

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday 21 November 2013
2:00pm Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:

Mrs J Chamberlin (Chairman)

Mr S Agnew	Mr B Hannah
Mr R Bearman	Mrs J Leggett
Mr D Collis	Mr J Mooney
Mrs M Dewsbury	Mr J Perkins
Mr C Foulger	Mr M Sands
Mr T Garrod	Mr R Smith
Ms D Gihawi	Dr M Strong
Mr P Gilmour	Miss J Virgo

Parent Governor Representatives:

Dr K Byrne
Mrs S Vertigan

Church Representatives:

Mrs H Bates
Mr A Mash

Non-Voting Cabinet Member:

Mr M Castle	Education and Schools
Mr J Joyce	Safeguarding

Non-Voting Co-opted Advisors:

Dr B Carrington	Primary Education
Ms T Humber	Special Needs Education

1. Apologies and substitutions

1.1 Apologies were received from Mr D Crawford (Mr S Agnew substituting), Mr M Kiddle-Morris (Mr J Mooney substituting), Dr L Poliakoff, Mr S Adamson, Ms V Aldous (Dr B Carrington substituting) and Ms C Smith.

2. Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2013 were received and signed as an accurate record.

2.2 The Chairman gave the following updates in relation to the minutes:

- Members had been included in the circulation of The Improving Times

departmental publication.

- An update relating to the work of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub would be presented to the January meeting to ensure that it included current ongoing work.
- An update relating to the Safeguarding Children Board would be presented in spring 2014.
- The Social Care Directions Notice was still in draft, and correspondence was ongoing between OFSTED and Norfolk County Council. A formal consultation would take place and the Notice would be presented to the next Improvement Board meeting. The focus of the Notice had moved to the capacity for continued improvement.
- Member Development sessions had been set up for School Governance Arrangements and Members Role in Supporting School Improvement (28th November); and Refreshed Performance Information (12th December).
- A governor recruitment drive was underway, and it was expected that the results of this would be reported to the Panel.
- A briefing to update Members on how the Restorative Approaches Strategy was being built into support for Looked After Children and care leavers was requested.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. Items of Urgent Business

4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

5. Public Question Time

5.1 There were no public questions.

6. Local Member Issues/Member Questions

6.1 The Local Member questions and answers are attached to these minutes at Appendix 1.

7. Cabinet Member Feedback

7.1 Safeguarding

7.1.1 The Cabinet Member for Safeguarding reiterated that a two way conversation was underway with OFSTED regarding the draft Directions Notice, and that OFSTED understood the way that the Council was moving forward.

7.2 Education and Schools

7.2.1 The Cabinet Member for Education and Schools noted that he had attended the Putting People First consultation events and had heard concerns regarding the proposed cuts in services. The Cabinet Member would be meeting with MP Brandon Lewis to discuss these concerns, with particular reference to subsidised bus travel. The concerns regarding intervention at Cavell Primary School had been noted, and it was recognised that Norfolk County Council needed to act decisively.

7.2.2 It was noted that although there was room for improvement within Norfolk's residential homes, the statement of purpose and standards table presented at the last meeting had shown that all homes were assessed as either Good or Outstanding by OFSTED. The ideal would be that all homes were assessed as Outstanding.

8. Promise for Norfolk Children In Care and Leaving Care by members of the Norfolk In Care Council

8.1 The annexed report (item 8) by the Consultation and Community Relations Manager was received, and a presentation by members of the Norfolk In Care Council was given (attached at Appendix 2).

8.2 During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The youngest member of the In Care Council was six years and nine months old, and the under 7's had been included in the process of collating the Promise. The idea of a DVD for under 7's had come directly from that age group.
- It was confirmed that depending on the situation, some older children in care remained under the guidance of a social worker, while some moved to a personal advisor.
- It was expected that all councillors would be made aware of the Promise and would use it to scrutinise their role as corporate parents.
- The complaints process for children in care could be difficult to understand, but was being made easier and more accessible. The introduction of this area on the website would assist with this.
- No child in care was forced to leave care, although the transition from foster care to residential placement was sometimes difficult. The Promise aimed not to force young people out of their placement, but to support them through the care leaver transition.
- It was suggested that a strong message should be given to the Council that all Members had a responsibility as corporate parents. It was agreed that an additional recommendation would be made that the Promise would be recommended by Cabinet to Full Council.
- It was agreed that statistics relating to the number of complaints that had been received and resolved in the last two years would be provided (see Appendix 3).

- It was agreed that the recommendation contained within the last slide would form one of the recommendations of the Panel.
- It was confirmed that the Promise would be uploaded to social media sites such as Facebook, to ensure interaction with the target audience.
- It was agreed that regular six monthly updates should be received by the Panel to monitor progress of the Promise, in order to strengthen the ongoing relationship between Councillors and children in care.
- The Chairman thanked the members of the In Care Council for their informative presentation and confident answers to the Panel's questions.

8.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** the following recommendations:

- To commend the hard work and commitment of the children and young people to create the Promise.
- To agree to recommend the Promise to Cabinet as a statement of purpose, with onward recommendation to Full Council.
- To acknowledge elected members' responsibilities as corporate parents and their role in promoting the Promise, to ensure that it was well understood by children and young people.
- To receive updates at six monthly intervals, to monitor progress of the Promise.
- To support the importance of all elected members being aware of the Promise and that they use it to help inform and fulfil their corporate parent and scrutiny roles.

9. Children's Services Improvement Plans

9.1 The annexed report (item 9) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report presented the refreshed Improvement Plan following the increased pace of improvement. The Interim Director noted that the Improvement Plans were changing on a daily basis by responding to detailed analysis, and that these would be presented to the Improvement Board at their next meeting.

9.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:

- It was confirmed that there were two Improvement Boards:- Education; and Social Care. Progress was reported to both however there were commonalities within the reports presented.
- The OFSTED recommendations were being picked up, and the department was testing itself against the law and regulatory frameworks. The Plans would cover statutory duties, as well as what could be done to improve.
- The two strands of improvement were inextricably linked, therefore the Improving Times publications covered both. Improvement was influenced by families and the community with ambitions for all children, and was not

just looking at the vulnerable.

- The Cabinet funding of £16.5M was designated to drive forward immediate improvement, however it was recognised that ongoing funding would be required to sustain this. A more integrated approach to working was being developed, including opportunities to work with health and education partners.

9.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report and Improvement Plans, and to endorse the direction of travel for improvements in service delivery for children. Members endorsed:

- The new branding for improvement in Children's Services.
- The proposed new governance arrangements.
- The re-ordering of the improvement actions and activities into strategic and operational elements.
- The reinforced emphasis on achievement of outcomes for service users as the primary means of evidencing improvement over time.

Members requested an update to a future meeting, to include further comment on work to be undertaken and the resources available, including use of the new money to promote integrated working.

10. Children's Services Performance Monitoring Report for 2013-2014

10.1 The annexed report (item 10) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report provided an update on performance monitoring information based on the County Council's performance monitoring framework for the 2013/14 financial year. It was noted that the performance monitoring data was being reviewed to give a richer picture to ensure robust scrutiny. The next report would give a picture across the department, as data and performance indicators were still being gathered. It was noted that performance data was displayed in offices for staff to see, and that Members would be welcome to visit to see this.

10.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:

- It was noted that some data had been missed from the graphs, and agreed that updated versions would be circulated with the minutes (Appendix 4).
- Positive changes to the departmental leadership team had been implemented to drive the department forward in its improvement. Staff confidence was being rebuilt, and underperformance would be challenged.
- It was key that scrutiny advice was acted upon, and that the focus across the board was on the outcome based service being provided.
- The work undertaken by Skylakes had been commissioned some time previously, and the department had the capacity to undertake internal quality assurance which was giving the same assessments as that external review. Work was underway with staff and managers to ensure that

processes were right for the Authority and to ensure that all improvement was sustainable.

- Both improvement plans had a refreshed approach to leadership, with the emphasis on outcome and consistency. A workforce development plan was in place, with clear roles, responsibilities, and accountability. It was important that staff had the right skills and tools to do their jobs.
- There were important changes underway within family law, including the requirement to complete all court applications within 26 weeks. Work was underway with nplaw to ensure that the right cases reached court, with clear plans and assessments to minimise delays.
- It was agreed that a series of visits would be set up for Members to talk to front line staff in both social care and schools, to test progress being made, and reporting back to Panel.

10.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report, and to set up a series of visits to front line staff in social care and schools.

11. Service and Financial Planning 2014/17

11.1 The annexed report (item 11) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report set out the financial and planning context for the authority and gave an early indication of what this meant for Children's Services.

11.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:

- It was confirmed that the total savings on page 50 should have read as £30.094M. The reference numbers within the tables at Appendix A referred to the Putting People First consultation. Government policy had led to changes within a number of budget planning assumptions.
- The Early Intervention Grant was a previously ring-fenced grant which had been reduced in the previous financial year. The underspend had also been ring-fenced. This would be removed from one-off funding and shown as a budget change, which would match the corporate picture. It was agreed that a briefing note regarding the Early Intervention Grant would be circulated (Appendix 5).
- The corporate position was reported within Appendix B, and the Capital Programme figures provided a breakdown of the capital grant and how this would be spent in future years.
- Concern was expressed that the proposed reductions in subsidised travel for 16-19 year olds would double the cost of bus passes, with a significant impact on NEET (not in education, employment or training) and those in rural areas. It was acknowledged that this illustrated the difficult choices that would have to be made, and that other authorities who faced similar challenges had been consulted on their approach. MPs were due to debate the gap between education policy and transport policy.
- Changes to early years provision would be the subject of a future Panel

report. The link between early years provision and attainment was important, and partnership working was key to improving delivery in this area. The report would focus on understanding the need for support for providers, and working with the community and voluntary sector.

- Savings in ICT related to ensuring value for money and joined up spending to make savings and ensure best value. This was a saving that would lead to an improved service.
- Any proposed cuts to service would be risk assessed, and safety would be paramount (for example cuts to school crossing patrols). The focus was on the method of service delivery rather than removal. Different solutions were being explored with partners.
- The Cabinet Member for Education and Schools noted that it was necessary to consult on some difficult issues as central funding was being cut. Children's Services was a priority area, and innovative ideas for savings were welcomed.

11.2 The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report and recommended their comments to Cabinet in relation to:

- The revised service and financial planning context.
- The updated capital bids and announcements relevant to Children's Services.
- Budget savings and reductions in unsupported borrowing costs in relation to delivering the capital programme.

12. Support for School Improvement

12.1 The annexed report (item 12) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report updated Members on progress in supporting school improvement through the strategy 'A Good School for Every Norfolk Learner'.

12.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:

- It was acknowledged that every child was entitled to a good education and that low standards could not be ignored. This could be provided in partnership with communities, however the local authority could intervene where schools were not run well at a local level. In some cases, devolved powers would be removed temporarily however where the pace of change was not fast enough, or confidence in a transition to a sustainable regime was not apparent, other solutions such as academy sponsorship could be promoted.
- Local collaboration with autonomous academies was important.
- It was recognised that good schools required good governors, and funding had been used to support governors. This would be explored further with Members in the briefing sessions.

- A change in circumstances did sometimes result in a change in categorisation. The option of classifying a school as temporarily a cause for concern was available.
- It was acknowledged that the large number of teachers leaving the profession was of concern, and that a better deal for teachers was required. The importance of good quality teaching was emphasised.

12.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report, including the scale of the challenge, and supported the general direction and work undertaken so far, and request a briefing on the success of the Council's Governor Recruitment Week.

13. Children's Services Growth Planning and Investment Plan 2013-17

13.1 The annexed report (item 12) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report provided a summary of pupil place number pressures in the County for the short and medium term and the proposed capital projects to deal with these pressures.

13.2 During the discussion the following points were raised:

- Due to dependency on announcements of district council housing allocations, capital proposals for some areas would be announced at a later stage.
- It was important to develop and maintain relationships with school providers in those key areas of growth so that sites could be planned to accommodate population growth, whilst working with the autonomy some schools had in setting their own admission limits. This approach had been productive so far.
- The level of future funding for basic need was now known until 2015, however it was expected that national schools capital would remain level until 2021. There was an increased dependency on the Community Infrastructure Levy funding, which required a business case to be put forward when a development was proposed. This replaced the previous system of a formulaic approach to Section 106 contributions.
- Surplus schools sites became the responsibility of the corporate property portfolio. It was unlikely that such sites would be brought back into use as a school, but had been used by local partner organisations, where this was possible.
- Although an all-through approach to the primary phase of education could be the solution to work towards in some areas of growth, it was acknowledged that the important issue at the current time was to raise the standard of existing provision within the county.

13.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report including:

- The proposed responses to address pupil place pressures in the short and medium term in Norfolk.

- The proposed capital spending profile to be part of the County Council's overall capital spending proposals 2013-17.
- Agreement of the proposals at Annex A of the report, recommending to Cabinet that these should be adopted and noting that an update would be reported to Cabinet in the spring.

14. Apprenticeships Norfolk – one year on

14.1 The annexed report (item 14) by the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and Development and the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report provided an update on the progress of Apprenticeships Norfolk, an initiative set up to tackle youth unemployment and encourage more businesses to employ apprentices, especially in the small and medium enterprise sector. 12 care leavers had been placed on apprenticeships, and a further 12 were due to start shortly.

14.2 During the discussion the following points were raised:

- The problem of young people being 'work ready' was acknowledged, and this was being linked to the plans for school improvement. Work was underway with employers to help get this key message to schools.
- Apprenticeships were offered with the Council's key strategic partners including Kier and May Gurney.
- Care leavers were very capable when finding their own apprenticeships, however sometimes they needed longer to make their applications, as adult help was required. Early notification of vacancies was circulated to care leavers, and financial support was available.
- Norfolk County Council had provided funding to Norse for apprenticeships. The function of Apprenticeships Norfolk was to shape the recruitment policies and give early notification of vacancies.
- Apprenticeships were available to young people aged 16 – 24. Although some could receive assistance with forms from their school, some were outside of this assistance. With looked after children, the difficulty was in fulfilling the parental role of knowing the young person well enough to help them communicate their strengths.
- Taster sessions were available for young people, and the Council supported initiatives such as Take Over Day. Work experience was offered to 3,000 school students each year.
- Changes to funding of apprenticeships was expected in around two years.
- It was agreed that a further briefing would be provided giving details of the action plans in place to reach the target for care leavers; details of how many young people, and specifically care leavers, had successfully completed apprenticeships and how many had then secured jobs; and how the work could continue once the initial funding had run out.

- It was suggested that Members could play a role as corporate parents in assisting looked after children with their applications.

14.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the progress of the Apprenticeships Norfolk programme, to approve the review of the final 12 months of the programme, and to receive a further briefing on the Apprenticeships Norfolk programme.

15. Introduction to Norfolk's Children's Services Quality Assurance Team Audit Framework and Standards

15.1 The annexed report (item 15) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report introduced Members to the programme of audits for the forthcoming year as well as the basis for the judgements that will be made. It was noted that the focus of the Quality Assurance team's work would be amended according to the improvement agenda.

15.2 During the discussion the following points were raised:

- Although the visibility of the work of the team had been enhanced, this was not a new initiative for the department.
- It was suggested that future reports could present more tabular information, with less narrative.
- A regional group had been developed to share standards and processed. Colleagues from other authorities gave an independent view where required.
- It was suggested that real examples could be given within the next report, to see where an issue had been picked up and what change had been implemented.

15.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report and endorse the methodology described, and to receive quarterly updates of audit activity, lessons learned and action taken.

16. Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

16.1 The annexed report (item 16) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report asked Members to consider a refreshed scrutiny forward work programme. It was noted that the Pathway Planning report scheduled for January 2014 would be moved to March 2014.

16.2 During the discussion the following points were raised:

- An overview of departmental risks was requested. It was confirmed that this would be included within the next integrated performance and finance monitoring report.

16.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report, and agreed the following additions:

- A briefing on how the Restorative Approaches Strategy was being built in to support for looked after children and care leavers.

- Regular updates about the Promise for Norfolk children in care and leaving care, including commentary from the In Care Council about the number of complaints the department had received which had been prompted by the Promise and the themes of those complaints.
- An update on Children's Services Improvement Plans to include comment on the job to be done and the resources available to do it, include use of new money to promote integrated working.
- Briefing on the success of governor recruitment week.
- Briefing on Apprenticeships.
- Quarterly Quality Assurance updates.
- Management of departmental risks to be included in future integrated finance and performance monitoring reports.
- Movement of the Pathway Planning report from the January 2014 meeting to the March 2014 meeting.

The meeting closed at 5:05pm.

CHAIRMAN



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Local Member Questions

6.1 Questions from Cllr Roger Smith:

- 6.1.1** *Would the Cabinet Member for Education & Schools reassure the Panel, with some explanation, why he saw fit to remove the entire Governing Body of Cavell Primary & Nursery School, Norwich, a School striving to improve.*

Answer from the Cabinet Member:

It is pleasing to note that progress is being made at Cavell Primary and Nursery School and that children are beginning to receive a better quality of education. Following the special measures verdict in the Spring, progress has been achieved because the Local Authority (LA) has made full use of its powers of intervention. Working with the school, the LA has ensured that all efforts are focused effectively on improving teaching, learning and achievement. In line with the principles agreed in 'A Good School for Every Norfolk Learner', the LA now makes full use of its powers of intervention so that no time is wasted in providing the standard of education to which children are entitled. To replace a Governing Body with an Interim Executive Board is an unusual step to take. In this case such a step was necessary in order to maintain the important drive for improvement and the LA's application to the Department for Education was approved.

- 6.1.2** *In particular why was this action timed at the end of the first day of a fresh Ofsted inspection on 6 November 2013?*

Answer from the Cabinet Member:

The inspection of the school was a monitoring visit to judge progress made following the special measures judgement in the Spring. The timing of such inspections is unknown and the establishment of the IEB was coincidental. It has been necessary to use progressive steps in our intervention - as described in 6.1.1 above - in order that momentum in improvement is maintained.



Norfolk's Promise to all Children and young people in its care

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Background

Over a year ago a consultation was held asking children and young people;

- Do you know what the pledge is?
- Do you have a copy of the pledge?
- Do you think the pledge is useful to you?
- Do you understand how to raise an issue against the pledge if you feel Norfolk County Council is not keeping to it?
- What do you think of the look and wording of the pledge?

Over 97% of responses were negative.

The findings of this consultation was presented to the corporate parenting strategic board

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Background

- The strategic board asked for a working group to be formed to;
- redesign the pledge, its look and the content
- Look at how it should be shared with all children and young people in care.
- Look at how it should be monitored.
- A working group containing four care experienced young people, Cllr Tom Garrod, Wendy Dyde (service manager for the IROs and independent chairs, Alison MacPhail, operational manager for corporate parenting and our involvement worker Irene Kerry was set up.

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Key recommendations from the working group

- It is a statutory requirement that we have a pledge and one of the things that Ofsted look at and so not redeveloping it was not an option.
- That it should be renamed a promise, as this is a word understood by children and young people and the word promise is in every dictionary definition for pledge.
- That the promise should list children and young people's rights as well as what we see as good practice.
- Due to including the rights of children and young people, that the promise should be produced in three different age related formats as our rights pre and post 18 are different and we wanted to produce something more child friendly for the under 7's.
- It should also be available in other languages, easy read and other formats used by the children with disabilities team..

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Content under 7's

- It is proposed that we develop a short 5 minute animated DVD for the under 7's.
- We plan to use a simple storyline to highlight different parts of the promise.
- This will include finding the right place for you, talking to the social worker, making a complaint, family contact and support at school.
- We hope to market this DVD to other local authorities.

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7 to 15 year olds. rights

- We will make sure you understand how to make a complaint or comment about the care you receive from us. If you would like someone to support you make a complaint or an 'advocate,' we'll arrange this for you.

Details of how to make a complaints are also included in both of the new promise leaflets.

- You will have a qualified social worker, who will visit you at least every 28 days when you first come into care or change your placement. After this your social worker will still visit you regularly and will let you know how often this will be.

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7 to 15 year olds. rights

- You will have a named Independent reviewing officer (IRO) who will manage your reviews. These have to happen when you come into care, three months after this and then every six months until you are 18 years old. You can contact your IRO between reviews if you want to talk to them and you can work with them and chair your own review meetings if you would like.
- No major changes like moving where you live, even if it is to go home, will happen without a statutory review with your IRO.
- Foster carers can now make more decisions about your life, for example staying at a friend's house or going on a school trip. This is called delegated authority and means that you do not always have to wait for background checks to be done on a friend's family before you can visit or sleepover or wait for your social worker to sign a consent form for most school trips.
- If we decide to change where you live we will always ask your opinion. If we can't do what you would like us to do we will explain to you why this can't happen.

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7 to 15 year olds. rights

- We will make sure, as long as it is safe, that you have contact with your family and that this is written into your care plan.
- We will provide you with help and support at school to help you do as well as other children and young people not in care.
- We will make sure that the place you live is safe and that you are well cared for. We will make sure your carers understand your needs, this could be your religion, your culture or any disabilities you may have.

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7 to 15 year olds. rights

- You will be provided with a copy of your care plan unless we feel that you are too young to have it or that you may find it upsetting - if we do decide this we will explain why
- Where you have not had regular contact with family members, we will make arrangements for you to have an independent visitor if this is something you would like.
- We will make sure that everyone understands their role as a corporate parent and that they ask themselves 'Would this be good enough for my child?' When they are making decisions about you as an individual or the care system.

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16 to 21 content rights

- We will make sure you understand how to make a complaint or comment about the care you receive from us. If you would like someone to support you make a complaint or an 'advocate,' we'll arrange this for you.

Details of how to make a complaints are also included in both of the new promise leaflets.

- You will have a qualified social worker who will visit you at least every 28 days until you are 18. After aged 18, if you change to a personal advisor we will make sure they have a professional qualification or are studying for one.

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16 to 21 content rights

- We will make sure that you have a Pathway Plan in place by the time you are 16 and three months. We will work with you to understand how important this plan is and we will review it every six months with you. It will be completed by you and your social care worker together and you will be given a copy. If any major changes happen before your Pathway Plan review, we will update it with you.
- No major changes like moving where you live, even if it is to go home, should happen without a statutory review with your IRO or if you are over 18, without a meeting with your personal advisor.

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16 to 21 content rights

- We will provide you with help and support at school or college or university to help you do as well as other children and young people not in care. If you go to University we will offer you support around your accommodation and a bursary to help with your fees. Your personal advisor can give you all of this information.
- If we decide to change where you live we will always ask your opinion. If we can't do what you would like us to do we will explain to you why this can't happen. We will make sure where you live is safe and what you want, that you have contact with your family and that this is written into your Care Plan and Pathway Plan.

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16 to 21 content rights

- We will make sure that everyone understands their role as a corporate parent and that they ask themselves, 'Would this be good enough for my child?' when they are making decisions about the care system or you as an individual.

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Aspirational statements

- Many of these are shared by both age related versions and so have been combined.
- They are covered by this statement.
- These are the things that Norfolk County Council says you should have. If you feel we are not keeping these you should talk to your social worker or IRO, or you can let us know by using a complaints form - details of how to do this are at the end of the form

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Aspirational statements

- We will help you deal with the reasons why you came into care and any problems you have because of being in care. We'll do this by making sure you feel cared for, valued and, if you need it, by setting up meetings with people who work with children and young people to help them understand their feelings and behaviour.
- Your social worker will visit you regularly and let you know if they have to cancel a visit and why. They will also let you know if they are going on holiday and make sure you know who to speak to whilst they are away.
- We will celebrate what you do well and not just concentrate on things that need to be improved.

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Aspirational statements

- We will make sure that you are safe and well cared for. We will always try to find the best place for you to live and will include you in making this decision. Wherever possible we will not use a temporary place as we want you to feel settled where you live. We will always try to make sure that you get to meet your foster carers before you move to be with them. This may not be possible if it is an emergency move.
- We will try to make sure that as many things as possible, like your school, stay the same when you come into care.
- We will talk to you about all the options for your future and not just about higher education or work
- We will ask your opinion about everything that happens to you and if we can't do what you want we will explain why.

 Norfolk County Council
at your service



Aspirational statements

- We will do our best to promote a positive image of children and young people in care,
- We will try our best to make sure you keep the same social worker, by not changing them unless we have to, for example if they are leaving or unwell.
- We will offer you opportunities to get involved with helping us make the service better for all children in care

 Norfolk County Council
at your service



Aspirational statements

- We will offer training to all professionals that come into contact with children and young people in care to help them understand what it means for you to be in care
- We will make sure that you have the best experience possible while you are in our care.
- We will make sure that you understand all of your rights whilst you are in our care.
- When it comes time for you to move out, we will make sure you have all the skills you need to live independently and make sure we find you secure, good quality accommodation.

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Process

- The promise will be handed out by the child or young person's social worker or personal advisor. They will read through it with them and give them a complaints form at the same time, explaining how to use it.
- The IRO will monitor that this has been done at the child or young persons statutory review.
- Over 18's who will not have an IRO, the personal advisor will have a sheet for the young person to sign. This will say they have received one, and have been given a complaints form and know how to use both. This will be monitored by team managers who will check that a signed copy of this sheet is included in the young person's file.

Monitoring

- Overall responsibility for monitoring the promise will sit with the Director of Children's services.
- The NICC Norfolk In Care Council will work closely with Children's services on themes identified.
- The complaints team will add a box to the complaints form which can be ticked if the complaint is raised due to the promise.
- Themes will be collected and fed back to the director at regular intervals.

Elected Members

- We will share copies of the promise with all elected members.
- We will work with the director and elected members to decide how often themes raised by the promise are reported back to members.
- We ask that elected members make themselves aware of the contents of the promise and use it in their scrutiny role and to help them fulfil their role as a corporate parent.

Recommendation

That cabinet agree to the promise being accepted as a statement of purpose

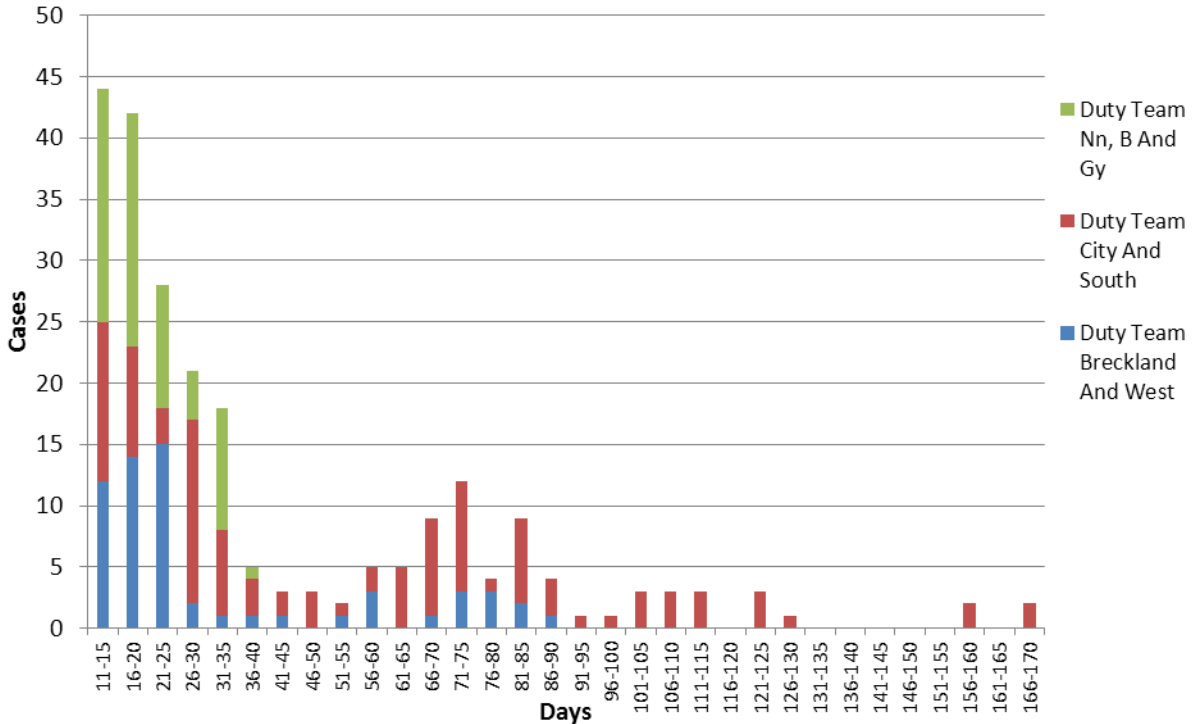
That cabinet support the importance of all elected members being aware of the promise and that they use it to help inform and fulfil their corporate parent and scrutiny roles.

**Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Thursday 24 October 2013**

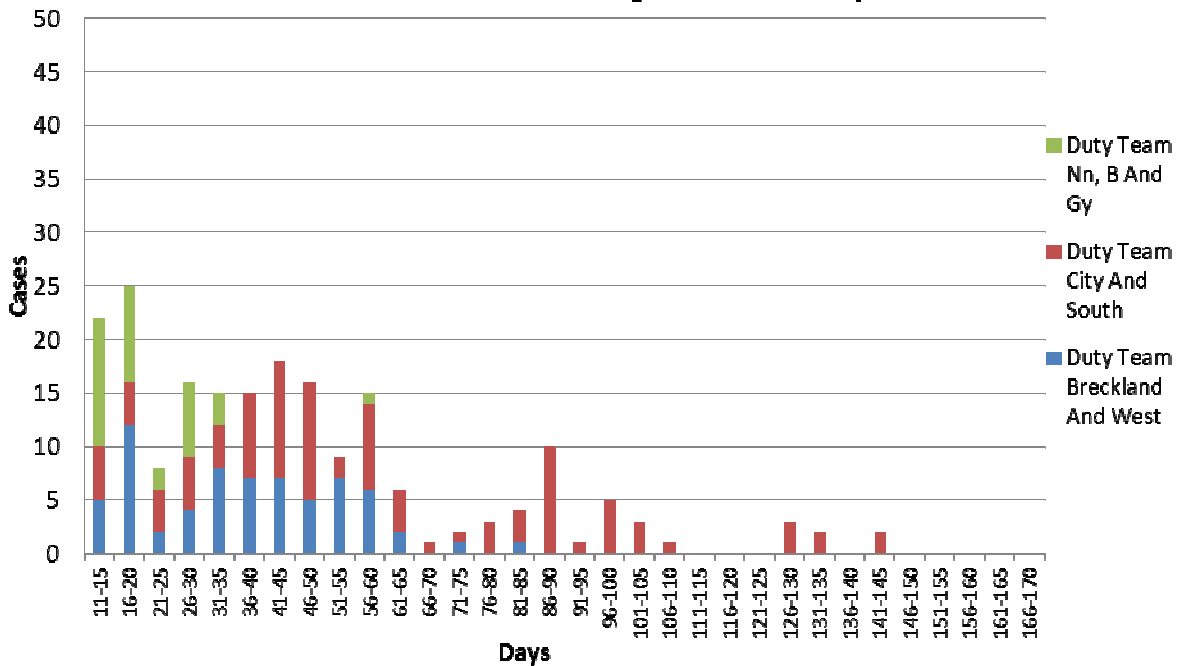
Agenda Item Number/ Minute Number	Report Title	Action	Response
8	In Care Council Promise	Provide statistics for how many complaints have been received by young people in care in last two years, and how many have been resolved.	<p>Our records show 47 complaints have been received from young people in care or their advocate since 1 April 2012.</p> <p>21 were received in the 2012/13 financial year and 20 have been resolved (1 outstanding is a complex Stage 2) and 26 received year to date in 2013/14 and of these 21 have been resolved.</p> <p>The 5 received in 2013/14 that have not yet been resolved are all recent complaints and are within the published timescales for responding to.</p>
10	Performance Monitoring Report	Provide updated copies of three graphs of data	See Appendix 4
11	Service and Financial Planning	Provide an explanatory note regarding underspend within Early Intervention Grant	See Appendix 5

Provide updated copies of three graphs of data

Initial Assessments Backlog as at 3rd November 2013

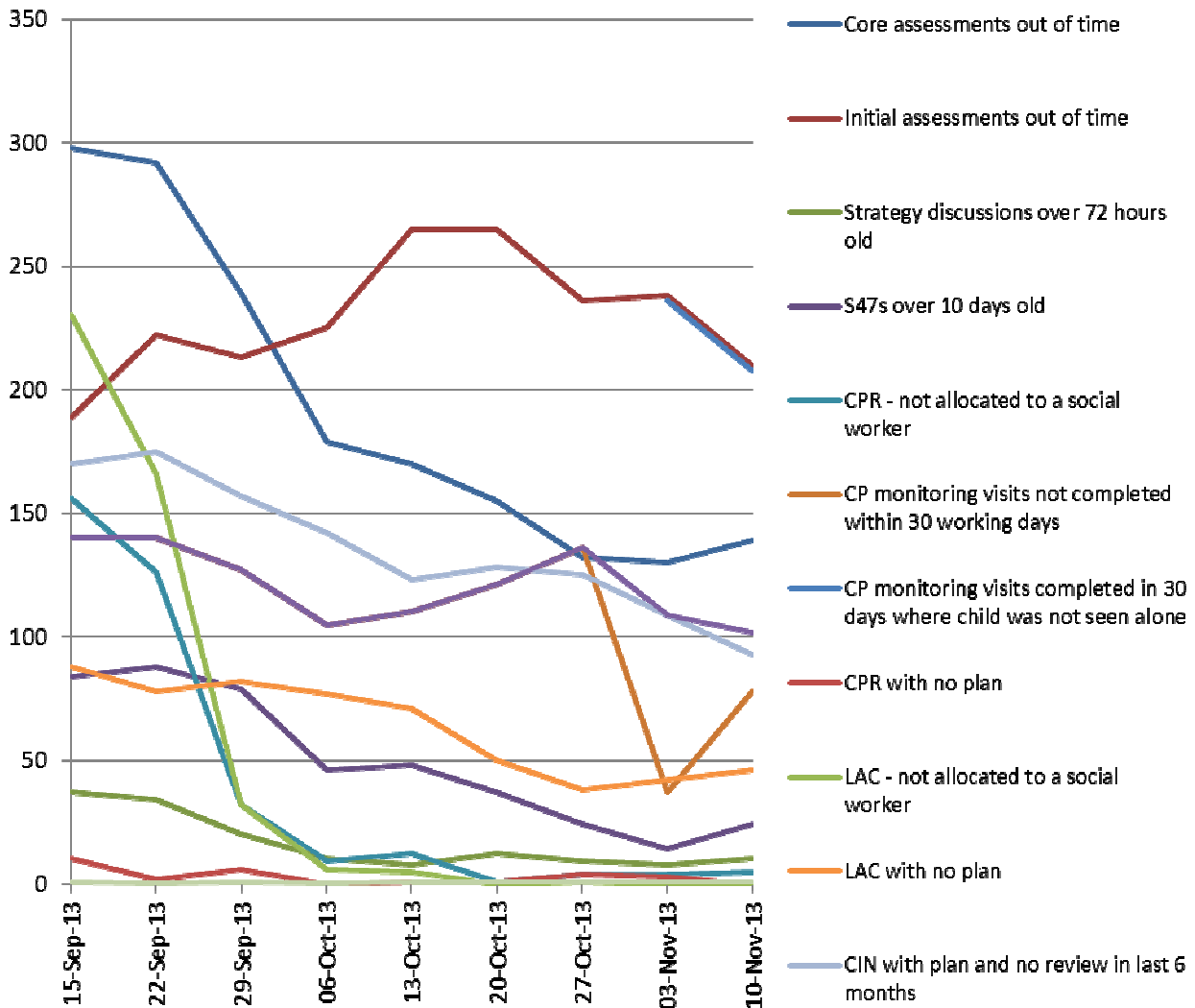


Initial Assessments Backlog as at 29th September 2013



Performance Data

The graph below shows the trend from the implementation of the weekly reports



Description of the Measures in the Trend diagram above

	Core Process Measure	Plain English
1	Core assessments out of time	<p>Where the outcome of an initial assessment requires a more in depth assessment of the child's need a core assessment must be completed within a maximum of 35 working days.</p> <p>Children's social care staff are responsible for the co-ordination and completion of the core assessment drawing on information provided by partner agencies. During the course of and upon completion of a Core Assessment it will be necessary to decide what services should be provided. The services will be appropriate depending on the needs of the child/ren.</p> <p>This measure reports on those core assessments not</p>

	Core Process Measure	Plain English
		completed within the 35 working day timescale.
2	Initial assessments out of time	<p>An Initial Assessment is necessary when a referral to a Local Authority indicates that a child is in need of services provided by Children's Social Care.</p> <p>An Initial Assessment is a brief assessment of a child's circumstances and will determine if a child is in need, what services would assist the child and whether a more detailed Core Assessment needs to be undertaken.</p> <p>It is a Local Authority's duty, in accordance with The Children Act 1989, to find out if a child is in need of services when they come to the attention of Children's Social Care.</p> <p>Initial Assessments should be led by a qualified and experienced social worker and must be completed within 10 working days.</p> <p>This measure reports on those not completed in the 10 working day timescale.</p>
3	Strategy discussions over 72 hours old	<p>Children's Social Care must hold a Strategy Discussion whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer Significant Harm. It should always be held at the outset of a Child Protection Enquiry.</p> <p>This Strategy Discussion should include other key professionals. It should always include the Police and be informed by health input.</p> <p>The purpose of the Strategy Discussion is to share relevant information and plan the child protection enquiry.</p> <p>More than one strategy discussion may be necessary.</p> <p>This measure monitors those strategy discussions that have been open on CareFirst for more than 72 hours and therefore remain uncompleted.</p>
4	S47s over 10 days old	Whether to hold a Section 47 (Child Protection) Enquiry will be determined by Strategy Discussion and must be undertaken by a qualified social worker within a maximum

	Core Process Measure	Plain English
		<p>of 15 working days of that decision. . The urgency of the situation, however, may dictate that the timescale is shorter.</p> <p>The outcome and any supporting evidence must be recorded, together with recommendations for further action, by the person undertaking the Section 47 Enquiry.</p> <p>This measure monitors those Section 47 Enquiries that have been open on CareFirst for more than 10 days.</p>
5	Child Protection Plan – not allocated to a qualified social worker	<p>All children with a Child Protection Plan should be allocated to a qualified social worker.</p> <p>This measure counts those cases where this is not so.</p>
6	Child Protection monitoring visits not completed within 30 days	<p>All children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan must be visited by the allocated, qualified social worker. This must be equal to the minimum visiting requirement or at a greater frequency as specified in the Child Protection Plan.</p> <p>This measure counts the number of children where visits were made at intervals of more than 30 days.</p>
7	Child Protection monitoring visits not completed within 30 days where child was not seen alone	<p>All children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan must be visited by the allocated, qualified social worker and seen alone.</p> <p>This measure counts the number of children not seen alone (regardless of age) in a visit during the last 30 days.</p>
8	Child Protection with no plan	<p>All children made the subject of a Child Protection Plan at the child protection conference must have that plan recorded in CareFirst.</p> <p>This measure counts the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan who do not have a plan recorded in CareFirst.</p>
9	Looked After Children (LAC) - not allocated to a social worker	<p>All Looked After Children must be allocated to a qualified social worker.</p> <p>This measure counts the number of children where this is not so.</p>
10	Looked After Children with no plan	<p>All Looked After Children should have a Looked After Child Plan. This addresses questions in relation to permanency and contingency, but central to the document is the 'plan' where the child's needs are set out and SMART planning is recorded.</p> <p>This measure counts the number of looked after children with no current Plan.</p>
11	Children in Need with plan and no review in the last 6 months	<p>Every child who receives a service outside of the Child Protection or Looked After Children processes must have a Child in Need (CiN) Plan. The CiN plan should be</p>

	Core Process Measure	Plain English
		reviewed and progress recorded. This measure counts the number of children whose CiN plans have not been reviewed in the last six months.

Briefing note regarding the presentation of Early Intervention Grant

In 2013/14 the Government reduced funding for the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) and included the responsibility for funding 2 year old education places within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). In addition, the Government top sliced £150m from the national EIG grant. The amount removed from the non ring fenced EIG to the ring fenced DSG was greater than was currently being spent on 2 year old education, resulting in a pressure on the other areas previously funded through the EIG. In order to allow sufficient time to review these services in context with the whole service being provided by the Local Authority, Cabinet agreed to fund this work on a one off basis for 2013-14.

The overall shortfall was £6.505m. Of this shortfall, £3m was met from EIG funding in 2012-13 which was carried forward to 2013-14 and ensuring that, where applicable, costs associated with 2 year old education are funded through the DSG. Cabinet agreed that the remaining shortfall of £3.5m could be funded from the additional one-off funding announced by the Leader at Cabinet on the 7th January 2013.

The presentation in Appendix A shows the pressures within Children's services and the relationship of the budget for Norfolk County Council as a whole. This means that the impact of the funding reduction in 2013/14, that was met through using one-off funding, impacts Children's Services budget in 2014/15, creating an additional pressure of £6.505m shown as a positive figure in appendix A. The one off funding of £3.5m has been removed from Children's Services budget (shown as a negative figure in Appendix A). The net impact is an additional pressure of £3.005m in 2014/15 for Children's Services and an additional pressure of £3.5m in Finance General.

These funding shortfalls are being addressed through the corporate budget and service planning process and forms part of the Putting People First budget consultation proposals.