

Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Monday 4 February 2019 at 10.00 am

To be held at the Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield, S1 2HH

The Press and Public are Welcome to Attend

Membership

Councillors Mick Rooney (Chair), Cliff Woodcraft (Deputy Chair), Andy Bainbridge, Simon Clement-Jones, Tony Downing, Francyne Johnson, Mohammad Maroof, Abtisam Mohamed, Bob Pullin, Colin Ross, Ian Saunders, Alison Teal, Sophie Wilson and Steve Wilson

Education Non-Council Members

Gillian Foster, Alison Warner, Sam Evans, Peter Naldrett, Vacancy and Vacancy

Healthwatch Sheffield

Alice Riddell (Observer)

Substitute Members

In accordance with the Constitution, Substitute Members may be provided for the above Committee Members as and when required.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MEETING

The Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny Committee exercises an overview and scrutiny function in respect of the planning, policy development and monitoring of service performance and other general issues relating to learning and attainment and the care of children and young people within the Children's Services area of Council activity. It also scrutinises as appropriate the various local Health Services functions, with particular reference to those relating to the care of children.

A copy of the agenda and reports is available on the Council's website at www.sheffield.gov.uk. You can also see the reports to be discussed at the meeting if you call at the First Point Reception, Town Hall, Pinstone Street entrance. The Reception is open between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Thursday and between 9.00 am and 4.45 pm. You may not be allowed to see some reports because they contain confidential information. These items are usually marked * on the agenda.

Members of the public have the right to ask questions or submit petitions to Scrutiny Committee meetings and recording is allowed under the direction of the Chair. Please see the website or contact Democratic Services for further information regarding public questions and petitions and details of the Council's protocol on audio/visual recording and photography at council meetings.

Scrutiny Committee meetings are normally open to the public but sometimes the Committee may have to discuss an item in private. If this happens, you will be asked to leave. Any private items are normally left until last. If you would like to attend the meeting please report to the First Point Reception desk where you will be directed to the meeting room.

If you require any further information about this Scrutiny Committee, please contact Deborah Fellowes, Policy and Improvement Officer on 0114 27 35065 or email.deborah.glen@sheffield.gov.uk

FACILITIES

There are public toilets available, with wheelchair access, on the ground floor of the Town Hall. Induction loop facilities are available in meeting rooms.

Access for people with mobility difficulties can be obtained through the ramp on the side to the main Town Hall entrance.

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SUPPORT SCRUTINY AND POLICY
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA
4 FEBRUARY 2019**

Order of Business

- 1. Welcome and Housekeeping Arrangements**
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
- 3. Exclusion of Public and Press**
To identify items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public
- 4. Declarations of Interest** (Pages 1 - 4)
Members to declare any interests they have in the business to be considered at the meeting
- 5. Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 12)
To approve the minutes of the meetings of Committee held on 10th December, 2018
- 6. Public Questions and Petitions**
To receive any questions or petitions from members of the public
- 7. Adoption Service - Annual Report 2017/18** (Pages 13 - 24)
Report of the Executive Director, People Services
- 8. Fostering Service - Annual Report 2017/18** (Pages 25 - 38)
Report of the Executive Director, People Services
- 9. Special Educational Needs in Sheffield**
The Executive Director, People Services, to report
- 10. Work Programme 2018/19** (Pages 39 - 46)
Report of the Policy and Improvement Officer
- 11. Date of Next Meeting**
The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, 11th March, 2019, at 10.00 am, in the Town Hall

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ADVICE TO MEMBERS ON DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

If you are present at a meeting of the Council, of its executive or any committee of the executive, or of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, or joint sub-committee of the authority, and you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** (DPI) relating to any business that will be considered at the meeting, you must not:

- participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, or if you become aware of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the meeting, participate further in any discussion of the business, or
- participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

These prohibitions apply to any form of participation, including speaking as a member of the public.

You **must**:

- leave the room (in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct)
- make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of any DPI at any meeting at which you are present at which an item of business which affects or relates to the subject matter of that interest is under consideration, at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.
- declare it to the meeting and notify the Council's Monitoring Officer within 28 days, if the DPI is not already registered.

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your **disclosable pecuniary interests** under the new national rules. You have a pecuniary interest if you, or your spouse or civil partner, have a pecuniary interest.

- Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner undertakes.
- Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period* in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

*The relevant period is the 12 months ending on the day when you tell the Monitoring Officer about your disclosable pecuniary interests.

- Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority –
 - under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
 - which has not been fully discharged.

- Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.
- Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.
- Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) –
 - the landlord is your council or authority; and
 - the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.
- Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -
 - (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and
 - (b) either -
 - the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
 - if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

If you attend a meeting at which any item of business is to be considered and you are aware that you have a **personal interest** in the matter which does not amount to a DPI, you must make verbal declaration of the existence and nature of that interest at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent. You should leave the room if your continued presence is incompatible with the 7 Principles of Public Life (selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership).

You have a personal interest where –

- a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing (including interests in land and easements over land) of you or a member of your family or a person or an organisation with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the Authority's administrative area, or
- it relates to or is likely to affect any of the interests that are defined as DPIs but are in respect of a member of your family (other than a partner) or a person with whom you have a close association.

Guidance on declarations of interest, incorporating regulations published by the Government in relation to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, has been circulated to you previously.

You should identify any potential interest you may have relating to business to be considered at the meeting. This will help you and anyone that you ask for advice to fully consider all the circumstances before deciding what action you should take.

In certain circumstances the Council may grant a **dispensation** to permit a Member to take part in the business of the Authority even if the member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest relating to that business.

To obtain a dispensation, you must write to the Monitoring Officer at least 48 hours before the meeting in question, explaining why a dispensation is sought and desirable, and specifying the period of time for which it is sought. The Monitoring Officer may consult with the Independent Person or the Council's Audit and Standards Committee in relation to a request for dispensation.

Further advice can be obtained from Gillian Duckworth, Director of Legal and Governance on 0114 2734018 or email gillian.duckworth@sheffield.gov.uk.

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Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 10 December 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Mick Rooney (Chair), Cliff Woodcraft (Deputy Chair),
Andy Bainbridge, Simon Clement-Jones, Tony Downing,
Francyne Johnson, Bob Pullin, Colin Ross, Ian Saunders and
Sophie Wilson

Non-Council Members in attendance:-

Gillian Foster, (Diocese Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)
Sam Evans, (Diocese Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mohammad Maroof,
Abtisam Mohamed and Steve Wilson.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

- 2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public
and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5th November 2018, were
approved as a correct record and, arising therefrom:-

- (a) the Policy and Improvement Officer (Deborah Glen) stated that she would
contact Kate Wilkinson (Service Manager – Performance and Analysis
Service) in connection with the request made by Councillor Bob Pullin for
statistics regarding indices of deprivation for Batemoor, Jordanthorpe and
Low Edges, and obtain a timescale for this to be delivered by;
- (b) the Chair reported that he had received a copy of the correspondence sent
by Councillor Jackie Drayton (Cabinet Member for Children and Families)
to the Parent Carer Forum, in response to a request by the Forum for
further information, and that he would arrange for Councillor Drayton's
response to be circulated to all Members of the Committee;
- (c) further to comments made at the November meeting by Councillor

Mohammad Maroof, Deborah Glen stated that she was in the process of arranging for a message to be sent to the Council's representative on the Schools Forum to try and ensure that schools continued to record and report the five-stage proficiency in English code; and

- (d) the Chair reported that he would be contacting Mark Sheikh (Head of Service – Business Strategy) to discuss the issue regarding further investigations into the potential for prudential borrowing with regard to capital funding for schools.

- 4.2 **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to the statistics relating to indices of deprivation for Batemoor, Jordanthorpe and Low Edges, and to further requests by other Members of the Committee for similar information in terms of their Wards, Kate Wilkinson be requested to provide such information to Councillors Bob Pullin, Andy Bainbridge and Ian Saunders, in respect of the Beauchief and Greenhill, East Ecclesfield and Beighton Wards, respectively.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

- 5.1 There were no questions raised or petitions submitted by members of the public.

6. SHEFFIELD SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

- 6.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, People Services, attaching the Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/18.
- 6.2 In attendance for this item were Jane Haywood, MBE (Independent Chair, Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)), Victoria Horsefield (Assistant Director, Children and Families Service and Professional Advisor to the Board) and Dan White (Sheffield Futures).
- 6.3 Jane Haywood introduced the report, which outlined the progress that had been made during the year, together with the key challenges ahead for the City to ensure that its children were safe from harm, abuse and neglect. Ms Haywood referred to her role as Independent Chair, and reported that the Board was responsible for monitoring performance across its partners and challenging the partners when it considered that improvements were required. She stressed that despite experiencing challenging circumstances, the partners remained strong, and continued to challenge each other when necessary.
- 6.4 Ms Haywood reported on the priorities for 2018/19, specifically relating to the need for the Board to continue the joint transition programme with Adult Safeguarding to ensure that the most vulnerable young people received the right help and support as they moved into adulthood. She added that, whilst this area of work was complex, and there was still room for improvement, it was considered that now that there was relevant leadership in place, and that partners were clear on their positions, this would assist with this area of work. Ms Haywood referred to the new guidance recently published by the Government, one element of which was to change the name from Safeguarding Children Boards to Local Safeguarding

Partnerships, with effect from April 2019. Other key changes resulting from the Government guidance included the decision to remove the Operational Board due to the duplication of roles with the Executive Board, and the recognition for closer working between Adult and Children's Safeguarding Boards. It had been agreed that there would be one Chair for each of the two Boards, but that the two Boards would meet annually to agree priorities. A further recommendation from the Government related to proposals for serious case reviews to be considered at a national level.

6.5 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-

- The Board reviewed its annual Business Plan on a quarterly basis, and noted progress made in terms of its functions. There had been a slight delay in terms of the drafting of the Business Plan for 2018/19, mainly due to the new arrangements required following the Government guidance. Whilst the current Business Plan centred on existing priorities, including child sexual exploitation, transition and neglect, it included two new priorities – child criminal exploitation and contextual safeguarding. Whilst the Board would look at new emerging themes, it was important that it continued to look at the core elements of child protection and child sexual exploitation as they must always remain priority areas.
- It was acknowledged that there had been a large percentage increase in the number of referrals to Children's Social Care, with such an increase having been replicated nationally. It was believed that such an increase was partly due to better reporting practices and processes. There was also a better understanding of intervention thresholds due to work with professionals to help them apply thresholds more effectively.
- It was important to note that the figures in the report related to 2017/18. During that year, the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub was established, and was being embedded into practice. The highest proportion of the referrals came from the police, and related mainly to concerns about domestic abuse. Work was currently taking place to look at whether all referrals to the Hub were appropriate, or could be dealt with by the early intervention services. Ofsted had undertaken a focussed visit in April 2018, looking specifically at the "front door" and referrals into Children's Social Care. Ofsted had been satisfied with the arrangements, and that correct safeguarding decisions were being made. The increase in the number of referrals could also be viewed as a positive sign, in that the systems were working more effectively, resulting in more children and young people being identified at risk, at an early stage, and who then received the right support.
- There were Community Youth Teams, a multi-agency specialist service for vulnerable young people, which had been commissioned by the City Council. It was confirmed that they operated in the Beauchief and Greenhill Ward. The Teams, which provided a targeted, early help service which aimed to support young people aged 10 to 18 into positive destinations, and reduce the

likelihood of them entering the criminal justice system, worked closely with the young people in terms of designing the programmes of activity. It was accepted that there were a number of young people were not engaging with the Teams, or any other similar services. Officers from Sheffield Futures had met with the Headteacher of Meadowhead School, providing help and advice in terms of how the school could identify, and help stop any vulnerable young people getting involved in serious criminal activity. It had been identified that relevant services needed to work together in order to make best use of the resources and facilities available which, given the current economic situation, was proving difficult. The Teams would also organise a number of outreach sessions, where members of staff would provide a rapid response facility, and organise holiday sessions, where young people would be taken away on trips. Details of the youth activities, including dates and times of sessions, in the Beauchief and Greenhill Ward, would be forwarded to all Members of the Committee.

- Weekly meetings were held to review all areas of the workforce in the Children and Families Service to ensure there was sufficient capacity to deal with referrals and re-referrals. It was accepted that the Service had, and continued to have, difficulties recruiting experienced social workers. This was a national issue, and not just seen in Sheffield. There were currently 192 full-time social workers, with additional investment to recruit over and above this level. The Service had experienced problems over the last few years in terms of a number of experienced social workers moving to other local authorities which, for various reasons, were able to pay higher salaries. Fortunately, this situation had now been largely stemmed. Recruitment campaigns were ongoing to ensure that Sheffield was seen as an attractive place to both live and work.

6.6 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, and the Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/18, together with the responses to the questions now raised;
- (b) thanks Jane Haywood, Victoria Horsefield and Dan White for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised;
- (c) expresses its support for the Safeguarding Children Board to:-
 - (i) remain a Sheffield-based body; and
 - (ii) continue the joint working with the Adult Safeguarding Board; and
- (d) indicates that it would not be in favour of the Government proposal to have serious case reviews considered at a national level.

7. SHEFFIELD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION SERVICES - ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

- 7.1 The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive Officer, Sheffield Futures, attaching the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service – Annual Report 2017/18.
- 7.2 In attendance for this item were Dan White (Sheffield Futures), Jane Haywood, MBE (Independent Chair, Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board) and Victoria Horsefield (Assistant Director, Children and Families Service and Professional Advisor to the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board).
- 7.3 Dan White referred to the introductory report, which contained information on the service user profile for 2017/18, key achievements in 2017/18, developments in 2018/19 and priorities for the Service for 2019/20.
- 7.4 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-
- The reasons for the significant drop in referrals in the West area of the City was due to a mixture of people moving, more people becoming aware of the risks involved and the work of the Service in that area. This was being looked at further to make sure that adequate support was in place, as social media remained a big risk.
 - The large increase in the number of children looked after being referred to the Service, as compared to the figures in 2016/17, was believed to be mainly due to the increased use of social media. The Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service continued to work very closely with the Children Looked After Service and other partners to gather evidence and disrupt patterns of behaviour. There was a continuing requirement for monitoring and vigilance as safeguarding issues were never “solved”, and effort around awareness-raising was required as an ongoing activity.
 - The Alexi Project had been seen as one of the major achievements in 2017/18. The Project had researched child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking, and looked at ways voluntary sector expertise could contribute to supporting statutory child sexual exploitation services. The hub and spoke model that grew out of this meant that the voluntary sector ‘hubs’ would expand their support, learning and expertise across geographical neighbourhoods, and Sheffield had been identified as one of only 15 national hubs. This had resulted in Sheffield working with neighbouring authorities to provide one to one support for young people identified as being at risk from child sexual exploitation, as well as delivering a comprehensive programme of training for professionals. The Service was always looking for the reasons why young people were going missing and whilst being fully aware of the problems of trafficking, aimed to pick young people at risk up at an early stage. In 2018/19, the Children Missing in Education Service was merged with the Child Sexual Exploitation Service, and there were cases of girls being found in other cities, linked to trafficking, and being successfully returned home.
 - The Service provided a considerable amount of training, but mostly at a

universal level. However, sexual exploitation awareness and training was part of the core and advanced training offer for school staff, and schools were key participants in the “It’s not OK” campaign. The majority of schools had made this part of their curriculum, either through Personal, Social and Health Education or elsewhere. It was agreed that a piece of work was required to try and track this activity within schools.

- It was accepted that there were times when children, who had been identified as being at risk from child sexual exploitation, had been removed from their home and placed in local authority care, in a residential home, or other facility, where they may continue to be at risk. The plans to reform the residential sector would provide more support to families to allow more young people to remain in the family home.

7.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service – Annual Report 2017/18, and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks Dan White, Jane Haywood and Victoria Horsefield for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised; and
- (c) requests (i) Dan White to prepare a briefing note for circulation to those Members on the Committee during the 2019/20 Municipal Year and, if deemed necessary, arrangements be made for this issue to be scrutinised by the Committee during that year and (ii) Victoria Horsefield to undertake a piece of work to track the rolling out of the child sexual exploitation awareness training “Friend or Foe” within schools.

8. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

- 8.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer containing the Work Programme for 2018/19.
- 8.2 Deborah Glen reported that, due to the Special Educational Needs Service having been subject to an Ofsted inspection, it had been agreed that the next meeting of the Committee, due to be held on 7th January 2019, when this item was to be considered, be re-arranged for 4th February 2019, which would enable the Committee to also consider the outcome of the Ofsted inspection. Ms Glen added that there were two other topics – Support to Roma, Gypsy and Traveller Children and Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS)/Post 16 Provision – for which meeting dates had not yet been identified, and it was hoped that both items could be allocated to meetings during the 2018/19 Municipal Year.
- 8.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the information now reported, and approves the contents of the Work Programme for 2018/19.

9. EU FUNDING POST-BREXIT

- 9.1 The Committee received and noted a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer on the future of EU funding post-Brexit and attaching, as an appendix, a list of those projects likely to be affected.

10. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT AND RECOVERY PLAN - UPDATE

- 10.1 The Committee received a presentation from Carly Speechley (Director of Children and Families) providing an update on the Children and Families Improvement and Recovery Plan.

- 10.2 Ms Speechley reported on the Service's vision and principles in terms of ensuring that Sheffield's children and young people were safe and supported to achieve their full potential, and referred to the Improvement and Recovery Plan, the vehicle for the delivery of the Council's vision. She reported on the outcome of the external Ofsted regulation focused visits on the Front Door in April 2017 and Edge of Care Services in October 2017, and referred to the progress made against the Improvement and Recovery Plan in terms of the workforce, quality and budget. Ms Speechley referred to statistical information regarding the numbers of children in care and children on the Child Protection Register, from April 2015 to August 2018, and the numbers of children in care, in terms of the rate per 10,000 children and young people, both in Sheffield, and as a comparison with figures in other Core Cities, from April 2016 to August 2017. She concluded by referring to the challenges facing the Service, together with details of how the Service intended to address such challenges.

- 10.3 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-

- It had been identified, as one of the challenges, that residential care provision was a competitive market, with private companies looking to make a profit. In some cases, particularly when there were a number of different organisations vying for the same placement, this resulted in increased costs. As a result of this, the Authority was constantly looking at what it could do to improve its offer in order to remain competitive. The Authority worked closely with the larger providers with the aim of trying to get them to prioritise Sheffield children and young people in terms of placements, and charge a reduced rate for the second child in a family.
- Although it was inevitable that there would be a budget overspend this financial year, it was hoped that the position would improve over the next four years. The Authority spent approximately £30 million on placements, which was considerably less than some of the other Core Cities.
- In terms of the recruitment and retention of social workers, whilst the position had improved considerably over the last few years, some experienced staff were still moving to other local authorities on the basis that they were paying

higher salaries. The situation was not being helped by the fact that, whilst there was a national salary framework for a number of other public service workers, there was no such framework for social workers. Following comments raised at a previous meeting, about a successful approach in Gloucestershire regarding the problems of retaining experienced social workers, the Service had made contact with them, and as a result, had managed to recruit one retired social worker, who was currently working three days a week, as well as continuing to try and attract other former workers back.

- The Council was part of a consortium which had implemented the White Rose Framework, to attempt to overcome the issues with independent foster agencies. This approach has worked better with prospective adopters, but not particularly well with foster carers.
- Whilst the Authority did not hold any information on the outcomes when arrangements had been made for older children and young people to remain with their families, there had been a considerable amount of research undertaken with regards to adverse experiences encountered by such children and young people. Work would continue to look at the level of need children and young people were at, and what level of intervention the Service could offer families to stop any adverse conditions worsening.
- The implementation of the new IT system (Liquid Logic), on 23rd July 2018, had proved very challenging. Whilst it was an improved system, it had caused a number of problems for a considerable number of staff and, as a means of support, four workers and IT champions had been used in order to assist staff.

10.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information reported as part of the presentation, together with the responses to the questions raised; and
- (b) expresses (i) its thanks to Carly Speechley for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised and (ii) its thanks and appreciation to all members of staff in the Children and Families Service for the progress made in respect of the Improvement and Recovery Plan.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 11.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 4th February 2019, at 10.00 am, in the Town Hall.



Report to Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee 4th February 2019

Report of: Executive Director of People Services Portfolio

Subject: Adoptions Annual Report

Author of Report: Paul Dempsey, Assistant Director, Provider Services

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

Consider the annual report of the Adoptions Service and note the progress made.

Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

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Sheffield City Council: Annual Adoption Report for 2017/18.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report is the Annual Report of Sheffield City Council's Adoption Service. The report details the activity and performance of Sheffield's Adoption Service for 2017/18 and sets out improvement and development work planned for 2018/19.

2. Introduction

2.1 Sheffield City Council Adoption Service's remit is to recruit and approve prospective adopters, match and place children with approved adoptive families, and to provide adoption support to adopted children, adoptive parents and adopted adults.

2.2 It is a legislative requirement that the service provides reports on its activity and performance to Elected Members at least every 6 months

3. Adoption Activity - Children 2017/18.

3.1 There have been fewer children adopted in Sheffield over 2017/18 compared to 2016/17 and fewer children with adoption plans agreed for them this year compared to last. This reflects the national picture, with the number of children being adopted nationally decreasing for several years now. There are complex reasons for this including case law and a fall in the number of adopters approved and waiting.

3.2 Table 1 below sets out the number of children who have been through different stages of the adoption process in Sheffield in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17:

Table 1

	2017-18	2016-17
Early permanence placements in year	4	5
Children made subject to SHOBPA decision	51	76
Children made subject to Placement Orders	38	56
Children matched to adoptive families	41	52
Children placed with adoptive families	44	44
Children adopted in year	39	51
Number of disrupted placements	2	3

2.3 Early permanence placements are where children who have not yet had a plan of adoption agreed by the Court are placed with approved adopters under Fostering Regulations, as a foster placement. This is known as 'Foster to Adopt'. We use these

placements where it is assessed as extremely likely that the Court agreed plan will become adoption for a particular child, and we want to place the child with its forever family as early as possible in his or her life, and ideally straight from birth. The approved adopters foster the child, until such time as all assessments are complete and the Court has awarded a Placement Order, at which point the child becomes legally placed for adoption with the family. We only use these placements for a small number of children in particular circumstances, to reduce risk. However, any risk associated with foster to adopt placements is taken by the approved adopters, who will have the child removed if the Court does not agree the adoption plan. For the child there is no added risk as in the standard process for adoption she or he would have had a placement move from a short term foster carer to a return home to birth or extended family anyway. The service made 4 Foster to Adopt placements in 2017/18 compared to 5 the previous year.

2.4 As can be seen from Table 1, the number of children subject to a 'should be placed for adoption' decision reduced significantly from 76 in 2016/17 to 51 in 2017/18 and the number of children adopted reduced by 12 in the same period. Adoption is not the right plan for all children who come into care, and where it is safe to return children to their birth families this should be pursued and seen as a success. However, for children who cannot return home we should seek the best alternative permanence for them and we will be striving in 2018/19 to ensure that all children where adoption is the right plan are supported to secure it.

2.5 The percentage of children who left care via adoption in 2017/18 was 14.7%. This was down from 18.3% in 2016/17 but was higher than the most recent national average of 13.9%

2.6 There were two children whose adoption placements disrupted in 2017/18. These two were a sibling group placed in the same adoptive family. The service plans to hold a disruption meeting to learn lessons from this disruption but this has been delayed while we address complaints made by the adoptive family.

4. Adoption Timeliness

4.1 National scorecards for adoption agencies are based on three primary indicators. These are used to compare performance of adoption agencies both nationally and with statistical neighbours. A low number of days represents good performance for the first two indicators (known as A1 and A2) while a high percentage is good for the third indicator (A3). The indicators are based on a three year average; however, a far more accurate indication of the current performance of an adoption service is to look at the performance on these measures for the most recent year.

4.2 A1- 'average time in days between a child entering care and being placed for adoption': Our 3 year average performance in Sheffield for 2015-18 was 446 days. This is an improvement on the period 2014-17 when the 3 year average was 500 days. However, very positively, performance in the reporting year only has improved significantly to an average of 317 days demonstrates key improvements made within the service. This is a strong performance and 109 days quicker than the Government's target of 426 days.

4.3 A2 – ‘average time in days between placement order being granted and the decision to match with adoptive families: Our 3 year average performance in Sheffield for 2015-18 was 231 days This is also an improvement on the period 2014-17 when the 3 year average was 273 days. Again very positively, the performance for 2017/18 only has improved considerably to 122 days. This is 109 days quicker than our 3 year average performance and just 1 day short of the Government target of 121 days.

4.4 A3 – ‘percentage of children who wait less than 426 days between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family’. Our 3 year average performance for 2015-18 was 62%. This is good and is an improvement on 2014-17 when the average was 55%. The average for the reporting year only has improved to 70%, demonstrating continued improvement.

4.5 There has been a strong focus on improving adoption performance over the last 18 to 24 months and this now shows in improved timeliness detailed above.

5. Adoption Activity – Adopters 2017-18.

5.1 As outlined above, there has been a national fall in the numbers of adopters approved. This has been the case in Sheffield too and has led to the decision to make improving the sufficiency of adoptive placements for the children needing them part of the Children’s Services Improvement Plan. The information below provides data in relation to adopters.

5.2 Recruitment and approval of adopters

- 21 adoptive families were approved in year 2017-18. There were 29 approved 2016-17.
- 24 adoptive families had children placed in the year (21 with Sheffield children). There were 25 in 2016-17.
- 17 families where adoption orders were granted in the year (all with Sheffield children),
- 12 adoptive families withdrew from process. These were for reasons such as bereavement, starting a new job and requiring time to put finances in order.
- 1 adoptive family had their application refused at stage 1 in the year. This was on medical grounds.

5.3 Use of inter-agency adopters

- In total, 23 children were placed with adopters approved by external agencies during the year. There is a fee when we place our children with other agency adopters. For placing a single child the fee is £27,000. The fee for placing a sibling group of two is £43,000.

5.4 Recruitment Activity Undertaken.

- The service continued to promote the adoption at local events and festivals in the council throughout 2017/18. Sheffield Adoption Service has also continued to be part of the 'One Adoption Hub' (previously known as the Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium), which promotes adoption services across the region via its website. South Yorkshire local authorities have continued to collaborate under this umbrella to provide information evenings for adopters in the region and a duty system for enquirers. However, further evaluation is required of the effectiveness of this arrangement.
- The need to bring recruitment in Sheffield back up towards previous levels is recognised in the service improvement plan. Ambitious targets have been set to increase the numbers of approvals over the next two years. This includes foster to adopt carers.
- Where enquirers are interested in inter-country adoption they are directed to Adoption Yorkshire which is a voluntary agency who provide specialist advice to those wishing to adopt children from abroad. Sheffield commissions this service along with other members of the One Adoption Hub.

6. Adoption Support 2017-18

6.1 Adoption support work has increased significantly, supported by the nationally available Adoption Support Fund for families in need of therapeutic support. The fund has been extended until 2020 and now covers adopted people up to the age of 21(25 with a EHC plan/SEN statement. Referrals to the fund in Sheffield have more than doubled over the last 12 months.

6.2 The drive towards promoting adoption as a route for permanency for looked after children, including those who are older, sibling groups and children with more complex needs has gone hand in hand with the recognition that those families will need support over the years to help them support their child with issues arising from early trauma or harm. The growth in both indirect and direct contact is another element of this. The result is that the number of referrals for support has grown and the data below reflects this trend.

- On 31st March 2018 the number of families in receipt of post adoption support: 87. 7 funded by agency. 80 through the ASF
- Requests for assessments during the year – 60. Of these 50 resulted in the provision of support
- Number of families in receipt of pre-adoption support as of 31st March 2018: 20. (Funded by the service: 1. Funded by another LA or VAA: 1. Funded by another route e.g. ASF: 10.)
- Number of families in receipt of adult adoptee support, not one off advice: 33. (Funded by agency: 31. Funded via another route: 2.)
- Letterboxes contacts: 550+
- Adoption allowances: 306

6.3 Sheffield has a number of support groups and activities in place to assist children of every age range (including teenagers), as well as their parents. The Adoption Fun

Days in summer and the Christmas Party are well attended popular events. Regular newsletters are provided to adoptive families to inform them of events and give useful information.

6.4 There are plans to extend the 'core offer' to adopters and develop post approval training/workshops to help prepare adopters for the task ahead. Additionally we support adopted adults to access their adoption records and sign post them to services that can help with searching and tracing birth family where this is desired.

6.5 Birth family members are also provided with support and advice around contact and other matters relating to the adoption. They are signposted for intermediary services where required to specialist agencies in the area.

7 Adoption Panel Business

7.1 Business and Meetings

- Sheffield Council operates a single adoption panel which meets every two weeks. There have been **20** panels in the period from 01/04/17 to 31/03/18.
- The panel has recommended **21** approvals of adopters
- There have been **44** matches considered by the panel. 5 of these were for sibling groups of **2** children.
- There has been **1** relinquished child presented to panel for consideration as to whether they should be placed for adoption.
- The fall in recruitment and numbers of children placed for adoption means that the Panel has been less busy than in the previous year. During the year 2016-17 there were **24** panels, including 2 extra emergency ones. There were **52** matches considered and **28** approvals.

7.2 Membership

- The panel has an experienced independent Chair. The medical adviser to the panel is very experienced and knowledgeable in the field of adoption. She provides comprehensive and clear advice to the agency and to Panel- as well as adopters. Legal advice is readily available as required. Both the Chair and Agency Adviser have good relationships with both these advisers.
- The central list is sufficient to meet need. It is in line with regulatory requirements. There are long standing, committed members who are very knowledgeable and they have a range of skills and experience, although certain groups are underrepresented. It is recognised by the Agency Adviser that further diversity of membership would be welcome.
- The Agency Adviser has a long history in children's services and the field of adoption. She has good knowledge of the regulations and legal context of

adoption. She has provided panel members with regular updates on cases as well as informing them of relevant case law and research.

7.3 Quality Assurance

- Panel provides feedback to workers and the agency on the quality of reports presented and the worker's presentation. An example of this is feedback on the need for some workers to develop their analysis in prospective adopter reports. This led to training and presentation at a recruitment team away day.
- However it appears that reports from the panel back to the agency have not been consistent over the last 12 months and this is being addressed by the Adoption Service Manager. It is also planned to develop the feedback forms to grade the quality of reports in line with OFSTED guidelines so workers and their managers can be given a clear indication of Panel's view of the standard of reports.

8. Regional Adoption Agency Update

8.1 Over the period of this report a lot of joint work took place with neighboring local authorities to prepare the way for the One Adoption South Yorkshire Regional Adoption Agency. This was to be hosted by Doncaster in the original proposal. However plans did not go forward on this basis as both Sheffield and Rotherham local authorities were not satisfied that the proposal was right and in their best interests. As a result the process has been delayed. An alternative model has been developed by Sheffield and Rotherham and is currently being considered as a potential way forward.

9 Developments in the Year:

9.1 These were mostly based around preparing for regionalisation. The work will not be wasted but will inform the next stages of the work.

9.2 Over the year there continued to be a drive towards improving timeliness for children requiring adoptive families and this can be seen in the improved performance around the key government targets.

9.3 Sheffield has been one of the key authorities to integrate latest research into transitions of children from foster care to adoptive family. The last 12 months has seen this become more embedded into practice, although there is further work to be done in terms of promoting this and getting both foster carers and children's social workers on board.

9.4 The Sheffield Adopter Advisory Board went live, with the aim of allowing adopters experiences/voice to inform service developments. This has had mixed results and is being merged into a new regional adopter voice group to try to attract a bigger audience.

9.5 The service has had significant management change towards the end of the reporting year. Both the Service Manager and Assistant Director with responsibility for the Adoption Service left during the year and were successfully replaced with new officers.

10 Developments and Improvement Actions for 2018/19

10.1 Children's Service Improvement Plan

- The developments over next 12 months will be led in large part by this plan. The elements relating to adoption relates include developing a sufficiency of adopters to meet the needs of the children waiting. Clear targets have been set to increase the numbers of approved adopters over the next two years. The aim is to approve 32 in 2018/19 and 48 in 2019/20. There is an updated recruitment strategy to support this. The strategy will involve examining each part of the current process from initial enquiry onwards to see how we may improve and attract more adopters.
- The other element of the service improvement plan that relates specifically to adoption services, concerns the increasing the use of Early Permanency Placements for children. So far in 2019/20 we have already seen an increase in the number of children placed with EPP carers (2 placed in the first quarter and more planned, which compares favorably to the total of 4 last year), but we plan to build upon this.

10.2 Signs of Safety

- Training is ongoing for the service. All team members will receive training in this as part of Sheffield Council's 5 year agenda to implement the approach. This is seen as being particularly useful in adoption support and a champion from that service will be identified to support the process of integrating signs of safety into the team.

10.3 Performance

- The ability to track performance will become more robust over the year, with much clearer performance measures for the service. Meetings will take place at both a team and director level to monitor this. The introduction of Liquid Logic to the authority will make it much easier to have accurate management information than the current system allows.

10.4 Re-structure of the Service

- There are plans in place to re-structure the adoption team and these are currently going through the achieving change process. It is proposed that certain functions relating to support for special guardians and private fostering will transfer to a newly created connected person's team which will also include connected carers. This will be managed by the fostering service. There will be a new dedicated recruitment and assessment team to support our efforts to increase the number of adopters approved. This will leave a specialist adoption support service and prepare the way for regionalisation. The plan also includes development of the family finding role to support children's workers who might be unfamiliar with adoption care planning and

allow them to share their expertise in this field. They will be involved more pro-actively in support plans and the transition process.

10.5 Develop Adoption Support Services

- It is intended to develop the 'core offer' to approved adopters by offering additional training and workshops for the task ahead. We are also looking at the possibility of being part of a shared commissioning process for adoption services at regional level across Yorkshire and Humber which would further develop our offer to adopters, birth family and adopted adults.

10.6 The Adoption Panel

- The reporting and quality assurance functions are being reviewed to make them more regular and robust so they can inform the work of the agency. The diversity of membership will also be addressed. Panel members, along with social workers, will be offered the opportunity to attend training around disruptions in adoption placements as there has been a slight increase over the last year.

10.7 Regionalisation

- Finally, the creation of a Regional Adoption Agency will be progressed over the year. Assistant Directors from Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster are meeting to agree how we take this forward.

11. Summary

11.1 The last twelve months have seen a significant improvement in timeliness for children with a plan of adoption. The annual data (rather than the 3 year average), shows we are meeting the Department for Education targets.

11.2 There has been a fall in the numbers of adopters approved and the number of children being made subject to adoption plans. However there has been a big increase in the levels of adoption support requested.

11.3 The Adoption Panel has not been as busy as in previous years as a result of fewer children being matched for adoption and fewer adoptive families being approved.

11.4 Regionalisation of the adoption services in South Yorkshire stalled in 2017/18 but there are now plans to take this piece of work forward, although the model will be different to that originally proposed.

11.5 Changes in the Adoption Service Manager and Assistant Director have affected progress over the second half of the year but these positions are now filled. There have also been a number of staff vacancies and sickness both within the adoption teams and business support services. There are still vacancies but these are currently being advertised and the situation is much improved. This will support the planned developments for the year ahead.

11.6 There service has clear plans and is now well placed to address development areas such as adopter recruitment and regionalisation.

Vicky Brooke
Service Manager, Adoption

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Report to Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee 4th February 2019

Report of: Executive Director of People Services Portfolio

Subject: Fostering Annual Report

Author of Report: Paul Dempsey, Assistant Director, Provider Services

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

Consider the annual report of the Fostering Service and note the progress made.

Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

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SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

People Services

Children & Families

Fostering Service

Annual Report

Sheffield Fostering Service
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1 Purpose of Report

1.1 This is the Annual Report of Sheffield City Council's Fostering Service. The report details the activity and performance of Sheffield's Fostering Service for 2017/18 and sets out improvement and development work planned for 2018/19.

2 Introduction:

2.1 Sheffield City Council Fostering Service's remit is to provide family based placements for Sheffield's looked after children. The Service recruits and approves prospective foster carers, matches and places children with approved foster carers, and provides support and supervision to approved foster carers.

2.2 It is a legislative requirement that the Fostering Service reports on its activity and performance to Elected Members.

2.3 As at the end of 2017/18, the Fostering Service had 264 mainstream approved foster carers offering a range of short term task centred placements, permanence placements, short break placements for disabled children, and support/respite placements. In addition, the service had a further 4 approved 'connected persons' foster carers. Connected persons foster carers are family members or friends of a looked after child or children who have been placed with them. Childcare legislation requires that these carers, who are most often grandparents to the looked after child, be assessed and approved, where suitable, as local authority foster carers.

2.4 Our foster carers do a fantastic job offering care to some of the City's most vulnerable children and young people, very often transforming their lives.

3 Our Vision and Aims

3.1 Our City's big ambition is that every child, young person and family achieves their full potential. Sheffield's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018-2020 sets out how we are going to meet that ambition for our looked after children and care leavers. We are determined to ensure our children and young people in care, adopted children and care leavers succeed.

3.2 Our vision is that 'children and young people are safe and supported to achieve their full potential'. We set out four elements to how we will work to achieve this, as follows:

- Children are at the centre of our practice
- We intervene at the earliest opportunity
- Our workforce are skilled and supported to do the work that they need to
- Children and families benefit from high performing and high quality services

3.3 The Fostering Service supports the department's policy to enable children and young people to stay with their birth families wherever this is safe and possible and where they cannot, to place them without delay with alternative carers.

3.4 The aim of Sheffield's Fostering Service is to provide high quality foster care as part of a full range of accommodation provision for looked after children and provide the best possible standards of care, safety and protection for children who cannot live with their own families. In doing so the service strives to:

- Provide a service that is welcoming, accessible and inclusive
- Provide a choice of high quality foster placements to meet the individual needs of children and young people
- Ensure foster carers provide a good level of parenting to all children in foster care and assist children and young people to engage in their care and placement planning
- Work together with partner agencies to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people, to enhance and develop health, education & well-being
- Work with foster carers to support 'staying put' placements for children remaining post 18
- Provide support and assessments for family and friends of foster carers

4 Looked After Children Placement Data

4.1 Sheffield's looked after children population on 31st March 2018 totalled 628 children and young people. This is an increase of 43 children compared to the 585 children who were looked after on 31st March 2017. As we moved into 2018/19 this number continued to increase.

4.2 As the number of looked after children in Sheffield has increased; the number of Sheffield's approved mainstream foster carers has decreased. At the end of 2017, we had 307 approved mainstream foster carers. By the 31st March 2018 this had reduced by 43 to 264. To some extent this reflects the picture nationally, where there has been an overall decrease in the number of approved fostering households and it is well recognised that there is a national shortage.

4.3 Sheffield does not have a sufficient number and range of in-house foster carers to meet the needs of our looked after children. This means that we have to place children in independent fostering agency placements. These are always more expensive and very often out of city. In some cases, where we cannot identify an in-house foster carer or an independent fostering agency placement, a young person may have to be placed in a children's home. This may be in contrast to the child's needs for a family and again will be very expensive and may be out of city.

4.4 As of 31st March 2018 we had 474 looked after children placed in foster families. Of these 320 of them were placed with Sheffield's in-house foster carers. Of the 320, 254 were placed with mainstream foster carers previously unknown to the child, and a further 66 were placed with connected persons foster carers. Making up the remainder of the 474 children placed in foster carer were 154 who were in independent fostering agencies placements.

4.5 We aim to place as many of our looked after children in our in-house fostering placements as possible. As such it is essential that we have access to a sufficient number and range of high quality, local foster carers, and efforts will be focussed on reversing the declining numbers in 2018/19 and beyond.

4.6 It is acknowledged that a major weakness in the service has been the timely completion of connected person's assessments. Action is being taken in 2018/19 to address this.

5 Recruitment Activity and Outcomes in 2017/18:

5.1 As discussed above, there is currently a significant shortage of foster carers in Sheffield and the numbers have been decreasing rather than increasing. The number of mainstream Sheffield City Council foster carers has reduced from 307 in 2014 to 264 at the end of 2017/18.

5.2 Recruitment and retention of foster carers is probably the most important factor for any fostering organisation in delivering an effective fostering service to looked after children. Sheffield is therefore making significant changes to our 'Foster Care Offer'.

5.3 In 2017/18 the service recruited and approved 15 new mainstream foster carer households. However there were 18 resignations, disappointingly resulting in a net loss of 3 carer households. This compares with a net gain of 1 carer household in 2016/17 when we recruiting 16 new households and lost 15.

5.4 In 2016/17 we had 297 initial enquiries about fostering, received 63 requests for initial home visits and made 16 new carer approvals. In 2017/2018 we had a significant increase in enquiries to 633 and 108 referrals for initial home visits. The

increase in interest came in the second part of the financial year due to the new marketing campaign.

5.5 Therefore it is likely that some new carer approvals following this interest will be completed in 2018/2019.

5.6 We can already see that recruitment outcomes will improve in 2018/2019. The service is currently projecting up to 40 new mainstream carer approvals in 2018/19, more the double the number for 2017/18.

6 Recruitment Plans for 2018/19:

6.1 A full and detailed Recruitment and Retention Strategy for 2018/19 has being produced based upon the channels and target audiences agreed with the Councils' Communications and Marketing Team. Recruitment events have been timetabled throughout the year, focussing on three specific campaigns. These are in May for Fostering Fortnight, October to launch a different campaign focussing on images of our foster carers and January 2019 when we will be focussing of foster carer stories.

6.2 In addition we have ensured that we remain visible across the city, having banners up in all local parks, advertising on the back of public transport and also attendance at key events across the city including park runs, Owls in the Park and Tramlines.

6.3 The service ensures we have high visibility on Facebook/Twitter updating our posts 2-3 times per week and we hold regular (6 weekly) open evenings.

7 Support and Supervision Services for Carers:

7.1 All carers are allocated a fostering social worker who undertakes their assessment; where possible for consistency they will remain allocated until their first placement is made. Another fostering social worker will be allocated post approval/first placement, who will continue to support and supervise the foster carer post approval; there may be a short period of handover/dual allocation.

7.2 All carers are offered a mentor for the first 12 months post approval to offer additional support and guidance. Consideration is given to the mentor carer's

approval category and location of carer so support can be more practical if necessary.

7.3 All carers will be visited a minimum of every 6 weeks. Many will be visited far more frequently, depending on their circumstances.

7.4 During office hours we have a duty service available to carers and outside working hours we have a foster carer's telephone helpline.

7.5 The Service has a contact and liaison officer, who makes monthly calls to carers to 'check in' and promote any upcoming events, such as the Open Forum, Fostering Fun Day, Bag a Book event that are fostering events open to all foster carers.

7.6 The Service holds quarterly Foster Carer Forums, and has a closed secure webpage where carers can book onto training and access any policies and procedures and be updated on any service developments.

7.7 There are also a number of foster carer support groups across the city that take place on monthly basis and this includes the introduction of a new support group specifically for newly approved carers.

8 Fostering Panel:

8.1 Between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018 a total of 15 panels meetings were held. There were 3 panels meetings that were cancelled due to lack of business. There currently is capacity to hold 2 panels per month dependent on service need and where necessary additional panels can be arranged. The Service has two different panels with different membership. Each panel has an independent chair with significant knowledge and experience of fostering issues and all panels meetings have been quorate which reflects the excellent commitment of the panel members.

8.2 There continues to be a system of each panel having a dedicated professional panel advisor. This is well established and continues to work well and provide consistency within and across panels. The panel advisor was initially a part time post however this post was made full-time in September 2017 in order to support the recruitment drive of foster carers and to reduce any issues of capacity or delay linked to panel. Both panels have the same Chair and Vice-Chair, enabling the panel to remain consistent in its leadership and in the recommendations they make. The Vice-Chair assumes the chairing role four times per year in order to develop and maintain their chairing skills.

8.3 Regarding quality assurance role of panel, all panel members have an individual responsibility to raise 'practice issues' as a contribution to quality assuring the work undertaken by the Fostering Service. This ranges from typing and factual errors to practice/performance issues of individual workers or feedback to the Service at a

more senior level in relation to how procedures and policies are being implemented. These issues are reported back to the service predominately via the Panel Adviser, but also directly from the Panel Chair and Vice Chair to the Agency Decision Maker via business meetings. Panel members contributed to a working group which developed the assessment report and this has seen benefits as the assessment reports are consistently of good quality. Challenging the performance and practice of the Fostering Service is seen as an essential role of panel.

8.4 Business Meetings are held twice per year and these are an effective means of communication between the Fostering Panel and the Service.

8.5 All panel members are reviewed annually in relation to their performance as panel members. Reviews take place throughout the year to coincide with members appointments. The panel member reviews are instrumental in establishing the training needs for panel members that will inform the 2018/19 training programme.

8.6 In addition to the annual fostering panel training day, all new panel members are provided with reading material and research articles that are relevant and useful to the matters presented to Fostering Panel.

8.7 All new panel members have an induction which consists of a welcome pack, the opportunity to observe panel, and a mentor who is an experienced panel member.

8.8 Panels held each month in 2017/18:

Fostering Panels held each month

April 2017- 2 cancelled	0
May 2017 – 1 cancelled	1
June 2017	1
July 2017	2
August 2017	1
September 2017	2
October 2017	1
November 2017	1
December 2017	1
January 2018	1
February 2018	2
March 2018	3

8.9 Agency Decision Maker

From April 2017 – March 2018 the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) has been the Assistant Director, Provider Services. During this period there have been three changes of Assistant Director. The ADM is a nominated person within the Local Authority who has the legal responsibility to make an approval decision. The ADM's role is to consider the fostering panel's recommendation and to make the final decision. In most circumstances the ADM accepts the fostering panel's recommendation; the Panel Advisor offers advice and support to enable this

process. The ADM for Fostering was changed in March 2018 and is now Paul Dempsey, Assistant Director, Provider Services.

8.10 Foster Carer Approvals:

There were 15 new approvals of mainstream foster carers between April 2017 and March 2018.

The table below shows the number of foster carer households and the number of approved beds offered by those households in total, at the end of 2016/17 and 2017/18. From this we can see that although the number of fostering households has reduced, the number of placements offered within these families actually increased by 1. This indicates that in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17 more of our foster carers were offering multiple placements.

Date	No. Foster Families	No. Approved Beds
31.3.17	264	282
31.3.18	247	283

8.11 Resignations:

Historically we have not as a Service been as pro-active as we could in understanding why foster carers choose to resign. We now ensure as part of our exit process that the panel advisor contacts all foster carers who choose to resign and offer them a face to face exit interview to better understand the reasons and rationale for their decision. It is hoped that this more consistent approach will give the Service a good understanding of a foster carer's experience and also give the Service opportunities to make necessary changes and development.

8.12 Annual Reviews:

It is a legislative requirement that all carer reviews where it is the first review post initial approval are presented to the Fostering Panel for consideration. There were 9 first annual reviews presented at panel in 2017/18. However it is acknowledged that there were 15 approvals the previous year (2016/2017) and so there should have been more first approvals at panel in the year.

8.13 The Service has recognised that first reviews have not always been presented to panel in a timely manner and action is being taken to address this. All new carers are being booked into panel for their first review at the point they are initially approved. It is anticipated that this will contribute to increased compliance around meeting timescales and ensure that all annual reviews are completed within 12 months and presented back to panel.

8.14 Last year we continued to meet with our colleagues in the reviewing service to establish and consolidate good communication and to help us identify what the

barriers to compliance were. These were primarily due to capacity and sickness cover of staff. Both issues are being addressed.

9 Developments in 2017/18:

9.1 As previously stated as part of the fostering business case, the panel advisors role has increased from 0.5 to a full time post. This is for a 2 year period to be reviewed. The purpose of this is to be able to increase the number of panel meetings in anticipation of increased recruitment outcomes and our target to recruit at least 40 new foster carers per year.

9.2 The Service has recruited a psychologist within the Service, to support with vulnerable placements, offer consultations to foster carers and social workers and develop a consistent training model to be delivered to the foster carers and staff within the service.

9.3 An additional social work post in the recruitment team has been established in order to meet planned increased demand and ensure timely allocation of assessments.

9.4 In October 2017 we launched our new fostering marketing campaign and logo 'Foster Sheffield's Future'. We have increased our investment on marketing and have become more visible across the city, which has led to increased interest.

9.5 Staying Put: The Staying Put policy has been further developed and this has included the recruitment of a Staying Put and Supported Lodgings Co-ordinator who will lead on the policy and support carers and young people from aged 16 when future options are being considered.

10 Developments and Improvement Actions for 2018/19:

10.1 The Service has the following development aims for 2018/19:

- Improve looked after children's outcomes through improving the sufficiency of care placements and developing an expanded and improved quality fostering service

- Create a pool of foster carers able to be part of a No Wrong Door type service provision and link with children's homes as a step down alternative to residential care
- Increase recruitment of new foster carers
- Improve retention of existing foster carers
- Maintain placement stability outcomes for looked after children
- Improve emotional wellbeing of looked after children in foster care
- Improve educational engagement and progress
- Increase the number and percentage of young people placed in foster care (as opposed to residential care) and in in city placements(as opposed to out of city) in line with best practice and children's bests interests – and as a result reduce spend on unnecessary high cost placements
- Improve our financial offer and our practical support offer to foster carers

10.2 The Fostering Service will be going through a change in structure in 2018/19 and as part of this we will be developing 3 new teams in addition to the two supervisory and support worker teams. These will be the Placement Team, the Recruitment Team and the Connected Persons Team. As part of the development of the dedicated Connected Person's Team we will ensure that we have a clear policy and robust tracking to ensure timescales for connected person's assessments are met.

10.3 We will also be establishing an additional full time fostering reviewing officer post to ensure all carers receive timely, face to face annual reviews. There will be a quality assurance element to this role to ensure that changes in practice and necessary actions and improvements are implemented.

10.4 In addition to this consideration is being given to the development of different fostering schemes including the introduction of the 'No Wrong Door' type provision in Sheffield. This is a model of provision where foster carers link with 'residential hubs' where either re-unification to family or move onto foster carer would be the plan for the young people in placement. The idea is that foster carers spend time working in the residential to hub to build relationships with the young people, with a view to being matched to one of them for a foster placement.

11 Summary:

11.1 The numbers of Looked After Children has continued to increase and evidence the continued and increased need for more foster carers. Unfortunately without the resource young people are being placed in independent agency fostering placements or in residential placements which may not meet the needs of the young person or their care plan.

11.2 Over the past 12 months there has been a small net loss in carer numbers. This is extremely disappointing however in September 2017 the fostering brand was re-launched and we have seen a significant improvement in interest since then and have ensured that we remain visible across the city with our branding.

11.3 The need for an increase in foster carers has been recognised and supported by the Corporate Parenting Board and wider council and we have been fortunate enough to be granted some additional funding from the fostering business case which has allowed us to invest more money in the service. This has included additional staff members, a psychologist and additional support in the service. This has allowed us to improve our support offer to our carers.

11.4 We have increased our targets for 2018/2019 to approving **40** more fostering households which would be an increase of over 50% compared to 2017/2018. Forecasting forward based on the increased interest and work allocated it is anticipated that this target will be achieved.

11.5 In addition it is anticipated that the new structure in the service, which has created a dedicated recruitment team, leaves us much better placed to improve recruitment outcomes, with the newly established specialist connected persons team focussing on the different type of assessment and support that connected persons foster carers need.

Stephanie Kerr
Fostering Service Manager
July 2018

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Report to Children, Young People & Family Support Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

Monday 4th February 2019

Report of: Policy & Improvement Officer

Subject: Work Programme 2018/19

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A draft Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for the Committee's consideration and discussion

The proposed work programme aims to focus on a small number of issues, in depth. This means the Committee will need to prioritise issues to be included on formal meeting agendas. In doing this, the Committee may wish to reflect on the prioritisation principles attached at Appendix 2, to ensure that scrutiny activity is focussed where it can add most value.

Where an issue is not appropriate for inclusion on a meeting agenda, but there is significant interest from Members, the Committee can choose to request a written briefing paper.

The Work Programme will remain a live document and will be brought to each Committee meeting. This version has been subject to some small changes. At the last meeting, Members requested that we try to accommodate the item on Support to Roma, Gypsy and Traveller Children within this work programme. Members are there requested to consider the draft agenda for the March meeting.

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

- Consider and discuss the changes to the committees Work Programme for 2018/19, particularly the scheduled items for the March 2019 meeting

Children, Young People & Family Support Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee Draft Work Programme 2017-18

Chair: Cllr Mick Rooney

[Meeting Papers on SCC Website](#)

Vice Chair: Cllr Cliff Woodcraft

Meeting day/ time: Monday 10am – 1pm

Please note: the Work Programme is a live document and so is subject to change.

Topic	Reasons for selecting topic	Lead Officer/s	Agenda Item / Briefing paper
Monday 25th June 2018			
Ward level contextual attainment and progress data	Further consideration of report submitted in March 2018, to be provided as background information for the new committee to inform their consideration of priority issues and the work programme	Kate Wilkinson, Service Manager - Performance & Analysis Service	Agenda Item
Update on Academisation – contextual information	Agreed with Cabinet Member as an introductory item for the new Committee	John Doyle, Director Business Strategy Pam Smith, Head of Primary & Targeted Intervention	Agenda Item
Draft Work Programme 2019-19, a report of the Policy & Improvement Officer	To consider and discuss the committees Work Programme for 2017/18.	Deborah Fellowes, Policy & Improvement Officer	Agenda Item

Monday 3rd September 2018			
Call in of Cabinet Member decision 26th July 2018 - Short breaks consultation; implementation phase			Call In
School Exclusions	To receive an update on the outcome of the review of alternative provision for excluded pupils, including stakeholder engagement; and data on exclusions by ward, ethnicity, as requested at Scrutiny September 2017	Joel Hardwick, Head of Commissioning, Inclusion & School Services	Agenda Item
Monday 5th November 2018			
Attainment 2017-18 – citywide attainment outcomes in schools & academies - headline results	To receive a report outlining headline attainment results. The Committee could then receive a final verified version of the report in March 2019 when validated data is available, this could include further analysis in terms of national data / comparators. Also report on the progress made with regard to reading, mathematics and phonics, as requested at Scrutiny March 2018	Pam Smith, Head of Primary & Targeted Intervention Kate Wilkinson, Service Manager - Performance & Analysis Service	Agenda Item

Consultation on the future commissioning and delivery of young people's services – Investing In Young People, a report of the Executive Director of People Portfolio	To receive a report on the proposals for youth services, during the consultation period and provide feedback / comment.	Sam Martin, Assistant Director - Lifelong Learning and Skills	Agenda Item
Changes to School funding and Capital Programme for schools	Both requested at meeting on 25/6/18	Mark Sheikh, Head of Service, Business Strategy (Capital and Funding Strategy) Tricia	Agenda Item
Monday 10th December 2018			
Children's Social Care Improvement and Recovery Plan	Progress update of the Improvement and Recovery Plan, setting out the statistical information to enable members to measure progress made, further details on the recruitment and retention package offered to Social Workers and clarification in terms of conversations with the user groups involved.	Carly Speechley, Director Children and Families	Agenda Item

<p>Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service Annual Report</p>	<p>This report will give an update on the work of the Sexual Exploitation Service and partner agencies working to address child sexual exploitation, including current priorities and any challenges.</p>	<p>Janet Haywood, Chair of the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board</p> <p>Victoria Horsefield, Assistant Director, Children and Families</p> <p>Janine Dalley, Senior Programme Manager for Targeted Service. Sheffield Futures</p>	<p>Agenda Item</p>
<p>Sheffield Children's Safeguarding Board Annual Report</p>	<p>This report will provide an update on the work of the Safeguarding Board, including current priorities and any challenges.</p>	<p>Jane Haywood, Chair of the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board</p> <p>Carly Speechley, Director, Children and Families</p> <p>Victoria Horsefield, Assistant Director, Children and Families</p>	<p>Agenda Item</p>

Monday 7th January 2019			
Special Educational Needs in Sheffield	To receive an update on the progress of the development and implementation of the Inclusion Strategy, specifically with regard to the conversion to EHC Plans	Joel Hardwick, Head of Commissioning, Inclusion & School Services	Agenda Item
Adoption Service Annual Report	To receive the annual report	Paul Dempsey, Assistant Director – Provider, Children and Families	Annual Report
Fostering Service Annual Report	To receive the annual report	Paul Dempsey, Assistant Director – Provider, Children and Families	Annual Report

Monday 11th March 2019			
Sheffield's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Transformation Programme, 12 month update	To receive a progress report from representatives of the partner organisations in respect of the areas identified at the Scrutiny meeting in March 2018, specifically regarding transition and waiting times (internal)	Bethan Plant, Health Improvement Principal - Public Health Team Matthew Peers, Commissioning Manager – EWBMH, CCG Other attendees tbc	Agenda Item
2017 Final Results: City Context and School Performance Page 45	To receive a further report on citywide attainment (following the report the committee receive in November 2018). This report will reflect validated data and can include further analysis in terms of national data / comparators.	Jayne Ludlam, Executive Director of People Portfolio Pam Smith, Head of Primary & Targeted Intervention Kate Wilkinson, Service Manager - Performance & Analysis Service	Agenda Item
Academies and Localities Priorities	Requested at meeting on 25/6/18	Andrew Jones	Agenda Item

Learn Sheffield Peer Review	Suggested by Stephen Betts and agreed by Chair and Vice Chair	Stephen Betts, Learn Sheffield, Interim Chief Executive	
Support to Roma, Gypsy and Traveller Children			
Other Possible Topics			
Annual meeting with Young People	To be determined		
Joint review with Healthy Communities and Adult Social Care Committee on all age Mental Health Services	To establish a joint working group with the HCASC Committee with the purpose of scoping the joint session	Underway November 2018	Task Group
NEETS/Post 16 provision			