

Quarterly / Termly		Bigger or Smaller is better	Sep 15	Dec 15	Mar 16	Jun 16	Sep 16	Dec 16	Mar 17	Jun 17	Sep 17	Dec 17	Mar 18	Jun 18	Sep 18	Target
{ChS} Percentage of Children Starting to be looked-after who have previously been looked-after	Smaller					17.6%	10.0%	9.0%	8.3%	7.0%	8.0%	5.3%	6.7%	5.4%	4.6%	<15%
													33 / 493	5 / 93	6 / 131	
{ChS} LAC with up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP)	Bigger	63.5%		73.5%	88.1%	76.0%	83.2%	84.2%	89.2%	89.4%	88.5%	88.7%		91.0%	100%	
				527 / 717	597 / 678	541 / 712	570 / 685	591 / 702	610 / 684	599 / 670	577 / 652	564 / 636				
{ChS} Rate of Looked-After Children per 10,000 of the overall 0-17 population	Smaller	63.6	63.1	62.5	62.6	62.8	65.5	65.8	65.7	66.2	66.5	69.7	69.8	70.3	63.2	
{ChS} Increase the percentage of education establishments judged good or outstanding by Ofsted	Bigger		80.0%			87.0%	88.0%	88.0%	89.0%	89.0%	89.0%	89.0%	83.0%	84.0%		
{ChS} Number of children subject to a Permanent Exclusion	Smaller		113.0	93.0	84.0	131.0		65.0	64.0		97.0					
{ChS} Percentage of Education, Health & Care Plans completed within timescale	Bigger										7.0%	14.2%	14.4%	9.9%	13.4%	
Annual (financial / academic)		Bigger or Smaller is better	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Target
{ChS} Percentage of children working at or exceeding the expected standard in Reading, Writing & Maths at KS2	Bigger												50%	57%	59%	64%
{ChS} Percentage of children achieving Grade 4 and above in GCSE English and Maths at KS4	Bigger												61%	63%	62%	Under Development

1.2 Report cards – (Appendix 1)

1.2.1 A report card has been produced for each vital sign. It provides a succinct overview of performance and outlines what actions are being taken to maintain or improvement performance. The report card follows a standard format that is common to all committees.

1.2.2 Each vital sign has a lead officer, who is directly accountable for performance, and a data owner, who is responsible for collating and analysing the data on a monthly basis. The names and positions of these people are clearly specified on the report cards.

1.2.3 Vital signs are reported to committee on an exceptions basis. The exception reporting criteria are as follows:

- Performance is off-target (Red RAG rating or variance of 5% or more)
- Performance has deteriorated for three consecutive months/quarters/years
- Performance is adversely affecting the council's ability to achieve its budget
- Performance is adversely affecting one of the council's corporate risks.

1.2.4 Vital Signs performance is reported on an exception basis using a report card format, meaning that only those vital signs that are performing poorly or where performance is deteriorating are presented to committee. To enable Members to have oversight of performance across all vital signs, all report cards will be made available to view through Members Insight. To give further transparency to information on performance, for future meetings it is intended to make these available in the public domain through the Council's website.

2. Impact of Support for Education Improvement

2.1 Ofsted Outcomes

2.1.1 Schools:

Ofsted statistics now include the previous Ofsted judgement for schools that have been sponsored or re-brokered as an academy. The percentage of Norfolk schools judged Good or Outstanding continues to improve under this methodology as more academies are inspected and is now 84% compared to a national average which remains at 86%.

2.1.2 Early Years Providers:

The percentage of early years providers judged good or outstanding continues to be above national averages at 97% of Early Years settings (national 95%) and 98% of childminders (national 94%).

2.2 Education Outcomes

2.2.1 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (Age 5)

Official DfE figures have now been published which show that outcomes at age 5 in school reception classes are slightly better than the national average. 71.6% of children in 2018 reached the expected Good Level of Development, compared to a national average of 71.5%

2.2.2 Provisional GCSE Results (age 16)

DfE have published provisional 2018 GCSE results. Last year, pupils took reformed GCSEs graded 1 to 9 in English and Mathematics. In 2018 most popular GCSE subjects were reformed. A grade 4 or above represents the equivalent of the old grade C.

Achievement is broadly in line with national averages, and is very similar to last year.

Unvalidated 2017 and 2018 results comparison:

		Progress 8	Attainment 8	%English and Mathematics (9 – 4)
2018	National	-0.02	46.4	63.9
	Norfolk	-0.01	44.9	62.0
	LA ranking	64 out of 151	97 out of 151	89 out of 149
2017	National	-0.03	46.0	63.3
	Norfolk	-0.05	44.7	62.1
	LA ranking	77 out of 151	97 out of 151	86 out of 151

Provisional GCSE results show that pupils in Norfolk made slightly better progress on average (progress 8) than pupils nationally. Average attainment (attainment 8) and the percentage of pupils achieving a standard pass in English and Mathematics remains slightly below national averages.

2.2.3 Provisional A Level Results (age 18)

DfE have published provisional A Level results for 2018. Norfolk average point scores have improved and are closer to the national average than in 2017.

		Schools	Schools and Colleges
2018	National	32.2	31.8
	Norfolk	31.7	30.8
	LA ranking	71 out of 146	70 out of 146
2017	National	31.5	31.1
	Norfolk	30.0	29.8
	LA ranking	100 out of 150	96 out of 150

2.3 Participation post 16

2.3.1 At this time of year the priority is establishing the actual education, training and employment destinations of all 16 and 17 year olds (16,536) so that we can accurately identify those who are NEET and target support to them. We do this through a combination of contacting young people directly by telephone or text and by working in partnership with schools and post 16 education providers. Where we are unable to find out the destination through these methods, our staff will make a home visit. This process takes place over the period of September to December. Our advisers support, signpost and enable young people to progress into EET. Norfolk has an excellent track record of gaining accurate destination information achieving an unknown figure of between 1 and 1.5% by December over the past three years. We are currently midway through the process and are in line with previous performance. Initial figures show that participation in learning for 16 year olds is in line with last year but for 17 year olds is higher than this time last year. This is translating to slightly lower numbers of NEET young people. The Department for Education measure a combined percentage of the average NEET and unknowns for the months of December, January and February. We will have an accurate picture of NEET and participation in December

3 Early Help

- 3.1 The new Children's Advice and Duty Service launched on 17th October 2018, and the transition to the new service has been smooth, with effective communication to partners about the changes. The impact on social work teams has been positive thus in terms of the right service for children, at the right time. Positive feedback from partners has been received. Volumes may increase following the return from school holidays.
- 3.2 At the end of September 2018 Early Help Family Focus had 659 open cases, with 120 cases awaiting allocation. There is considerable pressure on the service, as cases are more appropriately triaged in the new Children's Advice and Duty Service. This has resulted in fewer cases being sent for an unnecessary social work assessment but has highlighted a lack of capacity in the Early Help Family Focus teams. The new Performance Framework has enabled EHFF Managers to focus their attention on quality of work and timeliness of intervention.
- 3.3 Early Help Family Focus Teams continue to work closely with social work teams within their localities to ensure smooth transition for families with reduced hand-offs. Managers in localities are meeting regularly to discuss transfers and trends/issues and identify thematic areas for audit/scrutiny and development.
- 3.4 All localities continue to have collaboration meetings with partners. These support effective information sharing and positive relationships with partners. Locality Heads of Service and Partnership continue to work closely with District Council counterparts and Healthy Child Program colleagues. Through these relationships we are able to work on joint assessment, joint work around neglect and homeless reduction.
- 3.5 The Early Help Partner Focus teams continue to support a wide range of partners with information, advice and guidance, in addition they hold 136 open cases, whereby more intensive support for partners with Family Support assessment and planning is given. This is a very small team, with only 6 posts across the county, but with one vacancy. Partners reflect that they value the support they are offered by that team.
- 3.6 Early Help Community Focus teams have been supporting commissioning colleagues with the Early Childhood and Family Service consultation and have organised and attended these events all over the county.
- 3.7 The Community Focus element of Early Help are currently developing a tool to better capture the work they do supporting communities to be more resilient.

4. Social Work

4.1 Contact and Referrals

- 4.1.1 The number of contacts becoming referrals in August (circa 600) was significantly lower compared to the same time last year (886 in August 17). This trend continued into September with circa 550 referrals compared to the 956 the same month in 2017. We are hopefully that this lower number of referrals will continue and will be sustained with the implementation of the new Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) in mid-October 2018. Re-referral rates also appear to have fallen, with less than 20% repeat referrals reported in September 18 compared to 28% in April 18.

4.2 Assessments

- 4.2.1 Available data suggests that our rolling 12-month rate of assessments per 10k population under 18 is now circa 513, which is still below the National Average of 515 per 10k, but means we continue to complete more assessments per 10k population than our statistical neighbours (463.1). It is envisaged that the introduction of CADS will be impactful throughout the children's

system, particularly assessment teams and that overtime our rate of assessments per 10K under 18-year olds will fall.

4.2.2 The authorisation of social work assessments within 45 working days continues to improve and remains a KLOE in all localities. Data suggest September's performance was circa 77% compared to 62% in April 18, which, although still lower than our statistical neighbour (83.8%) and national (82.9%) averages, is a positive trajectory of improvement. Weekly performance monitoring by the SW Senior Leadership team is continuing and we have seen week on week reductions in the number of open Social Work Assessments that have gone over 45 working days in most localities, including 2 localities that as at week beginning 22/10/18 had less than 5 open assessments over 45 working days and 1 locality that had none. Alongside improving the timeliness of social work assessments, we are working to ensure the quality of assessments is good. A series of workshops for assessment teams covering performance, process and practice have been delivered and a county-wide 'one case, one worker' audit is being undertaken, including One Assessment One Plan per manager audit to evaluate manager's decision-making and case overview.

4.3 Child In Need

4.3.1 Performance data regarding Children In Need with an up to date plan is still being refined to ensure we capture the right figures for this measure. However early testing of the data suggests circa 84% of all CIN (excluding those in Assessment Teams) have an up to date plan, which if verified would be the highest performance since December 17.

4.4 Child Protection (CP)

4.4.1 As at the end of September the number of children subject to CP plans had fallen back to a rate of 38.2 per 10k of under 18s (647 children), from August's high of circa 39.2 (664 children) and we remain below our statistical neighbour (43.9) and national (43.3) averages. There are localities with a larger cohort of children subject to child protection planning, however this is not unexpected across a diverse County such as Norfolk.

4.4.2 Our percentage of children who have become subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time continues to be low, decreasing from 23% in September 2017 to circa 21% in September 18 which is only slightly higher than our statistical neighbour average of 19.7%. The percentage of children subject to child protection planning for over 2 years is very low (circa 1%), and we have seen a decrease in the number of children on CP plans for over 18 months over the last 6 months (from 30 in April 18 to 23 in September 18).

4.4.3 We are continuing to test the accuracy of data in our new reporting systems, however data that is available suggests that as at the end of September 18, circa 78% of children on CP plans had been seen within 20 working days which is in line with performance seen since the start of the year, although it is lower than the figure seen in September 17(88%). Whilst we have a best practice timescale of 10 day visiting, 20 working days is the statutory requirement and for many families making progress and sustaining change this is entirely right.

4.5 Looked After Children

4.5.1 The number of Looked After Children at the end of at end of September was 1202. Norfolk's rate per 10k population of under 18s (70.3%) remains significantly higher than our statistical neighbours (53.4). The weekly LAC tracker is in use to allow for more robust scrutiny and challenge, including identifying children where reunification or care outside of the care system could be explored.

There is also regular analysis of all LAC starts and ceases, age, exit routes from care and time spent in care. This work, together with the review of our front door arrangements and a transformation programme work stream, is working tirelessly to understand why numbers have increased, in what circumstances could alternative support to a family have prevented their child coming into care, and what resources are needed to secure safe care outside of being looked after for some children who are currently in our care.

4.5.2 Performance regarding ensuring our Looked After Children have an up to date care plan continues to be very good with over 95% of looked after children across the county having an up to date care plan.

4.5.3 Reporting currently shows a decline in the number and percentage of Eligible Care Leavers with an up to date pathway plan, falling from 76% in April 18 to 51% in September 18. It is known that this is in part due to a recording issue whereby the pathway plan element of the care plan has not been completed on the child's electronic record. The details of these children have been passed to the allocated teams to ensure recording is updated correctly.

4.5.4 The percentage of children having an Initial Health Assessment within 20 working days of becoming LAC continues to be an area of focus as improvements seen in weekly reports are not always sustained on a week by week basis. Of the 40 children who reached 20 working days in care in the month to 4th October 50% had an Initial Health Assessment within timescale.

Following a drop in weekly performance in September to circa 50%, we have more recently seen improvements in consistency regarding SW teams ensuring the request for an initial health assessment is made within timescales, with 94% of requests being passed to health in 5 working days in the month to 18th October.

The percentage of LAC having a review health assessment in the past year remains stable at Circa 87.5% over the past 2 months, which although very positive does not distract from us striving to improve this further.

4.6 Care Leavers

4.6.1 The EET performance regarding our Care Leavers in September is 56%. Whilst this is the County figure, we do know that we have some very highly performing Leaving Care teams however this figure is impacted by one team in particular who are currently receiving intensive support to develop both their knowledge of leaving care processes and being held to account through a robust local action plan.

We are pleased to report that the majority of our Relevant & Former Relevant Care Leavers have a Pathway Plan Need Assessment (99%) and up to date Pathway Plan (95.6%).

4.7 Caseloads

4.7.1 The average caseload in Norfolk is currently 15. As at the end of September 18 five social workers had high caseloads of 30+ (1 less than August), 4 of whom were in assessment teams. 92 (36%) social workers had over the caseload policy for their team type, although this varies across localities.

* Eligible care leavers are young people aged 16 or 17 who are currently looked after

** Relevant care leavers are young people aged 16 or 17 who have been **eligible** care leavers

*** Former relevant care leavers are Young People aged 18-21 who have been **eligible** and/or **relevant** care leavers

5. Financial Implications

5.1 As requested this is now contained in a separate report.

6. Issues, risks and innovation

6.1 This is contained in a separate report and will be presented to Committee in January 2019.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, e.g. equality impact assessment, 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.

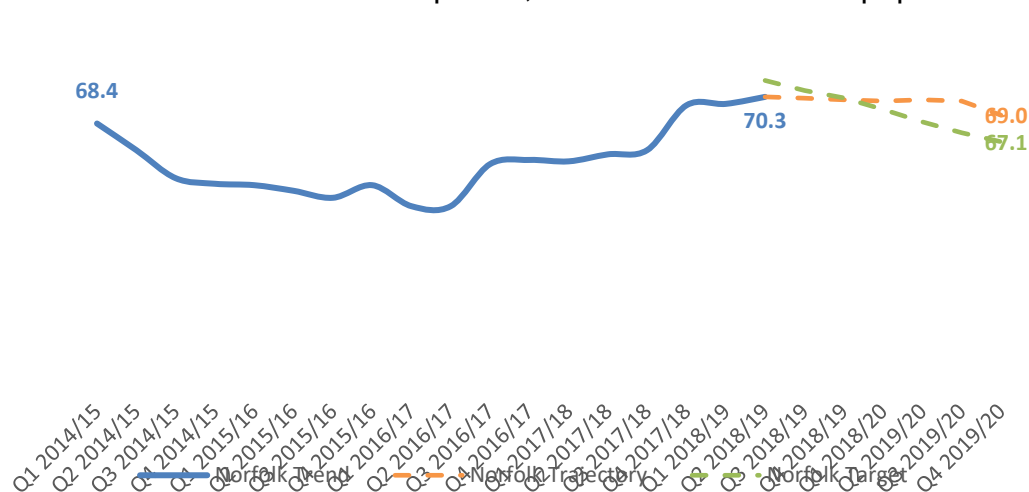
Rate of Looked-After Children per 10,000 of the overall 0-17 population

Why is this important?

Norfolk has many more LAC than its statistical neighbours and we have implemented a strategy to reduce the levels of LAC. LAC rate per 10k is a key indicator in assessing the success of that investment. The LAC rate also provides an indication of the success of the wider children's system.

Performance

Rate of Looked-After Children per 10,000 of the overall 0-17 population



What is the background to current performance?

- Historically Norfolk has had a high rate of LAC, and while numbers reduced between 2014 & 2016, increases have been seen over the past two years, to their current peak in March. This should be viewed in the context of increases in LAC numbers across England leading to record numbers of LAC nationally.
- While LAC numbers increased rapidly between December 2017 & February 2018, the numbers have since stabilised.
- Understanding and addressing our Looked After Children numbers remains a priority and a key element of our Transformation programme.

Action required

- Continue to strengthen Norfolk's Early Help offer to ensure families receive help as soon as it is required, working to enhance their strengths & overcome issues so they can remain together.
- Where appropriate and desired, work with current LAC and their families to enable them to have the skills & understanding to live together again.
- Where appropriate and in the best interests of the child, promote adoption and special guardianship as a means of securing permanence for children.

What will success look like?

- The rate of Looked-After Children per 10k 0-17s is in line with rates in other similar local authorities within England (around 53 as at March 2015 and recent trends have shown that LAC rates among similar authorities are rising, from around 48 in 2013).

- Work is being undertaken to fully understand the makeup of the population of Looked After Children this will help to target activity to best effect.

Responsible Officers

Lead: Phil Watson Data: Andy Goff

Children's Services Committee

Report title:	Budget Monitoring Period 6 (September)
Date of meeting:	13 November 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Sara Tough Executive Director of Children's Services
Strategic impact The report sets out the Period 6 (September) financial forecast for Children's Services, and the programme of transformation and improvement that is continuing.	

Executive summary

This report sets out:

- the financial resources to deliver the Safer Children and Resilient Families Strategy of Norfolk Futures.
- forecast revenue expenditure for 2018/19

Recommendations: That the Committee considers, comments and notes:

- (i) the forecast overspend of £7.349m for General Fund Children's Services
- (ii) the forecast use of Children's Services General Fund reserves and provisions
- (iii) £6.508m of the £6.534m Dedicated Schools Grant Children's Services will need to be offset by
 - a. £4.314m against Locally Managed Schools' balances and recovered in future years
 - b. £2.220m against the General Fund
- (iv) the amendments to and reprogramming of the Children's Services Capital Programme

1. Strategic Context

- 1.1. This section of the report sets out the strategic context for the delivery of Children's Services. This includes pressures on Legal Services and all aspect of High Needs provision.
- 1.2. Children's Services in Norfolk continue to operate in a challenging context. As is the case for almost all local authorities, we are experiencing high and increasing levels of need across numerous areas of service and, in particular, in relation to children with special educational needs and children at risk of harm. We are responding to new issues within society and the range responsibilities for the department is widening to tackle issues such child sexual and criminal exploitation and the threat of radicalisation. The number of statutory duties that councils have in relation to children's services has risen from 200 in 2011 to 299 in 2018 according to the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS); many of the new duties have brought funding requirements in excess of any additional funding provided for new burdens.
- 1.3. We are tackling these challenges in the context of ever diminishing resources. The level of grant funding to local authorities diminishes year on year and there is now a

clear national evidence base around a significant strategic funding shortfall in Children's Services, estimated by the Association of Directors of Children's Services to be growing to around £2 billion by 2020 for the nation as a whole.

- 1.4. Furthermore, the evidence shows that the pressure on, and need for, children's services are driven to a very large extent by external factors beyond the control of Children's Services. The levels of deprivation, the size of the local 0-25 population, levels of household income, levels of unemployment and levels of crime have been identified as the key contributing factors nationally and in many of these areas our own analysis of the demographics shows an increasingly challenging picture in Norfolk. We know that relative deprivation is increasing in the County, our population of children and young people is expanding and the national economic outlook is having an impact. Those trends are now beginning to translate into additional demand for services and pressure on budgets and capacity.
- 1.5. Although this is a challenging context, Norfolk County Council and its Children's Services are responding in a bold, positive and ambitious way. That began with the business case for a major investment in transformational change agreed at Policy and Resources Committee in September 2017 and the Launch of the Norfolk Futures Transformation programme as part of the committee plan at the May children service committee 2018. That high-level business case committed an allocation of £12-15million of up-front investment in Children's Services to enable the development of new service models that can respond to the changing needs in communities and allow us to continue to achieve positive outcomes for children and families.
- 1.6. More than half of total expenditure across Children's Services is on direct delivery of assessment, support and care through demand-led budgets to the most vulnerable or highest need children. That includes placements budgets of £52m for children looked after, support and care for children with special educational needs and disabilities £33.5m and Home to School Transport for children with Special Educational Needs £13.6m. In addition, a substantial proportion of the budget is spent on services and interventions that support children looked after and children with Special Educational Needs. The children looked after and transport costs are funded from Children's Services core budget and represent very significant proportion of total Children's Services funding. The SEN placements are funded via the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block. It is important to recognise that there are significant inter-relationships with our base budget because sometimes the same children and young people will be receiving support (and funding) from both an SEN education perspective and from within the Children's Social Care model.
- 1.7. Given this pattern of high spend on the highest needs cohort, it is clear that our response to the financial challenge needs to focus on these major budget areas and follow the principles set out in the Norfolk Futures Strategy of ***offering our help early to prevent and reduce demand for specialist services*** and ***using evidence and data to target our work where it can make the most difference.***
- 1.8. Only by intervening effectively at the right point will we be able to unlock significant financial savings; following that principle, we are developing a comprehensive programme of transformation, as illustrated in diagram 1. This thinking was first outlined to Committee through the Demand Management & Prevention Strategy: Children's Services which was agreed at Policy and Resources Committee in September 2017 which included the allocation of £12-15m of pump-priming investment to enable transformation and change. The programme has been developed in more detail and now forms the Safer Children and Resilient Families

strand of the Norfolk Futures Programme; with an update presentation was delivered to Children's Services Committee at their September 2018 meeting. Some of the key themes are summarised below.

Diagram 1: Children's Transformation Strategic Approach

Children's Transformation Strategic Approach

All teams and investments are targeted to supporting children and families to avoid the need for high intensity and high cost direct care

Majority spend is on direct delivery of care to the most vulnerable or highest need children. Overlaps between LAC, SEN and transport cohorts

Inclusion

- Investing in Specialist Resource Bases
- Additional direct inclusion work
- Increasing the proportion of children with SEN who are supported to stay in mainstream settings
- Investing in independence – enabled by technology

Prevention and Early Intervention

- Transformed model at the front door enabling more demand to be managed preventatively and the social work teams to focus only on appropriate cases
- Enhancing Early Help – with a focus on building capacity in the partnership system

Effective Practice Model

- Creating a new multi-disciplinary social work model
- Driving quality interventions through signs of safety and restorative practice
- New panels deploying resources earlier rather than at the point of crisis
- Wrapping specialist help around social work plans e.g. substance misuse, mental health and domestic abuse

Edge of Care Support and Alternatives to Care

- New therapeutic service for families with children at the edge of care (SIB)
- Turnaround short breaks alternatives to care provision
- A focus on family finding and building support networks from extended families

Increasing levels of demand in communities (in Norfolk and mirrored nationally)

Placements and Support for Looked After Children

Residential = 19.4m
Fostering = 28.4m
Semi-Independent = 5.3m
SGOs = 3.9m

Home to School Transport

SEN = £13.1m
Mainstream = £11.6m
Post 16 = £3.1m

Education & Care for Children with SEND (HNB)

Maintained Special Schools = £30.5m
Independent Special Schools = £21.2m
Alternative provision = £4.9m

Managing the care market & creating the capacity we need

- Step-change investment in Special Schools
- Creating high-quality semi-independent provision
- Family Values - using behavioural science to redesign our approach to recruiting foster carers
- Enhanced fostering model – building a network of capacity around foster carers to work with higher needs
- Valuing Care Model – robust needs analysis and outcome based commissioning of placements

- 1.9. Our demand management programme is driving forward projects within four broad themes:
- 1.9.1. Inclusion – we are working with children, their families and our partners in schools to further enable more children with additional needs to be educated locally and, wherever possible and appropriate, within their mainstream school. Our proposals include a very significant investment in Specialist Resource Bases across the county, giving access to specialist intervention and support so that children and families are not travelling great distance to access appropriate support to meet needs. We are also investing in additional capacity to support and challenge education providers, work with children and families to ensure needs are met in a timely and appropriate way, and to enable technology so that children get the extra help and equipment they need to succeed in mainstream settings. For children who have additional needs which are such that they should attend a high quality special or complex needs school, or access an alternative, specialist level of provision, our intention is to increase this capacity, locally, by further expanding existing special / complex needs schools, develop more residential opportunities and build new special schools in geographical areas of need. The aim is to intervene earlier, enable local solutions to meet need, mitigating the high volume of higher costs places in the independent/non-maintained sector, significantly reducing travel time and improving local specialism to meet need. The primary financial impact will be a reduction in the level of pressure on the High Needs Block element of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding, but the inclusion strategy will also impact positively on transport costs for children with special educational needs.
- 1.9.2. Prevention and Early Intervention – we are investing capacity ‘upstream’ in a range of areas to support families before their needs escalate to the point of crisis. Our plans include a transformed model at the front door with a highly skilled social work and early help duty team, enabling more demand to be managed at the point of initial contact and allowing the social work teams to focus only on appropriate higher risk cases. Our transformation of the Children’s Centre service model will specifically target additional outreach support to families whose needs might otherwise escalate – including those where mental health, substance misuse and family relationship issues are present. We are also enhancing our wider Early Help offer with a particular focus on building capacity in the partnership system to intervene effectively, and on ensuring that we develop and use community and voluntary sector support alongside our own interventions. The impact of these workstreams will be to reduce the demand flowing into the statutory social work system.
- 1.9.3. Effective Practice Model – we are proposing a number of improvements to the core practice model to free up capacity within teams; enabling staff to spend more time directly with families to help them to work through their challenges and effect change. We are also designing proposals to reduce the number of hand-offs and changes of lead worker that children and families experience, recognising that the stability of relationships is essential to successful work to help families keep children safe. We are continuing to drive quality interventions through our involvement in the national Signs of Safety and restorative practice programmes; as the quality of practice continues to improve we will see better outcomes for children and families. The impact of these workstreams will be seen through cases successfully de-escalating as a result of social work support and fewer cases reaching the point where children need to be accommodated.
- 1.9.4. Edge of care support and alternatives to care – Where needs have escalated to a point where consideration is being given to taking children into care, we will look to deploy a range of new approaches as alternatives and will only take children into

the care system once other options have been exhausted. Our first alternative will always be to explore the wider family and community network to find people who have the capacity to provide care, and we will be delivering a major development programme across our workforce to embed approaches to 'family finding' at the heart of our social work model. We are also investing in new 'edge of care' interventions such as an intensive therapeutic service and a time-limited short breaks offer for families who would benefit from some additional time and space in order to work through their challenges.

- 1.10. The cumulative impact of all of these proposals will be fewer children needing to be looked after and / or requiring high-level specialist SEND provision; this will deliver a corresponding financial benefit to the local authority.
- 1.11. As well as managing demand through earlier intervention, our transformation and budget planning strategy includes a strong focus on effective commissioning and market management. These proposals will follow the Norfolk Futures principles of ***being business-like to ensure value for money and using evidence and data to target our work where it can make the most difference.***
- 1.12. Our analysis of the care market for children looked after shows an over-reliance on high cost forms of care such as external residential provision, external semi-independent provision and independent foster care agencies. Therefore, there is a need to re-shape this market proactively to create the value-for-money provision we need for our children and young people. We are therefore proposing strategic capital investments in a range of placement types including additional semi-independent placements, a new enhanced fostering model, new short breaks and shared care placements and potentially in new in-house residential capacity. In addition to these major commissioning projects we are also leading a transformation of our own Fostering Service; utilising behavioural insight techniques to understand the motivations of existing and potential foster carers. This will allow us to develop a completely new approach to recruiting and retaining carers and, therefore, over time, reducing the reliance on costly external agencies.
- 1.13. Our analysis of the care market for children with Special Educational Needs also highlights sufficiency challenges and a corresponding reliance on high-cost specialist placements. We are bringing forward proposals for a step-change capital investment to develop four new special schools and additional Specialist Resource Bases attached to mainstream schools, to ensure that the right services are available in the right place, thus reducing ongoing revenue costs for the future.
- 1.14. A final strand of our response to the financial challenge is informed by the Norfolk Futures principle of ***joining up work so that similar activities and services are easily accessible, done once and done well.*** This principle is particularly important in our work alongside health partners to design services which respond to health and care needs in coherent and seamless way. To that end we have recently established integrated commissioning arrangements with our health partners and are working with them to examine our collective spend as a system, to eliminate any duplication and to align our commissioning priorities and contracts. We are also looking to join up our operational arrangement where this can improve outcomes. In particular we are looking to create an integrated model of Children's Mental Health Services; co-designing this in the coming months with the Clinical Commissioning Groups, local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and, of course, with children and families. These areas of work have strong potential to deliver both better outcomes through more integrated provision, and a range of financial efficiencies across the system

Legal Costs

- 1.15. The volume of legal work remains high. The main reasons behind the increased requirement for legal support are set out below.
- 1.16. There is an increased number of non-accidental injury cases. These require greater time to be spent by NPLaw as well as the need to instruct very experienced and therefore necessarily more expensive counsel to represent the Authority. Parents and the interests of the child are also represented by experienced and more expensive counsel.
- 1.17. The number of hearings being scheduled has also increased. More hearings require more time from NPLaw lawyers as well as counsel. Children Services and NPLaw have reviewed expenditure on external counsel and agree that there is scope to make savings against existing spend or at the very least to be able to stabilise the spend.
- 1.18. Local barristers' chambers in Norwich and Norfolk generally have little incentive to offer a competitive rate despite numerous attempts by NPLaw to engage with them to agree prices for a block award of work. Therefore, we will look to tender parcels of legal work to encourage competition. In addition to stabilising or hopefully reducing our spend on counsel, by relying on a group of barristers invested in a longer term commitment to Norfolk, we expect to ensure greater consistency of the approach taken in court leading to a reversal in the trend for increased number of hearings

Transforming the SEND System

- 1.19. Policy and Resources Committee on 28 October 2018 has received a report on transforming the system for SEND in Norfolk for children with special educational needs in Norfolk
- 1.20. We are responsible for ensuring that every child has a school place. For children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities there are additional duties on the local authority which mean we must ensure that appropriate educational provision is available to meet the child's educational needs. We are further responsible for planning for future demand in terms of places of the right type, in the right place across the county. The current trajectory indicates that there is likely to be further pressure on revenue funding for SEND places and specialist support, which will be challenging to meet, given the current level of provision across the county. We must therefore plan for more of the right kind of school places to meet SEND need, slow down the demand by meeting need earlier, and this could enable us to return the High Needs Block (HNB) to balanced position
- 1.21. Norfolk currently identifies more children as having special education needs than the average for other authorities. However, in comparison we place a smaller proportion of children in state-funded maintained special schools and a greater proportion in independent / non-maintained schools. State-funded special schools are consistently judged by Ofsted as Good / Outstanding and are, on average, £23,000

per place per year cheaper than the average costs in the independent/non-maintained sector, where inspection outcomes are not as strong.

- 1.22. Specifically, we have identified the need to develop up to 4 new special schools and 170 additional places within specialist resource bases (hosted by mainstream schools) and this will:
- Provide appropriate education closer to home and so reduce the time children spend travelling and the associated travel costs;
 - Improve the quality of the education provision for children with special educational needs;
 - Address current unmet need for pupils currently within mainstream schools who have been assessed as requiring special school placement;
 - Plan appropriately for predicted future need
 - Return the budget for children with High Needs (Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block) to balance

To achieve these plans, we require capital investment in order to secure local specialist provision. Alongside this investment, Children's Services will work with stakeholders to transform the quality of provision, timeliness of assessments, culture and behaviour across the Norfolk SEND system. We estimate that capital resources in the region of £120million are required. The programme would be delivered in 2 phases over 3 and 5 years respectively.

- 1.23. A 'do nothing' scenario has inherent risk for both individual children and young people and for Dedicated School Grant and NCC General Fund finance position. Many councils consider the current system is unsustainable. The Association of Directors of Children's Services said 68 out of 85 local authorities who responded to a survey reported an overspend on their high needs budget in 2016-17 totalling £139.5m.
- 1.24. The SEND challenge is also being felt in schools that are already grappling with an 8% real-terms reduction in funding since 2010. This may in some schools result in cuts to teaching assistants, specialist support and pastoral staff who play a vital role in supporting SEND pupils in mainstream settings.

2. Forecast Revenue Outturn General Fund Children's Services

- 2.1. An overspend of £7.349m is currently forecast for General Fund Children's Services. This is a mid-case forecast based upon the information currently available and after taking account of the anticipated impact of identified management actions to address pressures. Table 1 displays the overall forecast position as at the end of September (Period 6).
- 2.2. Significant areas of financial pressure remain within Social Work. These are primarily driven by spend on placements (Children Looked After, Staying Put and Leaving Care) and staffing costs. Within Education Services the pressures are primarily transport and assessment of special educational needs.

Table 1: Forecast Revenue Outturn Children's Services

	Budget	Current Forecast	Variance to Budget		Variance to P5
		P6 £m	£m	%	£m
Social Work	86.214	94.572	8.358	9.7%	2.906
Early Help & Prevention	25.299	24.846	(0.453)	-1.8%	(0.340)
Performance & Challenge	5.486	5.410	(0.076)	-1.4%	(0.164)
Education	39.422	41.386	1.964	5.0%	1.022
Resources (including capital charges)	29.527	29.527	0.000	0.0%	0.000
Sub-total	185.948	195.741	9.793	5.3%	3.424
Use of Reserves		(0.444)	(0.444)		(0.033)
Schools capital by borrowing		(2.000)	(2.000)		0.000
NCC General Fund Total	185.948	193.297	7.349	3.8%	3.391

Social Work Variances in Period 6

- 2.3. The budget for Children Looked After Placements is £41.777m. Early in the year, a stabilisation of Children Looked After placements was seen and it was expected that the original planned trajectory would be achieved by the end of the financial year. The trajectory has been reviewed in the light of national trends.
- 2.4. As the year has progressed, this position continues to be reviewed using more detailed transformation planning and demand information, and this has resulted in a forecast £3.814m overspend. This is a complex area to forecast, with continuous changes to the children and young people who are looked after and changes to placements to ensure that their needs are being met. The variance of £2.449m compared to Period 5 is due to increased residential placements costs of £0.655m; increased agency fostering placements costs of £0.506m; and other commissioned provision of £0.545m. The numbers of Children Looked After have remained relatively stable with some of the increase in forecast relating to reviewed packages in external placements that have seen a net increase in costs, whilst others relate to placements that commenced earlier in the year but had not previously been included within reports. Work is being undertaken to review data quality, recording practice and forecast methodologies as Liquid Logic and ContrOCC bed in and reporting improves; this is resulting in more reliable forecasts. The cost of the individual case separately reported in period 5 has been amalgamated.
- 2.5. The Directorate continues to be focused on an ambitious plan to implement transformational change at a fast pace; including aiming for more children to be able

to return home where it is appropriate for them to do so and supporting more children in foster care placements rather than in residential placements.

- 2.6. The budget for Staying Put and Leaving Care is placement costs is £4.424m, and is currently forecasting a £1.106m overspend, an increase of £0.150m compared to the prior forecast. This reflects expected short-term dual running costs as new, more cost-effective provision comes into operation.
- 2.7. There is currently a forecast staffing pressure of £2.187m, an increase of £0.300m compared to prior reporting. The pressure includes:
- £0.125m for in-house residential unit staffing due to changes to in-house residential staffing levels necessitated to meet the complex needs of the young people being supported in these settings.
 - £0.791m for Norfolk Institute of Practice Excellence (NIPE) salary costs for newly qualified social workers prior to placement in social work teams. These staff are provided with the opportunity to gain the experience, and provided with the appropriate supervision and support needed, to enable them to be placed in substantive roles
 - (£0.300m) forecast underspend on agency social worker top-ups reflecting reduced reliance on agency staff and a shift towards a more permanent workforce
 - £1.637m overspend within front line operational social work teams, due to the level of workload that is currently experienced. A reduction in throughput of workload from the 'front door' has been seen since the start of this year with changes made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). However, the number of children and young people already being supported at the edge of and within statutory services remains high. Reprofiting of the workforce, including the introduction of different roles and professions, is being undertaken. This is expected to enable the operational teams to manage within their base budget once complete. This work has been delayed due to the desire to get it right first time. Breckland Locality has been recruiting to vacancies in line with this reprofiting as an opportunity to gain proof of concept.
- 2.8. The budget provides £3.310m for legal costs. There is currently a forecast pressure of £1.154m due to the high level of court proceedings, an increase of £0.404m compared to the previous forecast. This forecast includes the expected impact of the increased focus on managing spend in this area, including ensuring legal resource is not used for elements of case preparation that can be carried out more efficiently by other teams. However, there is an increased level of proceedings being experienced by most Children's Services Authorities, and Norfolk is no different. The level of proceedings commenced this year are significantly higher compared to both 2017-18, when the budget was set. Feedback received suggests that the complexity of work is increasing. This reflects the additional number of children that are currently looked after, as well as those who are returning home. The forecast has been reviewed accordingly.

Early Help Variances in Period 6

- 2.9. The forecast underspend of (£0.453m) on Early Help has increased by (£0.340m) compared to prior reporting.
- (£0.113m) underspend on staffing by vacancy management
 - (£0.340m) contract adjustments and forecasting

Performance and Challenge Variances in Period 6

2.10. Performance and Challenge remains within its budget of £5.486m showing an underspend of (£0.076m).

Education General Fund Variances in Period 6

- 2.11. Education General Fund Services shows a forecast overspend of £1.964m against the budget of £39.422m, an increase of £1.022m since Period 5 reporting.
- The £28.737m budget for special school transport, home to school transport and post-16 college transport is showing a net overspend of £1.550m; an increase of £1.109m compared to previous reporting. The forecast reflects additional children requiring transport to maintained special schools and to independent special schools and is based upon the data available at the time. However, this data is still quite approximate at this point in the academic year, and further detailed information is expected for Period 7 that will enable further review to ensure that the forecast is robust, whilst supporting discussions that are ongoing to maximise the efficiency of transport arrangements. The exposure to increased transport costs has been identified as a key financial risk in the 29 October 2018 Policy and Resources SEND strategy report.
 - There is an underspend of (£0.160m) on the £0.220m budget for contributing to the PFI reserve. Reprofiting of PFI contributions from 2019/20 onwards has been agreed with the Schools Forum.
 - There is a pressure of £0.606m on the £2.868m budget for the assessment of children with special educational needs. This is marginally increased compared to prior reporting. There is a high level of demand for Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment being received by the authority and a backlog of assessments is outstanding. Action is being taken to manage this level of referrals and nearly 40% of referrals do not result in an EHCP. It is a statutory duty to make these assessments where a referral has taken place.
 - Smaller variations to budget include £0.160m pressure in relation to vacant school property costs, reduced by (£0.102m) since previous reporting, and (£0.200m) increased income within the attendance team.

Management Action

- 2.12. Careful monitoring of the position continues, with improvements made to arrangements for placements panels, performance information available to managers and closer scrutiny of plans for children to return home or to move from one placement type to another.
- 2.13. A number of approaches are being pursued:
- A recruitment drive and marketing for in-house fostering (placement numbers have increased since the start of 2018-19);
 - Developing supported semi-independent accommodation, with initial development expected to be completed within this financial year;
 - Further improving how the Multi Agency Service Hub (MASH) and the front door to Children's Services operate (the number of cases flowing through from MASH to assessment teams has seen a downward trend following implementation of early changes);
 - Redesigning social work teams to improve administration and to make the best use of professional resources;
 - Continuing emphasis on early help and preventative services;
 - Expansion of the boarding school placement model in appropriate cases.
- 2.14. An in-depth review of reserves, grants, contributions and provisions was undertaken at Period 5, resulting in a total of (£0.411m) being released to offset the overall position. This review work is ongoing and a further (£0.033m) of grant income,

where the conditions, have been met has been identified and released; the resulting total is (£0.444m).

2.15. The capital programme was reviewed at Period 4 with a view to maximising service revenue funding. £2m of planned revenue contributions in 2018/19 will instead be funded by borrowing.

2.16. The significant forecast variances to General Fund budget are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 – Summary of General Fund Forecast variances			
Expenditure	Budget	Over (+)/under	Primary Reason
	£m	£m	
Social Work			
Children Looked After Placements	41.777	3.814	As the year has progressed, this position continues to be reviewed using more detailed transformation planning and demand information. This is a complex area to forecast, with continuous changes to the children and young people who are looked after and changes to placements to ensure that their needs are being met.
Leaving Care Placements & Staying Put	4.424	1.106	Number of young people accessing provision and support exceeds the central government funding provided for this purpose
Legal Costs	3.310	1.154	The budget provides £3.310m for legal costs. There is currently a forecast pressure of £1.154m due to the high level of court proceedings.
Social Care Staffing	28.461	2.187	Additional front-line staffing has been required due to the level of workload that is currently being experienced
Social Care Other Budgets	8.242	0.097	No significant variances
Sub-total for SW	86.214	8.358	
Early Help and Prevention			
Early Help vacancies	17.235	(0.113)	Underspend on staffing by vacancy management
Contract adjustments and forecasting	8.064	(0.340)	A review of some contracts has been undertaken that has identified contract adjustments to be made that will result in an underspend
Sub-total for EH	25.299	(0.453)	
Performance and Challenge			
Independent Reviewing Officers	1.790	0.105	IROs extension of agency cover additional to period 5. 4th IRO manager in post currently (above establishment) due to the present number children looked after.

Table 2 – Summary of General Fund Forecast variances			
Expenditure	Budget	Over (+)/under	Primary Reason
	£m	£m	
Commissioning Service	0.825	(0.074)	A delay in recruitment for the new commissioning service.
CS Quality & Effectiveness	(0.054)	(0.107)	Vacancies within the service.
P&C Other Budgets	2.925	0.000	No significant change
Sub-total for Performance and Challenge	5.486	(0.076)	
Education			
Special school transport including Post-16 SEN	28.737	1.550	Number of children requiring transport to school places, particularly those in maintained and independent special school provision.
PFI Budget	0.220	(0.160)	There is an underspend of £0.160m on the £0.220m budget for contributing to the PFI reserve. Reprofiling of PFI contributions from 2019/20 onwards has been agreed with the Schools Forum.
Assessment of Special Educational Needs	2.868	0.606	Statutory duty to meet high level of demand for assessment
Other Education Support budgets	7.597	0.032	
Sub-total for Education	39.422	1.964	
Sub-total for Resources	29.527	0.000	
Use of reserves and provisions	0.000	(0.444)	Unplanned use of reserves and provisions
School capital funded borrowing	0.000	(2.000)	Schools capital now funded by borrowing
Sub-total other	0.000	(2.444)	
NCC General Fund Total	185.948	7.349	

3. Forecast Reserves and Provisions General Fund Children's Services

3.1. Projected changes to Children's Services General Fund reserves and provisions are set out in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Forecast Reserves and Provisions General Fund Children's Services			
Reserve or provision	Balance April 2018 £m	Net Movement Increase / (Decrease)	Forecast Balance March 2019 £m
Transport days equalisation	0.494	(0.081)	0.413
Holiday pay provision	0.015	(0.015)	0.000
Repairs and renewals fund	0.147	(0.136)	0.011
Information Technology earmarked reserve	0.030	(0.024)	0.006
Post-OFSTED improvement fund	0.004	(0.004)	0.000
Grants and contributions	3.063	(1.906)	1.157
Totals	3.753	(2.166)	1.587

- 3.2. Of the £1.906m of grants and contributions that are forecast to be used by the end of this financial year, approximately half were set aside to fund Children's Centres in this financial year. The remainder of the funds are for many differing purposes, primarily received on a one-off basis across Education and Social Work. There has been no change in forecast since prior reporting.
- 3.3. The Transport Days Equalisation reserve is to enable each year's transport budget to reflect an average year, with the variation in the number of academic days in each financial year being taken account of by this reserve. In 2018-19 it is expected that there will be a small use of this reserve in line with its purpose. The remainder of the reserve is expected to be required for 2019-20, in line with its purpose.
- 3.4. The forecast in-year usage of the reserves and provisions includes £0.177m released that are no longer needed for the purposes originally identified. This release offsets the overall forecast position and contributes to the (£0.444m) shown in table 1 earlier in this report. The remainder of the (£0.444m) has been identified from a review of creditors that are no longer required and a review of grants to identify where conditions have now been met.

4. Forecast Revenue Outturn Dedicated Schools Grant Children's Services

- 4.1. An overspend of £6.534m is currently forecast for Dedicated Schools Grant Children's Services as shown in Table 4 below; this is a mid-case forecast. The Dedicated Schools Grant is ring-fenced and is split into ringfenced blocks, the schools block, the central schools services block, the high needs block and the early years block.
- 4.2. The pressure is within the high needs block. Policy and Resources has considered a report on Norfolk's SEND Strategy on 28 October 2018 setting out plans for capital investment in new special provision. However, it may be several years before the revenue benefits of this are realised. Much of the high needs expenditure is paid to schools and it can be difficult to predict, particularly prior to the start of the new academic year.
- 4.3. Given the continuing pattern of pressure on the High Needs block consideration will continue corporately to how to maximise the resources that can be identified for this service. The Council is making a disapplication request to the Secretary of State –

with Schools Forum support – to transfer an additional £4.580m from the Schools Block in 2019/20 over and above the 0.5% transfer already agreed by the Forum.

Table 4 Childrens Services DSG					
	Budget	Current Forecast P6 £m	Variance to Budget		Variance to P6 £m
			£m	%	
High Needs Block	69.803	79.548	9.745	0.140	0.119
Schools Block	189.768	189.031	(0.737)	(0.004)	0.000
Early Years Block	44.565	42.091	(2.474)	(0.056)	0.026
Central Schools Services Block	2.667	2.667	0.000	0.000	0.000
Dedicated Schools Grant Total	306.803	268.579	6.534	2.1%	0.145

- 4.4. The budget for Post 16 Further Education High Needs Provision is £2.783m. There is currently a forecast pressure of £0.825m. This reflects demand for placements exceeding the funding provided by central government. There is no change from prior reporting which followed a reconciliation, between Local Authorities, of whose pupils were in funded places at FE colleges.
- 4.5. The budget for independent special school placements is £21.227m and has a forecast pressure of £3.833m. This reflects increasing numbers of pupils with Education Health and Care Plans that require special school provision, including specific placements awarded by tribunals. Many local authorities are experiencing increased numbers of pupils with these needs. This is an increase of £0.047m compared to previous reporting. Although there are an additional 34 pupils in independent provision, there have been some fee reductions. Concerted management action seeks to avoid additional placements and stay within budget, whilst liaising with schools to seek to avoid additional expenditure
- 4.6. The budget for alternative provision contracts is £4.786m. There is currently a forecast pressure of £1.931m. This reflects increasing requirement for alternative education provision, which includes children who are excluded, and those who are receiving an education who are not in any other type of school. There is a small increase of £0.090m since prior reporting.
- 4.7. The budget for maintained special school placements is £26.940m and is showing a pressure of £0.278m. There is no change from prior reporting.
- 4.8. The budget for personal budgets is £0.250m. There is currently a forecast pressure of £0.228m. This is an increase of £0.049m compared to previous reporting. This reflects an increase in the number of personal budgets requested as an alternative to high cost placements.
- 4.9. The significant forecast variances on the Dedicated Schools Grant for Children's Services are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5 Significant Revenue Variances DSG Children's Services			
Expenditure	Budget	Over (+)/under	Primary Reason
	£m	£m	
Post 16 Further Education High Needs Provision	2.783	0.825	Demand has exceeded central government funding
Independent special school Places	21.227	3.833	Number of places currently required due to maintained special schools being full.
Alternative provision	4.786	1.931	Increased requirement for places due to the high levels of school exclusions.
Additional SEN top up funding allocated to schools	5.689	2.750	Additional SEN funding paid to mainstream schools can avert escalation to more costly solutions. Forecast includes for the costs of additional top-ups that will be identified during the year due to new referrals.
Excluded pupil income	(0.900)	(0.100)	The increase in excluded pupils has led to an increase in charges to schools
Maintained special schools	26.940	0.278	Additional pupils requiring a special school place
Personal Budgets	0.250	0.228	Additional numbers of pupils receiving personal budgets and therapy. This early intervention can reduce demand for high cost specialist placements
DSG adjustments	306.803	(3.211)	High-level assumed underspend on non-High Needs Block funding, based upon current demand trends
DSG Total	367.578	6.534	

Please note that due to funding mechanisms, the budget and forecast for the High Needs and Schools blocks of the DSG do not include allocations to academies

4.10. It is proposed to look at the DSG outturn in its totality at the end of 2018/19. It is expected that there will be flexibility to meet an element of the forecast High Needs overspend by underspending on other blocks including the Schools Block or the Early Years block; a high-level assumption based upon current demand trends is included in the forecast. This position will be reviewed as the year progresses.

4.11. It is expected that £4.314m of the forecast overspend can be borrowed against maintained school balances at year end (see table 6 below). This will need to be repaid in future years. A transformation plan for SEND provision is currently being developed; this will include a proposal for significant capital investment in increased specialist provision across the county, as agreed at as part of the Meeting Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Quality, Sufficiency and Funding paper to the July 2018 of the Children's Services Committee. The remaining £2.220m forecast overspend will be a call on NCC's General Fund, as shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Headroom to fund High Needs cumulative overspend at March 2019 pending repayment

	£m	£m
Schools Balances less transferring to academy	11.097	
Schools Balances held on behalf of schools for Building Maintenance	0.673	
Balance of Building Maintenance Partnership Pool	1.400	
Total forecast balances available for offset		13.170
Overdrawn High Needs Block April 2018	8.087	
Capital Loans to Schools	0.769	
Forecast High Needs overspend 2018/19 (to be offset against schools' balances)	4.314	
Total forecast requiring offset		13.170
Headroom for offset		0

Table 7: Remaining Dedicated Schools Grant Overspend

Dedicated Schools Grant overspend		6.534
Loan against Maintained Schools Balances		(4.314)
Remaining overspend		2.220

5. Schools balances

- 5.1. There is a projected decrease in school balances because of schools converting to academies and the use of school balances to fund expenditure within the financial year. Cluster balances are planned to decrease as the Local Authority moves away from funding Special Educational Needs through the cluster model. There is no significant change from Period 5.
- 5.2. It is expected, as per the Period 5 Budget Monitoring report considered by this Committee in October, that the full Locally Maintained Schools' balances will be required to offset the overspend on the High Needs Block. This is schools' delegated funding under the Scheme for Financing Schools 2018/19 and will need to be repaid in future years. This is for cash flow purposes and does not affect the usage of balances by the individual schools that they belong to.

Table 8: Projected School Balances as at March 2019

	April 2018	March 2019	Variance	Schools becoming Academies
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Nursery schools	0.007	0.119	0.112	0.000
Primary schools	11.765	9.099	-2.666	-0.244
Secondary schools	0.562	0.100	-0.462	0.000
Special schools	1.402	2.375	0.973	-0.577
School Clusters	1.230	0.225	-1.005	0.000
Totals	14.966	11.918	(3.048)	(0.821)

- 5.3. Schools Reserves and Provisions are balances held on behalf of local authority maintained schools for a specific purpose. There is no change to the forecast movements or balances compared to last month.
- 5.4. The Building Maintenance Partnership Pool is currently in the fourth year of a 5-year scheme that schools have the option to buy in to. £1.181m of the usage currently forecast for 2018-19 is for building maintenance required by schools, as per the purpose of the Pool. The remaining usage of £1.400m currently forecast will be used to offset part of the High Needs Block overspend forecast in this year; this loan will need to be repaid in 2019-20 for the fifth year of the scheme.

Reserve or provision	April 2018	Net Movement Increase / (Decrease)	Forecast March 2019
	£m		£m
Non-teaching activities	0.730	0.155	0.575
Building Maintenance Partnership Pool	2.581	(2.581)	0.000
Sickness Insurance scheme	0.000	0.000	0.000
Playing surface sinking fund	0.054	0.000	0.054
Non-partnership maintenance fund	0.780	(0.108)	0.673
Totals	3.991	(1.289)	2.702

6. Capital Programme

- 6.1. Since the capital programme was approved, there has been both reprofiling to future years from 2018-19 and other changes both in 2018-19 and in future years, as per the table below.

Breakdown of capital programme	Approved budget	Reprofiling	Other changes	Current Capital Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m
2018-19	90.501	-38.100	2.716	55.117
Future Years' 2019-21	53.227	38.100		91.327

- 6.2. The main reprofiling changes to the 2018/19 programme are set out in the summary below.

Area	Main Variations	£m
A1 - Major Growth	£1m land acquisition £3m basic needs allocation slipped £2.4m project delay £1.5m scheme reprofiled	-9.724
A3 - Area Growth & Reorganisation	£5m project delayed at planning stage	-10.187
B1 - Special Education Needs	Various changes	-2.112
B2	CS Sufficiency Strategy	-3.500
C2 - Major Capital Maintenance	Condition Pots reprofiled	-11.900

Table 12 Children's Services Capital Programme Changes		
Area	Main Variations	£m
A4 - Growth Minor Adjustments		-0.130
A2 - Master Planning	Revised cost reports	-0.546
All		-38.100

- 6.3. The financing of the capital programme is from a combination of sources. The financing expectations have been updated in line with the changes made to the capital programme.
- 6.4. In addition to the SEND funding requested from October Policy and Resources, the government provided Norfolk LA with a grant of £2.7m over three years to develop and enhance provision for SEND. This grant covers both condition improvement and new place provision. Use of these resources has been reported on to previous committee meetings.
- 6.5. Basic Need Capital Funding is supporting mainstream provision, though technically not ring fenced. As we have identified the need for a significant number of new school places (mainstream) due to demographic growth and house building, all of the Basic Need Capital Funding will need to be allocated to the provision of new mainstream school places. Norfolk County Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and therefore will need to meet any shortfall in funding where the cost of new schools/places exceeds the available funding from developer contributions and Basic Need Allocations. These resources are not therefore available to support the SEND Strategy.
- 6.6. For improving Early Years provision, the government have recently invited bids from Local Authorities for a small amount of capital funding to develop nursery places in schools. Norfolk will be putting bids forward for this programme. A new Free School often includes the provision of Nursery Places as part of the school. There is no other capital funding allocation to create new Early Years places.

Table 11: Funding of the Children's Services Capital Programme		
Funding Stream	2018-19 Programme £m	Future Years' Forecast £m
Prudential Borrowing	2.968	7.784
Revenue & Reserves	-0.029	
Grants and Contributions:		
Department for Education	30.820	73.941
Developer Contributions	20.019	7.700
Other	1.340	1.901
Total	55.118	91.327

7. Risks

The financial forecast is a middle case forecast. There are however risks that will need to be carefully monitored and managed as the financial year progresses.

- Ensuring the delivery of planned transformation projects
- The planned rapid pace of improvement in practice and delivery
- The risk of increasing numbers of looked after children and the availability of the most suitable provision for each child
- The risk of increasing numbers of children requiring high needs funding

- An increased level of unavoidable legal proceedings and tribunals
- Management actions being taken expeditiously to achieve the planned effect within the financial year
- Continued effective working with partners to achieve coordinated and cost-effective services
- Continuing improvement and development of the front door to serves and the Multi-Agency Service Hub
- Attracting and retaining suitably qualified teams to deliver a wide range of services

8. Background Papers

Meeting Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Quality, Sufficiency and Funding (Item 12, 10 July 2018 Children’s Services Committee)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1469/Committee/8/Default.aspx>

Transforming the system for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in Norfolk (Item 8, 29 October 2018 Policy and Resources Committee)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1421/Committee/21/Default.aspx>

Budget Monitoring Period 5 (August) (Item 7, 16 October 2018 Children’s Services Committee)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1471/Committee/8/Default.aspx>

Officer Contact

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Children's Services Committee

Report title:	Schools' Capital Programme 2017-2020
Date of meeting:	13 November 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Sara Tough, Executive Director Children's Services
Strategic Impact <p>The County Council has a duty to secure sufficient pupil places to meet the demands of the school-age population. It receives schools' capital grant funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency to support its strategic plans for the provision of additional places and for improving the quality of existing LA-maintained school buildings. The well-planned and cost-effective provision of high-quality places make a key contribution to the overall education landscape in Norfolk. In particular, it supports the County Council's objective to ensure that every child has access to high quality education and training that meets their needs, stimulates a passion for lifelong learning and enables them to achieve well, so that they live fulfilling, independent and economically viable lives.</p>	

Executive summary

The County Council's schools' capital budget and programme 2018-21 were approved in February 2018 and the schools' capital programme for 2018/19 was reported to Committee in May 2018.

We now have to propose priorities for the development of the 2019+ capital programme as part of the corporate prioritisation process. The requirement is for Committees to consider (a) emerging major proposals, (b) significant changes to the existing programmes.

Prioritisation for the schools' capital budget is undertaken by Capital Priorities Group using Terms of Reference approved by Committee in January 2015. This report builds on the May 2018 report, identifying emerging capital priorities for 2019 onwards. It asks Committee to recommend these for further consideration and discussion by Capital Priorities Group at their November and January meetings;

Recommendations:

- 1. to note changes to the capital programme since May 2018; and**
- 2. to endorse the emerging priorities for further consideration.**

1. Background

- 1.1. This report forms part of an annual Committee reporting cycle as follows:
- November – identification of emerging capital pressures and priorities for forward years
 - January - Growth and Investment Plan (summary of strategic pupil place pressures)
 - May/June – proposed revisions to capital programme in the light of funding allocations

- 1.2. In May 2018 the Committee agreed to continue the basis of the programme priorities as follows:

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.

Schemes can seek to address any combination of sufficiency, suitability and condition need, according to the overall need, but the main driver of the programme continues to be growth, responding to new housing in primary and the existing primary growth consolidating into the secondary sector.

- 1.3. There have been no subsequent capital announcements since May 2018 and the position is set out below.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Basic Need (£m)	25.526m	2.526m	25.732m	0.00m
LA Capital Maintenance (£m)	7.712m	6.713m	Tbc early 2019	
VA Schools maintenance (£m)	1.080m	1.013m	Tbc early 2019	
SEN Sufficiency capital	-	0.908m	0.908m	0.908 m
Healthy pupils capital fund	-	0.455m		

- 1.4. The Basic Need Allocation is a grant from the Department for Education, in response to pupil number forecasts submitted on an annual basis. The grant is non-ringfenced, but Members have, in previous years, allocated this exclusively for schools' growth. It is anticipated that all residual Basic Need funding will be required to ensure the statutory provision of mainstream school places. The available funding is augmented by developer contributions, where these are available. Any shortfall in this funding will need to be met by Norfolk County Council.
- 1.5. The Schools' Local Growth and Investment Plan will be presented to this Committee in January and will set out the refreshed priorities for pupil pressure.

Targeted Capital

- 1.6. Along with other Local Authorities, Norfolk received a central government grant of SEND capital totalling £2.73m over a three-year period for new place provision and condition improvement. The first instalment of £0.908m was received this financial year as set out in paragraph 1.3.

- 1.7. The government has recently invited bids from Local Authorities for a small amount of capital funding to develop school-based nursery places to benefit disadvantaged children, and a bid is being prepared to meet the criteria. Other than provision of nursery places as part of opening a new primary DfE Free School, there is no additional allocation for early years capital.
- 1.8. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is reported to this committee annually alongside the Schools Local Growth and Investment Plan.

2. Review of the current programme

- 2.1. A number of schemes were completed from November 2017 to present and these are set out in detail at Annex A, with a total value in excess of £43m.
- 2.2. The following schemes are currently under construction with a total value of over £23m:
 - Sprowston White House Farm – new 2FE Primary
 - Downham Market Hillcrest Primary – permanent expansion to 3FE
 - Roydon Primary – expansion to 2FE
 - Scarning Primary – expansion to 2FE
 - North Walsham – minor capacity adjustment to 3FE
 - Fakenham Infant School – minor capacity adjustment to 3FE
 - Costessey Infant and Junior – reorganisation onto a single site
- 2.3. Healthy Schools Capital formed a one-off allocation this financial year to Responsible Bodies' alongside the annual condition allocation of funds resulting from the Sugar Industry Levy. The Local Authority received £455,000 and will continue to work alongside Public Health and Active Norfolk colleagues to evaluate bids from schools within the defined criteria.

3. Changes to the Programme

- 3.1. Since the May 2018 report, decisions on the following schemes were made by the Executive Director of Children's Services on advice from CPG, as changes to the current programme:

July 2018

- Budget adjustment for modular building to accommodate pupil pressures for September 2018 first admissions - Hethersett Woodside Infant (£150K) and Harleston VA Primary (£150K)
- Hingham mobile replacement and minor capacity adjustment (initial £50K allocation)
- Chapel Green Complex Needs School - final budget uplift for relocation and expansion (£529,075). The account has now been finalised and residual funding returned to unallocated Basic Need
- North Denes Primary modular accommodation following closure of Alderman Swindell Primary (£350K)
- Roydon Primary - change to foundations for new build area under removed mobiles (£187K uplift)

September 2018

- Mousehold Infant - uplift for replacement of boundary railings agreed prior to academy transfer (£63K)
- Bignold Primary - removal of lead pipes identified prior to academy transfer (£35K)
- Dereham Neatherd High SRB - expansion to accommodate additional pupils (£50K initial allocation)
- Drayton Junior - remodelling of internal space relating to removal of mobile classrooms (£50K initial allocation)

4. Capital Prioritisation - Strategic pressures

Special Educational Needs and Additional Needs

- 4.1. The Department's SEND Sufficiency Strategy has been presented twice in its development now to this Committee, and subsequently a request for capital and revenue investment in the region of £120 million to support the transformation of the system for special educational needs and disability (SEND) was taken to NCC Policy and Resources Committee on 29 October. This transformation of services will be achieved through the creation of new specialist provision and a programme to dramatically support and challenge mainstream inclusion.
- 4.2 The capital investment will
- Build up to 4 new special schools to accommodate 400 children in state-funded provision
 - Build suitable classroom/small group rooms across the county in order to expand specialist resource base places for an additional 170 children
 - Explore the possibility of further school-based nurture provision and residential provision to meet social, emotional, mental health and specialist /complex needs.
- 4.3 To do this we estimate that capital and revenue borrowing in the region of £120million is required, within a 2-phase programme. Phase 1 will run across years 1-3 of the programme and phase 2 will begin in year 2 and run to year 5. Phase 1 can begin as soon as capital becomes available. Feasibility for the first project is already under way, funded through the Schools Capital Programme. Early projects are being scoped out, locations for new builds are broadly agreed and aligned with the sufficiency plan. Phase 2 planning will begin immediately, however the implementation will start in year 2 of the programme.
- 4.4 The capital element of our SEND transformation programme will focus on a mix of new build and refurbishment/reuse of existing buildings. The programme will include infrastructure investment in mainstream schools to build capacity to meet the needs of children who may need light touch, or short term intensive intervention. The draft phase 1 includes the reuse of the Alderman Swindell Primary site, which has already seen £500K of basic need investment to take it forward to a planning application.
- 4.5 The estimated expenditure profile for the SEND programme is set out in the table below. The real expenditure against this estimate will form part of future reporting:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
--------	--------	--------

4.8%	35%	60.2%
£4.800m	£35.000m	£60.200m

- 4.6 Capital Priorities Group will form a key element of the governance structure for monitoring the capital aspects of the SEN strategy as it develops.

Mainstream school prioritisation

- 4.7 All the remaining schemes for prioritisation are currently funded from existing capital grants and housing developer contributions.

Secondary growth pressures:

- 4.8 Detail will be developed for January's Committee report to establish the secondary phase areas likely to generate pressure in the next few years. A number of high school masterplans have been developed and formed individual schemes for expansion to meet increased need. A similar process has now commenced for Sprowston High Academy (part of the North East Growth Triangle) prior to the further development for a potential new high school in this area.

Continuing primary pressures:

- 4.9 In the primary sector there continues to be pressure in a number of areas, but overall pressure is diminishing, given the capital investment made to schools to date. Existing agreed local policy determines our approach for dealing with growth to maximise opportunities for improving the structure of the education landscape.

Condition prioritisation

- 4.10 The fragmentation of the education landscape and potential impact of this on condition and asset management of the School Estate has been the subject of previous reports to this Committee. At the behest of this Committee, officers have worked with Academy Trusts and other Responsible Bodies to secure where possible high-quality learning environments for Norfolk children.
- 4.11 It is proposed that Capital Priorities Group reflect on the implications of the past five years and whether a greater understanding of the remaining stock would be beneficial and cost effective. This would allow a more strategic view of the demands of capital maintenance expenditure in future years budget allocation.

Corporate priorities for 2019/20

- 4.12 Taking all the above into account, Capital Priorities Group considered priorities for 2019/20 at their September meeting. The proposals are at Annex B and Committee is asked to endorse these for transmission to Policy and Resources Committee.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The approval by NCC Policy and Resources Committee last month for the capital investment to increase places in Complex Needs Schools and Specialist Resource Bases in the County totalling £120 million over a three-year period.
- 5.2 We will continue to work proactively with colleagues from the corporate Finance Directorate to utilise all available funding to minimise borrowing costs where possible.

6. Issues, risks and innovation

- 6.1 The approach to risk has remained broadly the same for the capital programme for a number of years. In response to both construction industry changes and a review of the Capital Programme delivery from 2014 onwards, it is proposed that Capital Priorities Group consider a more transparent approach to costed risks for the future programme, including the delivery of the SEND capital programme.
- 6.2 Risks to the programme however, remain mostly unchanged, essentially:
- Standard risks within any capital and construction programme around timeliness, quality and cost
 - The pace of development around the SEN strategy and its capital delivery strand
 - The availability of sufficient funding from section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy
 - The need to secure land for expansion
 - The need to develop strong partnerships with academy trusts in areas of pupil growth, especially now moving into the secondary sector
 - Risks to timeliness arising from the County Council's regulatory function as Local Planning Authority for NCC schemes and as Lead Local Flood Authority
- 6.3 There are opportunities for innovation in the strategic development of the programme, which might include:
- Model designs, following on from the Norfolk model primary school concept, for special needs and secondary school growth
 - New, more cost-effective construction methods including off site construction
 - Continued benchmarking of costs nationally
 - Collaboration with Corporate Property team in the acquisition of sites for new schools
 - Further developing collaboration on joint schemes between NCC and the Education and Skills Funding Agency

7. Background reports

Committee papers

Children's Services Committee – May 2018 Schools Capital building programme, page 103

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1468/Committee/8/Default.aspx>

Policy and Resources Committee – October 2018 Transforming the system for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in Norfolk, page 20

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1421/Committee/21/Default.aspx>

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Annex A

Completed projects between November 17 and November 2018

- Chapel Green - new complex needs school building
- Rosecroft Primary, Attleborough - reorganisation to 3FE primary
- Northgate Primary, Gt Yarmouth - reorganisation to primary
- Attleborough Junior School - reorganisation to 2FE primary
- Barford Primary School - two classroom mobile replacement
- Taverham CE VC Junior School - two classroom mobile replacement
- East Harling Primary School - suitability to ensure 1FE
- Falcon Junior School - expansion to 4FE
- Poringland Primary School - expansion to 2FE
- Suffield Park Infant School - expansion to 3FE
- Ashleigh Infant School, Wymondham - reorganisation to 2FE

Annex B

Project	Description	Project Delivery *	Priority
New SEMH school, Great Yarmouth	Reuse of Alderman Swindell School site for 100 place SEMH school and possible residential accommodation as part of SEN Sufficiency Strategy Costs not yet known	2018-2021	1
Blofield Primary School	Relocation and expansion of existing school onto a new site Costs not yet known and funded via Basic Need and CIL contribution for 2018/19	2018-2021	6
Brundall Primary School	Improvement to existing school to secure accommodation for 1.5FE Costs not yet known and funded via Basic Need	2019/20	7
Swaffham Infant School	Reorganisation to 1FE primary school in response to growth and organisational changes Costs not yet known and funded via Basic Need	2019/20	2
Swaffham Junior School	Reorganisation to 2FE primary school in response to growth and organisational changes Costs not yet known and funded via Basic Need and S106 contributions	2019/20	3
Admission pressures 2019/20	Works to address pressures identified via the Admissions round Costs not yet known and funded via Basic Need	2018-2021	4
Temporary Classrooms 2019/20	Placement of modular temporary accommodation at school sites	Target delivery by Sept 2019	5

	<p>experiencing either a bulge year of entry or the first year/continuing years of sustained pupil number growth.</p> <p>Pupil numbers are not yet known. Dependent on closure of admissions round.</p> <p>Costs not yet known and funded via Basic Need</p>		
Land costs for new schools	<p>Part funding required for land available through housing developments.</p> <p>Funding for new school provision to ensure sufficient school places for Bowthorpe</p> <p>Costs not yet known and funded via Basic Need</p>	All years	8
(i) Capital Maintenance and (ii) Academy transfer funds	<p>(i) Projects of approximately £500,000 not covered by schools' devolved formula capital based on assessment by NPS surveyors.</p> <p>(iii) Liabilities for NCC properties on conversion to academies, case by case, each subject to CPG approval</p> <p>Costs not yet known and funded via capital maintenance grant</p>	2019	9

Children's Services Committee

Report title:	Norfolk County Council Adoption Agency Annual Review
Date of meeting:	13 November 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Phil Watson Assistant Director Social Work
<p>Strategic impact</p> <p>Every adoption agency has a statutory requirement to publish, and regularly update, a document which describes the ethos, core aims and objectives, what services it offers along with its management and oversight arrangements.</p> <p>The following pages detail the performance of the adoption service and include the following information;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance in recruiting adopters • Performance in finding adoptive families for children • Performance providing post adoption support • Complaints • Service-User Engagement <p>It is important to remember that the purpose of the adoption service is to approve prospective adopters, prepare children for adoption, and match adopters with children and to provide appropriate post adoption support. This supports the overarching outcome which is to ensure that children and young people are brought up in secure and permanent homes.</p> <p>This Statement of Purpose (appendix 1) is a public document, approved by the County Council each year before being made available to adoptive families, adopted children, their birth parents and guardians and staff working in the field of adoption. It is also inspected by OFSTED (Office of Standards in Education). This committee paper will focus on a performance review of Norfolk Adoption Service.</p>	

Executive summary

<p>The key strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adoption service was graded as Outstanding by Ofsted November 2017 Ofsted told us our adoption service is outstanding and that the service delivers positive and timely outcomes for our children who have a plan for adoption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our adoption performance is in the top 10% of England - Foster to Adopt is making a real difference to children's lives - Family finding profiles are thoughtful and well written - The quality of transition has been transformed by our moving to adoption project in conjunction the with University of East Anglia - Post adoption support packages are comprehensive and individualised • As an outstanding Adoption Service, we have partnered with Bromley Children's Services to assist them in being their improvement partner in driving performance and practice within their Adoption Service. This has started and will become a focus of work over the coming year to promote the excellent adoption service we have in Norfolk in sharing best practice in the field of adoption and celebrate our achievements.
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- The number of adopters approved in 2017/18 was 45 (rounded down to nearest 5); compared to 35 in 2016/17 (also rounded down).
- The number of children matched with adoptive families in 2017/18 was 45; compared to 40 in 2016/17. (both numbers rounded down)
- The number of adoption orders granted in 2017/18 was 40 compared to 50 in 2016/17.
- Norfolk children, on average, are waiting for a shorter period between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family.
- Prospective adopters assessments are of a good standard
- Over the last year, we have worked with two voluntary adoption agencies and 6 local authorities as part of Adopt East Alliance to prepare a regionalisation approach of adoption services.
- Early permanence decisions are being made quicker and with greater senior management oversight to ensure that children are placed swiftly and experience minimal delay including robust arrangements to track cases in public law.
- We achieved 18 foster to adopt placements compared with 11 placements the year before and 7 in 2015/16

The Key areas of challenge:

- The number of children with a plan for adoption has slightly increased. This is a trend reflected locally and nationally.
- Recruiting enough adopters to be matched with the children with a plan for adoption
- Variability in the quality of child permanence reports.
- Some children with complex needs or large sibling groups remain difficult to place.
- To ensure all children with adoption as a permanence plan have good quality life story books.

Next year we will:

- Target recruitment on BME groups, those with an offer to large sibling groups and children with a disability.
- Continue to recruit and champion foster to adopt placements.
- Embed procurement process around adoption support applications and review our commissioning arrangements as part of the Adopt East Alliance.
- Further develop attachment friendly schools project.
- Continue to work with partners within Adopt East Alliance and progress this work.
- Work with colleagues to improve the quality of life story work
- Work with Bromley as their Improvement Partner

Recommendations:

Committee is being invited to endorse the Statement of Purpose for the Norfolk Adoption Service for year 2018/19.

1. Proposal

- 1.1 Members are asked to scrutinise the information within the report and provide challenge to the service to ensure continued improved outcomes for Norfolk children and families along with internal performance improvement.
- 1.2 Members are asked to recommend approval to Full Council of the Statement of Purpose and Functions for the Local Authority Adoption Service to comply with the Care Standards Act 2000.

2. Evidence

2.1. What is Adoption?

Adoption is a way of providing a new and permanent family for children who cannot be brought up by their own parents. It's a legal procedure in which parental responsibility is awarded to the adopters who become the only adults with parental responsibility. Once an adoption order has been granted it can't be reversed except in extremely rare circumstances.

2.2 Performance & Benchmarking

2.2.1 Children Awaiting Adoption

	31/03/2016	31/03/2017	31/03/2018
No. of children waiting with a decision but not yet placed as at 31 March 2018	40	55	60
No. of children waiting with a placement order but not yet placed as at 31 March 2018	30	30	40
Average length of time spent waiting (since entering care) for those with a placement order not yet placed (days)	370*	402	441
*note different definition in 2016 -			
Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family. Where times for children who are adopted by their foster family are stopped at the date the child moved in with the foster family (days). 3-year average 2013-16			

Our performance in relation to the number of children with a Placement Order waiting to be matched has increased, despite proactive family finding, linking children with potential adopters prior to the making of the Placement Order, enabling the matching and introduction process to take place without delay. The reduction in the numbers of adopters being assessed both Locally and Nationally has been the main contributory factor.

2.2.3 Number of children being adopted.

The latest national figures report that had been a decrease in the number of children being adopted and this trend is reflected in the East of England and Norfolk.

The table below shows the numbers of adoption orders granted for England, the East of England and Norfolk from April 2012 to March 2018, plus additional Norfolk data for 2017/18:

Area	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
England	4,100	5,550	5,360	4,690	4,370	3,840
East of England	370	510	530	430	490	440
Norfolk	58	81	100	74	86	65

[Source: Office of National Statistics (Adoption Orders Granted) and CareFirst Norfolk Data]

2017/18 Source – ASGLB data for 2017/18

In the three years to 31st March 2018, 225 children in Norfolk were adopted, compared with 260 in the 3 years to 31st March 2017.

In 2017/18 17% of the children that stopped being looked after in Norfolk were adopted. This compares to an average across England of 15% and the East of England is also 15%.

2.3 Recruiting Norfolk adoptive families

2.3.1 On average, Norfolk receives more enquiries and applications from prospective adopters and approves more adopters than local authorities across England as a whole. In 2017/18 we had 50 applications which mirrors the data for 2016/17. The ASGLB data shows there was an increase in prospective adopters being approved in 2017/18 compared to last year.

2.3.2 National data shows that the number of children in Norfolk with a placement order, so they can be matched with adopters mirrors national figures in 2017/18.

2.3.3 An emerging trend seems to be that prospective adopters are contacting us earlier and after attending an open evening they are choosing to spend more time preparing to become adopters. The conversion rate of enquiries to adopters is similar to other authorities. As a result of open evenings which explain the legal and emotional commitment adoption involves, the majority of prospective applicants decide not to take their intent further. Over the past two years nationally there has been a reduction in the number of prospective adopters coming forward for assessment.

2.4 Finding adoptive families outside Norfolk

3.3 As highlighted earlier in this paper, the last 2 years saw a decrease in the number of children placed for adoption mirroring a national trend and resulting from case law RE BS.

2.4.2 Last year 18 children were placed with families from other local authorities or voluntary agencies – a decrease of 2 on the year before. These are the most complex children awaiting adoption in Norfolk and will have special needs or developmental uncertainty. If not adopted it is highly likely that most or all of these children would have spent their childhood in care. Year to date (April – September 2018) we have placed 9 children with families from other local authorities and voluntary agencies.

2.5 Matching Children with Adopters

2.5.1 Adoption is a key area of focus for the Government. The Department for Education (DfE) publication “An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay” (2012) has the key objectives of reducing the time it takes to recruit adopters and reducing the amount of time children wait to be adopted. Performance against these objectives is measured nationally through the Department for Education (DfE) Adoption Scorecard. The two key measures are:

- In 2017/18 the average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family was 326 for Norfolk and 420 for England
- In 2016/17 the average number of days between Norfolk Children’s Services receiving authority to place a child for adoption and the child being placed with their adoptive family was 243 for Norfolk compared with the England average of 190 days.
- In 2017/18 the average number of days was 148 for Norfolk and 171 for England

2.5.2 These figures do come with a caveat that the average timescales could increase if Norfolk find adoptive placements for those children who have waited the longest for adoption which can lead to much improved outcomes for children.

3 Post adoption support

3.1 The Adoption Support team works with adopted children and their families after the adoption order.

3.2 As most children have experienced developmental trauma, the intensive casework often involves therapeutic services including Therapy and Developmental re-parenting and we have also started to commission in-depth multi-disciplinary assessments to help develop on-going support plans.

3.3 In 2017-18 the Adoption Service worked with 249 families (312 children), including 76 new referrals this year (87 children) and this amounted to 273 post adoption support for individual children over this year.

3.4 Although as 3.8 details, where therapeutic intervention is required of a specialist nature (complex need), we seek funding from the Adoption Support Fund in order

that such a need can be met. For those children and young people who do not require such specialist therapeutic support and where such a need can be met within the Adoption Support Team, such work is delivered directly to families from skilled and experienced adoption support workers within the Norfolk Adoption Service.

- 3.5 Another area of adoption support provided by the Norfolk Adoption Service is the Letterbox contact service where adopters and birth families can exchange messages. Between April 2017 and March 2018, over 3,000 exchanges were made between parties facilitated by the Adoption Support Letterbox service.
- 3.6 Many queries arise from these exchanges and some have to be reviewed or have direct contacts supervised as a consequence. Where required, birth parents are also given support to write their contact messages for children who have been adopted.
- 3.7 The Adoption Support Team provides access to information and intermediary services for adopted adults. In 2017/18, 272 cases were open. Intermediary services are also provided for birth relatives and in 2017/18 the Adoption Support Team handled 89 of these cases.
- 3.8 The Department for Education (DfE) has continued to provide financial assistance to adoptive families via the adoption support fund. Since 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 we have successfully bid for £955,918.67 worth of therapy for 250 adopted children/192 adopted families in Norfolk

4 The regionalisation of adoption services

- 4.1 The Adoption Service is fully engaged with the Adoption Change Agenda, as set out in 'Regionalising adoption' DfE June 2015 and 'Adoption: a vision for change' DfE, March 2016.
- 4.2 Norfolk was part of the Central East Regional Adoption Agency project, but the decision was taken for Norfolk to step away from this project as it was no longer meeting Norfolk's adoption requirements. The Central East RAA is no longer in operation.
- 4.3 Norfolk County Council is part of Adopt East, an alliance of Adoption Services (partners) and Voluntary Adoption Agencies (Essex, Suffolk, Southend, Luton, Thurrock AdoptionPlus and Barnardo's). Being a partner of the Adopt East will provide opportunity to share best practice, join up marketing and recruitment material, identify efficiencies in relation to provision of adoption support services. The priorities of the Alliance are: -
 - Decisions about placements are always made in the child's best interests
 - Service delivery has at its heart innovation and practice excellence
 - Social Workers are highly skilled professionals who make high quality evidence-based decisions and do not tolerate damaging delay for children in their care
 - Matches are made without unnecessary delay
 - Fostering for Adoption to offer children early permanence placements
 - Every adoptive family has access to an ongoing package of appropriate support with a high-quality specialist assessment of need
 - The voice of adopters and their children is at the heart of national and local policy making and delivery of services

5 Complaints

- 5.1 Between April 2017 and March 2018, Norfolk County Council received 15 complaints relating to the adoption service, all of which were resolved at an early stage compared with 16 the year before. The 15 complaints are above the average for local authorities in England which is 3, but this is to be expected due to the far higher numbers of enquiries and applications we process in Norfolk compared to the England average for local authorities Only 1 Adoption case was presented to the Independent Review Mechanism.
- 5.2 Norfolk Adoption Service is four times larger than the average English adoption agency. A review of all complaints evidences that there are no systemic issues were highlighted within the service. The Adoption Service has taken the learning from the issues raised to improve its service delivery and quality of practice.

6 Finance Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications from recommending this report

7 Issues, risks and innovation

- 7.1 It is critical in performing its duty as a corporate parent that the committee scrutinises the functioning of its adoption service.

8. Background

- 8.1 Please see the attached Statement of Purpose (appendix 1)

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:

Officer Name: Ricky Cooper
Email address: ricky.cooper@norfolk.gov.uk
Tel No: 01603 223744



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 Adoption Service



Norfolk County Council

Statement of Purpose

2018/19



Norfolk County Council

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1. Foreword

Sara Tough Director of Children's Services

Adoption is of critical importance to Norfolk County Council. We have implemented the Government's Action Plan for Adoption. We always guarantee a warm welcome to prospective adopters. If you can demonstrate that you could meet the needs of a child or young person who is in the care of the Local Authority awaiting adoption, then we will consider your application.

Some of the children we need to place in families will have suffered trauma, grief and loss. Some will have experienced or witnessed abuse or lived in chaotic environments, which may have left them feeling vulnerable and unsafe. We are looking for prospective adopters who can provide children with a safe and stable home for them to grow and develop. You will need to help them feel comfortable in your home and their surroundings.

It's important to remember that we are not simply looking for people who have had straightforward lives. We will consider your family history sympathetically. Coming through and learning from difficulties or losses can be helpful experiences for adopting a child.

We welcome applications from adults over 21 years of age, from all walks of life and all ethnic backgrounds and religions. It doesn't matter if you are a home owner, tenant, or on housing benefit, employed or not employed. You need to have a genuine commitment to care for a child and lots of energy, understanding and patience. You need to have a spare bedroom in your home and sufficient time and space in your family to adopt a child. Once a child has joined your family you will not be on your own. We can provide a range of adoption support services throughout childhood.

In January 2018 Ofsted told us our adoption service is outstanding and that the service delivers positive and timely outcomes for our children who have a plan for adoption...

- **Our adoption performance is in the top 10% of England**
- **Foster to Adopt is making a real difference to children's lives**
- **Family finding profiles are thoughtful and well written**
- **The quality of transition has been transformed by our moving to adoption project in conjunction with UEA**
- **Post adoption support packages are comprehensive and individualised**

This provides a good foundation from which we will continue to improve the quality of our practice and deliver a creative Adoption service. Thank you for taking the time to find out more about adopting in Norfolk.

2. Introduction

The Adoption Service for Norfolk is part of the overarching Adoption and Fostering Service and works collaboratively with local services, schools voluntary and external agencies. Children's Services' vision is to be a consistent, caring and responsible parent to all children and young people in our care through to adulthood.

We are an outstanding Adoption Service as recognised by Ofsted in the Norfolk Children's Services Inspection November 2017. Ofsted told us that our adoption service is outstanding and that the service delivers positive and timely outcomes for our children who have a plan for adoption.

- **Our adoption performance is in the top 10% of England**
- **Foster to adopt is making a real difference to children's lives**
- **Family finding profiles are thoughtful and well written**
- **The quality of transition has been transformed by "Moving to Adoption" project in conjunction with the UEA**
- **Post adoption support packages are comprehensive and individualised.**

This provides a good foundation from which we will continue to improve the quality of our practice and deliver a creative Adoption Service, which by becoming an Adopter for Norfolk you are joining an outstanding provider.

We promise to put Children First and to work with them and the important people in their lives to ensure they are safe, happy and well. We will always be there at the right time to support children and young people to achieve their own personal ambitions by never giving up on them. The Adoption Service contributes to this vision by seeking to provide permanent families for children and young people who cannot live with their birth families, enabling them to thrive within a safe and secure environment.

Norfolk County Council has an Adoption & Fostering Recruitment Team who support all potential adopters through the initial stages of an application. There is an Adoption Assessment team who assess potential families, make adoption placements and provide support to these families until one year after the granting of an adoption order. There is an Adoption Children's Team, to support the identification of an appropriate match for children. The Adoption Support Team provides support for birth families, adoptive families, children who are adopted and adult adoptees.

There is a two-step assessment process; Stage One is 'adopter-led' and Stage Two is 'agency-led'. We have a strong emphasis on customer service, mutual working agreements and a contractual approach to completing assessments. Timelines for completing each section of the assessment process, and procedures for prospective adopters to take time-limited breaks from assessment are provided. The Stage One recruitment process is managed within the joint Adoption and Fostering Recruitment Team and the Stage Two assessment is managed within the Adoption Assessment Teams.



The Adoption Service in Norfolk recognises the critical importance of achieving permanency for a child with a plan for adoption in a timely manner. We work proactively with national targets set for monitoring the performance of Local Authority Adoption Services (The Adoption Scorecard) in relation to the child's journey through care and the timeliness of matching with adoptive families.

The Adoption Service is fully engaged with the Adoption Change Agenda as set out in Regionalising Adoption, DfE June 2015, and Adoption: a vision for change, DfE March 2016.



Ricky Cooper
Head of Localities



Tracy Collins
Interim Head of Fostering and Adoption

Norfolk County Council is part of Adopt East, an alliance of Adoption Services (partners) and Voluntary Adoption Agencies (Essex, Suffolk, Southend, Luton, Thurrock AdoptionPlus and Barnardo's. The priorities of the Alliance are as follows:

- **Decisions about placements are always made in the child's best interests**
- **Service delivery has at its heart innovation and practice excellence**
- **Social Workers are highly skilled professionals who make high quality evidence-based decisions and do not tolerate damaging delay for children in their care**
- **Matches are made without unnecessary delay**
- **Fostering for Adoption to offer children early permanence placements**
- **Every adoptive family has access to an ongoing package of appropriate support with a high-quality specialist assessment of need**
- **The voice of adopters and their children is at the heart of national and local policy making and delivery of services.**



3. The Adoption Service Principles

The Adoption Service seeks to promote the principles and practice enshrined in the:

- Children Act 1989
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Voluntary Adoption Agencies (Amendment) Regulations 2005
- Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendment) Regulations 2003
- National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services 2011
- The Local Authority Adoption Service (England) (Amendment Regulations 2007
- Adoption Support Agencies (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Adoption Agency regulations 2013
- Adoption Key List (Children's & Families Bill 2014)
- Adoption Statutory Guidance 2014/2015
- Adoption Statutory Guidance 2015



Our practice is guided by the principles of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption and Foster Care:

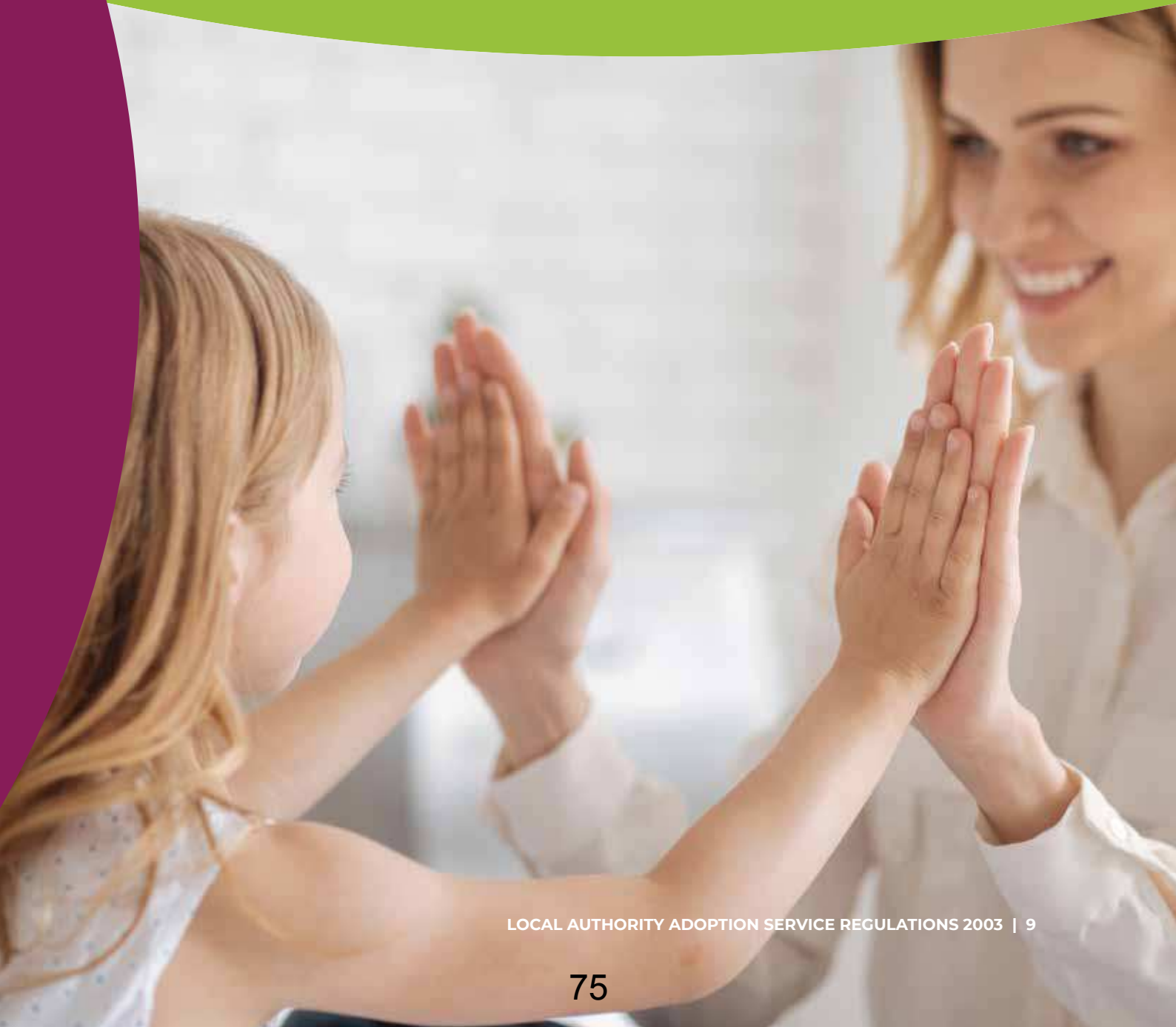
- The needs, rights, safety and welfare of children are our paramount concern.
- We welcome all prospective adopters and carers and treat each with respect at all times, providing information and feedback in an honest and timely manner.
- We recognise the lifelong implications of adoption for all parties and offer sustained and effective support services to adopters, carers, and adopted children and adults.
- We treat birth families fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process, ensuring access to appropriate and timely support in line with good practice and statutory regulations.
- We offer birth parents and relatives support and counselling, including access to records and intermediary services.
- We treat birth families fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process ensuring access to appropriate and timely support in line with good practice and statutory regulations;
- We offer birth parents and relatives support and counselling, including access to records and intermediary services.
- We work towards rehabilitation using concurrent planning if that is in children's best interests and achievable within the prescribed timescales, including supervised contact and coaching to help the parents develop their parenting skills.
- We apply equal opportunities and value diversity welcoming adopters from all ethnic, religious, language, racial and social backgrounds.
- The needs, rights, safety and welfare of children are our paramount concern.
- We welcome all prospective adopters and carers and treat each with respect at all times, providing information and feedback in an honest and timely manner.
- We recognise the lifelong implications of adoption for all parties and offer sustained and effective support services to adopters, carers, and adopted children and adults.

4. Key Aims and Objectives

- ✓ To provide a service responsive to the needs of children, who require a permanent family placement, recruiting sufficient adopters to meet those need.
- ✓ For adopted children and young people to be happy members of a family, confident and achieving to their very best potential.
- ✓ Whatever their cultural background or disability, to identify and prepare children who need to join, and will benefit from, a permanent and legal adoptive family.
- ✓ To implement effective strategies for the recruitment of sufficient adopters able to meet the needs of children waiting for adoption.
- ✓ To aspire to achieving a successful outcome for each child placed with a new family, minimising the number of placement disruptions.
- ✓ To provide a comprehensive adoption support service to adopted children and their families and also to birth families.
- ✓ To value adopters, providing them with a high standard of support and guidance through individual sessions with their link social worker, support groups and pre- and post-approval training, to ensure they are well prepared and supported for the task of becoming adoptive parents.
- ✓ To offer a service to those wishing to adopt from overseas or those wishing to pursue non-agency adoption.
- ✓ To provide an intermediary service to birth families as outlined in the adoption support policy.
- ✓ To offer a service in line with access to records for adoptions both pre-commencement and post commencement.
- ✓ To provide, on request, an assessment of needs for adoption support services for all adopted people, adopters and birth parents.
- ✓ To work in partnership with all those affected by adoption and provide information and advice on all adoption matters to the general public and other professionals.
- ✓ To ensure all information/records will be treated confidentially and held securely.
- ✓ To promote current government policy in achieving a wider, more diverse pool of adoptive parents who are able to provide lifetime care for children who have been looked after.
- ✓ To maintain high standards of practice within the adoption service by exceeding the National Adoption Minimum Standards and the challenges of timeliness.
- ✓ To provide intermediary services to adopted adults and to birth families.



- ✓ To promote opportunities for professional development of adoption workers, both social care and administrative staff, to increase their knowledge of good practice and personal development and to strive constantly for service improvement.
- ✓ To provide an adoptive family committed to maintaining contact arrangements in line with the child's needs.
- ✓ To place siblings together wherever possible and where it is in the best interests of each child.
- ✓ To employ an innovative range of family finding techniques including the use Adoption Match, Link Maker and a range of adopter-led matching activities.



5. Management and Staffing

The Adoption Recruitment Team takes a lead role in recruiting, assessing, training and approving prospective adopters. Other functions include providing the in-family (step-parent) assessment and court service and inter-country adoption.

The Adoption Children's Team specialises in family finding for children with complex needs, on a regional and national basis. A full matching, support and court reporting service is provided. These children can require therapeutic input to prepare them for placement and ongoing support

The Adoption Support Team provides post-adoption support services after an assessment of need. Such services can include casework, provision of therapy, support groups and links with trained 'buddies'. Counselling adopted adults regarding their personal histories, acting as intermediaries for birth relatives seeking contact with their adopted relations and delivering the 'letterbox' exchange of information between adopters and birth family members are vital components of the wider adoption support service.



The Adoption Panel, commissioned by the adoption agency, meets once a week to make independent recommendations on the suitability of applicants as adopters and the quality of matches between families and children. The independent chair is an experienced adoptive parent with a legal background, who has been a Norfolk Adoption Panel member for more than a decade and was previously Vice Chair. The Panel Advisor role is filled by an experienced child care manager.

The Norfolk County Council Adoption Agency is part of the Adopt East Alliance. Children who cannot be placed within their home area would be referred to the Alliance as an identified priority.

All social work staff are required to have the Diploma in Social Work or equivalent on appointment and are registered with the HCPC. All staff are subject to satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced disclosure checks. All social work staff meet the requirements required under the Restriction of Preparation of Adoption Reports regulations 2005

The Adoption Service comprises three teams:

**Janet Barker & Ben Albery
Team Manager, Adoption Recruitment**

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Team Manager, Adoption Family Finding**

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6. Adoption Activity to 31st March 2018



This year we will:

- Utilise the regional opportunities through the Adopt East Alliance to improve our practice, develop regional marketing and recruitment opportunities, align some of our processes and explore a regional approach to the procurement of adoption support.
- Continue to recruit and champion foster to adopt support.
- Develop our marketing and recruitment approach to further target BME groups, children with disabilities and those with an offer to large sibling groups.



7. Prospective Adopters – who are we looking for?

All sorts of people can make successful adoptive parents. Norfolk Adoption Service welcomes enquiries from people of any ethnic background, age, religion or sexual orientation and from people with disabilities. Applicants may be single, married or living with a partner and may or may not already have children in their family.

The important thing is that adopters have the potential to meet the needs of the children who are waiting for secure and trusting families.

What skills do adopters need?

- ✓ As can be seen from the flowchart which follows, Norfolk Adoption Service prepares and trains prospective adopters for the task of looking after, and claiming, children born to another family. The process helps applicants think about their strengths and skills and any areas where they may need more information or experience.
- ✓ Adoptive applicants don't have to be perfect. Nobody is. Often people who have had difficulties in their lives and have worked through them are stronger as a result.



By the time applicants are ready to adopt, we trust that they will be able to:

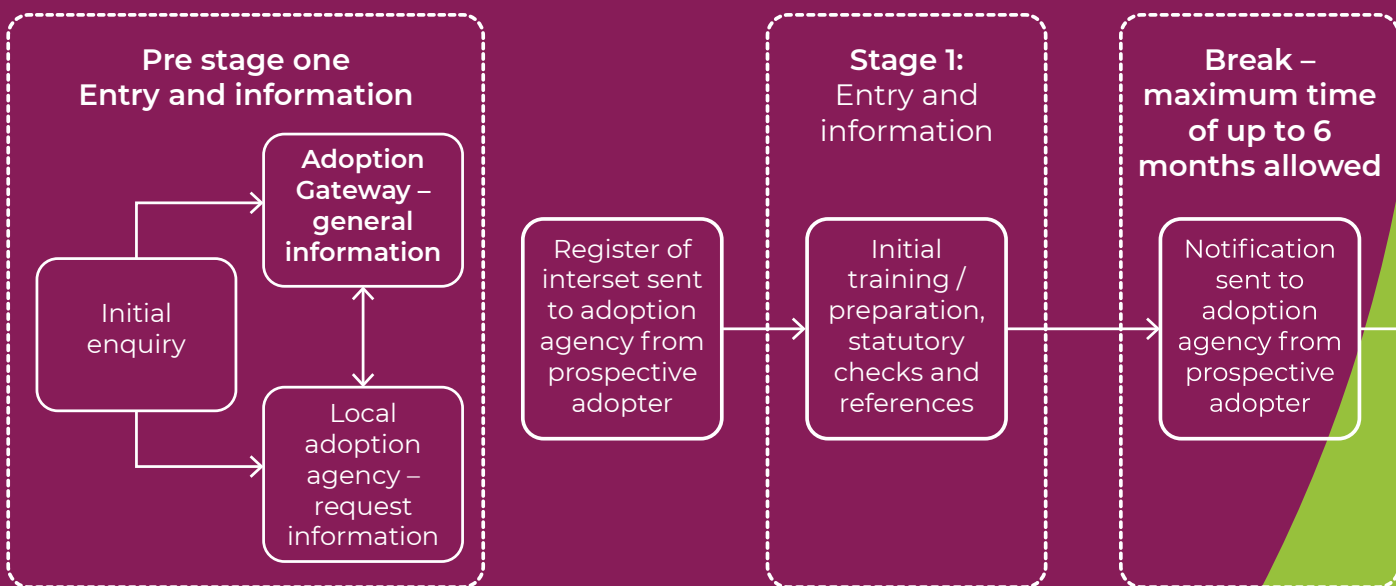
- ✓ Provide a safe, stable, loving family life
- ✓ Have plenty of time and energy to spare
- ✓ 'Stand in the shoes' of a child and understand how he or she may be feeling
- ✓ Help children feel good about themselves
- ✓ Encourage a child's education, hobbies and interests
- ✓ Keep a child safe and promote a healthy lifestyle
- ✓ Help a child feel a positive sense of who they are and where they have come from
- ✓ Tell their child about their background and sometimes keep in contact with important birth family members
- ✓ Be firm sometimes but also be able to negotiate and compromise
- ✓ Cope with the unexpected
- ✓ Stay calm and positive when things are not going according to plan
- ✓ Ask for help if they need it.



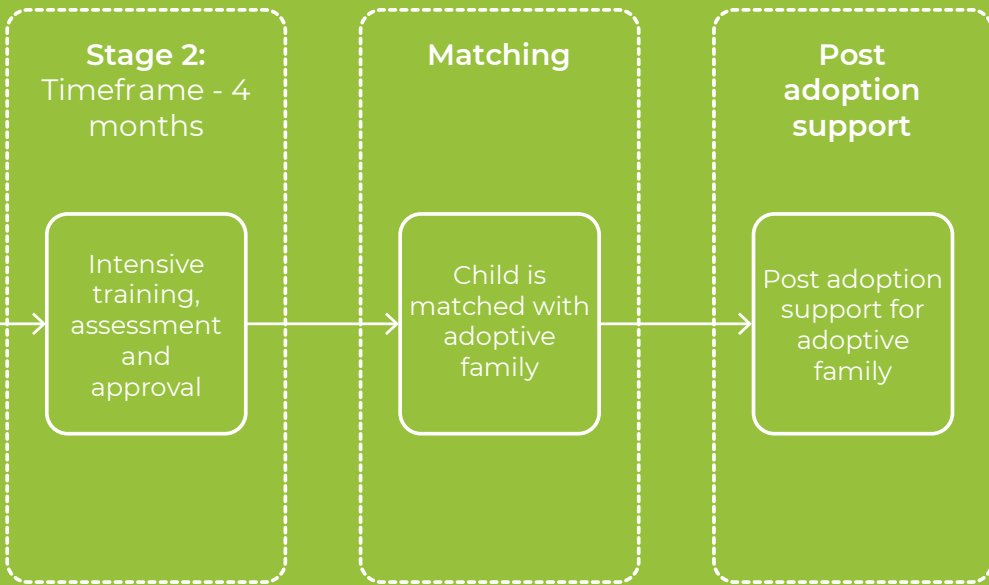
8. The procedures for recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving and supporting prospective adopters

- The Adoption Service aims to recruit a wide range of families to meet the differing needs of children requiring adoptive homes. The agency will welcome all enquiries. Anyone who uses the adoption service will be treated with respect and honesty.
- The agency's strategy for recruiting prospective adopters is to prioritise applicants to reflect the needs of looked after children waiting for adoption at any one time.
- Publicity and recruitment materials and leaflets have been produced to support good communication with prospective adopters and more accurately represent the profiles of children waiting to be adopted.
- Details of the process for recruiting, assessing, preparing, approving and supporting prospective adopters are set out in the Adoption Service's procedures, available on request to the public, professionals and other agencies.
- We aim to work in partnership and will seek your views about the assessment process and our relationship with you at regular intervals.

Flowchart of steps in recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving and supporting prospective adopters



RECRUITMENT PROCESS





9. Key Aims and Objectives

- All children who are placed for adoption will have their plan agreed by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). Once the ADM has made the decision that a child should be placed for adoption, the child is allocated an Adoption Social Worker. This worker is either from the Family Finding Team or the Adoption Assessment Team. The role of the Adoption Social Worker is to ensure that a placement is identified in a timely manner and that children are appropriately prepared for placement and transitions.
- A tracking meeting is held on a fortnightly basis, with the Team Managers and the panel advisor to ensure that children's plans for adoption are progressing appropriately and that there is no delay. The Adoption Service has evidenced a consistently strong performance in the recruitment of prospective adopters and in seeking to place for adoption older children, those in sibling groups and children with complex needs.
- Following approval, a Matching Agreement outlining how Norfolk Adoption Agency will assist adopters in finding the right child for them is completed. Adopters may choose to be referred to the Adoption Match and Adoption Link maker with their consent. Their details will be passed onto see if they have children who may be a suitable match.



- Family finding is a shared activity across the Adoption Service. Adopter-led matching events are regularly held within the region involving adopters and children to further support linking and matching.
- Where there are potential links between children and Norfolk adopters, the Prospective Adopters Report (PAR) is sent to the children's social worker and manager for their consideration. Timescales of five working days for selection are in place to avoid delay and ensure that decisions are made quickly about any potential links.

10. Early Permanence

- Early Permanence (Foster to Adopt) is embedded within the adoption service. From the point of enquiry, prospective adopters are provided with information about early permanence. Early permanence carers are approved adopters who have the skills, emotional resilience and willingness to be able to offer a child a loving and nurturing home. However, they also need to manage living with the uncertainty that the child may be returned to their birth family or moved to an alternative placement with other family/connected people.
- The dually-approved carers are supported by an adoption social worker who provides intensive advice and support. The adoption social worker provides a fostering handbook and details regarding fostering requirements. Information about any available support groups and training courses is also provided. They continue to offer support up until the point of an adoption matching panel or if the child leaves the early permanence placement.
- Once an approved adopter, dually approved carers receive information about children needing early permanence placements. Information is shared with adopters about the child. The adoption social worker supports the carers in helping them decide if they feel that they are able to meet the child's needs and manage the particular set of circumstances around the child. A meeting or a telephone call with the Medical Advisor is arranged to share information regarding the child's health needs and background.
- If the child's social worker feels that the carers are a good match and that they are able to meet all of the child's needs, then (wherever possible) there is a Pre-Matching meeting where arrangements are considered regarding the placement of the child and if possible, a transitions plan put in place for the child to move to the dually approved carers. Whilst fostering the child, the carers are kept updated about the care plan. If the court decides that the child should be adopted, then the adoption social worker, in agreement with the child's social worker will recommend that the carers attend matching panel. If this match is approved the placement will cease to be a fostering placement and it becomes an adoption placement.

11. Support

- Each adopter has a named link worker, usually the assessment team social worker who visits regularly to offer support, advice and guidance. The link worker will remain involved up to the adoption order being granted and by arrangement for 12 months thereafter following the order being granted. This support may be provided by the link social worker or the Adoption Support Team.
- All adopters have access to an assessment of need for adoption support when matched with a child and again at the point a child is placed. This assessment and any support services are again reviewed at the point of application for an adoption order. Once an adoption order is granted, adopters (including inter-county adopters) have access to an assessment of need from the appropriate agency, although this does not give an automatic right to a service.
- In making assessments and formulating adoption support plans there may be also consultation with partner agencies with the consent of the adopter(s). The resulting plan will be sent in writing to the adopters who will be invited to comment on the plan. A signed copy of the agreed plan will be kept on file. All adoption support plans are reviewed regularly or when there are changes to the family's circumstances. In the event that a one-off service is requested a detailed plan may not be required. In such cases a letter of notification will be sent to the adopters who will be asked to sign that they are in agreement to the service being provided.

11. Training

The Adoption Service offers regular training and preparation sessions for adopters at all stages of the process. Following the initial preparation training, other programmes and learning opportunities are available to prospective and approved adopters. These include training on the following:

- **Background factors affecting adopted children (e.g. impact of alcohol/substance abuse, domestic violence and/or parental mental health)**
- **Children's needs**
- **Building a secure base and resilience in adopted children**
- **The experience of adopting sibling groups**
- **Adopting with a birth child in the family**
- **Adoption for single carers**
- **Early Permanence – Foster to Adopt including transitions from fostering to adoption**
- **Team around the Child training**



The Adoption Support Team also offers regular training and support sessions for adoptive parents as part of a holistic programme of support. This includes the following:

- **Consultation sessions for members of adoptive families**
- **Consultation sessions in relation to the adopted child experience in school**
- **Therapeutic life story work**
- **Attachment focussed family therapy**
- **Teenagers – in terms of social media, birth family contact**
- **Therapeutic parenting**
- **Contact and telling**
- **Managing challenging behaviour**
- **Social Networking**
- **Theraplay**
- **Foster to Adopt**

Adopters are encouraged to take part in specialist training and to offer mentoring for other adopters coming through the process. The Adoption Panel has training in accordance with regulations; it has a specific programme of learning and development for panel members, who are also invited to adoption service events and training.

12. Adoption Support Fund

The implementation of the Adoption Support Fund in May 2015 has helped many families and individuals in Norfolk access a wider variety of therapeutic services. The overall aim is to help children to recover from their previous experiences and bond with their adoptive families. For further information see: <http://www.adoptionsupportfund.co.uk/>.

Contact

- **In all cases of direct contact between a child and birth family members, a key worker from the Adoption Support Team can be allocated to support those arrangements, if assessed as required.**
- **Financial support may also be available under the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005. This support is means tested on an annual basis.**



13. Monitoring and Evaluation

Norfolk's Adoption Service receives regular internal and external scrutiny to ensure that services are robust and of good quality with an emphasis of improved quality of practice.

Internal monitoring is achieved by:

- ✓ Collection and scrutiny of data, recording outcomes for children and adopters.
- ✓ Tracking systems to measure the timescales involved for providing services.
- ✓ Quarterly performance board which reviews outcomes to allow performance to be checked against key performance indicators and national standards.
- ✓ The three adoption teams meet regularly and take part in practice development together.
- ✓ Gathering of service user feedback at different stages of the adoption process.
- ✓ Statutory reviews and planning meetings provide a structure for the agency to record progress in individual cases.



- ✓ Staff performance is routinely monitored during regular supervision sessions and adherence to the Performance Development Framework.
- ✓ Elected Members scrutinise the Agency's output through attendance at adoption panels and the Agency's Annual Reports and the review of the Statement of Purpose & Function.
- ✓ Auditing of case files.
- ✓ Adopters evaluate training, preparation and assessment groups to inform future service development. There are regular focus groups of adopters which meet with the Adoption Service to co-produce improvements and implement new models of practice. This also includes adopter's participation in workstream activities and the Adopt East Alliance Project.
- ✓ Attendance at Panel by adopters is also evaluated for user satisfaction. The chair of the Adoption Panel prepares an Annual Report on the work of the Adoption Panel.
- ✓ The submitted work of the Adoption Panel and the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) for children's care plan for adoption is quality assured by the Panel Advisor and the ADM adviser and reported to the Head of Adoption and Fostering. Quarterly panel management meetings are held to monitor panel activity and to assure quality outcomes for children with a plan for adoption.
- ✓ All reports submitted to the Adoption Panel and the ADM for children's care plans are quality assured by their operational managers, the panel and ADM advisors. Quality assurance reports are sent to children's social workers and managers for each report submitted.
- ✓ The work of the Adoption Agency is reported on an annual basis to elected members through the Children Services Committee Panel.

We also maintain our quality by:

- ✓ The independent Adoption Panels which closely examine the quality of cases referred to Panel, with annual review between the Panel Chair and agency managers and decision maker.
- ✓ Input from external clinical psychologist who provides therapy supervision and consultation.
- ✓ Collective scrutiny of regional practice and service delivery through membership of the AdoptEast Alliance.
- ✓ Comprehensive, regular inspection by OFSTED which measures the agency's performance against the adoption national minimum standards and regulations. In 2017 Ofsted rated the Adoption Service as Outstanding.

14. Service Feedback and User Involvement

- The Adoption Service aims to seek views from a range of service users, including representatives from other agencies, from adopters, from young people and from adult adoptees, and birth relatives.
- Service user feedback is proactively sought and listened to so that our services continue to improve, including:
 - ✓ Evaluation forms are completed by prospective adopters/carers who attend preparation and training groups. Similarly, feedback will be sought regarding their experience at panel.
 - ✓ Feedback forms are sent out after the adoption order is granted, and at this stage service users are asked to comment on their experience of the service.
 - ✓ Undertaking periodic user satisfaction surveys of adopters over a period of years asking for information on the quality of adoption support received and their overall experiences (both positive and negative) of the adoption and concurrent planning process, with an opportunity to make suggestions and improvements.
 - ✓ Children and Young people are engaged with and openly encouraged to comment on the service, appropriate to their age and understanding, their views informing future delivery and incorporated into training of carers.
- We seek feedback from the Advocacy Service, outcome of complaints and lessons from disruption meetings.
- We seek feedback and issue leaflets at all stages of delivery listening to complaints and compliments and ensuring our services continually improve.

15. Recording and Access to Records

- The Adoption Service has a responsibility to maintain accurate records on all adopters and to ensure that information is shared with the user wherever possible. There is a statutory requirement to retain files for 100 years following adoption order. Adopters have a right to access to their records. Adopted children also have a right to access their record when they are 18 years old.
- There are specific safe and secure facilities for the storage and archiving of adoption files. All files are indexed and categorised for ease of retrieval, which can normally be accomplished within 48 hours of request.



16. Safeguarding

- Children placed for adoption both pre- and post-adoption and those in receipt of adoption support services are subject to Norfolk's Local Safeguarding Childrens Board (NSCB) Child Protection procedures.
- It is also Norfolk Policy to refer allegations and concerns to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) alongside safeguarding procedures. Whenever an allegation is made that a child placed with adopters may be suffering abuse or neglect, these procedures will be followed. The matter will be investigated, and adopters will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and the implications for their circumstances. In accordance with the procedures, consideration will be given first and foremost to safeguarding the child but also to the support needs of the adopters. Written records will be kept of any allegation of abuse.
- Where persons working for the adoption service, prospective adopters and children who have been placed for adoption have concerns about the welfare and safety of the child, they must refer the matter to Children's Services for investigation.





17. How to Make a Compliment, Complaint or Challenge a Decision

While Norfolk's Adoption Service endeavours to get things right first time, every time, there may be occasions where service users wish to make a complaint. This section sets out the procedures in place, should this situation arise.

The Complaints Procedure

Norfolk County Council has a designated Compliments & Complaints Team which coordinates the investigation of representations made by prospective and approved adopters. All compliments and complaints are logged by the team.

Children, young people or their representative can make a compliment or complaint by using the local rate number 0344 800 2020 or accessing the Norfolk County Council website www.norfolk.gov.uk.



The key features of this complaints procedure are:

- ✓ Most issues can be resolved informally by the manager responsible for the service within 10 working days.
- ✓ If the case is not resolved, an independent person completes an investigation within a further 25 working days.
- ✓ If the issue remains contentious, the Managing Directors Department commissions another investigation to make recommendations to be considered by a panel of three independent people.

Children and young people wishing to make a compliment or complaint must either be receiving or seeking a service from Norfolk County Council Children's Services. Any individual or group, other than children and young people, receiving or seeking a service from Norfolk County Council, who wish to make a complaint, can do so by writing to:

Norfolk County Council has a designated Compliments & Complaints Team which coordinates the investigation of complaints made by prospective and approved foster carers. All complaints are logged by the team. Children, young people or their representative can make a complaint by using the local rate number 0344 800 8020 or accessing the Norfolk County Council website www.norfolk.gov.uk

Challenges to decisions regarding suitability to adopt

If prospective adoptive enquirers are assessed as unsuitable as adopters before having a formal application accepted, they can seek to have the decision reviewed by a Team Manager.

If still negative, the enquirer(s) can ask for the decision to be referred to the Head of Fostering and Adoption for final adjudication. If this reviewing officer upholds the original decision, there is no further ground for appeal.

If a formal application to adopt is accepted by the adoption agency, and doubts regarding suitability subsequently arise, the applicants can insist that their assessment as adopters is presented to the Adoption & Permanence Panel.

If the Panel recommends that the applicants are unsuitable as adopters, the case can be referred to an independent Panel through the Independent Review Mechanism.

18. Contact Details for OFSTED and the Children's Commissioner

Any serious concerns regarding the agency's practice can be referred to the OFSTED inspectorate. The main office for the OFSTED fostering inspectorate service is:



OFSTED National Business Unit
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Anne's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA
Tel: 08456 40 40 40
e-mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



If a child has any serious concerns relating to the agency, they can contact the Children's Commissioner of England. The details are:

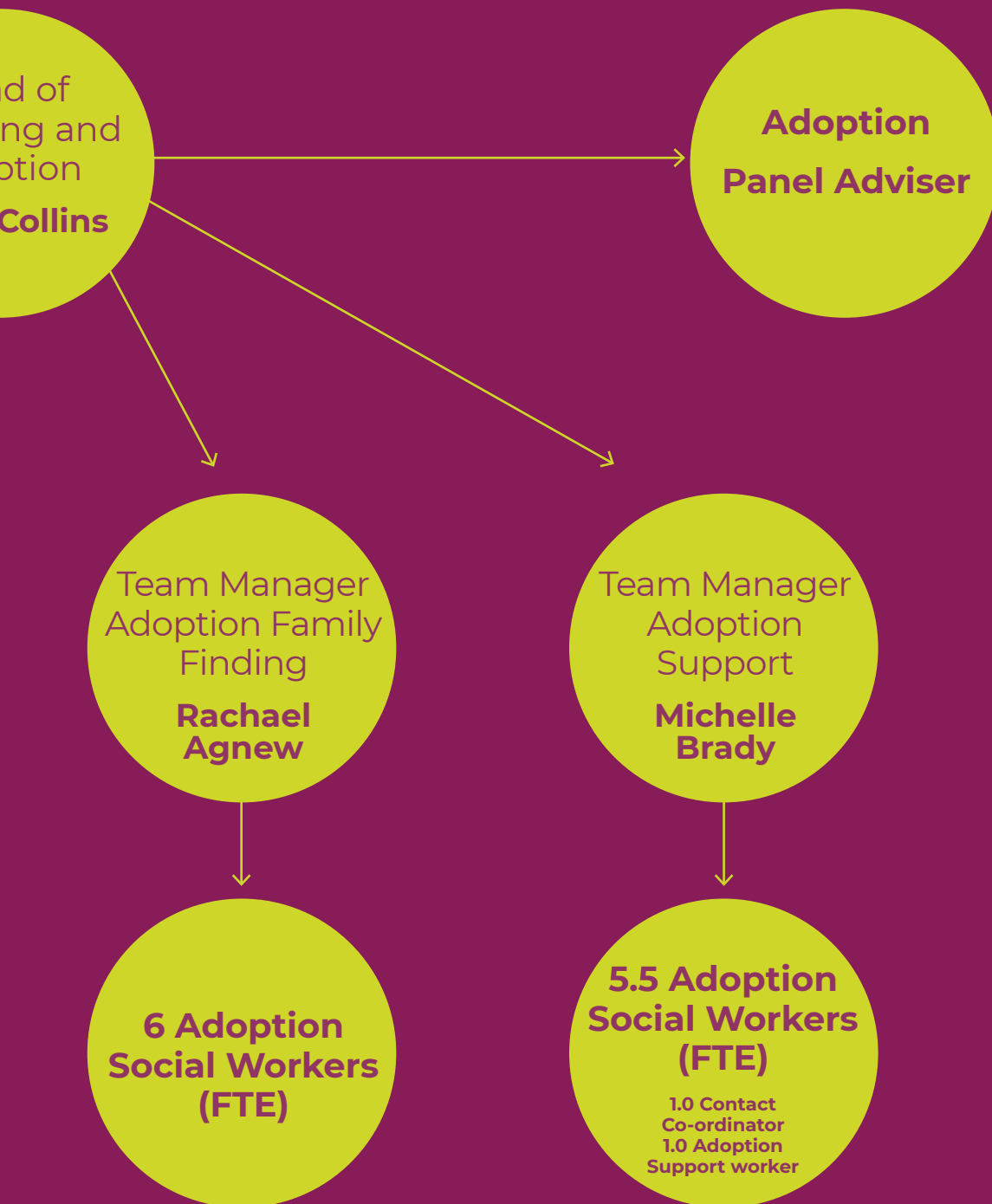
Office of the Children's Commissioner

Children's Commissioner for England
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT



Appendix 1: The Structure of the Adoption Service







Norfolk
**Adoption
Service**



Norfolk County Council

Children's Services Committee

Report title:	Statement of Purpose of Norfolk's Fostering Services Annual Review
Date of meeting:	13 November 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Sara Tough Executive Director Children's Services
Strategic impact	
<p>Every fostering service has a statutory requirement to publish, and regularly update, a document which describes the ethos and goals of the fostering service, its management and oversight arrangements and the experience of its staff.</p> <p>This Statement of Purpose (appendix 1) is a public document, approved by the Children's Services Committee before being made available to foster families, fostered children, their birth parents and guardians, and staff working in the field of fostering. It is also inspected by OFSTED (Office of Standards in Education).</p> <p>The committee paper will focus on a performance review of Norfolk Fostering Service.</p>	

Executive summary

The key strengths:

- Norfolk Fostering Service as part of the Children's Services Ofsted Inspection in November 2017, described the fostering service as well-resourced and managed. Fostering Panels were sighted to be effective and placement stability is good. Most importantly for us, OFSTED told us "foster carers are well trained, well supported and well supervised". The Committee will be familiar with the outcomes of the Inspection report. This report serves to update Committee on the key developments within the service, provide data in relation to the Performance of the Fostering Service, outline key activity over the last year and forecast improvements and developments for the following year.
- Norfolk Fostering Service, has been supporting Bromley Children's Services on its improvement journey, by sharing best practice, service development initiatives, including the effectiveness of the Fostering Advisory Partnership.
- Norfolk Fostering Advisory Partnership is now embedded, led by Foster carers and attended by partners including, health, the Virtual School and senior representatives from Children's Services, much progress has been made in shaping and developing the Fostering Service today. There are continuous improvements being made to the Fostering Service in shaping the delivery of fostering services to Norfolk children and young people. The engagement and retention of foster carers has been directly impacted on the success of the Partnership as well as developing quality practice and in the recruitment of new foster carers.
- There have been further strengthened relationships between the fostering service and the fostering panel and panel chairs through quarterly meetings. This has encouraged and facilitated learning from key themes through increased scrutiny of

fostering panel minutes, and feedback to continuously improve the quality of practice and support provided to foster carers in maintaining quality placements.

- The Fostering Service has increased the capacity of the Kinship service to improve the timeliness of fostering assessments, and the packages of support provided to carers post approval. This will continue to be an area of work that will be continuously reviewed.
- With the inception of work that has been undertaken through the transformation board in the implementation and scoping of work undertaken by IMPOWER, the service has begun to build on the marketing, recruitment and retention strategy for increasing capacity within our fostering resource.
- As part of this work, the Fostering Service has empowered foster carer's to be true ambassadors for the Norfolk Fostering Service in championing and encouraging individuals to becoming a Foster Carer for Norfolk Fostering Service.
- The Fostering Service has continued to grow and develop our cohort of foster carer trainers

The key areas of challenge:

- Recruiting more foster carers, this year's target is 40 new foster carers rising to 60 (2019/20) the following year and 99 in 2020/21
- Increase placement choice for children requiring a foster home, keeping children close to their community with our foster carers.
- Ensuring diversity in our community is reflected in our recruitment and approval of foster carers to meet the needs of all our looked after children and being representative of our looked after population.
- Ensuring the infrastructure resources such as increased support teams/social workers are in line with increased growth of foster carer recruitment
- Providing foster homes for children stepping down to foster care having lived in children's homes.
- Work across children's services to implement the improvement plans and ensure children are in the right placement for the right amount of time.
- To increase capacity within the Linked Families short-breaks team

Next year we will:

- Improve accessibility of our fostering website to include short videos.
- Establish a foster carers ambassador scheme as part of our recruitment and retention strategy
- Develop a targeted brand awareness campaign
- Run social media recruitment campaigns and events throughout the year
- Develop a model of foster carers focussed on providing step down placements to family life for children in residential care.
- With the Fostering Advisory Partnership ensure the needs of children in foster care are addressed in the recommissioning of child and adolescent mental health service
- Review the learning and development programme to ensure it continuously meets foster carers needs
- Re-establish an annual celebration event, along with differing ways to continuously recognise and value foster carers
- Review and develop the support and training offer to Special Guardian Carers

Recommendations:

Committee is invited to endorse and approve the Statement and Purpose and provide scrutiny and challenge to the fostering service.

1. Proposal

- 1.1 Members are asked to scrutinise the information within the report and provide challenge to the service to ensure continued improved outcomes for Norfolk children and families.
- 1.2 Members are asked to recommend approval to full Council of the Statement of Purpose and Functions for the Local Authority Fostering Service to comply with the Care Standards Act 2000.

2. Evidence

- 2.1 Norfolk County Council (NCC) has identified an imperative and opportunity to increase the size and placement share of the in-house fostering service.
- 2.2 With support from IMPOWER, NCC has developed proposals to grow and develop the in-house fostering service based on in depth analysis -including a foster carer survey, staff survey, business analysis and co-production with staff and foster carers.
- 2.3 **Numbers of children in Foster Care, Foster Carers, number of Carer Households and Placement Stability.**
 - 2.3.1 At 31st March 2018, 437 children and young people were placed in mainstream and friends and family foster homes provided by Norfolk Fostering Service.
 - 2.3.2 75 young adults remained in their foster placement after their 18th birthday, supported by Norfolk County Council under a staying put arrangement.
 - 2.3.3 Norfolk Fostering Service supported 386 approved foster carers across Norfolk at the end of March 2018 in households, including 81 mainstream foster care households, 81 friends and family (kinship) foster carers and 24 short break carers. The number of fostering households has declined by 8 in comparison to 398 fostering households in 2017.
 - 2.3.4 As at 31st March 2018 there were 437 children placed with Norfolk foster carers compared to 446 in 2017.
 - 2.3.5 36 Foster Carer placements were subject of their placements endings in an unplanned way during 2017/18, compared with 18 and 14 for the two years before. Nationally in 2017, 2,910 children experienced an unplanned placement ending representing a rate of 5.6% the Norfolk rate is 3.1%.
 - 2.3.6 In light of the increase in unplanned endings of foster placements A revised, Disruption Policy and process has been developed which requires all fostering placements that have an unplanned ending to hold a disruption meeting chaired by Head of Social Work or Independent Review Officer (IRO) at the earliest opportunity. This will encourage and capture learning from these placements and

better inform areas of training and support required for foster carer's that will be developed and rolled out within the Fostering Service alongside Children's Services.

2.4 Recruitment & Retention of Foster Carers

- 2.4.1 In 2017/18 we had 370 initial enquiries and 120 newly approved fostering households. Of those households, 97 were temporary approvals of friends or family carers that facilitated children and young people living with their connected carer's or family member. 23 of these went onto have a full fostering assessment and were fully approved as foster carers.
- 2.4.2 In the same period 132 households left the register of which 88 were temporary friends and family foster carers usually becoming special guardians as a consequence of concluded care proceedings. 44 mainstream foster carers left the Service due to retirement as young people had turned 18 years and those carers resigned from fostering, and changes to personal circumstances.
- 2.4.3 All foster carers who are planning to resign or have resigned will be offered an "exit" discussion by the Head of Fostering and Adoption, to capture and inform improved practice within the Service and to assist development.
- 2.4.4 On average Norfolk Fostering Service has on average of 25 vacancies at any one time. Foster carers can be on hold for a variety of reasons including family circumstance, ill health, the needs of a child already placed or rarely as a result of concerns that relate to allegations being investigated.
- 2.4.5 The Fostering Service continues to review our foster carer's capacity on a daily basis as we strive to place children with Norfolk Foster Carers, keeping them close to their community.

2.5 Concerns and Allegations against Carers and Child Protection Enquiries

- 2.5.1 There were 23 referrals and discussions with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) relating to Norfolk foster carers between April 2017 and March 2018, of which 21 resulted in an investigation, with only 2 being referred to fostering panel for a full review of their foster carer approval status.
- 2.5.2 This compares to 7 investigations the year before and 1 the year before that. All our foster carers have access to an independent advice and mediation worker employed by the Fostering Network and based in Norfolk.
- 2.5.3 Our foster carers are provided with individual membership of the Fostering Network – this provides access to a comprehensive website which includes library items on fostering, help lines, legal and medical advice, stress counselling and a new on-line community. It also provides the support of a solicitor and a worker who provides advice, mediation and advocacy for our foster carers. The Fostering Network is well used by our carers.

2.6 Incidents of Restraint and Children Going Missing from Care

- 2.6.1 There were 2 incidents of restraint on children by Norfolk foster carers between April 2017 and March 2018 compared to 9 and 6 in the previous 2 years. All our

foster carers are taught de-escalation techniques, restorative approaches and longer courses are available to help carers therapeutically re parent children. All incidents of restraint are reviewed by the Head of Fostering and Adoption.

- 2.6.2 Fourteen children/young people went missing from a Norfolk foster home in 2017/18 on 49 separate occasions. Last year 8 children were missing on 17 occasions. A return interview is offered on each occasion when a child goes missing, as this assists in understanding the reasons for the missing episode, the risks and the actions to be taken to mitigate these reducing further missing episodes. The Fostering Service works in collaboration with Children's Services in these particular cases closely to address and mitigate risks as part of the team around the child in adopting a Signs of Safety approach.

2.7 Support for and Supervision of Foster Carers

- 2.7.1 All foster carers receive regular support and supervision they need in order to care properly for children placed with them. Foster cares receive supervision every six to eight weeks. All foster carers have an annual review.
- 2.7.3 Norfolk Fostering Service should complete one unannounced visit to each fostering household per year. As at 12 July 2018, 58 carer households had not had an unannounced visit within timescales visits. Work is underway within the Fostering Service to address this deficit. As a percentage 83% of unannounced visits are in time scale. The indicator of performance in this area is that 100% of unannounced visits will be undertaken during 2018/19.
- 2.7.4 In the last year,10 fostering households have transferred from being agency foster carers (From an IFA (Independent Foster Agency) to becoming in-house Norfolk Fostering Service Foster Carers. They are clear the quality of support and training offered is a key factor in their decision to transfer. In the last 4 years no foster carers have left Norfolk Fostering Service to join an agency (IFA).

2.8 Foster Carer Training

- 2.8.1 Norfolk Fostering Service provides a wide range of training opportunities for foster carers. In addition to the mandatory courses of safeguarding and emergency aid, a variety of long and short courses are available both face-to-face and on-line via e-learning technology. Foster Carer attendance on the training courses remain high with 1,152 foster carers accessing 161 courses during 2017/2018. Only 9 courses were cancelled due to low numbers. The training and development offer to foster carers is continuously reviewed. An improved training and Support Offer to Special Guardians is being developed.
- 2.8.2 Foster carers are encouraged to complete a certificate in 'Training, Support and development Standards for Foster Care'. Foster carers are meant to complete this training within 12 to 18 months after their approval. As at the 12 July 2018, 2 fostering households had not completed the training to meet the Standard in the required timescale. 99% of carer household have completed or are on course to complete the training and meet the Standard within time scale.

2.9 Complaints

- 2.9.1 Between April 2017 and March 2018, Norfolk County Council received 14 complaints relating to the fostering service, compared to 19 in 2017/18. The

learning from such complaints is disseminated within the Service and assists with continuous service improvement and development.

3. Finance Implications

3.1 There are no financial implications from recommending this report

4. Issues, risks and innovation

4.1 It is critical in performing its duty as a corporate parent that the committee scrutinises the functioning of its fostering service.

5. Background

5.1 Please see attached Statement of Purpose (appendix 1)

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:

Officer Name: Ricky Cooper Tel No: 01603 495519.

Email address: ricky.cooper@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.



Norfolk Fostering Service

Statement of Purpose

2018/19



Norfolk County Council

Why foster for Norfolk County Council?

Fostering is extremely rewarding. As a foster carer, you can make a real difference to a child's life, providing them with a nurturing safe home where they can have every chance of a happy secure childhood, supported to reach their aspirations and succeed in life.

It's a big commitment to become a foster carer, but extremely worthwhile. The rewards are enormous – some of our foster carers have been fostering for over 30 years!

By becoming part of Norfolk County Council's Fostering Service, you will be contributing to the provision of high quality placements, which gives best value for Norfolk communities. We will provide support and guidance from our highly experienced team of fostering staff, and access to a wide range of training to develop your skills, knowledge and expertise. There is a tiered payment scheme which reflects the complexity of the child requiring a fostering placement and the skills you offer. We will treat you with the respect that you deserve as a professional foster carer and work in partnership as a member of the Team Around the Child

Foster carers are of critical importance to Norfolk County Council. I am delighted that OFSTED, November 2017 told us that our fostering service was well resourced and managed. Fostering Panels are effective and placement stability is good. Most importantly for us, OFSTED told us "children with foster carers who are well trained, well supported and well supervised. As part of our transformation journey to good and outstanding, we are inviting new foster carers to be part of our Fostering Service this year we are looking to recruit 40 new fostering families.

This year through our collaborative work with Impower Consultants we have further invested in the Fostering Service as part of the transformation programme to improve our targeted marketing and recruitment Strategy, and in how with support we will retain our foster carers. To assist us we are working closely with our fostering ambassadors and the Fostering Advisory Partnership. We are ambitious about wanting Children who are looked after to be living in loving foster families in their communities, where they can feel safe, confident and have a sense of belonging.

Keen to know more call us on 01603 306649

Thank you for taking the time to find out more about fostering in Norfolk.



Sara Tough
Director of Children's Services

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National Legislative and Policy Framework ♥

Norfolk's Fostering Service is run in accordance with the principles and practice outlined in the:

- Children Act 1989
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2013 (Amendments to the Children Act 1989)
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards for Foster Care 2011
- Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services 2011
- Care Planning, Placement and case Review Regulations 2010
- Care Planning and Fostering Regulations (Amendments) 2015
- The Disability and Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD) for Foster Carers

Statement of purpose introduction ♥

This Statement of Purpose outlines the aims, objectives and service arrangements of Norfolk County Council's Fostering Service. It has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011, the National Minimum Standards 2011, and amended regulations to explain how the service strives to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

Ofsted made the following observations in respect of Norfolk's Fostering Service during the Ofsted Inspection (under the Single Inspection Framework) in November 2017

'Children are placed with foster carers who are well trained, well supported and well supervised.'

This Statement of Purpose is a source of information for prospective foster carers, foster carers registered with Norfolk County Council, Fostering Services staff and all other colleagues or professionals within Norfolk County Council.

The Statement of Purpose also links with the Children's Guide that is provided to all children and young people who are placed in foster care.

The Office for Standards in Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) has the responsibility to inspect the Fostering Service regularly to ensure that we achieve the aims and objectives as set out in the Statement of Purpose. Our most recent inspection can be located at www.ofsted.gov.uk. A copy of this statement is lodged with Ofsted. The statement is updated and amended annually.





Policy Statement♥

Norfolk Fostering Service believes that every Looked After Child should be able to enjoy the same quality of life and opportunities as all children.

Norfolk's Fostering Service recognises that children's needs are best met by their family where it is safe to do so and is committed to placing children who are not able to remain in their own family in an appropriate alternative family placement wherever possible. The priority will be for children to be placed with family or friends (known as kinship carers) and supported under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning regulations where this placement is deemed suitable and the child is looked after. Other placements may include a child being placed with their parent/s within a fostering household.

Norfolk is committed to placing children and young people with Norfolk-based foster carers for them to maintain contact with families and friends, to continue at the same school and thrive within their community wherever possible.

Each child/young person will have access to services that recognises and addresses their needs in terms of gender, religion, ethnic origin, language, culture, disability and sexuality.

Placement decisions will consider the child/young person's assessed racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic needs and match these as closely as possible with the ethnic origin, religion, culture and language of the foster carer.

Of paramount importance is the child/young person's safety and welfare which is actively promoted within all Fostering placements. Children and young people are safeguarded against being exposed to significant harm within fostering placements through active engagement of the implementation of safer caring arrangements within the household.

Our Vision♥

To give every child the opportunity to thrive in their families, in their school and in their communities. All children should enjoy a happy, healthy childhood which promotes their self-confidence and resilience, which gives them the foundation for adulthood and the opportunity to fulfil their potential. The Fostering Service is working to improve outcomes for Norfolk's looked after children, providing them with safe and secure environments in which they can thrive.



The Aims of Norfolk County Council's Fostering Service ♥

The main aim of our Fostering Service is to provide safe, high-quality foster care placements for children and young people that value, support and encourage them to grow and develop as individuals.

As well as promoting their health and general well-being, we believe that children and young people in our care should:

- ✓ Be helped to grow and reach their potential
- ✓ Be given safe, nurturing experiences within a variety of caring resources which reflect need, respect difference, value diversity and promote inclusion
- ✓ Be listened to and that services we provide should take these views into consideration
- ✓ Receive high quality, relevant aftercare
- ✓ Have their rights and responsibilities respected and involve them, along with their carers, in all aspects of service delivery

We believe that children looked after by Norfolk Children's Services deserve:

- ✓ Services which help them overcome adversity and positively address disability
- ✓ Good quality and timely assessments that reflect the child/young person's needs and demonstrate how such needs are going to be met.
- ✓ Positive care planning and that as corporate parents foster carer's have high aspirations for their future
- ✓ All significant adults in their lives to be working together
- ✓ To be heard, consulted with and encouraged to participate in their care and family life

The service is also committed to:

- Ensuring that the service offered is based on statutory requirements, sound principles and good practice and works within the principles of value for money for the council.
- Multi-agency working and developing partnerships and protocols with organisations which can progress the needs of our looked after children.
- Working at all levels in partnership with Education and Health to promote the well-being of children whom we are looking after.
- Providing a high quality responsive child-centred service in relation to its core functions.
- Recruiting fostering carers from within our diverse community and from kinship networks of the looked after child, whichever best meets their needs.
- Applicants being comprehensively assessed and prepared through training to be able to deal with a range of issues that foster carers face when looking after children within a safe family home.
- Providing fostering allowances in line with government recommended rates. In addition, carers can receive a fee in line with Norfolk's Tier Alignment Scheme. All carers are aligned to a tier level and most receive a corresponding fee, in recognition of their skills and experience and the complexity of the placement they are able to offer.



Somewhere they can achieve and contribute

Our Service Objectives ♥

We put children at the centre of what we do, and we support carers to do the same by:

- Promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children throughout their childhood.
- Ensuring there is a choice of high-quality foster care placements available to meet the complex and diverse needs of children.
- Working in partnership with children and their families.
- Ensuring equality of opportunity, having a positive regard for the child's racial, religious and cultural needs.
- Promoting and abiding by the Pledge for children and young people who are looked after.
- Supporting children through trauma-informed foster care (understanding that children's behaviours are impacted by their experience of trauma). Foster carers to be offered training that considers addressing the attachment needs of looked after children and trauma responses to their past experiences.
- Ensuring children reach their potential in education and employment.
- Ensuring children's health needs are met.
- Ensuring that young people are supported to move into independence in a planned way.
- Delivering regular supervision to each foster carer from a fostering supervising social worker who will assist in identifying the individual training and development needs of foster carers, so that we are able to continually develop our fostering workforce.
- Taking into consideration an individual child's needs/wishes and feelings as they relate to the foster placement.
- Accommodating siblings together wherever possible and appropriate.
- Promoting contact between the child or young person and his/her birth family throughout their placement.
- Ensuring foster carers make children and young people aware of their rights in line with the Norfolk County Council Promise to children and young people. This includes making children and young people aware of the complaints, compliments, advocacy and independent visitors processes.
- Ensuring that our foster carers feel valued by: providing regular updates on the service through the carers hub; building our carer community through events such as the Carer Awards and the Carer Conference as well as family events; and providing opportunities for foster carers to have a voice through the Fostering Advisory Partnership, focus groups and our newly appointed Foster Carer Ambassadors.



- The Payment for Skills (PFS) model ensures quality by providing a competency and skills framework with clear expectations for foster carers, together with training and personal development programme.
- Ensuring that all practice promotes equal opportunities for all and values diversity of both foster carer's, children and young people.
- Ensuring carers can take appropriate decisions relating to the children in their care by delegating authority for day-to-day decisions unless there is a valid reason not to do so.
- Ensuring that any decisions are transparent and fair, any concerns are addressed, and information about complaints procedures are made available to all.
- Ensuring service performance is monitored, assessed with outcomes measured via a Quality Assurance Framework.
- Promoting a Team Around the Child approach in working with the child, young person and their birth family alongside the foster carer.
- Consult regularly and learn from those who are in receipt of services through comments, complaints or compliments and to have regular meetings and consultation with foster carers, senior managers, elected members and the foster panel, including the Panel Chair.
- Consulting regularly with children and young people who are fostered, using a variety of methods to ensure their voice is heard with active participating and encouragement for Looked After Children being part of the Norfolk In Care Council.
- Having a commitment to continuous improvement through provision of wider placement choices by pioneering more innovative approaches to foster care that are needs-led, delivering flexible packages of support to our looked after children.
- Improving relationships with the use of motivational interviewing which aims to empower children, foster carers and the work force to bring about change.
- Continuing to innovate and develop the service in co-production with our foster carers, through focus groups, workstream and carer-to-carer training.
- Using customer feedback from a range of sources including foster carers and the Children in Care Council to develop and improve our fostering service.
- Ensuring that all information/records will be treated confidentially and held securely.

The Fostering service is responsible for a diverse range of foster care placements for children who are unable to live with their own family and are being looked after by Norfolk County Council.

Foster care placements range from babies to teenagers, for children with complex needs who require a placement on their own as well as large sibling groups who need to stay together. Providing stable placements remains a key priority which means finding carers who are able to support children and young people through into adulthood and beyond. The fostering service actively promotes the option of Staying Put with our foster carers, to enable young people in their care to remain with them beyond their 18th birthday, if this is what the young person wants too.

Our Priorities for 2018/19 ♥

- Our recruitment strategy ensures that we target recruitment to meet our service priority needs. This strategy is underpinned by the three Maslow Groups (Value Modes); Pioneer, Prospector and Settler, giving us an insight into what motivates applicants. All marketing materials are designed in line with these core values.
- Develop an improved retention and support framework for foster carers which will include an annual conference (autumn) and Foster carer recognition event (spring), including welcome to our new foster carers. Tea and cake events.
- Rebranding of the fostering service which includes, complete brand refresh, posters, leaflets, a new website and other dedicated social media channels in line with our core marketing strategy.
- Refreshed marketing and recruitment strategy which targets foster carers to meet the needs of our Looked After Children; we need foster carers for teenagers, sibling groups and children with complex needs and disabilities.
- Recruit a group of Foster Carer Ambassadors to work alongside the service to drive forward recruitment initiatives and manage the information events.
- Placement stability and support remains a priority for 2018/19, with new initiatives to support stability and permanence for children in care, including the Ambassador Programme and hub-based support groups.
- Greater support offered to children and young people from their foster carers in supporting children returning home to their families and for children and young people on the edge of care.
- Develop a pool of retained highly skilled and experienced carers who can work with older children/teenagers with complex needs, providing them with a family home having stepped down from residential care.

Our target for 2018/19 is to recruit 40 new fostering households.

Our aim is to recruit foster carers who can be trained and supported to provide high quality placements which meet the varied and often complex needs of children and young people needing to be looked after.



Carers from diverse backgrounds who can provide placements for older children from a variety of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, including carers, who are able to provide for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

Carers for older children (10+) and teenagers (13+)

Carers for children with specific disabilities/complex health needs

Carers for sibling groups of all ages.

Carers who can offer permanent placements and long-term stability for children who are unable to return to their birth families

Carers for older children/teenagers with complex emotional needs

Respite carers to support carers with children and young people placed with complex needs (Short Breaks)

Parent and child foster placements

Connected Persons carers (Kinship) approved as foster carers to offer a placement to a specific child known to them.

Carers able to accommodate child and young people in an emergency often outside of the core working hours – often in the evening and at weekends, including young people subject to bail and PACE (Police And Criminal Evidence Act) conditions

How we monitor and evaluate the fostering service ♥

- The performance of the service is monitored and analysed in the Annual Report.
- Staff at all levels are provided with regular supervision by their line manager and consultation is also available for very complex cases.
- The Corporate Parenting Board receives the annual report on the performance of the fostering service.
- The professional advisor provides support, advice and quality assurance to the Fostering Panel. The advisor manages the Panel arrangements, facilitates panel training needs and supports the independent panel chairs.
- Monthly audits are undertaken to ascertain the quality of social work practice and service delivery, and to inform fostering service improvements.
- Monthly performance and quality assurance meetings to review fostering performance data and feedback from audits, compliments and complaints, to improve the quality of practice and service delivery.
- Quarterly meetings with fostering panel chairs to review quality of practice, reports and lessons for learning.
- Analysis of disruptions which take place, through disruption meetings.
- Identification and analysis of looked after children in Norfolk, which will inform and influence our recruitment strategy.
- The looked after child's review, along with the function of the Independent Reviewing Officer, has a quality assurance role.

Feedback from Service Users ♥

The views of children and young people receiving a service are sought through a variety of methods, including feedback from Advocacy Service, outcomes from complaints, lessons from disruptions, children's views expressed in statutory reviews, foster carer reviews and through the MOMO (Mind Of My Own) app. The views of children, young people and foster carers inform service planning.

Written feedback is requested from the child's social worker as part of the foster carer's review and at the end of each placement.



NiCC (Norfolk in Care Council) contribute to the Skills to Foster preparation training for applicants to foster by attending a session and taking questions. All participants attending the course find this a useful part of the preparation training.

The NiCC have been working in partnership with the fostering service and the virtual school to develop training programmes focused upon the educational requirements of looked after children and the role foster carers can play in maximising educational opportunities for the children in their care.

NiCC have also been involved in helping to train foster panel members in the importance of placement planning. Children and young people have attended sessions with foster carers in giving a child/young person's perspective on the importance and guiding principles of delegated authority.

Norfolk Fostering Service aims to gather feedback from applicants throughout their approval process and from carers and children during their fostering career.

This includes:

- Feedback requested by the fostering panel on the views of applicants on the assessment process.
- Questionnaires following the preparation course for prospective carers.
- The statutory looked after children's review ensures that the child/young persons and birth parents' views are fully explored.
- The agency places high priority on direct work with children/young people and provide the opportunity for them to explore their feelings and give their views.
- Response to issues raised at the Fostering Advisory Partnership and foster carer survey 'You said we did'.
- Feedback collated from carers attending training courses and shared through joint meetings with workforce development/ training providers to develop training programmes and individual courses as required.
- The views of foster carers are gathered during regular supervisions with the allocated Fostering Supervising Social Worker so that managers can identify any shortfalls and address this promptly.
- Foster carers are consulted on key changes of policy and service developments and general carer satisfaction through questionnaires and network meetings. We work closely with the Fostering Advisory Partnership, hold regular meetings and consultation sessions to gain feedback, working in partnership on issues and jointly organising events such as the annual conference for foster carers.

Fostering in Norfolk♥

As at 31 March 2018, we are supporting 386 approved foster carers across Norfolk. 81 of these are friends and family carers, 281 are mainstream foster carers and 24 provide short breaks. In total there are 427 looked after children living with Norfolk Foster Carers.

During 2017/18 we recruited 23 new mainstream foster carers.

Norfolk fostering Service has endorsed 97 temporary approvals of friends and family foster carers.

Norfolk is committed to co-working with fostering carers to develop the service. We are working with 25 Fostering Ambassadors to drive forward our recruitment strategy. Our foster carers are an integral part of recruitment, training, innovation and support processes. We actively listen and act upon the foster carer's voice.

Foster carers are increasingly taking the lead in the development of the fostering service, for example leading the Fostering Advisory Partnership and participating in the Ambassador Foster care recruitment project.



Open your heart and your home.♥

**Where they
can realise
their potential**

Management and Staffing

The Head of Fostering and Adoption Services is the designated lead officer and Responsible Individual for Fostering and the Agency Decision Maker for Fostering.

The Norfolk Fostering service comprises six teams, three of which are locality mainstream fostering support teams, and three countywide teams for recruitment kinship and children with disabilities. All these teams undertake the functions of assessment, approval, supervision, support, training and development, safeguarding and review.

The Fostering Recruitment Team

The Fostering Recruitment Team (FRT) have a crucial role in promoting the need for foster carers from across Norfolk and have a schedule of promotional events that are delivered by staff, and foster carers. The Recruitment team oversees marketing and advertising to recruit specific adopters and foster carers who can meet the needs of children most likely to be referred for placements.

The team is responsible for:

- Marketing, communications, advertising and publicity, using Values Modes tool kit
- Arranging regular events, open evenings & information evenings.
- Processing initial enquiries
- Undertaking initial visits
- Providing some initial training
- Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) transfers
- Assessment
- Fostering pre-stage & stage one processes, including safeguarding checks

The Recruitment Team has a dedicated Marketing Manager and Fostering Service Development Manager who are developing a series of marketing and event strategies, ensuring we are recruiting the foster carers within the specific locations that they are required. The team will be running six recruitment events per month as well as running an awareness campaign throughout Norfolk. The service works closely with Norfolk County Council's Corporate Communications Team.

The Fostering Recruit Team has a recruitment strategy which uses the Values Modes principles to appeal to the motivations of 'Pioneers' and 'Prospectors'. Foster Carers are mobilised through a 'call to action' to generate word of mouth enquiries to recruit carers to meet the needs of the looked after children and young people requiring placements. The team oversees all the Stage One processes (statutory checks) for fostering.

Members of the public who are interested fostering can enquire via the duty worker's direct line 01603 306649 or online via the web www.norfolk.gov.uk/fostering and social media. An information pack can then be emailed or posted along with information about forthcoming open evenings or information sessions. The team aims to provide a seamless, efficient and responsive service to both potential adopters and foster carers.

Fostering Supervision and Support Teams

The teams offer supervision and support to foster carers. All carers have an allocated Supervising Social Worker who will visit regularly, conduct an annual foster carer review, liaise with children's social workers and help to ensure appropriate placements are made. All children placed with foster carers should be in an approved placement with a carer who has the quality, skills and experience to meet their needs.

The teams supervise and support two types of foster carers:

Fostering: Offering placements to children until the conclusion of their care plan.

Connected Persons (Kinship Care): Offering a Looked After Child a placement where the child is known to them as a family member or friend.

All newly registered foster carers are approved to care for children and young people between the ages of 0 to 17, but in line with our smoking policy, some carers will not be approved for children under the age of 5 (with exceptions for connected carer approvals).

Foster carers and their families receive:

- ✓ Regular supervision visits in line with the fostering task, generally 4-8 weeks.
- ✓ Twenty-four-hour telephone support from an on-call fostering worker.
- ✓ Invitations to regular support groups held throughout the county, including educational and social events and a group specifically for the children of foster carers.
- ✓ All foster carers on approval are funded for membership of the Fostering Network which provides independent advice and mediation as well as other associated benefits.
- ✓ Ongoing training to encourage continuous development.



The team provides supervision and support to enable foster carers to work to a child/young persons care plans. We aim to provide foster placements offering therapeutic care by promoting a Team Around the Child approach, with the focus on the foster carer providing 'therapeutic re-parenting'. We actively manage the placement to ensure that outcomes for the children are our primary focus.

Foster carers need the following to 'therapeutically re-parent' young people:

- To be seen as a key part of the Team Around the Child.
- A heightened sense of self-awareness, including being emotionally grounded and evidencing the ability to be reflective in their practice
- To possess a good working knowledge of theoretical models to use as a framework for understanding young people's behaviour
- Access to good quality wrap-around services.

Partnership Working

- The Fostering Advisory Partnership, which consists of foster carers and staff, has become the group that drives our service over seeing training and improving team around the child working.
- All carers are required to work closely alongside the families of looked after children, with sensitivity and an understanding of the responsibility attached to looking after another person's child. This can be complex and demanding, both for the carers and the child, and requires an emphasis to be placed on joint working with social workers and colleagues in all relevant agencies.
- All carers are required to record details of the child's life in their care and contribute to effective assessments.
- In addition to the basic allowance, in Norfolk we operate an accreditation scheme, based on the Task Skills Profile which is used by the social worker and carer to determine whether a carer has the skills required to be accredited at a higher level.
- All carers can access the LAC CAMHS Service (A Primary Mental Health Service for Looked After Children and Adopted Children in Norfolk). This service provides consultation and guidance to foster carers and professionals working with looked after children. Each child's situation will be considered individually.

Annual Foster Carer Review

- Annual reviews of carers ensure that we keep in the forefront our aims and objectives for the children in our care. The views of all those involved are sought to contribute to the review. It is particularly important that the child or young person's voice is heard.
- It is at the review that decisions are made regarding the carers' continued suitability. Their terms of approval are reconsidered, and support and training needs identified. The first annual review is presented to Fostering Panel for consideration. The second annual review where carers may, subject to meeting level 2 competencies, progress from level 1 to level 2. This review is presented to the Fostering Team Manager for consideration and a decision is made on progression. Reviews may be presented to the fostering panel as required.



- The supervision teams have developed the way in which reviews are carried out to ensure that foster carer reviews are reflective of continual practice and support the continuous professional development of all foster carers.
- Respite care is an important source of support to foster placements. When considering respite arrangements, consideration is always given to the needs of both the child and the carers.
- Norfolk County Council funds individual membership of the Fostering Network for all approved foster carers. This provides a holistic package of support for foster carers, helpline and includes legal insurance.
- If a foster carer is subject of a child protection allegation against them, foster carers have access to independent support from Foster Network Independent Support Service (FISS) and Independent Counselling Services.
- The Fostering Service works closely with the Placements Team to identify fostering placements, working as one service to provide the best possible matched placements for children and young people.

Safeguarding checks

- Every carer must have an annual review. Disclosure and Barring Service and medical checks must be completed as part of the foster carer's assessment and at intervals of three years. The family safe caring policy is updated at every review. Health and safety checks are reviewed annually.
- In the event of a child protection investigation because of an allegation of abuse against a foster carer, the foster care review will take place immediately after the conclusion of the investigation. They are presented to Fostering Panel for consideration.
- Every carer review will include feedback from the looked after child, their parents and social workers as well as the carers' own children.



Linked Families carers are provided with necessary furniture and equipment to meet the needs of the child and adhere to safety standards. This can include mobile hoists or toys to promote children's development and skills and those that record or capture a child's experience of their short breaks.

Current and future equipment needs are identified at the start of each placement and will be reviewed on a regular basis to promote positive and suitable, lasting links. Carers are encouraged to raise any aids and adaptations needs with their supervising social worker as and when the need arises.

Work of the Kinship Care Team

Family and Friends wishing to be approved as foster carers (connected persons)

Regulations require that children who are looked after by the local authority can only be placed with either an approved foster carer or, for a period not exceeding 16 weeks, with a relative or friend of the child who has been approved as a temporary foster carer by an appropriate senior manager within Children's Services.

The Kinship Care Team offers consultation to the child's social care team and any practitioner where connected persons assessments may be required, and when temporary approval has been given.

Once temporary approval has been granted a Social Worker will undertake an initial visit to complete the necessary paperwork required under the regulations. If suitable for assessment by the Kinship Care Team an assessment plan will be agreed and reviewed. The Assessing Social Worker, together with the child's social worker, will complete a Fostering Network Form C assessment and present it to the Fostering Panel. The Agency Decision Maker will make the final recommendation. The Kinship Care Team also undertake fostering assessments where specific children have been identified but not yet placed. Once approved the Friends and Family carer will receive support and access to training from the Fostering support team.



Children with Disabilities

Linked Families Team

The Linked Families Team supports a county wide scheme with supervising social workers based in Marshfields in King's Lynn and Applewood in Norwich. The Linked Team are responsible for the recruitment and assessment of prospective Linked Families who are then approved, supervised, supported, reviewed and trained in line with all other foster carers in the broader fostering service. The Linked Families Team are responsible for the matching and placing children and ensure the carers are fully involved in the matching process.

Linked Families Fostering Scheme

As a countywide scheme, the Linked Families carers are located across the county. The scheme provides a series of planned short breaks for children and young people with complex disabilities who are referred by the CWD fieldwork teams. The children primarily live at home with their parents and/or carers and can receive sitting, day care or overnight stays with a Linked Families foster carer.

Carers can have a variety of experience in working with children with disabilities, most have a background in Health, Social Care or Education. Each will be able to offer a unique experience due to their family composition, living environment, background, availability to offer care and personal interests. Alongside providing short breaks, Linked Families carers have also supported parents in addressing challenging behaviours or developing a child's skills, for instance personal care or independence skills. There have been occasions when carers have undertaken task-centred, time limited, work with the child and their family to benefit the child's well-being; this could include support within the family home through sitting or within the community. Requests for this support are made by the child's social worker in consultation with parents. Linked Families carers have at times also been able to provide emergency and unplanned care for children in response to parental ill health or safeguarding concerns. These requests would be made by the child's social worker in consultation with parents.

When children are matched to carers for short breaks, the Linked Families practitioner will identify any training needs associated with the placement in consultation with the family, carers and other professionals involved in the child's care. This could include Moving and Handling, Epilepsy Awareness, Administering Medication, Gastrostomy training, Steps On, Sign-a-long, Autism Awareness or any other course required to provide safe care for that child or young person.

Linked Families Short Breaks Plus Scheme (Fee paid)

The Short Breaks Plus Scheme also has fee paid carers. This service was commissioned to provide a service for children and young people with complex health needs, autism and/or challenging behaviour who were 'hard to place'. Fee paid (or contract) carers provide up to four nights planned care per week. High levels of support, more in-depth training and an expectation to take 'hard to place' Another word for this? children distinguish these carers from the non-fee paid scheme.

Learning and Development ♥

Central to the County Council's ability to provide the best possible service to children; training is of central importance in supporting carers and helping them to develop therapeutic parenting skills to face the many challenges that foster caring brings.

We offer a variety of courses designed to cover the diverse nature of foster care. We want to support carers to offer therapeutic re-parenting to our foster children to help them to recover from their difficult start in life. We have also tried to ensure that training can be accessed in different locations and at different times, including full-day and half-day courses to meet your needs. Attending courses also give you the opportunity to meet with and talk to other carers.

Integral to all our training is valuing difference, diversity and challenging discrimination. Anyone who delivers training for Norfolk County Council is expected to sign a tutor agreement form which clarifies our anti-discriminatory practice.

Some training is written, and delivered, by a cohort of trained, and experienced foster carers, this enhances the foster care training package. Training for foster carers ensures the following:

- Training meets the needs of foster carers, the requirements of National Minimum Standards for the Fostering Service, and the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care.
- The training provided enables foster carers to provide high quality care which meets the diverse and complex needs of the children placed with them.
- The training promotes the recruitment and retention of foster carers.
- The training ensures that carers are an integral part of Children's Services.
- The training is delivered within existing and planned resources.
- All training promotes partnership working.

The service offers foster carer buddies who work with carers to help them achieve the Fostering Training Standards and all aspects of the fostering task.

The learning and development plan is updated each year. The development of our training programme is annually informed by course evaluations, an annual questionnaire to foster carers, requests from carers and social workers for specific training, and national and local drivers.

Every carer is expected to gain the knowledge required from the mandatory training courses, which include: skills training, first aid for foster carers, safeguarding children and Child Sexual Exploitation and missing from care.

Following the mandatory courses, carers can choose from a range of further opportunities. We offer a range of long and short courses, as well as e-learning, individual mentoring and other learning opportunities. These are a sample of the courses available.

Core Courses:

- De-escalation training
- Equality and Diversity
- Restorative Approaches
- Signs of Safety Briefings
- Stepping Stones (all you need to know about fostering)

Specialist courses:

- Anti- and Cyber Bullying
- Arts Therapy
- Moving to Adoption
- Developmental trauma
- Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder
- PATHS (Promoting alternative thinking strategies)

Longer Courses:

- Fostering Attachments
- Solihull Training
- Fostering Changes

Foster carers are expected to maintain a continual professional development portfolio to evidence their learning and development. Supervising Social Workers will work with the foster carer to help develop their portfolio.



The Fostering Panel ♥

The Fostering Panel considers the approval of all new carers and existing carers' reviews. The panel will make recommendations on foster carers' terms of approval including:

- Type of fostering
- Age of child(ren)
- Gender of child(ren)
- Number of children to a maximum of three

Approval and matches for long-term fostering are considered by the Fostering Panel. The Fostering Panel's recommendations are considered by the Agency Decision Maker who makes the final decision.

The 1989 Children Act sets the 'usual fostering limit' to three children, unless the children are siblings to each other. In certain circumstances, the Fostering Service may consider placing children outside the usual fostering limit on exemption. With the carers' agreement, whenever this applies, the exemption will be formally recorded, and consideration will be given to what additional support the carer may require.

Variations of approvals are risk assessed to ensure the needs of all the children in the household are met. A return to panel will be actioned where necessary. If the plan is for the child to remain with carers on a long-term basis, a matching meeting is held where the needs of the children are identified, and a report written identifying how the proposed carers can meet these needs. This report, together with the carers' long-term review and Child's Permanency Report, are presented to panel for approval.

Fostering Panel minutes are recorded, and decisions are confirmed in writing to the carer. The panel hears all cases where there have been significant concerns in terms of safeguarding, quality of care or allegations made. An Independent Reviewing Officer review will be completed and presented to panel.

A foster carers' review following a change of circumstances, or a request to increase their approval status, will be referred to the Fostering Panel. They will also recommend, as appropriate, the termination of an approval. Panel will also consider appeals to recommendations

Recording and Access to Records ♥

The Fostering Service has a responsibility to maintain accurate records on all foster carers and to ensure that information is shared with the carer wherever possible. There is a statutory requirement to retain files for 10 years following closure. However, in accordance with Norfolk's County Council policy, the practice is to retain for 35 years. Carers have a right to access their record and can approach the Information Governance Unit for advice.



How to Complain or Challenge a Decision ♥

Comments, Dissatisfactions and Complaints

Comments, complaints and compliments are received in the spirit of open communication. It is hoped that any problems can be dealt with quickly and at a local level. Formal complaints are dealt with in accordance with the Children's Services Complaints Procedure. Carers are made aware of the complaints procedure in relation to children in their care and also how to complain in their own right. The complaints procedure has three stages. Complainants are advised at each stage of their right to request that their complaint be referred to the next stage if they are not satisfied that it has been resolved.

The Complaints Procedure

Norfolk County Council has a designated Compliments & Complaints Team which coordinates the investigation of complaints made by prospective and approved foster carers. All complaints are logged by the team. Children, young people or their representative can make a complaint by using the local rate number 0344 800 8020 or accessing the Norfolk County Council website www.norfolk.gov.uk.

The key features of this complaints procedure are:

- ✓ Most issues can be sorted out informally by the manager responsible for the service within 10 working days.
- ✓ If the case is not resolved, an independent person completes an investigation within a further 25 working days.
- ✓ If the issue remains contentious, the Managing Directors Department commissions another investigation to make recommendations to be considered by a Panel of three independent people.
- ✓ Children and young people wishing to make a complaint must either be receiving or seeking a service from Norfolk County Council Children's Services.

Challenges to Decisions Regarding Suitability to Foster

If prospective fostering enquirers are assessed as unsuitable as foster carers before having a formal application accepted, they can ask for a Team Manager to review the decision.

If the Team Manager upholds the decision, the enquirer(s) can ask to refer the decision not to proceed with the process to the Head of Fostering and Adoption for final adjudication. If this reviewing officer upholds the original decision, there are no further grounds for appeal.

If a formal application to foster is accepted by the fostering agency, and doubts regarding suitability subsequently arise, the applicants are able to insist that their assessment as foster carers is presented to the Fostering Panel.



If the panel recommends that the applicants are unsuitable, and this is supported by the Agency Decision Maker then this can be raised with the Carers' Independent Review Mechanism for Fostering, which reviews decisions made by Norfolk's fostering agency.

Allegations

All allegations in relation to foster carers are investigated and actioned through Norfolk's integrated safeguarding unit (Children's Advice and Duty Service – CADS), reporting to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on behalf of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board under the procedures for Investigation Allegations Against Adults Caring for Children.

Contact Details for OFSTED and the Children's Commissioner ♥

Any serious concerns regarding the Fostering Service practice can be referred to the OFSTED inspectorate. The main office for the OFSTED fostering inspectorate service is:



OFSTED National Business Unit
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Anne's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA
Tel: 08456 40 40 40
e-mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



If a child has any serious concerns relating to the Fostering Service, they can contact the Children's Commissioner for England. The details are:

Office of the Children's Commissioner

Children's Commissioner for England
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Norfolk County Council Contacts ♥

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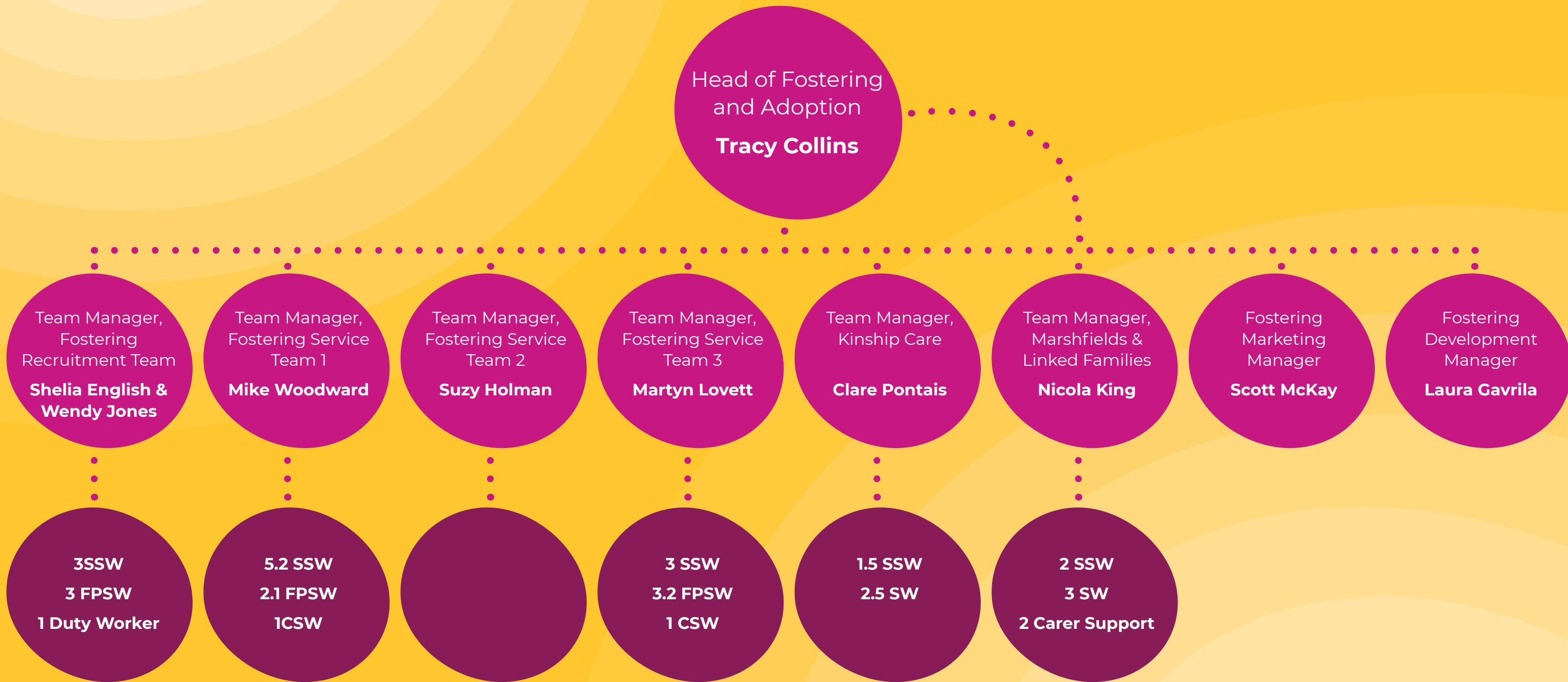
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Information about our fostering service can be accessed via:

Fostering Duty Line:
01603 306649 or visit
www.norfolk.gov.uk/fostering



All social work staff are required to have the Diploma in Social Work or equivalent on appointment and have current Health and Care Professionals Council registration. All Team Managers are qualified social workers and are required to hold or are working towards a management qualification.

Norfolk Fostering Service

Most children in care are looked after by foster carers who provide a strong, stable and secure family environment, either short-term or long-term.

Our mission at Norfolk Fostering Service is to provide Norfolk children with Norfolk families and we are currently responsible for providing care to over 1,000 children in Norfolk.

Fostering in Norfolk could be one of the most rewarding things you ever choose to do. If you're interested, please get in touch.

Call 01603 306649

Email fostering@norfolk.gov.uk

Visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/fostering

Help a child to be a child

Children's Services Committee

Report title:	Annual Review of Norfolk's Residential Children's Homes Service
Date of meeting:	13 November 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Sara Tough Executive Director Children's Services

Strategic impact

Annual Approval of the Statement of Purpose of Norfolk's Residential Children's Homes Service and a Summary Review of the Year September 2017 to August 2018.

Members in their role as the registered provider of these homes are required, under law (Children's Home Regulations 2015 (as amended); Care Standards Act 2000), to approve each children's home's Statement of Purpose and Functions.

It is a requirement that each of our children's homes has a clear Statement of Purpose which details the aims and objectives and how the standards will be met. The nine standards are:

- Quality and purpose of care standard
- Children's wishes and feelings standard
- Education standard
- Enjoyment and achievement standard
- Health and well-being standard
- Positive relationships standard
- Protection of children standard
- Leadership and management standard
- Care planning standard

Each home must also provide a guide for children which explains the purpose of the home, the complaints procedure and access to advocacy services. Each home's Statement of Purpose is available on Members Insight and hard copies will be in the Members' room.

Executive summary

This paper reports to Members on the performance of and outcomes achieved by Norfolk's Residential Children's Homes Service.

The key performance outcomes achieved for the service this year (September 2017 to August 2018) are:

- Ofsted inspection outcomes which are above the national average.
- The service has contributed to reducing the number of looked after children placed out of county provisions, returning Norfolk's children to Norfolk and reducing placement costs.
- Individual placement costs are reduced due to high occupancy levels across the service.
- The service continues to be financially competitive, with managers constantly reviewing the most cost-effective ways of providing high quality care for our young people.
- The service continues to provide and facilitate education for the young people we look after, supporting young people to identify goals for their future and achieve economic wellbeing.
- Our short breaks services have worked with families on the edge of care, offering support and respite to promote families staying together and reducing the number of children becoming looked after.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- **Scrutinise the information within the report.**
- **Challenge the service on the performance and outcomes achieved.**
- **Recommend the approval of the Statements of Purpose and Functions for all the Local Authority children's homes to Full Council to comply with the Care Standards Act 2000.**

1. Proposal (or options)

- 1.1** Members are asked to scrutinise the information within the report and provide challenge to the service to ensure continued positive outcomes for Norfolk's children and families along with internal performance improvement.
- 1.2** Members are asked to recommend approval to the Committee of the Statement of Purpose for the Residential Children's Homes to comply with the Care Standards Act 2000.

2. Ambition

- 2.1** We strive to provide high quality care that is tailored to the needs of each individual young person. Our skilled and dedicated teams of practitioners, qualified social workers and managers act as good role models, using training and theory to inform their practice. Our ambition is that, through this individual approach and targeted support, young people in our care will be safe, happy and well cared for. Through respect for themselves and others, they will be able to build meaningful relationships, now and in the future. We support young people to identify aspirations and endeavour that each young person achieves a well-rounded education, incorporating academic and vocational qualifications as well as vital life skills. We provide a secure base and promote appropriate attachments to assist them in successful transitions to independence. We aspire for young people in our care to be the best version of themselves in everything they do.

2.1.1 We aim to do this in a way that is financially conscious, using a systemic approach from the start to plan for the best outcomes for young people, ensuring they are in the right placement for the right amount of time.

3. Evidence

3.1 The Norfolk's Residential Children's Home Service currently has six children's homes, three residential short-breaks children's homes and five supported flats. We work closely with other statutory and voluntary sector services supporting children and families in need. Accommodating children is always a last resort and the authority must be satisfied that the care threshold is met. Over the past year, the service has accommodated the majority of young people referred to us, unless their risk assessment identifies that the placement in Norfolk's Residential Children's Home Services would not be suitable. We continually review and adapt our services based on feedback from young people and other professionals, to ensure they meet the needs of all young people including those with challenging behaviours. Service development is discussed monthly at Residential Managers' meetings.

3.2 Our homes deliver a range of interventions to children and young people within residential care, depending on their individual needs:

- Norwich Road and The Lodge provide eight beds between them, offering emergency accommodation for children where there is an immediate need, following a crisis breakdown at home or at their current placement. This accommodation is used while an alternative, appropriate placement is sourced.
- Waterworks Road and Frettenham are two-bedded Emergency/Crisis Intervention Homes. The aim of the homes is to provide emergency and time-limited residential care. They are specialist homes for young people (male and female) aged between 8 and 17 years.
- Aylsham Road Short Breaks provides planned or short term stays of residential care to children and young people aged between 5 and 17 who are considered on the edge of care.
- Loki House is a four-bedded home offering flexible term accommodation to young people with targeted packages of care.
- Easthills is a long-term home which provides support and accommodation for 4 young people aged 8-17 until independence.
- Marshfields is a short breaks home providing 4 beds for children and young people who have severe learning and/or physical disabilities including children and young people with complex health needs and challenging behaviour.
- Linked Family's Short Breaks Fostering Service is linked to Marshfields residential home and has offered short breaks foster placements for children with disabilities.

- Foxwood is a 9-bed home (functioning 8 beds and 1 emergency bed) providing overnight short breaks for children with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and sensory impairments, aged 5 to 17 years.
- Our self-contained supported flats provide accommodation for 16 and 17-year-olds and help them prepare for independent living. The young people receive 37 hours of support each week by Children's Services staff with 24-hour (7 days per week) telephone support available. The four supported flats are managed in partnership with Broadland Housing, offering 4 bed spaces at any one time.

3.3 What Children and Young People say about the service

3.3.1 Listening to young people's experiences of care is incredibly important to us. We actively gather feedback from young people through keywork sessions and residents' meetings, as well as from families and professionals. This is considered at Residential Managers meetings to identify areas for development and to improve the service.

3.3.2 The following is a selection of comments about Norfolk's Residential Children's Home Service from children and young people who have been accommodated during the past 12 months:

3.3.3 *"I like living at Frettenham, the staff are fun and honest".*

3.3.4 *"My stay at Norwich Road was good fun, my favourite thing about the staff is that they listen. I would like more blackboards around the home to write on."*

3.3.5 *JC has been at Loki house over 3 years. In May 2018 it was his 17th birthday. The staff team at Loki and some of the young people arranged an evening out at an Indian restaurant in Norwich for him. The head of service LN also came along. JC was extremely appreciative of the effort made as nearly 20 people were there for him. He thanked the team and bought a thank you card to express his gratitude.*

3.3.6 *AS states Aylsham Road is great and loves coming here.*

3.3.7 *"Have a lovely nice time" (Young person accessing short-breaks at Marshfields)*

3.3.8 *A young person accessing short-breaks at Foxwood said she enjoys seeing her friends and there was nothing she didn't enjoy.*

3.4 Compliments

3.4.1 Each home has a feedback folder to capture positive experiences for children and young people. Please see some examples outlined below:

3.4.2 Operations Manager for YOT stated:

“The communication from the Norwich Road team has been second to none, thank you for all your help with the young people we are working with.”

3.4.3 Father of young person accommodated at Frettenham commented:

“Frettenham is overall a great care home with great staff, nothing more can be done to attempt to keep challenging children in a safe environment.”

3.4.4 Social Worker for two young people accommodated at Loki House stated:

“I’m very impressed with Loki House. The communication between myself and the young person’s professional network is always effective and timely. Management and staff design their approach to meet the individual child’s needs.”

3.4.5 A Social Worker thanked the Aylsham Road staff team for:

“A brilliant piece of work with LL who is a challenging young person.”

3.4.6 Family member of a young person attending Marshfields:

Marshfields is “Brilliant, I couldn’t fault them”. “The garden is great and the fact it is one level is really important for my daughter as she has rods in her back and I would have been more worried with stairs.” “My daughter really likes the garden and the swing”. “The staff are really good and keep me up to date”. “I know she is safe when she is here and I don’t have to worry about her here” “We’ve been coming for years and have never had any problems.” “I know that they have had problems with staffing and things have gone pear shaped with appointing and that has led to cancellation and date changes”. “I couldn’t do without it”.

3.4.7 Parent of a young person attending Foxwood:

“Thank you to all the team for the care they provide for A, I have peace of mind when he is there.”

3.4.8 Parent of a young person accommodated at Waterworks Road:

Thanked staff for arranging a trip to a theme park, young person reported being really happy after not wanting to go out for a long time.

3.4.9 IRO of a young person accommodated at Easthills:

“I too would like to express my thanks for the excellent care that the Easthills staff have afforded AL. This was very evident during my recent visit to the placement and AL appeared relaxed and secure with the staff I met I am very aware that AL came to this placement on the back of a lot of concerns about his reported behaviour and worries

about how it would be managed. From the outset, he has been treated as an individual first and foremost. The communication from all the management and staff has been excellent and very child-centred. The report to the LAC review was realistic and balanced.”

3.5 Complaints

- 3.5.1** Each home has a complaints book in which all complaints are recorded. Young people have open access to a telephone should they wish to make a complaint at any time. Contact numbers for Ofsted, the Children’s Rights Director and Voice, and the independent advocacy service, are available to young people, as are complaints leaflets.
- 3.5.2** The homes’ welcome books, available in a variety of formats to make them accessible for all ages and levels of ability, provide information and advice on how to complain. All residential staff have mandatory training on complaints and there is a Norfolk County Council complaints team which can offer consultation and advice to both staff and young people.
- 3.5.3** Since September 2017, until August 2018, the service has received 31 complaints in total. Four complaints from neighbours due to noise from the homes, 20 from neighbours about young people’s disruptive behaviour in the community, and three due to cancelled care. In all instances, managers responded to the complaints and resolved the issues. Four complaints were received from young people making allegations against staff and other young people in the home. All of these were investigated and no further action was required. All complaints are responded to as per procedure in order to find resolution and improve practice where appropriate and build positive community relationships.
- 3.5.4** All young people have the opportunity to discuss any complaints with the manager and explore a satisfactory solution. At every house meeting, the young people are given feedback which is recorded. The managers have engaged with the local community to address any concerns and improve relationships, this has been supported by the local police community support officer when needed.

3.6 Service Development over the last year.

- The residential policies and procedures have been reviewed in line with the relevant statutory guidance and Ofsted framework to ensure we continue to meet requirements.
- A Signs of Safety Risk Assessment format has been implemented across the service. This has received positive feedback from Ofsted and our service is in line with the wider implementation of Signs of Safety across Children’s Services.
- Each home has a tailored Improvement Plan alongside the Regulation 45 Report. This is a 6-monthly evaluative review which Ofsted require.

- We have recruited more relief workers across the service, ensuring continuity of care for our young people and the ability to increase staff ratios when needed for more challenging young people.
- The management team have inspected private, regulated and unregulated provisions in and out of county alongside the Quality Assurance team to ensure all Norfolk's young people are receiving good quality care. We have also learned from this through observing best practice of others.
- More of our homes have taken part in and implemented the Result Model of working, which has been championed by the Department for Education.
- We have reviewed the training needs of the service to ensure training is of a good quality and all mandatory areas are covered in a timely manner.
- We have explored the possibility of having a psychologist attached to the service and will continue to research this further.
- We have embraced the new apprenticeship scheme for new staff and those who may be eligible for the new Social Work Apprenticeship. This is a cost effective and time efficient way for us to train eligible new staff.
- We reviewed internet access for all our homes as this was cited regularly in feedback from young people. All homes now have internet that young people can safely access.

3.7 Ofsted Inspection Outcomes

3.7.1 Each residential home is inspected twice a year by Ofsted who conduct a full and an interim inspection. The latest judgement (as at the end of August 2018) from the most recent full inspection of each home is shown in the table below:

Home	No. of beds	Overall inspection findings	The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	How well children and young people are helped and protected	The effectiveness of leaders and managers
Marshfields	4	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Aylsham Road	4	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Foxwood	9	Good	Good	Good	Good
Norwich Road	4	Requires improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good

Loki House	4	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Waterworks Road	2	Good	Good	Good	Requires improvement to be good
Frettenham	2	Good	Good	Good	Good
Easthills	4	Requires improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good	Requires improvement to be good
The Lodge	4	Good	Good	Good	Good

The above table shows three Outstanding, four Good and two Requires improvement to be good Ofsted inspection judgements.

3.7.2 Ofsted has recently made changes to their inspections; if a home receives a grading of good or above then it will only be inspected on an annual basis, unless Ofsted have any concerns. In the case of the rating 'Requires improvement to be good' and below, the inspections will be twice a year.

3.8 Achievements for Young People

- Moved on successfully to long term, permanent placements in fostering.
- Participation in GCSE exams and functional skills.
- Gained a place in college to study catering.
- Began driving lessons.
- Working through independence tasks using Norfolk's Passport to Independence.
- Joined local boxing club.
- Helped to organise and run a Macmillan cancer coffee charity event baking cakes and raising nearly £200.
- Successfully gained a part time job working a local Farmers' Market.
- Reduction in criminal offences and higher participation in positive activities within the community. This was assisted by the use of Restorative Practice within the home.
- Building up confidence and being able to chair house meetings and put his views across and advocate for others.
- Successfully learning skills to regularly keep bedroom tidy.
- Learning how to budget and plan meals for the week.

3.9 Children Missing from Norfolk's Residential Children's Homes Service

3.9.1 A revised missing from care procedure has been implemented by the Residential Children's Home Service, which includes sexual exploitation, radicalisation risk assessments and an awareness and impact of County Lines on the young people we look after. All staff have had training in these areas.

- 3.9.2** Within our service, the definition of missing from care includes children and young people who leave the residential home without permission, those who do not return to the home at the agreed time and those who are absent overnight. Each young person has an individual care plan, which identifies strategies to implement for a young person who is absent without authorisation or is missing from care.
- 3.9.3** The table below shows the number of times children and young people went missing from Norfolk's Residential Children's Home Service in 2017/18, September to August.

Children / Young People Missing from Norfolk's Residential Children's Home Service

	2017/18 Sep - Aug
Number of times children / young people went missing	274
Number of children / young people who went missing	27
Number of overnight missing episodes	87
Number of children / young people who did not return at the agreed time or left without permission	104

- 3.9.4** This year we have seen an increase in the number of young people missing from care within the service. A substantial amount of the missing episodes above relates to a small number of the young people we have looked after. We have excellent links with MASH and the team around these young people to ensure the best strategies and safety measures are put in place to manage these episodes. We continue to work with partner agencies to address the risk of looked after children going missing and produced a working protocol to regulate practice. The service has built close working relationships with the Missing Persons Coordinator (police); Safer Neighbourhood Teams (police); Youth Offending Team; and Barnardo's and The Rose Project who are working in partnership to deliver the return home interviews.
- 3.9.5** Looked after children living in children's homes are particularly vulnerable to involvement in child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation. Over the past year there has been an increasing awareness and network of professional support and intelligence gathering around 'county lines'.
- 3.9.6** Our staff are aware of the warning signs to look for and use targeted keyworker sessions to discuss and raise awareness in the young people should they feel they are becoming at risk. Being informed and aware is key to effective intervention. One of the homes managers regularly attends multi agency networking meetings around the prevalent concerns and information

around county lines operations and child criminal exploitation within the county.

3.9.7 We regularly communicate with the newly set up Child Criminal Exploitation team, YOT, operation gravity, the police in general and social work teams around intelligence we receive from our young people. Finding out early about these links between young people who are at risk is vital to early intervention, preventing further criminalisation and vulnerability to being exploited.

3.10 Physical Intervention and Positive Handling

3.10.1 All the residential staff have been trained in the Norfolk’s Steps de-escalation and positive handling strategies. As per national guidance and local policy the Residential Children’s Homes Service will only use restrictive physical intervention as a last resort when the young person places him/herself or others at risk of injury or may cause significant damage to property. If such risks exist, consideration is given to effective strategies that will be employed to minimise the risk.

3.10.2 For the period of September 2017 – August 2018 there were a total of 14 Incidents of physical intervention across the service, these were mostly in our emergency homes (8 interventions), 3 were in our CWD homes, and the other 3 were in the rest of the service. All restraints were necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the young people. All restraints carried out in the homes are reviewed by the Regulation 44 visitors and Ofsted inspectors and in all cases they agreed with the actions taken.

3.11 Significant Incidents Reported

3.11.1 Ofsted must be notified (Regulation 40 Notifications) of all significant incidents that occur in any residential children’s home. The reasons for notifications for 2017/18 by Norfolk’s Residential Services are shown in the following table:

Total Regulation 40 Notifications by Classification Type

Regulation 40 Notification Classifications	2017/18 Sep - Aug
Serious incident - police called to home	35
Serious complaint about the home or person in the home	3
Instigation & outcome of any child protection enquiry involving child in the home	8
Other incident relating to a child that the registered person considers to be serious	24
Total Regulation 40 Notification Classifications	70

3.12 Outcomes for Permanency

3.12.1 From September 2017 to August 2018 Norfolk Residential Children’s Homes Service have provided accommodation for 162 children and young people that reside in Norfolk. Of these, 109 were short term breaks, 38 children have moved on following interventions delivered by the service, and 15 are still currently accommodated:

- 4 young people returned home
- 6 to foster care
- 7 to independent living or supported lodgings
- 11 to other children’s homes
- 6 moved internally to our in house children’s homes
- 1 to specialist placement
- 2 to secure training centre
- 1 to Educational placement

3.13 Number of Children Accommodated in the Homes and their Occupancy Rates

3.13.1 The table below shows the occupancy rates for all residential homes since September 2017:

Occupancy Rates & Children / Young People Accommodated by Children’s Homes

	% Bed Nights Occupied	Number of Children/Young People Accommodated
Easthills Road	56%	8
Frettenham	100%	3
Loki House	100%	5
Norwich Road	58%	13
The Lodge	90%	22
Waterworks Road	100%	1

3.13.2 As Norwich Road and The Lodge offer emergency provision turnover is necessary to be able to have placement availability for unplanned admissions, but in some cases due to the level of need they have not run at full capacity.

3.13.3 Waterworks Road has at times been providing a single placement in order to meet the needs of the young person accommodated.

3.13.4 Easthills has also provided care for 2 young people, rather than 4, due to their complex needs.

3.13.5 The dynamics within any home are affected by the mix of young people. This can be both positive and negative. Over the last year there have been some occasions where we have had inappropriate matching for some of our young people. This has caused challenges both within our homes and within the local communities. This has had a detrimental effect on the experience of care for our young people, staff morale and Ofsted inspections. At times, this

matching has been unavoidable due to local and national shortages of sufficient and effective placements. Moving forward, we continue to be innovative in our approach to meet the needs of our more challenging young people.

3.13.6 Number of Children offered Short Breaks:

	% Bed Nights Occupied	Number of Children/Young People Accessing Short Breaks
Aylsham Road	79%	Offered short breaks for 36 children
Foxwood	78%	Offered short breaks for 42 children
Marshfields	77%	Offered short breaks for 31 children

3.13.7 In some cases, the occupancy rate has been affected in the homes due to the level of need and risk assessment of the young people. For example, we have taken young people in an emergency which has impacted on the group dynamic risk assessment which has meant that we have had to restrict the number of available beds in order to meet the needs of the young people already accommodated.

4. Improvements made to our Children's Homes

What the managers have to say

- We received a donation of £5000 from Roundtable, this enabled us to improve the garden area, replace the shower table and purchase an Achiever bed so children who have complex health and physical disabilities can be included in the daily activities. We also installed hoists in a playroom and replaced bedroom furniture.
- The garden has been completely overhauled, providing the children with new play items such as climbing frame, slide, sandpit, fairy gardens, tables and chairs and child-friendly plant pots made from old tyres.
- The home was refurbished – redecorated throughout and new flooring laid where it was needed. Furniture was updated and the home given a more 'homely' feel.
- We are taking part in a pilot scheme and working as a therapeutic Children's Home, offering weekly sessions for children, monthly bespoke training, clinical individual staff supervision, monthly team supervision and parent sessions.
- The team received clinical supervision from a forensic psychotherapist. This helped them improve their practice, build their knowledge and resilience working with JC and ensured they had strategies in place to help him improve his behaviour and manage his sexual interests appropriately. Clinical

supervision is a great asset to any team as it can help staff work from stronger foundations, built in theory and evidence based practice, and encourages an ethos of therapeutic support and self-reflection. This has now finished but the manager has requested it from another service, awaiting outcome.

5. Future Development

- A holistic review of the service and each home to ensure we are meeting the needs of our children in care population and adapting our remit if necessary.
- Residential service to present to Children's Services Leadership Team our ambitions for the Service: 28 day unregulated emergency service; Multi-agency Assessment Service; Emergency CWD home; Therapeutic Residential Home; Increase of short breaks homes; Edge of Care intensive family support; Therapeutic farm environment.
- We plan to review the policies and procedures within the service and update the paperwork accordingly, becoming more streamlined and paper free where possible. We will work in conjunction with the Quality assurance team.
- Finding suitable education provisions for our harder to reach young people can be very difficult at times. We plan to develop our informal and alternative education provisions to meet this need.
- Nationally there is recognised gap in the market for 16-18 year olds. We plan to develop and manage the semi-independent living service for 16-18 year olds, providing a cost effective and efficient service with high aspirations for this cohort of young people.
- We are reviewing our training for de-escalation and positive handling and considering if there are other providers out there who may meet the ever-changing needs of the service better. This is particularly crucial for our CWD homes.
- We are hoping to offer more placements for student social workers as well as student police officers across our homes. We also continue to promote continued professional development for the staff we currently employ.
- Once again, we plan to increase the number of Relief Bank staff within the residential service to improve continuity for young people and to help with the expansion of the 16-18 service.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Financial Monitoring Information

- 6.2** Each placement in Norfolk's Residential Service children's homes in 2017/18 was on average £2583 per week. This compares favourably with the agency

placement costs of £3453 for the basic package of care, anything extra would incur further charges.

- 6.3** Following the last financial year, Norfolk Residential Children's Services finished the year within budget.

7. Issues, risks and innovation

- 7.1** The key challenges for the Service are:

- Ensuring the Service meets the Ofsted criteria and expectations.
- Ensuring that our young people have permanence plans that meet their needs.
- Assessing the group dynamics and matching process.
- Expansion is line with sufficiency report.
- Working alongside corporate strategies to ensure the residential services aligns with these.

8. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- 8.1** As can be seen in the purpose and function documents, all our homes are committed to policy, procedures and practice which promote equality and address the poor outcomes for this group.

9. Impact on Children and Young People in Norfolk

- 9.1** Children's Services deliver a range of residential homes to meet the needs of young people who require residential care. As can be seen from the quality of care as judged by Ofsted, and our own quality assurance checks, our children's homes are having very positive effects on the outcomes achieved by our young people.

10. Background

10.1 Background Papers

The statement of purpose for each home is available on Members Insight.

10.2 Officer Contact

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

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Children's Services Committee

Report title:	Recruitment and Retention – Social Workers
Date of meeting:	13 November 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Sara Tough Executive Director, Children's Services
Strategic impact	
<p>The ability to recruit and retain social work qualified professionals to deliver services and outcomes for children, young people, and their families is critical. Understanding where our pressure points are and having strategies in place to mitigate them is essential.</p> <p>In considering strategies we have considered:</p> <p><i>Prevent and reduce demand:</i> reshaping services to provide early help and reduce call on professional social work</p> <p><i>Joining up work; done once and done well:</i> joint social work academy with adults for professional development focus, centralised recruitment within directorate and management of agencies through neutral vendor agreement</p> <p><i>Being business - like:</i> clear view of costs and benchmarking</p> <p><i>Data and evidence to target data:</i> improved workforce data and planning from one centralised source</p>	

Executive summary

<p>Following questions at the March committee about our social work workforce, this report has been compiled to advise members of our status, progress and continuing plans to ensure a stable and well-resourced workforce. Please note that the report was first prepared for the July committee but was not discussed due to lack of time. The report remains largely unchanged but where appropriate some of the narrative and data has been updated.</p> <p>This report demonstrates improvements in increasing our social worker capability against a challenging workforce backdrop. Continuing to achieve a fully established workforce against this backdrop requires a different approach and cannot rely on recruitment as the solution.</p> <p>In summary, our recruitment approaches are improving our overall permanent headcount, supported significantly by our newly qualified programme and we ensure a safely resourced service using agency workers.</p> <p>Our strategy over the coming year, whilst still pursuing recruitment options is to remodel how social work provision is provided. This could be through a skills-mix approach or using multi- disciplinary professionals working in an integrated way with other providers, coupled with how we manage demand overall for services. Ultimately this will support a reduced agency worker reliance and therefore spend and ensure we provide a consistent service for families without unnecessary or planned changes of social worker.</p> <p>Specifically, the report provides an overview of the national picture in relation to</p>
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recruiting and retaining social workers and how we bench mark to provide an overall picture of the current challenges.

The strategies to achieve a stable and well-resourced workforce include:

- Recruitment plans including education routes into practice
- Removing non-social work tasks from social workers to a more appropriate administrative role
- Considering alternatively qualified posts to work alongside social workers, e.g. Domestic Violence experts, Mental Health practitioners.
- Through the teaching partnership and refreshed Academy, provide excellent learning and development opportunities to support recruitment and retention
- Providing a temporary to permanent offer to allow future employees to work here before fully committing
- Being very clear on career progression within our organisation
- Rebalancing the mix of permanent staff and agency workers

To help inform our thinking we have visited Hampshire, Hertfordshire and other authorities to understand how they have transformed their services and identify elements that would work for Norfolk.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to note the content

1. Current Picture

1.1 National insight and benchmarking

1.1.1 The recruitment and retention of Childrens’ Social Workers is a national issue. The Department for Education has applied a new data methodology for 2017 to understand the national workforce picture and provide a new benchmark. (it should be noted that the data is considered experimental.)

1.1.2 The data indicates that we are increasing the number of employed frontline social workers in the workforce *faster* than other Local Authorities and that our turnover in 2017/18 is lower than the national average (please note that this data is only produced annually and cannot be updated mid-year). We remain reliant on agency workers as a key component of our workforce and although this is higher than the national picture, we are seeing a reduction in usage.

	National	NCC
Year on year (yoy) change in number of social workers employed	+3%	+10%
% vacancies	17% increase of 5% yoy	10% Decrease of 8% yoy
% turnover	15%	14%
Less than 2 years’ service	34%	29%
Less than 5 years’ service	58%	53%
Agency rate	16%	23%

% of agencies filling vacancies	75%	68%
Increase in agency usage	0%	-14%

- 1.1.3 Additionally, qualitative feedback in the 2016 Local Government Association (LGA) survey of 91 authorities, over half of respondents identified recruitment as being in their top three risks across all services and 42% were 'not very' or 'not at all' confident about having enough social workers to meet demand over the following 12 months.
- 1.1.4 We have undertaken several County visits to understand other models of social work provision to consider alternative models including skills mix and multi-disciplinary working.

1.2 NCC workforce data (ALL posts requiring a Social Work qualification):

- 1.2.1 The establishment (Budgeted roles FTE) was permanently increased by 66 FTE in 2015 in response to Ofsted recommendations. Below is a record of the workforce position as at 24 October 2018:

Post	Established FTE	Actual FTE	Vacant FTE	Agency	Total Vacancies less agency
Practice Consultant	34.87	29.22	-5.65	6	0.35
Senior Social Worker	95.18	91.77	-3.41	16	12.59
Social Worker	244.08	182.25	-61.83	48	-13.83
Team Manager	68.9	66.25	-2.65	8	5.35
IRO/LADO	40	27.00	-13.00	3	-10.00
Sub Total	483.03	396.49	-86.54	81	-5.54
Social Worker NIPE	0	41.31	0.00		
Grand Total (Inc NIPE)	483.03	437.80	-45.23	81	35.77

- 1.2.2 These figures include a **temporary uplift in the establishment of 30FTE posts** secured through transformational funding to respond to an increasing number of referrals into the system thereby reducing backlog and provide safe services.
- 1.2.3 For the **year ending 2017/18**, we demonstrated an improvement in our workforce with an increase of **26** headcount predominantly at Social Worker Level 1 (newly qualified), with a total of 44 leavers and 70 new entrants to NCC.

1.3 Workforce Plan for 2018/19

- 1.3.1 Assuming that, as a minimum, we maintain current recruitment activity, turnover

stabilises at 12%, and the establishment reduces by the 30 posts in 2019, then we predict that we will be fully staffed by summer 2019. The use of agency at that point will be limited to the covering of maternity and long-term sickness, or where agreed, temporary additional resources.

- 1.3.2 The sections below, provide further insight of how we seek to move more quickly to a permanent workforce by continuing to improve our recruitment capability, having a much-improved story to tell, and other organisational strategies which can enable a faster flight path to reduce the agency reliance and cost associated.

2. Recruitment – Our Strategy

2.1 Experienced social worker recruitment:

2.1.1 Over the last 5 years, we have used recruitment marketing techniques to improve our visibility to encourage applicants to Norfolk. With our recent Ofsted findings and a newly stabilised leadership team, we have the ingredients to tell an increasingly positive story and make NCC a more attractive proposition.

2.1.2 We have worked with Community Care for 18 months as our strategic recruitment partner and through use of advertorials, targeted emails and adverts it has provided a renewed focus on our recruitment campaigns. We attended the Community Care Live event in September to continue to maintain our presence in the market with potential candidates. We have had a good response to the two masterclasses we ran, one on Transformation and the other on the Boarding School Pathfinder for looked after children. Our two roundtable discussions about the Norfolk Institute for Practice Excellence and the development for Independent Reviewing Officers attracted large audiences. We will be doing a full review of our attendance at this event over the coming weeks.

2.1.3 We have increased our capability within HR to include permanent resource with a focus on recruitment marketing.

2.1.4 Since April our recruitment activity for non NIPE roles has been:

85 x applications from 71 x applicants

44 x Invited to interview (10 x PC, 14 x SSW, 11 x SW, 9 x TM)

5 x waiting to be shortlisted, (jobs closed 28 October, 3 x SSW, 2 x SW)

24 x appointed – 8 x external, 15 x internal, 1 x agency conversion

2.1.5 It is important to note that we slowed down on permanent external recruitment to frontline teams at the start of the summer because we have been looking at alternative models of social work as outlined above. Once we have a new model agreed based on need and new ways of working we will increase our efforts on external recruitment where we need it. The exception to this being the recruitment to the new Children's Advice and Duty Service.

2.2 Newly qualified social workers:

2.2.1 Providing a route to qualification is and will continue to be the primary source to grow our workforce of qualified social workers. We have recruited more than 200 Newly Qualified Social Workers over 4 years, of which we have retained 148 (76%).

2.2.2 In 2014 we set up a more structured approach to the recruitment and training of newly qualified social workers (NQSWS) with the creation of the Norfolk Institute for Practice

Excellence (N.I.P.E.). This has proved a popular offer for those leaving university and in their most recent report, Ofsted noted that:

2.2.3 *Strenuous efforts to build a stable, skilled workforce are beginning to secure positive results. Continued investment in Norfolk's Institute for Practice Excellence (NIPE) ensures good-quality support to newly qualified social workers when they start their employment in children's services. This programme has been effective in achieving a more stable workforce and is an example of good practice.*

2.2.4 The latest information on the NQSW recruitment:

NIPE Cohort 11 (Oct 2018) –

- 81 applicants
- 66 invited to interview
- 52 interviewed
- 32 started October 2018
- 1 x deferred until January 2019
- 2 x deferred until April 2019

NIPE Cohort 12 (January 2019) –

- 22 x applicants
- 9 x Invited to interview
- 4 x appointable
- 5 x left to interview
- 1 x deferred from Cohort 11

NIPE Cohort 13 (April 2020)

- 2 x deferred from Cohort 11
- 8 x potential applicants from 'Step-up to Social Work' MA

2.2.5 During initial training NQSW on the NIPE programme are not counted as part of the budgeted establishment because of the protected time needed to complete required learning.

2.2.6 Alongside the NIPE arrangements, we offer several initial training routes enabling individuals, including some of our own employees, to gain a social worker qualification under the umbrella of the Norfolk Social Work Academy. By providing trainees with work placements in our service we build a relationship with them which can be continued through the NIPE process and on into front line teams. Routes include degrees in Social Work through HEIs or OU, Social Work apprenticeships which come online in 2019, Frontline and the DfE funded Step Up to Social Work programme. We have also worked regionally on the LGA's Return to Social Work pilot and will incorporate this into our scheme.

2.3 Supporting the Future Pipeline:

2.3.1 Through the work of the teaching partnership we have three Practice Education leads who work closely with the UEA (and other local social work degree providers) and Team Managers to identify student placements to support practice development. The experience the student has in their placement is critical to their future career planning. Improving the quality of the placements we offer will encourage student social workers to join us as NQSWs. This is a significant pipeline into our NIPE recruitment.

2.3.2 NCC currently aims to provide placements for all locally-based students on any social work degree course. We provided **79** placements in the 17/18 academic year.

2.3.3 Sara Tough has also been nominated by the East of England Association of Directors of Children’s Services to be the project sponsor for a piece of work to:

2.3.4 “Look across the region at Resourcing/Branding of Social Care, pre-qualification (from school), and alternative qualified career pathways”

2.3.5 Elly Starling, Lead HR and OD Business Partner will be the project lead for this, working closely with Sara and other regional colleagues.

2.4 Use of Agency staff:

Children’s Services	Average FTE over year
2015-16	65
2016-17	82
2017-18	72

2.4.1 Agency workers have played an important part in meeting our workforce needs and whilst agency working may be perceived as short-term and less reliable, we have secured agency workers for longer-periods of duration providing consistency and expertise. The number of agency workers in the market has remained static nationally at 16% and plays an important role to cover absence, and peaks of workload. It remains a key strategy to reduce the reliance on agency staff in line with our workforce plan targets. They additionally play a critical role as additional resource whilst newly qualified staff carry a reduced case load.

2.5 Managing Agency Costs

2.5.1 We manage our recruitment through our neutral vendor contract with De Poel managed centrally in HR which allows us to better control independent agencies seeking to negotiate prices.

2.5.2 We are part of the East of England Memorandum of Co-operation which means that we have signed up to an agreed rate for each type of role and will not take on agency staff who have worked in a permanent role in the region in the past 12 months. This has helped us reduce the cost of agency staff and discouraged staff leaving permanent roles to become agency workers.

2.6 Converting agency staff to permanent employees

2.6.1 We have been successful in providing a new offer to encourage 15 agency workers to transfer to permanent status and support their relocation and training. This has been facilitated by the introduction of the IR35 regulations (whereby agency workers join the NCC IR35 payroll and are deducted tax and national insurance monthly). For those staff converting, the transfer to permanent status has been less impactful financially than historically was the case

2.7 Career Development to support retention

2.7.1 We are successfully tracking the career progression of our NIPE cohorts. 29 (22%) staff from earlier cohorts have been successfully promoted as Social Workers, Practice Consultants or managers. This is a key component of retaining social workers who might otherwise move to other Authorities to secure promotion. The table below the progression of our early NIPE cohorts through to various levels of social work up to Team Manager level within 4 years of joining the organisation. (this information is currently being refreshed)

Year of Joining	2014	2015
Total cohort	39	57
Leavers	7	16
Internal moves to Adult Social work	4	1
Social Worker L1	0	0
Social Worker L2	6	28
Practice Consultant /Snr Social	17	9
Team Manager	2	
Other	3	

2.7.2 We offer sponsorship for MA Social Work modules at the UEA as a key retention measure and support for improved practice and career development. We also encourage Practitioners to train as Practice Educators to support student workers with their workplace learning. We also encourage practitioners to become involved in supporting the UEA in their research and learning activities.

2.7.3 We are relaunching our Social Work Academy and are currently developing a job family framework that will support learning and career progression. Our social workers will understand the range of roles there are for them, here in Norfolk, and what they need to do to develop towards the role(s) they are interested in.



3. Future activity

- 3.1 We have refreshed our workforce data and reporting in order to publish monthly workforce data providing focus and priority to the workforce plan.
- 3.2 We continue to refresh our recruitment marketing to publicise the positive change in our Ofsted rating and showcase Ofsted findings and how we are transforming our services.
- 3.3 Once embedded, we will evaluate the impact of the Children's Advice and Duty Service on the reduction of assessments by social workers needed in frontline teams and therefore reduce workload.

- 3.4 Alongside this we are reviewing our frontline social work teams to explore different ways of working to allow social workers to spend more time with children and families. The changes resulting from these reviews have been shown in other authorities to allow a different mix in the social care workforce and **potentially** a reduction in the numbers of fully qualified staff we will need in the future and thereby reducing our vacancy gap and reliance on agency workers.
- 3.5 Some early research conducted through EELGA indicates that our salary ranges for experienced social workers may have fallen slightly compared to regional comparators. We will complete the review of market pay rates and provide any recommendations if required.
- 3.6 In the autumn, we will be re-launching the Norfolk Social Work Academy across Childrens and Adults to lead the professional development of social workers (and occupational therapists) within the context of integrated services, and provide ongoing learning opportunities and development pathways for all Norfolk County Council social workers (and other social care staff) /occupational therapists to support our recruitment offer, promote development, improve practice and showcase our professions in Norfolk.
- 3.7 The opportunities presented through the new Social Worker apprenticeship will be exploited and will form part of our workforce planning / service design.

4. Finance

- 4.1 We currently we have some AGREED commitments over establishment on our staffing budget and the intention is to address these through successful demand management which should, over time, reduce the number of qualified staff we need in the model.
- 4.2 We will be transforming the model to return the staffing spend to the current base establishment and budget.
- 4.3 We still have a significant current reliance on agency workers however with our recruitment plans and plans for a new model we have an opportunity to drive down these costs as we reduce our reliance on agency staff.

5. Issues, risks and innovation

- 5.1 Failure to recruit, motivate and retain social workers impacts on quality of service as clearly identified through national and local inspection regimes and reporting.
- 5.2 The delivery of a clear workforce plan, accurate workforce data and monthly performance reporting on progress will provide a clear route for improvement.
- 5.3 Providing appropriate development support to enable newly qualified social workers to train with appropriate workloads and supervision requires an appropriate ratio of experienced to new social workers.

6. Background

The recruitment offer is provided in our recruitment microsite at www.norfolkbetterfutures.co.uk

Officer Contact

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

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Children's Services Committee

Report title:	Committee Forward Plan and update on decisions taken under delegated authority
Date of meeting:	13 November 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Sara Tough Executive Director of Children's Services
Strategic impact Providing regular information about key service issues and activities supports the Council's transparency agenda and enables Members to keep updated on services within their remit. It is important that there is transparency in decision making processes to enable Members and the public to hold the Council to account.	

Executive summary

This report sets out the Forward Plan for Children's Services Committee. The Forward Plan is a key document that enables Members to shape future meeting agendas and items for consideration. Each of the Council's committees has its own Forward Plan, and these are published monthly on the County Council's website. The current Forward Plan for this Committee is included at Appendix A.

This report is also used to update the Committee on relevant decisions taken under delegated powers by the Executive Director (or her team), within the Terms of Reference of this Committee. There are no relevant delegated decisions to report to this meeting.

Recommendations:

- 1. To review the Forward Plan at Appendix A and identify any additions, deletions or changes to reflect key issues and priorities the Committee wish to consider.**

1. Proposal

1.1. Forward Plan

- 1.1.1. The Forward Plan is a key document for this committee in terms of considering and programming its future business.
- 1.1.2. The current version of the Forward Plan is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.1.3. The Forward Plan is published monthly on the County Council's website to enable service users and stakeholders to understand the planning business for this Committee. As this is a key document in terms of planning for this Committee, a live working copy is also maintained to capture any changes/additions/amendments identified outside the monthly publishing

schedule. Therefore, the Forward Plan attached at Appendix A may differ slightly from the version published on the website. If any further changes are made to the programme in advance of this meeting they will be reported verbally to the Committee.

1.2. **Delegated decisions**

- 1.2.1. The report is also used to update on any delegated decisions within the Terms of Reference of this Committee that are reported by the Executive Director as being of public interest, financially material or contentious. There are no relevant delegated decisions to report for this meeting.

2. **Evidence**

- 2.1. As set out in the report and appendices.

3. **Financial Implications**

- 3.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. **Issues, risks and innovation**

- 4.1. There are no other relevant implications to be considered by Members.

5. **Background**

- 5.1. N/A

Officer Contact

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

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(textphone) and we will do our best to help.

Work programme for service committees

These are the items that service committees may need to consider or make a decision on.

Children's Services Committee

Issue/Decision	Implications for other service committees?	Requested committee action (if known)	Lead Officer
13 November 2018			
Finance Monitoring Report			Dawn Filtness
Committee Forward Plan and update on decisions taken under delegated authority			Sara Tough
Performance Monitoring report			Andy Goff
Capital Programme			Seb Gasse
Annual Review of the Norfolk County Council Adoption Agency		To challenge the service on performance and outcomes achieved, and approve the statement of purpose	Peter Ronan
Annual Review of Norfolk's Residential Children's Homes		To challenge the service on performance and outcomes achieved, and approve the statement of purpose.	Peter Ronan
Annual Review of Norfolk's Fostering Service		To challenge the service on performance and outcomes achieved, and approve the statement of purpose.	Peter Ronan
Recruitment & Retention			Elly Starling
22 January 2019			
Finance Monitoring Report			Dawn Filtness
Committee Forward Plan and update on decisions taken under delegated authority			Sara Tough
Budget Planning			Dawn Filtness
Performance Monitoring report			Andy Goff

Work programme for service committees

These are the items that service committees may need to consider or make a decision on.

Issue/Decision	Implications for other service committees?	Requested committee action (if known)	Lead Officer
Determination of 2020/21 Admissions arrangements			Sebastian Gasse
Local Growth & Investment Plan			Seb Gasse
Children's Centre Consultation			Sarah Jones
SEND Sufficiency & Transformation Strategy			Michael Bateman
Risk Register			Andy Goff
12 March 2019			
Finance Monitoring Report			Dawn Filtness
Committee Forward Plan and update on decisions taken under delegated authority			Sara Tough
Performance Monitoring report			Andy Goff
Validated Post 16 Education Outcomes			Seb Gasse
Review of Children's Services MASH			Phil Watson