

Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND SCHOOLS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 14 APRIL 2021

TIME: 4:00 pm

PLACE: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Members of the Commission

Councillor Dawood (Chair)
Councillor Cole (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Pantling, Rahman, Riyait and Whittle

1 unallocated Group vacancy
1 unallocated Non-Group vacancy

Co-opted Members (Voting)

Gerry Hirst	Roman Catholic Diocesan
Carolyn Lewis	Church of England Diocese
Mr Mohit Sharma	Parent Governor (Primary / Special Schools)
Vacancy	Parent Governor (Secondary Schools)

Standing Invitees (Non-Voting)

Janet McKenna	Unison
Joseph Wyglendacz	Teaching Unions
Vacancy	Faith Representative (Hindu)
Vacancy	Faith Representative (Muslim)
Vacancy	Faith Representative (Sikh)

Members of the Commission are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

A. Thomas.

For the Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Ayleena Thomas (Democratic Support Officer),
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Leicester City Council, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Information for members of the public

PLEASE NOTE:

Any member of the press and public may listen in to this 'virtual' meeting via a weblink which will be publicised on the Council website at least 24hrs before the meeting.

Members of the press and public may tweet, blog etc. during the live broadcast as they would be able to during a regular Commission meeting at City Hall. It is important, however, that Councillors can discuss and take decisions without disruption, so the only participants in this virtual meeting will be the Councillors concerned, the officers advising the Commission and anyone the Chair invites to speak.

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Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: Ayleena Thomas, Democratic Support on (0116) 454 6369 or email ayleena.thomas@leicester.gov.uk

For Press Enquiries - please phone the **Communications Unit on 0116 454 4151**



USEFUL ACRONYMS IN RELATION TO OFSTED AND EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

(updated November 2015)

Acronym	Meaning
APS	Average Point Score: the average attainment of a group of pupils; points are assigned to levels or grades attained on tests.
ASYE	Assessed and Supported Year in Employment
C&YP	Children and Young People
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CFST	Children and Families Support Team
CICC	Children in Care Council
CIN	Children in Need
CLA	Children Looked After
CLASS	City of Leicester Association of Special Schools
COLGA	City of Leicester Governors Association
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CQC	Care Quality Commission
CYPF	Children Young People and Families Division (Leicester City Council)
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
CYPS Scrutiny	Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission
DAS	Duty and Advice Service
DCS	Director of Children's Services
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EET	Education, Employment and Training
EHA	Early Help Assessment
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EHP	Early Help Partnership
EHSS	Early Help Stay Safe
EIP	Education Improvement Partnership

ELG	Early Learning Goals: aspects measured at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
EY	Early Years
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage: (0-5); assessed at age 5.
EYFSP	Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
FS	Foundation Stage: nursery and school Reception, ages 3-5; at start of Reception a child is assessed against the new national standard of 'expected' stage of development, then teacher assessment of Foundation Stage Profile areas of learning
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Education
GLD	Good Level of Development
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KS1	Key Stage 1: National Curriculum Years (NCYs) 1 and 2, ages 5-7; assessed at age 7.
KS2	Key Stage 2: NCYs 3, 4, 5, and 6, ages 7-11; assessed at age 11.
KS3	Key Stage 3: NCYs 7, 8 and 9, ages 11-14; no statutory assessment.
KS4	Key Stage 4: NCYs 10 and 11, ages 14-16; assessed at age 16.
KTC	Knowledge Transfer Centre
LA	Local Authority
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LARP	Leicester Access to Resources Panel
LCCIB	Leicester City Council Improvement Board
LCT	Leicester Children's Trust
LDD	Learning Difficulty or Disability
LESP	Leicester Education Strategic Partnership
LLEs	Local Leaders of Education
LP	Leicester Partnership

LPP	Leicester Primary Partnership
LPS	Leicester Partnership School
LSCB	Leicester Safeguarding Children Board
LSOAs	Lower Super Output Areas
MACFA	Multi Agency Case File Audit
NCY	National Curriculum Year
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NLEs	National Leaders of Education
NLGs	National Leaders of Governance
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PEPs	Personal Education Plans
PI	Performance Indicator
PVI	Private, Voluntary and Independent
QA	Quality Assurance
RI	Requires Improvement
SA	Single Assessment
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy
SCR	Serious Case Review
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SIMS	Schools Information Management Systems
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
SLEs	Specialist Leaders of Education
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRE	Sex and Relationship Education
TBC	To be Confirmed
TFL	Tertiary Federation Leicester
TP	Teenage Pregnancy
UHL	University Hospitals Leicester
WIT	Whatever it Takes
YOS	Youth Offending Service
YPC	Young People's Council

PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

LIVE STREAM OF MEETING

A live stream of the meeting can be viewed on the following link:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCddTWO00_gs0cp-301XDbXA

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

- 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**Appendix A
(Pages 1 - 16)**

The minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission held on 25 February 2021 (Appendix A1) and 11 March 2021 (Appendix A2) are attached and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

- 4. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any petitions received.

- 5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any questions, representations or statements of case received.

- 6. THE UNDERACHIEVEMENT OF 'BLACK CARIBBEAN' AND 'WHITE BRITISH WORKING-CLASS' PUPILS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL AGE IN LEICESTER**

**Appendix B
(Pages 17 - 30)**

The Principal Education Officer submits the Underachievement of 'Black Caribbean' and 'White British Working-Class' pupils of secondary school age in Leicester' report to provide some context and background to the current work across Education to improve outcomes for all disadvantaged children and particularly those groups identified by Scrutiny Commission.

The Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission are asked to:

- 1) Note the content of the report.
- 2) Note the actions taken and proposed.

7. PROVISION OF TAXI FRAMEWORK FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE **Appendix C
(Pages 31 - 38)**

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education submits a report to provide the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission with an update on the provision of taxi journeys for Vulnerable people and the implementation/procurement of a new Framework.

8. EDGE OF CARE INTERVENTIONS SUMMARY REPORT QUARTER TWO: 2020-21 **Appendix D
(Pages 39 - 86)**

The Director for Social Care and Early Help submits this report is to provide a progress update to SMT on the delivery of interventions that are part of the edge of care offer within the Early Help and Prevention Service. Due to the range of complex interventions referred to, this report is supported by a presentation.

Members are asked to note the contents of the report and provide any observations or comments to the Head of Service for Early Help and Prevention. Each intervention programme has specific recommendations at the end of its section which are reviewed within the operational Edge of Care Interventions Board.

9. NATIONAL REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE **Appendix E
(Pages 87 - 94)**

The Director for Social Care and Early Help submits the Independent Review of Children's Social Care Terms of reference and letter to the Chair of the review from President of ADCS.

10. UPDATE ON IMPROVEMENT PROGRESS **Appendix F
(Pages 95 - 98)**

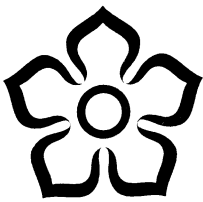
The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education submits a letter from Ofsted, following the formal 'annual engagement meeting'.

11. IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON LEICESTER'S CHILDREN SERVICES AND SCHOOLS

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education will provide a verbal update in relation to the impact of the coronavirus on Leicester's children services and schools.

12. WORK PROGRAMME **Appendix G
(Pages 99 - 104)**

The current work programme for the Commission is attached. The Commission is asked to consider this and make comments and/or amendments as it considers necessary.



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND SCHOOLS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2021 at 4:00 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Dawood (Chair)
Councillor Cole (Vice Chair)

Councillor Pantling
Councillor Rahman

Councillor Riyait
Councillor Whittle

In Attendance:

Councillor Cutkelvin, Assistant City Mayor - Education and Housing
Councillor Russell, Deputy City Mayor - Social Care and Anti-Poverty

Also Present:

Gerry Hurst - Roman Catholic Diocese
Mr Mohit Sharma - Parent Governor (Primary / Special Schools)

* * * * *

111. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Carolyn Lewis, Janet McKenna and Joseph Wyglendacz.

112. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cole declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the general business of the meeting that he had family members who worked within schools and a family member that worked within the Council.

Councillor Rahman declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the general business of the meeting that she was a governor at a school.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, these interests were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice the Councillors judgement of the public interests. Councillors Cole and Rahman were not

therefore required to withdraw from the meeting during consideration and discussion of the agenda items.

113. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

that the minutes of the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 13 January 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

114. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, reminding everyone that this was a virtual meeting, as permitted under Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, to enable meetings to take place whilst observing social distancing measures.

At the invitation of the Chair, Members and officers present at the meeting then introduced themselves.

The Chair informed the Commission that agenda item 9 – 'Edge of Care interventions Summary Report Quarter 2: 2020-21' would be deferred to the CYPS Scrutiny Commission meeting in April.

It was noted that a Special Meeting of the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission would take place on 11 March 2021 to discuss the 'Realignment of Special School Funding'.

115. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

116. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

Ruth Sinhal (questioner) posed a question/ statement at the previous meeting and since then, a written response from Officers had been provided. Ruth Sinhal was present at this meeting and gave details of a subsequent statement (provided to the Commission prior to this meeting). Some of the points Ruth highlighted from her statement included the positiveness of promoting racial literacy training in schools and requested the Council to be willing to work with local anti-racist groups in order to signpost schools where they could get the right literacy training.

In response, the following was noted:

- That a positive meeting had been held with officers, Assistant City Mayor for Education and Housing and Ruth Sinhal.
- Partnerships had been established with schools over the past year to ensure the right practice was being shared.
- Racial literacy training was the starting point of an ongoing discussion, some discussions of which had already commenced with organisations

such as the African Heritage Alliance.

Members of the Commission welcomed the discussion and also contributed observations, and the following points were made:

- Support was expressed for racial literacy training and it was felt that the Council had a responsibility to ensure good educational outcomes of children in this City. It was further urged that these principles would need to be embedded into the system rather than merely providing literature.
- The idea of inviting Members to sessions once they were up and running was welcomed.
- It was reported that the Government had posted details regarding the 'Petitions Committee: Online engagement on Black history and Cultural diversity in the curriculum' and the Member requested that this be monitored.

Ruth Sinhal was thanked for all the hard work and efforts and it was noted that further work/ communication with Ruth Sinhal and key stakeholders in relation to the anti-racism pledge and addressing the cultural bias would continue.

AGREED:

1. That a report would come back to a future meeting.

117. TAXI TRANSPORT SERVICE FOR SEND CHILDREN

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education provided a verbal update in relation to the Taxi Transport Service for SEND children. The following was noted:

- Approximately 18 months ago the transport service for SEND children moved from being held in the housing division to the education division.
- £7.5m was spent on taxi services in Leicester City taking children to and from schools, an amount which was noted to be a large majority of funding the Council had to support education.
- The unit costs being paid for these journeys was significantly higher compared to other cities in the country, one reason for this was the amount of transport being provided.
- The contracts were looked into to see if there was a different way the services could be procured. It was aimed to move away from the framework of a taxi provider bidding for a route of transporting a new service user, to moving to an agreed fixed price for each route which would be in two parts; 1) a flat rate for doing any journey and 2) a per mile distance rate.
- Engagement with the operators took place over an extended period and the proposed arrangements were worked through with the taxi providers, a formal procurement process took place and a number of taxi companies made bids and contracts were awarded.
- It was planned that the new arrangements would commence from January 2021. However, when assigning routes to individual taxi providers, the operators were not content with the offered rates and doing the work under those newly procured terms, even though those

rates had been explicit throughout the procurement process.

- As a result, the existing contract was then extended until half term to allow for further engagement with the taxi operators to see whether within the procurement boundaries there was scope to adjust the arrangements, however it was not possible to reach an agreement. The procurement process was then abandoned, and the existing contract extended for a further year until a new procurement exercise could be completed.
- The service has had to go back to the drawing board to identify options that could be used to do this. These included: looking at travel training, providing support to families to be able to transport children themselves to schools and looking at the range of alternative travel options.

Members of the Commission discussed the taxi transport service for SEND children and the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education responded to the queries, as below:

- The reasons why the agreement didn't hold were further clarified, one being that taxi operators thought there was scope for further negotiation following the agreement of fixed prices, however the procurement contract didn't allow for this.
- LCC was looking to reduce costs by 10% (£1m) across the overall £10m taxi budget, to be in line with the costs of their statistical neighbours. The procurement process over the next year would look at how the loss of saving for this year could be mitigated and it was reiterated that if travel training and other aspects were implemented this could allow some costs to be recouped.
- It was confirmed that during the process there was no impact to children and no child was left without transport as the existing contractual arrangements continued.

AGREED:

1. That the verbal update be noted.
2. Request a report to be brought regarding the financial impact and the impact on the vulnerable communities being engaged with to the April meeting.

118. VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD ANNUAL REPORT 2019/ 20

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education submitted the Virtual Head report which highlighted the achievements of Leicester City's looked after children in the school year 2019/2020. The report coincided with the period of national lockdown arising from the Covid-19 resulting in most of our looked after children accessing learning remotely from home during the summer term.

The presenting Officer informed the meeting of the following:

- The aim was to ensure the educational outcomes of looked after children were near to that of their school peers.
- It was reported that a maintained year on year improvement in school attendance had been achieved, there were no permanent exclusions

and the rate of fixed term exclusions had decreased for the looked after children.

- GCSE grade achievements for looked after children were explained and it was noted that teacher assessments had been cancelled and GCSE's assessed in a different way, so there were no comparative data for that year.
- During the national lockdown most looked after children accessed their learning remotely, were provided with access to a digital device for this, and a Virtual School touch down website was also established with resources to support learners and carers.

Members discussed the report and officers responded:

- It was further reiterated that exclusion rates had gone down and although it was aimed to avoid exclusions, for the few that did happen most were one day exclusions generally relating to challenging behaviour including persistent disruption or not following instructions. To address an exclusion, resources were put in place and interventions to readdress the balance as to the underlying issues.
- A Member of the Commission highlighted a point about the higher costs of employing temporary staff as opposed to employing permanent staff. The service would be discussing this issue with management in March.
- In terms of careers support/ further education, it was noted that were visits for looked after children to universities, starting from primary school years and throughout school years. In addition, a sailing ship enrichment experience activity was offered which gave the opportunity to support the looked after children in developing their aspirations. It was noted that the tour ship activity had been confirmed for this year. The support provided through university life was also explained.
- Some of the reasons why looked after children were not in education, employment or training post 16 were reported. Some reasons were due to several looked after children becoming young parents for that report year but who would return; some hadn't engaged with education at any point for a wide range of reasons and some were serving time in institutions. A lot of time was spent working on how to engage and intervene and this was dealt with on a child by child basis taking into account many factors.
- In terms of disproportion to the figures, it was noted that the majority of children looked after were from a white British background.
- Progress had been made on all the key objectives and it was noted that this was a continual process and was not expected to be achieved within a year.

The team were thanked for their hard work

AGREED:

1. The Commission note, welcome and approve the Virtual School Head Annual Report 2019-20.
2. The Commission notes that the impact of Covid-19 would have affected young people and a report is requested to identify its

challenges and how these issues will be addressed.

119. EDGE OF CARE INTERVENTIONS SUMMARY REPORT QUARTER TWO: 2020-21

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission.

120. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND EARLY HELP ASSURING QUALITY OF PRACTICE QUARTERLY REPORTS

The Director for Social Care and Early Help submitted a presentation to update Members of the Commission on the Children's Social Care and Early Help Assuring Quality of Practice Quarterly Reports for quarters one and two.

- The presentation detailed the impact of Covid-19 and the alterations put in place including all meetings being moved to virtual arrangements and any face to face visits saw social workers and EH practitioners always wearing PPE equipment.
- The 'Their door is shut. Ours is open' campaign helped to see the referral rates go back up after an initial decrease at the start of the pandemic.
- Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions in March 2020, a continued increase had been evident in children subject to repeat child protection plans. Following a look at 40 families, this showed good evidence of good quality effective relationships with social workers, Edge of Care practitioners and young people, parents/ carers. Measures had now been put in place where there were gaps in the assessments.
- Figures of children in care and care leavers were provided and one of the areas for focus noted was to move planning for transitions to adulthood earlier to 14 years rather than 16 years as this would give the children more opportunity to prepare.
- 'Quaranteens' – which was a social media campaign aimed at supporting living in lockdown created by young people, won Best Project 2020.

In response to Members comments, the following was noted:

- Following this piece of work, a large discrepancy was noted between the foster carers training and the kinship carers' training. Since then discussions had taken place and kinship carers would now have the opportunity to engage in carers training more effectively than previously. In addition, part of the support has been restructured, splitting the service so there was bespoke support for recruited foster carers and those kinship carers, some of the training and learning and development had also been split. The offer was now also more varied and included online training.
- Out of approximately 28 parents who took the participation surveys and parental feedback, the vast majority reported that they found the

conference easier to be part of, however, some felt that not being present in a room left them at a disadvantage. Looking forward at least the initial meeting, would be moving to a hybrid model and risk assessments would take place to determine which method would be more effective.

- The importance of Q&A work was expressed, and the presenting officer explained the process after each Q&A report was made/ carried out. This included, that the reports were discussed at the monthly improvement board meetings and then all actions were distributed to the relevant service. These reports allowed for the service to have the resource to be able to look in more detail if required to see what could be improved. The importance of celebrating success was also noted.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission note and welcome the many strengths which have been identified in the report.
2. The Commission welcomes and is pleased that the Leicester City Council 'Quaranteens' project created by young people, was nominated for and won the *'Best Project 2020 by National Leaving Care Bench Marking Forum'*. In addition, the Commission welcome that Leicester City Council have been recognised for good practice in the LGA for the LLR campaign 'Their door is shut, ours is open'.
3. The Commission would like to be updated on progress following the areas of focus on the transitions of adulthood, care plan safety planning at a future meeting.

121. IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON LEICESTER'S CHILDREN SERVICES AND SCHOOLS

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education provided a verbal update in relation to the impact of the coronavirus on Leicester's children services and schools.

The Government had recently announced all schools would be reopening on 8th March 2021, with secondary schools having a phased return from this date to allow for lateral flow testing to be offered to the children. To help this process, work would be carried out to promote and help the Covid-19 testing process in schools. In addition, areas of wearing face coverings were being considered for schools amongst other measures for parents.

The current rate of cases in Leicester was now reported to be five times higher than in September 2020 when children returned following the previous lockdown.

Following Members comments the below responses were provided:

- There were still concerns around the infection rate and whether children returning to school could worsen this, however, it was essential for children to be back in school. Schools were looking at reducing bubble

sizes to reduce the transmission bridges. It was however reconfirmed that there had not seen big number of transmission cases in schools and the measures put in place by schools were able to contain reported cases.

- An increased amount of teaching staffing now met the new shielding requirements and as a result were not required to come back into school, which could mean less staff available on site. Shielding was due to end on 31 March.
- Some of the things in place to support schools and children on the concern of mental health included the Wellbeing Education Recovery Programme training which was offered to all schools and colleges in the City and had been supported by the educational psychology team and mental health teams. School nurses were also being re-introduced, including an online digital offer where students could get self-help and in addition many schools were looking at what their counselling offer would need to be going forward.
- Following a Member's concern that children had been locked down a lot over the past year and needed outdoor sports, playschemes etc. It was responded that some outdoor sports clubs would be reopening nationally soon, and sports activities organised by schools could be restarted again, some of which could be funded via the 'catch up' fund.
- In the holiday a new programme called the Holiday Activity and Food programme which worked closely with a range of providers including sports clubs, adventure playgrounds and more to ensure there was an offer for children to be active and socialise.
- Schools and the Education Welfare Team would be and had been working closely with families who had concerns about sending their children back to school.
- Members were requested to update the Assistant City Mayor for Education on any queries being received from parents. These would be added to a crib sheet being put together, of which the information on schooling arrangements and guidance could then be circulated to Members and something for parents.
- It was reported that many staff were keen to be vaccinated however many were not necessarily in the age category being called for the vaccination. Following a discussion, Members were all in accordance to support the Department for Education (DfE) in their lobby that all teaching staff should have access to being vaccinated as a priority, regardless of age group.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission agree to support the DfE in that teaching staff should have access to being vaccinated as a priority, regardless of age group.

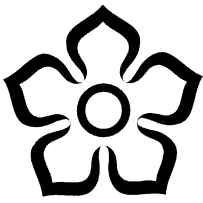
122. WORK PROGRAMME

AGREED:

That the work programme be noted.

123. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 6.58pm.



Leicester
City Council

Appendix A2

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND SCHOOLS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 11 MARCH 2021 at 5:00 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Dawood (Chair)
Councillor Cole (Vice Chair)

Councillor Pantling
Councillor Rahman

Councillor Riyait
Councillor Whittle

In Attendance:

Councillor March
Councillor Dr Moore
Councillor Cutkelvin, Assistant City Mayor - Education and Housing
Councillor Russell, Deputy City Mayor - Social Care and Anti-Poverty

Co-opted Members (Voting)

Mr Mohit Sharma – Parent Governor (Primary / Special Needs)

Standing Invitees (Non-Voting)

Janet McKenna - Unison

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124. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, reminding everyone that this was a virtual meeting, as permitted under Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, to enable meetings to take place whilst observing social distancing measures.

At the invitation of the Chair, it was noted that Councillor March, Councillor Dr Moore and Sue Strange, a parent of a child who was attending Millgate School were all invited to participate in discussion of item 5 "Re-alignment of Special

School Funding”.

The Chair requested that all Members, officers, Members of the Executive and invitees present at the meeting kindly introduce themselves.

125. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Gerard Hurst (Roman Catholic Diocesan), Carolyn Lewis (Church of England Diocese) and Joseph Wyglendacz (Teaching Unions).

126. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cole declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the general business of the meeting that he had family members who worked within schools and a family member that worked within the Council. In addition, Councillor Cole declared that he represented the ward in which West Gate School was located.

Councillor Whittle declared that he represented the ward in which Millgate School was located.

In accordance with the Council’s Code of Conduct, these interests were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice the Councillor’s judgement of the public interests. Councillor Cole and Councillor Whittle were not therefore required to withdraw from the meeting during consideration and discussion of the agenda items.

Although not a member of the Commission, Councillor Dr Moore declared an Other Disclosable Interest in agenda item 5, “Re-alignment of Special School Funding”, for transparency, that she was a governor at Keyham Lodge and Millgate School. This interest was not considered to be significant enough to preclude Councillor Dr Moore from addressing the Commission at the invitation of the Chair.

127. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

128. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations or statements of case had been received.

129. RE-ALIGNMENT OF SPECIAL SCHOOL FUNDING

The Strategic Director for Social Care & Education submitted this report to provide the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission with the opportunity to provide feedback and comment on the outcome of a consultation exercise to implement a new funding formula for the six maintained special

schools in the city. It was proposed the changes would take effect from 1 April 2021.

The Assistant City Mayor for Education introduced the item and officers presented the report. The following was noted:

- The review of the special schools' funding related directly to the imbalance of the existing funding arrangements between the six schools. It was noted that four of the schools would see an increase of funding, whilst two schools namely Keyham Lodge and Millgate School would see their funding reduced.

All Members and invitees present, engaged in discussion of the report and noted some of the below concerns including:

- The legal and equality impact of the review, that a longer programme for consideration was required especially for the Commission's comments to be taken on board. There was a lot of concern from Members and invitees that the budget cap would have a detrimental effect on Keyham Lodge and Millgate Schools, who were currently achieving outstanding results. In addition, clarity was requested on the following points: the DfE agreement process and general timelines for implementing, standardised costs and the banding system. On the point of the consultation; it was queried as to why feedback from parents and children was not included within the report and it was reiterated that lots of work was required to help all children not just those achieving high grades.

Officers present and the Assistant City Mayor for Education responded to the comments, as set out below:

- There were four specific SEND schools in the City which were significantly underfunded, and the proposed budget was seeking to address this. Some schools had surplus in their budgets and others were struggling.
- There would be difficulties if the process was put on hold as it would mean that the schools who were set to gain from the budget increase wouldn't receive the level of support they required for another year.
- It was clarified that this funding was a ringfenced grant (the high needs block) from the Department of Education (DfE) which could only be spent on Special Needs Education. The review aimed to ensure redistribution of the funding in a fair and transparent manner.
- The banding system was developed with reference to systems in other Local Authorities. The schools identified the band for each pupil and LCC worked closely with the schools to ensure the banding model worked. The bulk of funding would follow each pupil based on their need and regardless of which school they attended. It was noted that this banding system would be kept under review. In addition, a review into the high needs block would also take place. To ensure 'band creep' was avoided, communication would be made with the special schools this

week to request them to design a moderation system for decisions to be made by their peers.

- In relation to a timeline for the process by which the reductions would be made in the case of two schools, it was explained that LCC were planning to submit an application in the next few weeks, the DfE would then generally take a couple of months (anticipated by end of May/ June) to respond. Following the DfE response phasing would be implemented around Autumn time. The intention was to have a rapid conversation with the two schools to inform them what a transition period would look like.
- Only half the EHCP children were noted to be in special schools, as the other half were in mainstream schooling. This balance was noted to be broadly consistent with national practice. However, there was a consistent message from mainstream secondary schools that they were not equipped for SEND children's needs and also for those with behavioural problems. It was therefore noted that the service would be looking at how these mainstream schools could be enabled to cater more effectively for SEND children – this upcoming piece of work was noted as forming a key element of the 'inclusion agenda'.
- It was reported that the consultation exercise took place with stakeholders and included regular meetings with the special school's grouping. A letter was drafted from each of the schools to parents regarding the consultation and details were provided in school bulletins/ newsletters, however some schools may have communicated this information better than others. Furthermore, the Parent Carer Forum, the SEND information Advice and Support Service and Big Mouth Forum were worked with and over 150 parent and carer responses were received.
- Another aspect highlighted during the discussion was that educational support may need to be looked at separate to how these children could be better supported with their social care needs.

The Chair thanked everyone present for their contribution to the meeting.

AGREED:

1. The Commission is concerned about the potential impact on student's education and welfare and therefore requests an update of any significant issues that may arise as a result of the new arrangements.
2. The Commission is concerned about the impact of any staff reviews as a result of the new arrangements and would like to be informed about any decrease of staff, which in turn could potentially affect the support provided to the students.
3. A report to be bought back informing the Commission on the outcome of the transition discussions with the schools.
4. Concerns in the report have been raised in relation to legal and equality impact of the review and the potential reputational damage to the authority.
5. The Commission to be updated about the outcome of the letter to Department for Education.

6. The Commission to be notified when the new funding arrangements will be implemented.

130. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.34pm.

Response to Scrutiny enquiry into

‘The Underachievement of ‘Black Caribbean’ and ‘White British Working-Class’ pupils of secondary school age in Leicester’

Children, Young People and Schools
Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 14 April 2021

Lead director/officer: Sue Welford

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Sue Welford
- Author contact details: sue.welford@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 3.0

1. Summary

- 1.1. In October 2019, the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny commission published a working group report into - The Underachievement of 'Black Caribbean' and 'White Working-Class' pupils of secondary school age in Leicester'. This report provided a number of recommendations for schools and the education division of the council.
- 1.2. In Leicester, there remains significant work to be done in the Education arena to address the low outcomes for children at the end of their secondary school years. These low outcomes are particularly noticeable for those of Black Caribbean heritage as are those for disadvantaged White male students.
- 1.3. This report provides some context and background to the current work across Education to improve outcomes for all disadvantaged children and particularly those groups identified by Scrutiny Commission. We will talk to the individual recommendations during the meeting.
- 1.4. Over the years there have been a number of initiatives to improve outcomes. This has impacted positively on the progress during secondary schooling for most groups of pupils. For some groups there have been targeted programmes of work to address poor outcomes. This has been particularly the case for those of Black heritage. These interventions have been short-term and targeted and have supported and improved the results of some of those involved but have not delivered wholesale improvements or the change in culture and the sustained impact that is needed.
- 1.5. The role of the LA has changed significantly over the years. Compared to ten years ago, the permission and capacity for directing schools has steadily been removed from councils by central government. School funding has also changed with almost all monies for mainstream provision distributed to schools through a national funding formula. Grants that previously were used in line with local discretion are now within the main formula.
- 1.6. As a result of the government's policies on reducing burden on schools, they are not required to submit racist incidents to local authorities. This does not get collected centrally by our local authority as we no longer have the budget for the staff who used to collect and respond to this information. Our schools continue to monitor and report these incidents to their governing bodies.
- 1.7. As a result of the government's policies with the transfer of responsibilities from the local authority to schools, each school governing body is responsible for its own policies which must be agreed and published on the school's website. Guidance on the content of policies is provided to governing bodies through the DfE website. The local authority also supports governing bodies through exemplar policies published on the schools' extranet (a secure website maintained

by the local authority for all schools in the city). We promote and provide guidance on equality and diversity.

- 1.8. The council works to improve education outcomes for all students through developing partnerships with schools, with governors, with leaders and with multi-academy trusts. Previously we worked directly with teachers and indeed occasionally with children and young people. The change of the role of the local authority means that we can influence through leadership, partnership and relationships rather than through direction or intervention.
- 1.9. The Education Division monitors the performance of schools using a range of data available, including outcome and progress data, exclusions and attendance. This information alongside intelligence from various sources (Ofsted reports and qualitative data from colleagues across the council who visit the school, such as Estates and Buildings Services, Health and Safety, SEND support staff, HR, Safeguarding in Education and finance information) enables us to identify a school's strengths and weaknesses.
- 1.10. The local authority and contracted school improvement partners undertake performance discussions (challenge/support visits) with schools and agree their priorities for the year. This also contributes to their preparation for Ofsted inspection.
- 1.11. For most schools a challenge/support visit happens once a year. Where there are concerns, we provide up to 10 extra days of planned support for the school leadership. We no longer have the responsibility for direct support or challenge with Academies.
- 1.12. When working with schools, we identify underperforming groups of pupils in that school where outcomes should be improved and need targeted support. Some groups have very small numbers in individual schools and may not have a significant impact on overall outcomes for that school. We consider all groups on a city-wide perspective and where they are underperforming, challenge the education system as a whole.
- 1.13. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a positive impact in enabling us to develop our role, influence and credibility with schools. School leaders have told us they see the benefits of working more collectively and in close connection with the council. This strengthening of our partnership is a good foundation for collaborative working with our cadre of school leaders to influence change and enable us all to improve outcomes for children across the city.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 Scrutiny to note the content of the report
- 2.2 Scrutiny to note the actions taken and proposed

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

This report is a response to the recommendations of the Children and Schools Scrutiny Commission enquiry into 'The Underachievement of 'Black Caribbean' and 'White British Working-Class' pupils of secondary school age in Leicester'

4 Detailed Report - Background - what we used to do

4.1 MacPherson Review

4.2 In the first ten years following the MacPherson report significant support was provided to schools through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service. This team actively developed a range of strategies to improve outcomes for children of Black heritage and ensure that the content of the curriculum met the needs of our diverse society.

4.3 Up to 2010 the Local Authority's Education and Inclusion Division employed an Ethnic Minority Advisory Service of 8 staff including an advisory teacher for racial equality. Through training and advice, the team actively supported schools to monitor and improve practice. The Service also maintained a database of racist incidents. Funding changes by the DfE for pupils with English as an Additional Language and/or from an Ethnic Minority meant that there was no longer the grant to maintain this function.

4.4 Since 2010, the changes in funding and the revision of the National Curriculum has reduced the opportunity for the local authority to influence the schools' interpretation and implementation of the curriculum. The recent improvements in our relationship with schools and the recognition of the role of the Local Authority provide us an opportunity to use our influence.

4.5 One of the many recommendations from the MacPherson report was that organisations adopt a definition of a racist incident and that the definition should be universally adopted by the Police, local Government and other relevant agencies:

"A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person".

That the term "racist incident" must be understood to include crimes and non-crimes in policing terms. Schools are expected to adopt this definition.

5 The Changing landscape

5.1 Following MacPherson in 1999, although there has continued to be developments in addressing inequalities in the country, there is still a lot to be done. Most recently, inequalities have again been highlighted by the Black Lives Matter movement. The movement has re-energised and provided further impetus to social change and overcoming unconscious racial bias that exists in our society.

5.2 In October 2017, the Equality and Human Rights Commission published "A roadmap to race equality". The recommendations set out in relation to **Education** are to take action to improve educational outcomes so that every child has a fair chance to fulfil their potential irrespective of their ethnicity.

This includes:

5.3 *Ensuring that equality and human rights are part of the curriculum to instil shared values, tackle prejudiced attitudes by educating about difference, foster community cohesion and enable young people to fully participate in our democratic society. The curriculum should also include Britain's immigration history to enable children to understand how this has shaped all aspects of our country.*

The National Curriculum for History does not make the inclusion of Britain's immigration history as statutory. In Leicester, many of our schools do include these elements to reflect our richness of culture and diversity of children in the city.

- 5.4** *Publish a plan of concrete actions to improve understanding of, and tackle the disproportionate levels of exclusion, absences and attainment rates among, certain ethnic minority groups, including Gypsy and Traveller children, in primary and secondary schools.*

Whilst government has been tasked with these concrete actions and have made progress in some areas, we actively monitor the levels of exclusion, absence and attainment across different ethnic minority groups. This information is shared with schools both at an individual and city-wide level to highlight these inequalities. The Scrutiny Commission report highlighted those specific groups - Black-Caribbean heritage and disadvantaged white boys - where underachievement in secondary outcomes is significant. These groups are the focus of our partnership challenge discussion with schools and form a key strand in our Education improvement plans.

- 5.5** *Ensure all teachers have access to training and resources on how to identify, record and develop strategies to respond to bullying and identity-based bullying so they have the tools and confidence to protect pupils.*

Training is offered to primary schools through the 'No Outsiders' programme to teach the Equality Act (2010).

To support Leicester's anti-bullying approach, we offer training and support to schools and other settings to implement the 'Everyone's Welcome' approach.

Schools are actively encouraged to support all children and to promote inclusive practice in their schools, which is a key element of the new Relationship and Sex Education curriculum.

We will be developing a programme of racial literacy training for staff and governors in school to be rolled out in the 2021/22 academic year.

- 5.6** *Encourage schools and higher education providers to improve their understanding of all ethnicity attainment, attendance and dropout rates in higher education institutions and to take actions to address them.*

Our partnership with the universities in Leicester provides opportunities to discuss dropout rates and ethnicity attainment. The local authority's Connexions service, challenges further education institutions and colleges about retention rates of young people in different groups.

Through our performance dialogue meetings with schools we highlight areas of concern and underperformance including the city-wide issues of black underachievement and white disadvantaged underachievement

6 Current Practice

- 6.1** The Education Division uses a range of indicators, data and qualitative intelligence - some provided directly from schools - to monitor pupil and school performance. This information is triangulated to identify pressure points or weaknesses which have an effect on underperformance of the school and/or poor outcomes for children. In the past year, we have worked more closely with schools and collaboratively adapted monitoring systems to make sure we continue to understand the context of exclusions and attendance for different groups of children as well as the impact of remote learning on different families.

6.2 We share information with schools, settings and governors to improve understanding of any disproportionate levels of exclusion, absences and attainment rates in primary and secondary schools.

6.3 In 2020, there were no performance indicators for schools as assessments and formal monitoring was suspended. Statutory assessments have also been cancelled for 2021 except for qualifications such as GCSE, BTEC and A levels which will be assessed in different ways. This information will not be available to local authorities and cannot be compared to previous years. Due to the partnership working we have established, schools have agreed to share their ongoing assessments for children in primary school and their GCSE results files. This will enable us to understand the performance of different groups across the city, with the proviso that the assessments will not have been moderated against national standard criteria.

6.4 School Improvement activity

The Education Performance Service's two School Raising Achievement Partners carry out the statutory duty of monitoring schools on behalf of the Local Authority. This work is supported by School Improvement Partners who are commissioned directly by primary schools.

These professionals are tasked with highlighting and challenging schools through the following activities:

- Analysing headline data including that relating to vulnerable groups such as White British, Black Caribbean and disadvantaged students
- Evaluating the quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Analysing attendance data for all students and vulnerable groups, with the EWO service responding to individual cases of irregular attendance
- Challenging the use of data on vulnerable groups and the processes in place by senior and middle leadership to intervene when students underperform
- Evaluating the school access to additional funding for underperforming pupils via the National Tutoring Programme (post Covid)
- Evaluating the pastoral system and the strategies adopted by schools to monitor and improve wellbeing and attendance for all groups of students.
- Ensuring review of school websites for compliance in the public sector equality duty. This must include how the school is:
 - ~ Eliminating discrimination
 - ~ Improving equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics
 - ~ Consulting and involving those affected by in-quality in the decisions the school takes to promote equality and eliminate discrimination (affected people could include parents, pupils, staff and members of the local community)

6.5 We are working with schools at both individual, operational and at strategic levels to highlight the underperformance of the Black Caribbean heritage group. By raising the profile of this group of children we can ensure schools (who may only have one or two children of that heritage) are supporting them.

6.6 As part of the performance dialogue with all schools the School Improvement Partners have been asked to particularly focus on the outcomes for children of Black Caribbean heritage and those who are White British and disadvantaged to identify the actions being taken to improve outcomes.

6.7 Curriculum

Schools are responsible for the delivery of the national curriculum and also for ensuring they meet national guidance for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education (RE). Managing this delivery effectively enables schools to educate and inform students about the rich and diverse society in which we live.

The Education Division works with strategic partners such as the Education Improvement Partnership (EIP) and Leicester Primary Partnership (LPP) who have established networks to support curriculum leadership. This provides good opportunities to share good and emerging practice across the city.

In September 2020, the council facilitated sharing of good practice and training materials to support the introduction of the Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum. This curriculum focusses on how children can build relationships and understand societal and cultural differences.

6.8 Closing the Gap

This is a programme funded by Leicester's maintained primary schools which aims to address city-wide priorities, develop and sustain long-term impact on pupils' outcomes. Primary headteachers, local authority education staff and teaching schools have prioritised three strands of work related to heritage:

1. To improve teaching and learning and raise the achievement of all pupils, particularly in relation to religion, belief, BAME communities, etc.
2. To raise the awareness of teachers, senior leaders, governors, etc. about issues around BLM and the diversity and needs of BAME groups in Leicester.
3. To strengthen the role of SACRE, especially in terms of its key functions and statutory responsibilities regarding the RE curriculum

6.9 Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium Funding is given to schools based on the number of children who are eligible for free school meals or have been eligible in the past 6 years. Pupil premium funding is also given for children of Services personnel and those children who are looked after or previously looked after. This funding is designed to be used by schools to raise attainment among disadvantaged students.

Schools are required to plan how this funding is spent and report on the impact it is having on closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. This information must be published on each school's website and when Ofsted inspect the school, they review this plan and report.

Secondary schools have been encouraged to consider how this funding could be channelled to boost outcomes specifically for Black Caribbean and White British working-class students.

In January 2020, there were 11,196 children eligible for pupil premium based on free school meals eligibility which provided funding for schools of £13.4m. In January 2021, there were 13,539 children meeting the criteria which would have provided £16.2m of funding, however the DfE have determined they will now base Pupil Premium Funding on October census figures. This means that only 12,732 were eligible and city schools will receive £1.02m less funding than expected.

6.10 Governor Support

Local Authority Governor Services support Governors in maintained schools to carry out their role. Selection of governors takes place within the school setting

and schools are encouraged to recruit governors from their communities in order to reflect the diversity in their schools. Training and resources are offered to Governors in order to fulfil their role(s), including regular reminders about the need to monitor progress and attainment of all pupil groups, particularly vulnerable groups.

6.11 Safeguarding in Education

The team at the local authority offer schools a Safeguarding Health Check and/or audit. As part of this work they explore with the leadership of the school to ensure staff are aware of the risks to vulnerable students, including BAME students, in respect of safeguarding risks to these groups.

6.12 Parental Engagement

The recent report “Examining the London advantage in attainment” (2020 Ross et al) highlighted that the most important drivers were parental expectations about the young person going to university, hours spent on homework, academic self-belief and personal aspirations. Parental attendance at parents’ evenings was also a positive factor. This research has looked at why the performance of disadvantaged students in London is so much better than in other parts of the country.

Education leads in the city are beginning work with the Stephen Lawrence Centre at De Montfort University to further explore how to increase parental engagement in young people’s learning and strengthen relationships between schools and Black Caribbean families

6.13 Supplementary/ Complementary schools

Many children access educational provision outside statutory schooling and this provides opportunities to promote and raise attainment for children in ethnic minority communities. The Leicester Complementary Schools Trust (LCST) are a self-funding organisation which provides information and support.

Ethnic minority communities may share some common reasons for setting up a complementary school, such as maintaining language and identity and providing good role models through successful members of the community. Complementary schools also support National Curriculum subjects such as modern foreign languages and this is a factor for raising attainment of ethnic minority children in their mainstream schools. For instance, within Somali and Bengali communities, parents who cannot help their children with their homework and other schoolwork would send their children to a complementary school.

7 Progress since the Scrutiny Commission Report

- 7.1** Work started in January 2020 with school leaders and Chairs of Governors to develop an education strategy for the city. This work was paused due to the pandemic and its disruption to children, families and the education system.
- 7.2** Through the last year, schools have been prioritising health and safety of both their staff and pupils and focussed on safeguarding vulnerable children. Schools have responded to well over 150 changes in guidance from the DfE working with Public Health England. In Leicester, they have managed 4 different lockdowns and re-openings. Their most recent priority has been to settle children back into school and on return after Easter, will be building on this to support children to transition to new classes or new schools.
- 7.3** Cllr Cutkelvin has met a number of community representatives and had meaningful dialogue about how we can work with them to support their young people. We will build and learn from these conversations.

Once Covid restrictions allow, Cllr Cutkelvin intends to visit a range of supplementary schools that are run by communities.

7.4 The Stephen Lawrence Centre

Cllr Cutkelvin and the Principal Education Officer have met with the Stephen Lawrence Centre to explore what can be promoted and offered to schools. The Centre is developing curriculum materials, information and training for staff and an ambassador programme for young people. The Centre began to work with some schools last year and plan to expand their programme further this year, building in research and evaluation techniques. The local authority intends to explore the possibility of quality assuring any racial literacy training undertaken.

The Local Authority has shared data and information with the Centre which they will use to consider further developments and we will continue to explore opportunities with them. A number of strands of work have started:

1. mentoring
2. targeted work with specific group of schools to look at how to improve outcomes for those young people
3. support for Black Caribbean teachers

7.5 The Education Division will ensure any activity links with the City Mayor's Black Lives Matter officer.

7.6 Although work on the Education Strategy has been paused, the initial work includes these priorities:

- Providing a sufficiency of educational places
- Creating excellence in leadership and partnership to deliver outcomes
- Preparing children to be ready for school – improving Speech Language & Communication and physical development
- Working together to understand the provision and outcomes for every child and young person in order to plan appropriate support
- Improving outcomes for all children to prepare for life destinations
- Improving engagement and progress for children who are missing out on education

7.7 The Education Strategy will lead to an action plan which we envisage including

- Participation and role modelling to raise aspirations for children young people
 - ~ Trips to universities & colleges
 - ~ Work experience
 - ~ Interview training and recruitment support
- Development of the workforce
 - ~ Reflect diversity of the school population and Leicester City
 - ~ Raise aspirations of the education workforce and future leaders
 - ~ Work with the Stephen Lawrence Centre to promote school leadership for staff of Black Caribbean heritage
 - ~ Address preconceptions and unintended bias in curricula
- Strengthening links with community
 - ~ Reaffirm sense of identity
 - ~ Parental engagement
 - ~ Bring the family into the school
 - ~ Increase community representation on governing bodies (and to reflect ethnic diversity of the school)
- Racial Literacy training
 - ~ Create a safe space to have open discussions
 - ~ Encourage all schools to engage and address pre-conceptions and unintended bias within curriculum and leadership
 - ~ Consider good practice from other councils in consultation with the local community and schools to develop and strengthen the History curriculum to reflect the black history that belongs to everyone
 - ~ Celebration of cultural diversity

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 Throughout the past year the council's education division have strengthened partnerships with schools and this provides a firm basis for future partnership work.
- 8.2 School leaders and governors would have expected to progress actions against their priorities during the year, having been informed by outcome data, but this progress has been overtaken by the work to manage the pandemic.
- 8.3 Schools have had to adapt quickly to the changing expectations and guidance to have children continue with their learning, attend school wherever possible, yet at the same time be kept safe. Schools have had to tailor their remote learning offer to the needs of different groups and have been particularly mindful of those who have not had access to digital devices, those who have had limited access and those where home circumstances made accessing learning difficult.
- 8.4 This year schools have had the challenge of adjusting to new priorities and new ways of delivering learning. They have become experts at managing risks, putting in place Covid secure measures, track and trace and lateral flow testing.
- 8.5 Schools have had a number of new reporting demands made upon them; from daily reporting of attendance and absence to the DfE, reporting positive cases to DfE and Public Health England, monitoring vulnerable children in and out of school.
- 8.6 Schools' understanding of children's progress has been challenging because national assessments and examinations have been cancelled, curricula have had to be altered to respond to the needs of individuals, and school staff have had to be particularly aware of children (and staff) mental health and well-being.
- 8.7 This has meant that each school is identifying new and emerging priorities to support individual learning and development. We will continue to support and work with schools to maximise the impact of the additional "catch-up" funding available for all our children who have been identified as at risk of underachieving. This work will focus on actions that will support children in their learning journey from where they are now. It will include looking at improving opportunities for children to broaden their experiences rather than solely on "catch-up" for English and mathematics.
- 8.8 The role of the local authority has changed significantly over the last 10 years and our relationship with education providers has changed. We remain committed to working closely with our partners in schools to challenge underperformance for groups of children. We are able to actively promote good practice and evidence-based research with schools and educational settings to support them in improving outcomes.
- 8.9 There is no doubt that through our leadership role and in our partnership work we need to actively encourage schools and higher education providers to improve their understanding of all ethnicity attainment, attendance and dropout rates in higher education institutions and to take actions to address them.
- 8.10 We recognise that challenges remain in the outcomes for these groups of pupils. Given legislative and financial constraints, we would welcome further suggestions from the Commission that would improve attainment and attendance for these groups.

9. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

9.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report'
Martin Judson, Head of Finance, Leicester City Council

9.2 Legal implications

'None identified'
Paul Holmes, Head of Law, City Barrister and Head of Standards, Leicester City Council

9.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. This on-going duty is not only relevant to the work of local authorities, but to schools and public sector organisations such as the NHS.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

As the report focuses on the ethnicity of pupils, race is certainly a relevant protected characteristic, however the report also looks at how different identities such as gender, disability (in particular mental ill health) and socioeconomic status can interact with race to cause additional disadvantage. In addition, those pupils who are underachieving may also have other protected characteristics and any further work arising should consider this.

There are also potential implications arising for teachers, school staff and governors.

Positive action is permissible under the Equality Act 2010, and, therefore, once the appropriate data has been identified and analysed there are likely to be ways in which under representation and low retention may be addressed.

However, there is a distinction between positive action which is lawful and positive discrimination, which is not, which any further work in this area will need to take into consideration.

The positive action provisions of the Equality Act can also be applied to measures taken to advance equality of opportunity for pupils, where there is evidence of specific barriers. Positive action provisions under the Equality Act 2010 allow schools to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with particular protected characteristics. Such measures will need to be a proportionate way of achieving the relevant aim.

The provisions would also apply to any further actions taken to improve job prospects for white working-class people who are not in employment, training or education provided they are implemented in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Overall, going forward equalities will need to be a key consideration of further work. The equalities team can offer specialist support and advice at the appropriate point where required, particularly where any further work arising is likely to require an Equality Impact Assessment.

Corporate Equalities Team, 454 4175

9.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate change implications directly associated with this report.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

9.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

10. Background information and other papers:

- [The Underachievement of 'Black Caribbean' and 'White British Working-Class' pupils of secondary school age in Leicester'](#)
- [The MacPherson Report 1999](#)
- [Equality and Human Rights Commission – A roadmap to race equality](#)
- [Examining the London advantage in attainment: evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England 2020 Ross et al](#)

12. This is not a private report

13. This is not a key decision

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND SCHOOLS SCRUTINY COMMISSION REPORT

Provision of Taxi Framework for Vulnerable people

Martin Samuels– Strategic Director – Social Care &
Education

12th March 2021

Useful information

- Ward (s) Affected: All
- Report Author: Neil Lester
- Contact details: neil.lester@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V1

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the Scrutiny Commission with an update on the provision of taxi journeys for Vulnerable people and the implementation/procurement of a new Framework.

2. Summary

- 2.1 This paper explains the background to the procurement exercise for taxi journeys and explains the difficult current position with operators refusing to accept the majority of journeys on the new pricing terms and conditions.
- 2.2 A new framework for commissioning taxis was tendered in 2019/2020 with resulting in awards to 11 operators. 9 of these operators were already working for the LA on an old framework, delivering around 80% of existing journeys.
- 2.3 Lengthy engagement was undertaken with the market to inform the framework, including clear information on the proposed prices for the work. No significant resistance to the pricing proposals was put forward (some small adjustments were made to take into account feedback) and these prices were advertised as the rates for work throughout the tender process, becoming contract terms on award.
- 2.4 Despite having knowledge of the pricing structure for over a year, all operators on the new framework have refused to continue with many of their journeys on the new pricing terms. This refusal came in December 2020 with journeys due to commence from 4th January 2021. With approximately 60% of the journeys unallocated in mid-December 2020, a decision was made to extend the old framework in order to ensure journeys took place.
- 2.5 The old framework has been extended to 24th April 2022 to allow time for a re-procurement exercise to be undertaken
- 2.6 Further engagement with the market has led to the recommendation to re-procure the provision and further consultation with the market is required in order to inform the new procurement exercise
- 2.7 This report sets out the present situation with regards to the strategy for the procurement of the taxi service.



3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission is recommended to:
- a) Note the content of the report and to provide comment/feedback.

4. Report

- 4.1 Approximately £10 million is spent each year on taxi transport for vulnerable people and staff, commissioned by the City Council from the external taxi market.
- 4.2 The majority of these journeys, totalling £7.5 million are for children and young people, predominantly those travelling to and from school. Most children with commissioned transport packages have SEND and most require a passenger assistant.
- 4.3 The purpose of the intended new framework was to both improve quality by implementing a more robust quality assurance process and to seek to bring a level of management/consistency of journey costs as a review of rates charged per mile across a wide sample of journeys under the existing bidding framework found significant variation in the rates charged, which could not reasonably be explained.
- 4.4 The improvement in quality assurance would be delivered by two dedicated QA officers who would not only build strong working relationships with providers but they would also undertake a detailed annual Quality Assurance inspection alongside the implementation of a 'Penalty Points' dashboard to effectively manage service failure at both significant and a cumulative perspective.
- 4.5 Despite the new framework being terminated the old framework still allows for Quality Assurance to be undertaken and the 2 QA officers will begin to implement a more robust and programmed QA process.
- 4.6 As part of the procurement exercise and to deal with the above concern a fixed rate (per mile/per pick up rate) was agreed as it would avoid the taxi firms exploiting the opportunity to charge excess rates at off peak (in terms of retail work) times. These rates

were benchmarked with those paid by other comparable councils, to ensure that they were set at genuine market rates.

- 4.7 When the new 'fixed rates' were cross matched to journeys it was established that a saving of £900k could be made.
- 4.8 Lengthy engagement was undertaken with the market to inform the framework, which included three full engagement events where providers were made aware of all the changes including clear information on the proposed prices for the work.
- 4.9 No significant resistance to the pricing proposals was felt, some small adjustments were made to take into account feedback, and these prices were clearly advertised as the rates for work throughout the tender process, becoming contract terms on award
- 4.10 A new framework for commissioning taxis was tendered in 2019/2020 with resulting awards to 11 operators. 9 of these operators were already working for the LA on an old framework, delivering around 80% of existing journeys.
- 4.11 Despite having knowledge of the pricing structure for over a year, all operators on the new framework, at the last minute refused to continue with many of their journeys on the new pricing terms. This refusal came in December 2020 with journeys due to commence from 4th January 2021. With approximately 60% of the journeys unallocated in mid-December 2020, a decision was made to extend the old framework to ensure journeys took place.
- 4.12 During this period no vulnerable journey was unallocated, and no children missed school
- 4.13 The overall financial position is that the budget for SEN home to school transport for 2021/22 of £3.9m includes a £2.2m net growth to deal with historic growth pressures and ongoing increase in demand for taxi transport. The growth is net of the anticipated savings of £0.9m from using the new framework rates.
- 4.14 Not implementing the new framework means that there is an immediate £0.9m budget pressure for 2021/22.
- 4.15 Ongoing, the achievement of savings from the procurement will continue to be a challenge. It is clear that forcing a price reduction on the market will likely be met with a refusal to take on journeys. The approach to achieving cost reduction is therefore likely to be targeted on reducing the number of taxi journeys commissioned by reducing the need for this by securing other, more appropriate, means of safely getting children to school.

Current position

The 'old' Framework has now been extended to the end of April 2022 to allow another procurement exercise to be undertaken and there are a several options under consideration. Work is currently underway to agree a preferred model that will meet the need to deliver the journeys and provide value for money. Officers will engage with the market to ensure that there is support for the proposed model, learning lessons from this recent exercise

- 1.1 Relationships with taxi providers have been impacted by this exercise, but in addition to continued engagement the Quality Assurance team is proactively rebuilding those working relationships.
- 1.2 The anticipated challenge will clearly be founded on any change to the rates of pay for each journey. The providers did not raise any challenges with regard to the Quality Assurance process or any other part of the contract or specification so engagement in the area of rates will need to be a significant part of the re-procurement process.
- 1.3 It should be noted that a 25% lockdown payment has been made to operators whose journeys have been cancelled as a result of the latest lockdown and school closures. This is a payment that we are legally obliged to pay to cover the costs that continue e.g. business overheads, vehicle repayments etc. and legal advice is that these payments need to be made for all journeys suspended as a result of the latest lockdown
- 1.4 We have learnt from the 'failure' of the implementation of the new framework and will review and address all areas of challenge and will engage with all relevant partners, especially the taxi providers themselves, to deliver a further revised framework that will provide a taxi service that is safe for all users, managed to bring consistency to journey rates and ensure a robust quality assurance process.
- 1.5 The procurement exercise itself will clearly set out to operators that if a fixed rate is used again, there is no room for negotiation once the tender is advertised. Prices will be revisited to again seek a rate that provides a reasonable cost for the LA and a workable cost for the market. Options to enhance the rate for carrying people with more complex needs as part of the journey will be explored. Finally, increased work with members throughout the consultation and procurement exercises will take place.

5. Scrutiny Overview

The taxi procurement/new framework implementation has not been presented to Scrutiny before but was delivered to Lead Member Briefing on

7th October 2019 to detail the commissioning intentions and a further presentations on 20th May & 4th March and to City Mayors Briefing on 18th February 2021

6 Financial

The budget for SEN home to school transport for 2021/22 of £3.9m includes a £2.2m net growth to deal with historic growth pressures and ongoing increase in demand for taxi transport. The growth is net of assumed savings of £0.9m from using the new framework rates and a £0.5m saving from an increase in personal transport budget take up. Not implementing the new framework means that there is an immediate £0.9m budget pressure for 2021/22. This will need to be dealt with by the department.

The rationale for using the fixed rate per mile and pick up rate in the new framework was to avoid the taxi firms exploiting the opportunity to charge excess rates at off peak (in terms of retail work) times. A review of rates charged per mile across a wide sample of journeys under the existing bidding framework found significant variation in the rates charged, which could not reasonably be explained either by cost variations of the provider or demand pressure bidding up prices.

It is recommended that using a single fixed rate per mile, or more than one fixed rate dependent upon type of journey (for example one requiring a larger vehicle to accommodate a wheelchair) be maintained in the new contract, rather than offering a per journey bidding mechanism, in order to better control our costs.

Martin Judson, Head of Finance

7 Legal

Both Procurement and Legal Services are engaged in the re-procurement options identified within this report to ensure any such procurement is in compliance with Council's contract procedure rules and the Public Contract Regulations

Previous legal advice has been provided in respect of consultation, extension of the existing framework together with the 25% payments made under the framework due to the pandemic.

Ongoing legal advice and assistance should be sought throughout.

Mannah Begum, Principal Lawyer (Commercial) Ext: 1423

8 Equalities

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, including procurement, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good

relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

In doing so, the council must consider the possible impact on those who are likely to be affected by the recommendation and their protected characteristics.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The proposal is a re-procurement exercise for taxi journeys. The service provides transport for vulnerable people and staff and will have had positive equality impacts with the majority of these journeys for children and young people, predominantly those travelling to and from school. Most children with commissioned transport packages have SEND and most require a passenger assistant.

Although there are no direct equality implications arising from this report, it is important that regardless of the model that is taken forward, equalities considerations should influence the process and be built into the contract specification in order to ensure that the future provider/s take a robust approach to meeting their equalities obligations as a provider of a public service.

In moving forward and in order to demonstrate that the consideration of equalities impacts has been taken into account in the development of the proposals and as an integral part of the decision making process, it is recommended that an Equalities Impact Assessment that takes into account findings of any consultation is carried out.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer, Ext 37 4175

9 Climate Change

Passenger transport by taxi is monitored as part of Leicester City Council's annual carbon footprint, and accounts for a significant proportion of emissions. In 2019/20 it is estimated to be responsible for around 1,000 tCO₂e (~5%) of the council's total emissions. Following the council's declaration of a climate emergency, and the ambition to reach carbon neutrality in the city and council by 2030, emissions from road transport are a key area that will need addressing.

As the new framework included an increase in the environmental standards of vehicles, returning to the existing framework will prevent the delivery of these improvements and the associated carbon emissions and air quality benefits in the meantime. It is recommended that the re-procurement exercise, in whatever form it takes, therefore again aims to secure improvements in vehicle standards including the Euro 5 and Euro 6 standards as appropriate and encourages better performance and the use of low emission vehicles where possible. The

recording of mileage, fuel use and carbon emissions for vehicles subject to Leicester licensing conditions should also be retained, as this will allow carbon emissions to be accurately monitored going forwards and improvements tracked.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

10. Appendices

None

11. Background Papers

None



Edge of Care Interventions Summary Report Quarter Two: 2020-21

Lead Director: Caroline Tote

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Jackie Difolco - Head of Service: Early Help and Prevention
- Author contact details: 0116 454 6106
- Report version number plus Code No from Report Tracking Database:

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update to SMT on the delivery of interventions that are part of the edge of care offer within the Early Help and Prevention Service. Due to the range of complex interventions referred to, this report is supported by a presentation.

Recommendations

1.2 SMT are asked to note the contents of the report and provide any observations or comments to the Head of Service for Early Help and Prevention. Each intervention programme has specific recommendations at the end of its section which are reviewed within the operational Edge of Care Interventions Board.

2. Background Information

2.1 This report pulls together a summary of all edge of care interventions with separate detailed reports presented at the Edge of Care Interventions Board (EOCI) on 3 Dec. The key aims of this board are to ensure the programmes operate within the purpose and structure for which they were designed and to ensure a collaborative approach towards reducing our looked after children. The aim of these programmes is to provide a targeted response to those children most at risk of coming into care with a view to reducing looked after episodes, the financial cost of these and improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.

2.2 The edge of care (EOC) services referred to within this report are:

- a) Multi Systemic Therapy (MST), a 3 – 5-month programme targeting children aged 11 -17 at risk of custody or care due to behavioural issues.
- b) MST Child Abuse and Neglect (MST CAN), a 6 – 9-month programme targeting families with at least one child aged 6 – 17 at risk of care following one or more episodes of physical abuse and/or neglect.
- c) Functional Family Therapy for Child Welfare (FFT-CW), a programme of approx 6 months duration for any child aged 0 – 7 where there is a risk of care due to ongoing child welfare needs (except active sexual abuse) where the family isn't eligible for an MST intervention.
- d) Safe Families, a commissioned service where local volunteers provide short term respite, befriending and resources to families where children are identified as at risk of care
- e) Family Group Conferencing (FGC) specialist independent service co-ordinating a personalised community response to prevent family breakdown
- f) Parenting Assessments and Two-Year Pathway, a response to engaging families with young children where a risk of care is identified.

2.3 The list above is not exhaustive but reflects the main programmes targeting EOC intervention supporting social work and early help practitioners. The primary aim of the EOICI board is to provide scrutiny, oversight and challenge of the effectiveness of the programmes in reducing the numbers of children who are becoming looked after.

2.4 Local authorities use a combination of different interventions and bespoke programmes as part of their early help offer and to divert children from care. There isn't a one size fits all, with recognition that the

risk of children and young people entering care can be identified much earlier. This suite of edge of care intervention programmes within Early Help and Prevention is based on national good practice that delivers better outcomes based on proven approaches. They are positioned at different stages, with the intention of working alongside the social worker and early help practitioner as part of the overall plan creating better outcomes for children and families to remain at home with their families whilst also reducing costs of care.

Glossary:

CLA – Child Looked After CIN – Child in need CP – Child Protection EH – Early Help
LPM – Legal Planning meeting

Approach to using edge of care services



*Will take cases from early help where a risk of imminent breakdown is identified or open to the youth justice service and risk of custody identified.

2.5 The cost of EOCI interventions varies significantly and should not be compared to one another as they are different approaches for children at different stages. With the exception of parenting assessments, if MST-FFT is identified as needed, due to the evidence base and ecology of the model, this becomes priority and all other edge of care interventions supporting the family cease.

Table 1: Cost of Edge of Care Interventions

Edge of Care Intervention	Cost	Comments
MST-FFT	£2m	
Family Group Conferencing	£160k	£100k funded by Troubled Families reserves until Mar 21
Parenting Assessments	£145k	
Safe Families	£100k	Funded by Troubled Families reserves until Mar 21.

2.6 Whilst the cost of MST-FFT is significantly higher than other edge of care interventions, this service is subject to rigorous adherence and evaluation, evidencing that placement costs avoided are in excess of the cost of the service. For other programmes such as FGC, these approaches are encouraged by the Department for Education, with the national consensus that programmes such as these reduce the number of children who come into care. Financial evaluation of FGC and Parenting Assessments would be possible but would require significant input from Finance, which is felt to be of limited benefit given that the cost of these approaches is minimal and the approaches are established as good practice nationally.

3. Key Headlines: Outcomes and Cost Avoidance Savings

3.1 Through the quarter, edge of care services continue to be delivered despite the covid-19 pandemic with teams operating a flexible approach using a combination of face to face, video and phone sessions. During quarter two, service delivery resumed as normal. Within quarter two, 183 children from 108 families have been supported by EOC interventions.

3.2 A summary of key outcomes from internal edge of care interventions for children in this quarter demonstrates that of the **49 children where edge of care intervention concluded in the quarter, 92% (45 children) remained at home.**

Glossary:

CLA – Child Looked After CIN – Child in need CP – Child Protection EH – Early Help

MST – Multi Systemic Therapy

FGC – Family Group Conference

MST CAN – MST Child Abuse & Neglect

FFT – Functional Family Therapy

PA – Parenting Assessments

Table 2: Edge of Care Outcomes concluded within Q2 2020-2021

	EOC Outcome	MST CAN	FFT	MST	FGC	PA	Total	%
1	Exited from care							
2	Closed to social care and early help		3		1	4	8	16%
3	Stayed open to the same plan	1	1	1	3		6	12%
4	Remained in care							
5	Came into care (LAC)		2		2		4	8%
6	Risk to child decreased (stepped down)*	4	11	10	1		26	54%
7	Risk to child increased (stepped up)		1	4			5	10%
	Total	5	18	15	7	4	49	100%

*Where a child's risk was assessed to have decreased, children's social care and /or early help remained involved to provide the family with support. Where that risk was assessed to have increased, children became subject to CIN/CP.

- 3.3 Compared with the previous quarter (April – Jun 2020), there has been a 24% increase in the number of interventions concluded for children. This is comparable with quarter four, (2019-20) with 49 children this quarter compared with 37 children for the last quarter. There is also a 11% increase in children remaining at home or exiting from care compared with the previous quarter. This is attributed mainly to the impact of Covid 19 within quarter one and disruption to the normal service delivery model which has become more stable.
- 3.4 It is an expectation (of the judiciary) for all Local Authorities to have ensured that any case that goes before the court has been subject to a robust process of assessment, this is known as pre-proceedings and identifies our children most at risk of coming into care. If it is robust, this process should provide assessment and support and should ideally divert cases away from the court arena. If used appropriately, the timescales for care proceedings should be reduced and permanency for children is achieved quicker whether coming into care or remaining with their families.
- 3.5 Of the pre proceedings that concluded within quarter two, 18 children/ 9 families that had EOC interventions as outlined below stepped down from these.

Table 3: Cases stepped down from pre proceedings within Q2 2020-21

EOC intervention	No of families	No of children
MST CAN	2	8
FFT	5	8
MST	0	0
Safe Families	0	0
Family Group Conferencing	0	0
Parenting Assessments	2	2

- 3.6 Safe Families do not provide the data per quarter in the same way as internal EOC services, however outcomes are described within their section.
- 3.7 Whilst Parenting Assessments and Family Group Conferencing can evidence positive impact on preventing placements breaking down, children remaining at home with exits from care, cost avoidance for placement costs to the authority are currently only evidenced for MST, MST CAN and FFT.
- 3.8 In the first six months of the year, MST/CAN and FFT have successfully diverted 80 children from care with a forecast placement cost saving of £1.6m net compared to a budget of £1.1m net for the year.
- 3.9 Commissioning of external residential parent and baby assessments has stabilised with a reduction of £800k expenditure per year since the introduction of the parenting assessment model and two-year pathway in 2018. For this year to date, whilst most other local authorities report increased commissioning of residential parenting assessments, Leicester continues to reduce this which is attributed to robust social work practice and the internal parenting assessment model provided by early help and prevention services.

Table 4: Residential Parenting Assessment cost

Year	No of residential parenting assessments	Bed nights	Cost
2017-18	55	3,261	£1.2m
2018-19	23	1,116	£470k
2019-20	21	670	£447k
2020-21 Q2	5	320	£154k

- 3.10 Heads of Service have met to review the impact of edge of care interventions where temporary funding ends in Mar 21, namely Family Group Conferencing and Safe Families. Looking at uptake, professional's confidence in using these and impact, proposals are being developed to continue these

using Troubled Families payments by results funding for a further 12 months. This may not be at the same levels due to PBR funding available. If the full amount is not available, children who are subject to child protection plans and already in care will be prioritised.

4. Demographics by residence and ethnicity

4.1 Building on the work from the Q1 report exploring disproportionality, data has been produced by ethnicity and residence of children being supported by EOC interventions. Data analysis to date highlights disproportionality in particular in relation to an under representation of mixed heritage young being supported by edge of care interventions when compared with the population of children who are in care and care leavers. Edge of care interventions support higher numbers of white british children compared with the CLA, Care Leaver and youth population in Leicester. In addition, the majority of children supported by edge of care interventions live in areas with the most deprivation and need compared with the local population.

Table 5: Ethnicity of children supported by EOC Interventions Q2 2020-21

Ethnicity	MST- FFT	FGC	Parenting Assessments	Safe Families	Total
White British	34	25	22	45	126
White Irish	0	0	0	0	0
White other	0	0	0	7	7
Black Caribbean	0	0	4	5	9
Black African	0	0	0	3	3
Black other	0	0	1	0	1
Asian Indian	7	0	1	3	11
Asian Pakistani	2	0	0	0	2
Asian other	3	0	3	0	6
Dual Heritage	4	1	5	0	10
Not known	1	2	5	0	8
Other					
Total	51	28	41	63	183

Table 6: Residence by ward of children/families supported by EOC Interventions Q2 2020-21

Postcode	Number of children (Q2)	Areas covered
LE1	2.1% (4)	Wycliffe (1), Castle (3)
LE2	22.1% (41)	Knighton (3) , Aylestone (6) , Stoneygate (1) , Spinney Hills (3) , Saffron (10) , Eyres Monsell (18)
LE3	31.1% (57)	Braunstone & Rowley Fields (25) , Westcotes (6) , Western (15), Fosse (11)
LE4	30.6% (56)	Beaumont Leys (16) , Rushey Mead (14), Abbey (15), Belgrave (11)
LE5	12.5% (23)	North Evington (8) , Troon (2) , Thurncourt (4) , Humberstone & Hamilton (5) (Evington) (4)
Out of city	1.09% (2)	Coventry (1) and Mablethorpe (1) (LAC)

Table 7: Comparator data by ethnicity for families supported by edge of care interventions

Ethnicity Category	Edge of care intervention	Children Looked After	Care Leavers	Combined CLA and Care Leavers	Leicester population
White British	68.8% (126)	57.2% (346)	50.7% (137)	55.2% 483	45.1%
White Irish	0	0.16% (1)	1.85% (5)	0.6% 6	0.8%
White other	3.8% (7)	4.13% (25)	5.18% (14)	4.46% 39	4.6%
Black Caribbean	4.9% (9)	1.15% (7)	2.2% (6)	1.48% 13	1.5%
Black African	1.6% (3)	3.47% (21)	9.6% (26)	5.37% 47	3.8%
Black other	0.54% (1)	2.15% (13)	1.48% (4)	1.94% 17	1%
Asian Indian	6.01% (11)	4.47% (27)	2.96% (8)	4% 35	28.3%
Asian Pakistani	1.09% (2)	1.82% (11)	2.59% (7)	2.05% 18	2.4%
Asian other	3.27% (6)	3.14% (19)	4.81% (12)	3.54% 31	4%
Mixed Heritage	5.46% (10)	19.37% (117)	14.4% (39)	17.84% 156	3.5%
Not known* Unclassified	4.37% (8)	1.65% (10)	0% (0)	1.14% 10	3.4%
Other ethnic group	0	1.15% (7)	4.44% (12)	2.17% 19	1.6

*Unborn babies or declaration of ethnicity refused.

4.2 Within quarter two, two thirds of children supported by EOC interventions are white british (68.8%) with just over a quarter of children supported from black and ethnic minority groups (BAME). Whilst there are slight variances between some of the ethnic groups, compared with the population of children in care (CLA,) the most notable variance shows an over representation of White British and under representation of Mixed Heritage being supported by edge of care interventions. This is also replicated when compared with the population of care leavers and youth population of Leicester with the exception of an under representation of Asian Indian groups.

4.3 When examining ward data, whilst there are families from each ward being supported by EOC interventions, almost two thirds are from LE3 and LE2 which in line with most referrals being made for families who live in areas with links to deprivation and most need.

4.4 Whilst findings to date have been shared with senior managers to inform discussion and planning, analysis by ethnicity is in its infancy and evolving as part of this report. Work is ongoing regarding referral status, outcomes and matching. Additional scrutiny and support will be provided from the Assistant City Mayor for Equalities and Special Projects, a meeting is planned mid-December to review data to inform key lines of enquiry to progress. Refer to Appendix One: Ethnicity by population and children social care and early help for the full breakdown.

5. MST, MST CAN and FFT

5.1 There have been cases involving 51 children across 35 families opened in the quarter. Within the quarter, MST, MST CAN and FFT have worked with 109 families, 38 families' cases have closed in the quarter with 100% of children starting treatment this year remaining at home. Refer to Appendix Two: MST, MST CAN and FFT Feedback, Case Data and Financial Savings

5.2 Ethnicity of families receiving support from MST, MST CAN and FFT are outlined below.

Table 8 Ethnicity of referrals of families to MST, MST CAN and FFT Q2

Ethnicity Category	MST	MST CAN	FFT	Total
• White British	14	4	5	23
• White Irish	0	0	0	0
• White other	0	0	0	0
• Black Caribbean	0	0	0	0
• Black African	0	0	0	0
• Black other	0	0	0	0
• Asian Indian	2	1	2	5
• Asian Pakistani	0	0	1	1
• Asian other	0	2	0	2
• Dual Heritage	2	2	0	4
• Not known	0	0	0	0

5.3 Sixty-six per cent of referred children starting the programme were White British; 23% were Asian (Asian Indian and Asian other); 11% dual heritage. This fits with the local and national picture of over representation in White British and Dual Heritage groups and under representation in Asian groups. There is a body of evidence demonstrating ethnic matching (which is not always possible in small teams or highly diverse areas) can be mediated by high model adherence, skill levels and confidence in holding meaningful conversations around culture. Highly skilled staff who are focussed on strength-based teaching, giving reinforcing statements, problem solving, and dealing with practical family needs within the cultural context, are correlated to high engagement and positive outcomes, regardless of race, racial match, or financial hardship.

5.4 Overall, feedback from families and professionals continues to be positive, with 100% of 'failed' cases resulting in children coming into care, suggesting that referrals are appropriate and that teams are targeting those with the highest risk of care.

MST

5.5 There have been 21 new children starting across both MST Standard team in the quarter. In the year the teams have started 37 families and children. MST counts differently to MST CAN and FFT and whilst working with whole family, only counts one child per family as a start. The two teams have worked with 45 families across the quarter and 78 in the year. The teams have started 37% of their target caseload for the year. The MST service has achieved 37% of the 'new starts' annual target of 120 which is slightly lower than anticipated target (47%) and impacted by staff absence. The average caseload per FTE therapist has been 5 which is in line with the budget. The teams are operating at full capacity as of the end of September.

Table 9: Status of cases at referral to MST Q2

No of children	Case status	Comments
21 Children		
10 (47%)	Single Assessment/Duty and Advice	
2 (10%)	Child Protection	
5 (24%)	Child in Need	

4 (19 %)	Early Help & Prevention	MST standard only
0	Looked After Children	Plan to exit from care within 28 days

5.6 Due to the length of intervention, cases do not generally open and close within the quarter, however of those cases that closed within the quarter:

Table 10: Status of cases closed within the quarter (Q2)

15 children closed, 100% remaining at home.	
No of children	Case status
4 (27%)	Child Protection
11 (73%)	Child in Need

5.7 Of cases opened this year, 92% remain at home. The targeting deflator is averaging 56% compared to 73% in 2019/20, which is a result of referrals from Early Help and Prevention, including the Children and Young Peoples Justice Service. The average placement cost of the cases taken has increased significantly from 2019/20 with more children with greater needs being referred.

5.8 The placement costs avoided in MST (std) are significantly higher than last year. As the team have only started 37% of the target caseload, this may still change as the year progresses. That said, the teams are taking an increasing number of children and young people who are at significantly at risk from criminal and sexual exploitation. Additionally, the teams are taking children with eating disorders, significant self-harm and serious violence. A number of these children would require high cost placements, were the intervention to fail.

5.9 In year cumulative gross savings from the 37 cases taken in the first half total £1,420k compared to an annual budget of £734k. Whilst cases taken on is lower than the target budget the average placement cost avoided is significantly higher than that assumed in the budget, as noted above.

MST CAN

5.10 There have been 6 new families (starts) in the quarter with 15 children. The two teams have worked with 22 families in the quarter and 42 families to date in the year. The two programmes have remained consistently full, with one therapist vacancy which will not be filled due to it being maternity cover and advertised twice. The two MST CAN teams are targeted to start 32 new cases per year on average over a 3-year cycle. The length of the programme is 9 months and hence the theoretical number of new starts in any one of the three years can vary between 24 and 48.

Table 11: Summary of overview of cases starting and closing - MST CAN Q2

6 families/ 15 children opened all subject to child protection etc - 100% from legal planning meetings.
5 families closed (13 children), 100% remained at home:
- 2 (40%) remained at home on a CIN plan
- 3 (60%) remained at home on a CP plan

5.11 A second Psychiatrist has been secured for MST CAN 2 and will be trained to start working with families in the next quarter.

5.12 In year cumulative gross savings from the 31 children referred in the first half total £784k compared to an annual budget of £653k. The number of families started is line with the budget but the number of children per family is higher and coupled with the zero-failure rate means that savings are ahead of budget despite the one therapist vacancy.

FFT-CW

- 5.13 There have been 8 new families opening in the quarter with 15 children. The team has worked with 42 families during the period and 56 families in the year. In the quarter, this equates to 14 cases per therapist demonstrating that the team has been oversubscribed based on staffing capacity impacted two therapist vacancies and carrying forward 36 families from the previous year.
- 5.14 The average length of treatment of cases closing in a planned way this year is 224 days, or just over 7 months per case. Most cases have closed within the 6-month target; however, a small number of cases have exceeded it. This is due to a change in treatment plan (e.g. family break ups), treatment interruptions (e.g. time in hospital), new safeguarding concerns (e.g. children with non-accidental injuries), and an increase in cases requiring translation services. There is a management focus on case pacing going forward to develop capacity.
- 5.15 The average placement cost avoided has increased from £31k last year to £62k this year. As the team have had reduced starts this year, the average placement avoided across this team is skewed and should be read with some caution. The figure has been significantly impacted by three teenage children starting the programme with significant and highly complex health needs. These children were assessed as otherwise requiring specialist care in therapeutic provision. The team is taking an increasing number of children with highly complex health needs including complex learning and developmental delays, suicidal ideation, anorexia, and children requiring specialist peg feeding.

Table 12: Summary of overview of cases starting and closing – FFT

8 families/15 children opened, 62.5% were child protection, 37.5% child in need
100% came from legal planning meetings and all remain home to date
18 families (31 children) closed (89% remain at home): <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2 (11%) became looked after (LAC), placed away from home- 1 (5.5%) was LAC; placed with parents with a plan to get a supervision order- 1 (5.5%) remained in PLO subject to a child protection plan- 9 (50%) had stepped down to Child Protection- 2 (11%) had stepped down to Child in Need- 3 (17%) were closed to the division.

- 5.16 In year cumulative gross savings from the 32 children referred in the first half total £1,421k compared to an annual budget of £1,696k. Number of cases taken on is significantly lower than the target, although financial savings are ahead of the budget because the average placement cost avoided has been double the budget and what was seen in 2019/20.
- 5.17 There are no specific recommendations for MST, MST CAN and FFT in this quarter.

6. Safe Families

6.1 The primary aims within the Safe Families contract are to;

- a) Connect isolated families into their communities through high quality volunteer support
- b) De-escalate cases to a lower level of support required from Childrens' Services by improving the resilience of families to cope with life situations.
- c) Reduce the flow of children coming into Care
- d) Achieve cost avoidance savings for Leicester City Council

6.2 A contract extension up until the 31st March 2021 is in place, during that period Safe Families are contracted to work with 60 families, a target of 100 referrals is set (66% engagement rate).

6.3 For this quarter Safe Families have received referrals for 22 families and 63 children (3 of these were care leavers). There has been a 23% increase in referrals for quarter 2 compared to quarter 1, and in September, 14 referrals were made, this is the highest number of referrals made in a calendar month since the contract began. The rise in referrals is attributed to teams re-establishing working practices in light of COVID-19 pandemic and families requiring support as children return to school.

6.4 Safe Families operate a category system to determine trajectory and support required. This is determined by the referrer.

- a) Category 1 is *Families that require support to thrive within their community, children within the family are not at risk of being accommodated.*
- b) Category 2 is *Without Safe Families support, are one or more of the children in the family on a downwards trajectory towards needing accommodating*

6.5 The origin of referral for quarter 2 is Social Care 10 (46%), and Early Help 12 (54%). For this quarter, 55% of referrals for families received are identified as Category 2 on a trajectory into care. This is continually monitored to ensure contract objectives are being met and category 2 referrals do not drop below 50%. Of the referrals, 41% from Early Help and 85% from social care were identified as category 2, which is consistent with thresholds.

6.6 To improve the accuracy of the Category 1 or Category 2 choice, in consultation with LCC, Safe Families have expanded the question to include more detail about what the referrer hopes support from Safe Families will prevent/enable. This change has only been live from May to July, it is hoped that this will improve the accuracy with which Safe Families can report back social care change. The following table illustrates the breakdown of incoming referrals by what support is expected to prevent/enable in Leicester:

Expectation	# Children	%
Escalation to Social Care CIN	16	19%
Escalation to Social Care PLO	7	8%
At risk of becoming looked after by the LA	8	9%
Escalation to Social Care CP	10	12%
Enable de-escalation to Social Care CIN	16	19%
Enable de-escalation to Early Help	16	19%
Enable closure to Childrens Services	30	35%
Enable de-escalation to Early Help	16	19%
Enable closure to Childrens Services	30	35%
Enable de-escalation to Social Care CIN	16	19%

*The same child may appear with multiple expectations within the same trajectory.

6.7 For this quarter 63 children and young people have been referred within the whole family referral to Safe Families. At this stage of contract delivery, we can see that:

- a) 44% of children are aged 0-5
- b) 36% of children are aged 6-11
- c) 20% of young people are aged 12-17.

6.8 The following tables illustrate residence and outcome for all the referrals that have been made to Safe Families this year Jul 20 – Sept 20

Table 13: Residence of ward for families and children referred

Postcode	Number of families and children (Q2)	Areas covered
LE1	1 (2 children)	Wycliffe, Castle
LE2	7 (18)	Knighton , Aylestone , Stoney Gate , Spinney Hills , Saffron , Eyers Monsell
LE3	3 (8)	Braunstone , Westcotes , Western Fosse
LE4	9 (31)	Beaumont Leys , Belgrave , Rushy Mead, Abbey Belgrave
LE5	2 (4)	Evington , Troon , Thurncourt , Humberstone

6.9 The table below illustrates the lead ethnicity of incoming referrals for Q2 and for the duration of the commission, the table also details the ethnicity of referrals nationally and locally. Ethnicity data for Leicester is included from the 2011 census (Population 324,224) to provide a means to compare engagement. Data provided specific to the referral is broken down into 11 ethnicity categories, Safe Families will categorise in this way moving forward.

Table 14: Ethnicity of children/families referred

Ethnicity Category	Population (%)	Quarter 2 (Number)	Duration of Contract (%)	Volunteers Nationally (%)	Leicester Volunteers (%)
White British	51	13 (45 children)	70	74	92
White Irish					
White Other		2 (7)	4		
Black Caribbean	6	2 (5)	6	11	0
Black African		1 (3)	2		
Black Other					
Asian Indian	37	1 (3)	6	3	0
Asian Pakistani					
Dual Heritage	4	2 (2)	5	9	2
Not Known			2	8	6
Other	3	1 (1)	5	0	0

6.10 Overall, incoming referrals to Safe Families are less ethnically diverse than the overall population, White British families are overrepresented, and Asian families are underrepresented, whilst referrals from Black and Dual heritage families are proportionate compared to the population.

6.11 Analysis of outcomes for families from different ethnic backgrounds has begun, moving forward Safe Families will be providing data specific to the familial ethnicity. However, for the purpose of the following reference is made to White British Families and families from BAME communities. Engagement for White British families is 66% whereas engagement for BAME is 74%, White British Families are successfully volunteer matched 61% of the time, and for BAME 67%. Of the 41 families closed, 6 families were from a BAME background.

6.12 In relation to the volunteer base, Safe Families has a less diverse volunteer base than the incoming referrals. There are some nuances in this though; as the data shows, Safe Families have a higher than average number of volunteers of a black ethnicity compared to Asian. Recruiting more Asian volunteers has now been identified as an area for development, Safe Families are planning to engage faith groups in the city in order to achieve this, due to Covid-19 this work is yet to start. Safe Families will seek to do this in collaboration with the Fostering Service who are also trying to recruit Asian foster carers.

Table 15: Summary overview of referrals from Safe Families April 20 – June 20

No	Summary
22	Referrals made this quarter.
34	Referrals made this year (71 children)
37	Families have been supported or are receiving support
8	Families are pending support
1	Referral declined by Safe Families due to it being below threshold.
0	Bed nights have been provided, however there is a hosting planned for 1 child imminently.
3	Referrals for care leavers
0	Families have closed to Safe Families after being matched to and supported by a volunteer

- 6.13 Safe Families use a soft measures outcome tool to measure the impact that support as had upon outcomes. All families record their scores against a number of outcomes and these scores are tracked throughout involvement, these outcomes are:
- Positive Parenting
 - Social Networks and Support
 - Wellbeing, happiness and emotional health
 - Confidence and self-esteem
 - Home and physical needs of the child
 - Family Relationships.

6.14 Safe Families reports on social care change on families who have been open for 6 months or more. For this quarter, families have not been open to Safe Families long enough for us to have data on their social care change. However, refer to Appendix Three: Safe Families Case Studies evidencing impact.

6.15 Volunteer recruitment continues to be steady and is meeting the demands of the contract. Safe Families currently have a total of 117 volunteers with 7 in the training process.

6.16 Care Leaver Learning and Development the incoming flow of Care Leaver referrals is positive, referrals have now been received from the majority of the PAs in the 16+ Team (13 out of 15 PAs). Safe Families are developing practices and have learned that a greater degree of persistence is required to engage young people and have adjusted their projected timescales in order to better engage care leavers with their volunteers.

6.17 Disengagement Research, research across Safe Families nationally showed that during the initial period of lockdown, when all initial conversations with families were taking place over the phone, disengagement was at its lowest ever rate. As a learning from this moving forward, families will be offered the choice of an initial conversation over the phone prior to a Family Support Manager meeting them in person. It's hoped that this change will maintain higher levels of engagement.

Specific recommendations for Safe Families

6.18 Explore opportunities for continuation funding beyond April 21.

7. Family Group Conference Service (FGC)

New referrals and number of children involved

7.1 Over the last quarter, the FGC Service has received 10 new referrals with 28 children. There have also been 6 enquiries with advice given.

7.2 The continued impact of Covid-19 on the FGC service has resulted in less referrals being received and held. However, this appears to be levelling out and we are focusing on trying to gain more referrals to the service. We have started to have some face to face FGC's, making sure they comply with government guidelines and LCC policy. The inability to see families in their homes has made it harder to connect to them and it is taking longer to progress to a FGC and there has been more contact with families by the co-ordinators to get the families to the point they're ready to have a FGC, this is reflected in the length of time the referral have been open.

LAC – Looked after child

CIN – Child in need

CP – Child Protection

PWP – Placement with parents

EH – Early Help

PF – Private fostering arrangement

Table 16: Source and status of children at referral to FGC

Quarter 2	<i>July</i>		<i>August</i>		<i>September</i>		<i>Total</i>	
Sources of Referrals	No. of referrals	No. of children	No. of referrals	No. of children	No. of referrals	No. of children	Total No. of referrals	Total No. of children
CIN								
CP	1	2	3	5	1	2	5	9
EH	2	9					2	9
LAC			2	9	1	1	3	10
Grand Total	3	11	4	14	2	3	10	28
Previous Quarter	5	14	4	9	4	3	12	27

7.3 During quarter two, 7 FGCs were held, they will be reviewed after 3 months.

Table 17: FGC Activity Q1 2020-21

Month	Completed	Change of Circumstances FGC stopped	Family Withdrawn	Lead Professional Withdrew	Withdrawn as MST/FFT	Grand Total
July	3	0	1	0	0	4
August	2	0	1	0	0	3
September	2	0	1	0	2	5
Grand Total	7	0	3	0	2	12
Previous Quarter	7	2	2	2	0	13

Ethnicity trends for the Family Group Conference service

7.4 Breakdown of referrals by ethnicity to FGC in the quarter were: 25 children are white british, 1 child is dual heritage and 2 children's ethnicities were unknown. For quarter two White British is the dominant with 80% of referrals. Due to the limited number of referrals, we have included quarter two data within this to inform analysis.

7.5 For quarter one and two 2020-21, 65% of referrals were for white british children, this is comparable with the same period last year where 61% of referrals were for white british children. This is an over representation of white british children compared with the population of Leicester (45%) Looking at the status of children when referred across quarter one and two, there is an over representation of white british children (72%) where a decision has been made that the threshold for removal into care has been met. This is also higher than the percentage of referrals made to FGC.

Table 18: Ethnicity of families referred Q1 and Q2

Ethnicity	EH	CIN	CP	LPM	Pre-Proceedings	Court request	LAC	Grand Total
Asian Indian	2							2
Dual Heritage							1	1
Not known			1					1
Other	1		1				2	4
White British	4	1	2	2	1	1	4	15
Grand Total	7	1	4	2	1	1	7	23

Table 19: Ward of residence for families referred Q1 and Q2

Ethnicity	Q 1 & 2	Wards of residence
Asian Indian	2	Fosse, Rushey Mead
Dual Heritage	1	Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields
Not Known	1	Beaumont Leys
Other	4	Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields, North Evington, Aylestone, Out of City – Coventry (LAC)
White British	15	Abbey, Aylestone, Beaumont Leys, Evington, 2 Eyres Monsell, Fosse, 2 Humberstone and Hamilton, Knighton, North Evington, Saffron, 2 Western, Out of City - Mablethorpe
Total	23	

7.6 Looking at the 3-month follow up stage, where the families that have had FGC's in quarter one & two this year.

Status at 3-month Follow up stage

Ethnicity	Improved	Same	Escalated	Grand Total
Asian Indian	3			3
Asian Pakistani	1			1
Other		1		1
White British	3	3	5	11
White other	2	1		3
Grand Total	9	5	5	19

- 7.7 Further analysis shows that on average white british families are referred to FGC at a later stage and that the status of the case and issues for white british families have escalated and become worse, more so than families with other ethnicities. Due to the size of the cohort, over representation of referrals and individual circumstances for families, it is not possible to state if referring white british families at an earlier stage would improve their outcomes. However, this will be highlighted to managers and practitioners to raise awareness and inform planning and consideration of use of FGC.
- 7.8 If a FGC does not go ahead, we may have still worked with the family. Over the quarter, we spoke to **15** family members for the referrals that did not result in an FGC going ahead.
- 7.9 Intensive work with all cases involving meeting with other professionals, home visits to individual family members, often more than once. In most cases, the FGC worker has grown the family and friends' network. The Family Plans have resulted in cases being closed to Children's Social Care and being stepped down to Early Help, prevented children going into care e.g. by supporting kinship applications, finding other family members that can help and/or share the care.
- 7.10 We record the immediate effect of the FGC (where a plan was made that addresses the issues/concerns of the Lead Professional) and follow up after 3 months with the Lead Professional to capture the impact of having a FGC. **100%** of the FGCs that took place during the quarter had an immediate positive outcome. All of them produced a plan made by the family that the Lead Professional was happy with and the family were invested in.
- 7.11 The average number of days from allocation to FGC taking place is **66** days, last quarter this was **75** days. The longest case during this period lasted **126** days. Last Quarter the longest case held was **183** days. The shortest time from allocation to the FGC taking place was **20** days. These figures include weekends, bank holidays and doesn't take into account that 3 of the 5-person team are part time.
- 7.12 For the **7** FGCs that took place a total of **49** family members were contacted with **33** attending the actual FGCs. Per FGC this is an average of **7** contacted and **4.7** attended.

Feedback 3-month follow up, including Signs of Safety scaling

- 7.13 All FGCs are followed up 3 months post closure with questionnaires completed over the phone. We contact the referrer first and then the family.
- 7.14 7 FGCs took place during the previous quarter July-September 2020. We gather the signs of safety scale (0 – 10) at the point of referral and at the 3-month follow up stage. The average SofS scale at the point of referral was **4.5**, 3-month post FGC this raised to **7.1**. This is an average improvement of **2.6+**. Only 1 of the SofS scales went down, 1 stayed the same, the remaining 5 had improved SofS scales scores.

Families pathway through SCS and EH post FGC.

- 7.15 We also capture a snapshot of where the family are within the SCS and EH pathway at the point of referral and at the 3-month follow up stage, so we can see if the FGC has had an impact of the family's journey. Feedback from the referrers captured that 100% of them felt they felt confident in referring to the FGC service in the future and that they were given enough information about timescales and content.

7.16 We also captured feedback from families. All of them said they feel having a FGC made their situation better or mentioned a positive outcome due to the FGC. All of them found the process easy. All of them said that they are confident they could ask their network for help in the future. For quarter 2, the summary is as follows:

Table 20: Summary overview for Family Group Conferencing

19 children, 68% of which are SC (42% CP, 26% LAC) – 32% are EH
7 FGC's held - where 49 family members contact, 33 at meetings, most 8 attending an FGC
100% produced a plan, in 3-month follow up majority evidencing successful outcomes due to FGC
Gathering data 3 months post-FGC we catch up on where the families are. We group this into quarters (in this case quarter 2, April-June)
A total of 7 FGCs in the previous quarter, 5 at children's social care level and 2 EH. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 x CP – 1 Closed to all services, 2 LAC, 1 CIN and 1 remains CP. - 2 x EH – 2 remain EH
29% of the FGCs moved down, 1 CP to CIN, 1 CP Closed
42% of the FGCs stayed at the same level. 2 EH, 1 CP
29% of the FGCs moved up, from 2, CP to LAC
Signs of Safety scale average at point of referral 4.5 , after 3 months this has moved up to 7.1 .

7.17 For the FGC service, interpreters are used to help ensure there is clear communication for the family and professionals, a core part of FGC is private family time, during which the interpreter is not involved. Over the course of 2020 Jan-Sept there have been 5 referrals that used an interpreter with three FGC's that took place with the FGC Co-ordinator as the interpreter. One family that did not make it to the FGC stage (an interpreter was used at the exploration stage, but no FGC took place) and one referral that is still ongoing.

7.18 The three families that had the FGC Co-ordinator as the interpreter are Asian Indian families who all reported improved scoring when followed up 3 months post closure. Of these, one case closed completely to social care and early help, one case stepped down from a child protection plan to a child in need plan and for the remaining case, children remained in care. With only three families having interpreters to date this year, it would be beneficial to review their impact over the course of a year, if the numbers remain low.

7.19 Feedback from the service report positive impact of using interpreters where requires and the difference this makes. One of our Co-ordinators wrote this about the use of interpreters for FGC *"I used interpreters for 4 families – Polish, Slovak, Tigrinya (Eritrean) and Sylheti. I mentioned at the time how pleased the mum from the last family was to have the correct Bangladeshi dialect as she had previously had Bengali interpretation, and this was not clear for her. It is good to have an interpreter even where some English is spoken and family members are interpreting, to ensure neutrality and clear message, and to ensure children are not interpreting for parents. Communication is key to our role so anything that helps must be a better experience for the family."*

7.20 Refer to Appendix Four: Pre and Post FGC Intervention which demonstrates impact using scaling pre and post FGC intervention with relevant commentary regarding the family situation

Specific recommendations for Family Group Conferencing

7.21 Explore opportunities for continuation funding for the expanded team beyond April 21.

8. Parenting Assessments (including Two Year Pathway)

8.1 To mitigate against the need to use external residential parenting assessments and support families to develop local support networks, the Children Centre and Family Support service within Early Help and Prevention have developed a 0 – 2 pathway of universal and targeted services to support families with young children. Part of the pathway also includes the completion of parenting assessments for children to prevent family breakdown, access to childhood services and extending their support the network within their own community.

Impact of Covid-19 restrictions

8.2 Adaptations to assessment practice continue to be made due to the impact of the Covid 19 outbreak. At the beginning of this quarter, the service was established, working within Covid 19 restrictions. To enable safe completion of parenting assessment work, communication continued to be made with every social worker to discuss the level of concern for each case, and to see if work could continue to be carried out over the phone, with safe home visits also being reintroduced.

8.3 Both St Andrews and Belvoir Drive contact centres are used to facilitate face to face contact between parents and their children who are placed in Local Authority care. Ordinarily they would facilitate direct contact up to 3 times a week in addition to undertaking parenting assessments during this time. Due to Covid 19, St Andrews contact service were not able to facilitate face to face contacts or parenting assessments between the 24th March 2020 and the 28th September 2020 and all contact sessions went virtual using Microsoft Teams.

8.4 The three parenting assessments that were already taking place continued to take place virtually with the parents undertaking work sessions, however, due to the risks from the parents, the practical sessions where parent/s are seen practically caring for their child/ren were paused as there was no Covid secure venue that would be able to facilitate the sessions and equally the risk assessments meant it was not safe to undertake these sessions in the community. Consideration was given to whether the child could be taken to parent's home in order to observe their care but again, this was not deemed safe or in the children's interests as it may cause confusion.

8.5 Those parenting assessments that had started are now being completed as the contact centres have re-opened and the worker can observe the practical childcare. There have also been a further three referrals for parenting assessments which will now be progressed. The difference between Early Help being able to progress their assessments is due to that cohort of children either being unborn or are still in the care of parents whereas, the children who have contact at St Andrews are in care, living at a different address, considered high risk and require supervised contact.

8.6 In terms of care proceedings, we have continued to progress cases to final hearings and social workers have given evidence virtually and we were still able to move children onto adoptive placements by being able to use the garden at St Andrews despite the building not being open. This happened on five cases and has prevented any delay in those children achieving permanence. There has been some delay in court proceedings, however due to experts undertaking assessments having to delay direct sessions with parents. Again, now that the centres are open, Guardians and other experts have been able to come and see parents with their children.

Activity for Quarter Two 2020-21

8.7 Since July to September 2020, there have been 45 requests for parenting assessments from Early Help with 34 of those pre-birth.

Table 21: Request for Parenting Assessments Jul - Sept 2020

Service Area	Children Centres & Family Support
No of PA's requested	45
How many children	41*
Of these, pre birth	34
Completed	9
Part completed Cancelled	2
Cancelled	3 (social worker withdrew 2 and 1 moved to a mother and baby placement)
Ongoing	31

Note: * Two parenting assessments completed for four children.

8.8 Of the 41 children, the table below provided a breakdown of ethnicities and residence by ward:

Table 22: Ethnicities of children supported through a parenting assessment

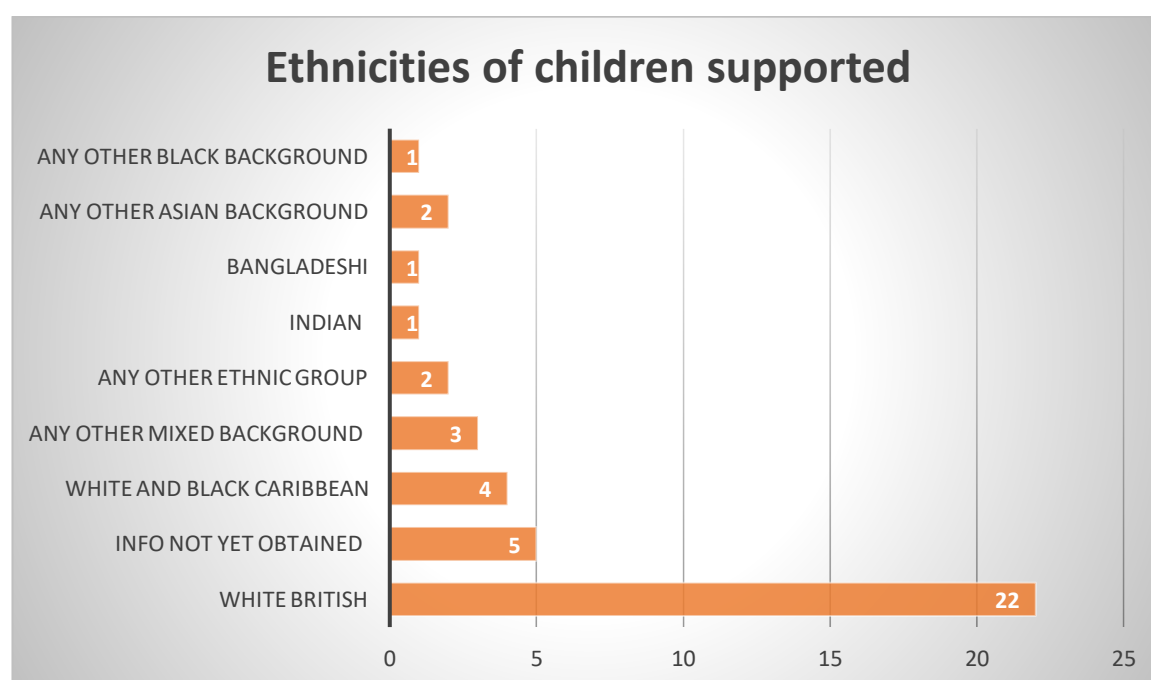


Table 23: Wards of residence and ethnicity of children supported

Ethnicity	No of children	Wards of residence
White British	22	Beaumont Leys, Abbey, Aylestone, Western, Castle, Rushey Mead, Troon, Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields, Westcotes, Thurncourt, North Evington, Eyres Monsell, Stoneygate, Belgrave
Info Not Yet Obtained	5	Westcotes, Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields, Beaumont Leys, Abbey, Aylestone
White/Black Caribbean	4	Western, Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields
Any Other Mixed Background	3	Eyres Monsell, Evington, Aylestone
Any Other Ethnic Group	2	Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields,
Asian Indian	1	Rushey Mead

Asian Bangladeshi	1	Eyres Monsell
Any Other Asian Background	2	Eyres Monsell
Any Other Black Background	1	Fosse
Total	41	

8.9 For Quarter Two 2020-21, 54% (22) of the referrals were for white british children which is an over representation of white british children compared with the population of Leicester (45%). Thirty four percent (14) of referrals are for children from black, asian and minority ethnicities. Twelve per cent (5) of referrals have no information gathered in relation to the birth father, therefore no evidence of the child's actual ethnicity has been recorded at this time. Further analysis by ethnicity for the quarter shows that out of the nine completed PA's, six (67%) of children were 'white british', one (11%) was 'any other mixed background', one (11%) was 'white/black caribbean' and one (11%) with 'information not yet obtained'.

8.10 Of the nine parenting assessments completed, the outcome destination for children was as follows:

Table 24: Outcome destination for children following completion of parenting assessment and intervention

Service Area	Children Centres & Family Support	St Andrews
Remaining at home	67% (6)	n/a
Removal into foster care		
Removal into kinship care	22% (2)	n/a
Remain in foster care		n/a
Returned home		n/a
Placed in mother and baby placement	11% (1)	

Table 25: Summary overview of status of case pre and post parenting assessment and intervention from Children Centres and Family Support

9 children, of which: 34% CP, 22% CIN, 22% SA, 11% LAC, 11% ICPC

No	Case status at start of PBA within Q2	Case status at end of Q2	Comments
1	CP	Closed	Case stepped down from CP to CIN due to positive steps being made and then was closed to Social care completely as the positive changes were being sustained
2	CIN	CP	Case was stepped up from CIN to CP due to ongoing concerns, which is where it remained at the end of this quarter period.
3	CP	CIN	Case stepped down from CP to CIN due to positive steps being made.
4	SA	CP	Case started as a Single Assessment (SA) but was stepped up to CP due to ongoing concerns, which is where it remained at the end of this quarter period.
5	CP	Closed	Case stepped down from CP to CIN due to positive steps being made, and then was closed to Social care completely as the positive changes were being sustained.

6	ICPC	LAC	Case started at the initial child protection conference stage but became LAC as child was placed into kinship care, which is where the child remains.
7	SA	LAC	Case started as a SA but became LAC as child was placed into kinship care, which is where the child remains.
8	CIN	Closed	Case remained on a CIN plan at completion of the parenting assessment, however 2 weeks later the case was closed completely to Social Care.
9	LAC	LAC	Case remained at LAC level as mother and baby were placed in a mother and baby unit.

8.11 Out of the 9 completed PA's, 2 of the referrals were made at the Single Assessment stage (1 – White British and 1 – Information Not Yet Obtained) were the ethnicities for these, and 1 referral was an action from an ICPC with the ethnicity of this child being White British. These are early intervention referrals from social care for a parenting assessment request, whereas the remaining 6 referrals/child were either on a CIN (2 – 1, Any Other Mixed Background and 1, White British), CP (3 – White British) plan or were LAC (1 – White British).

Case status 3 months post closure

- 8.12 Cases are now tracked 3 months post closure to assess and evidence impact and sustainability. Within Q1 2020-21 (July – Spt 2020), there were 4 parenting assessments completed for 4 children. Three of the children were subject to child protection plans with one child subject to a child in need plan, all four cases are now completely closed to children's social care and early help.
- 8.13 On closure, two children that had made positive progress in their case within Social Care were both White British children, with the 4 cases/ethnicity of the child that had seen an escalation at Early Help closure was (2 – White British, 1 – Any Other Mixed Background and 1 – Information Not Yet Obtained).
- 8.14 All of the CDW's (6) that complete the Early Help Parenting Assessments are White British and when completing assessments where interpreters are required for those families whose first language is not English or their understanding of English is deemed not sufficient enough. Interpreters are used for all communication with these families, whether this be over the phone or when completing assessment visits. We do not currently have a diverse workforce within this team as when the team was put together, the personnel were put forward by cluster management. If in the future, the team is expanded in numbers, an opportunity could arise to create a diverse workforce which could assist with allocating relevant referrals if the preferred families' language can be met by a member of staff with the PA team.
- 8.15 With our final assessment reports, we ask for feedback from parents in regard to their experience of having the assessment completed and how they found this process. Generally, feedback is positive despite the circumstances. For future reports, we could explore if there are any differences in experience as a result of using interpreters.
- 8.16 It is clear from the data that the PA's completed by Child Development Workers (CDW) within the Children Centre and Family Support service, continue to play an integral role alongside social care to ensure that the parent(s) of the unborn/born child are given the opportunity to be supported to investigate a wide range of issues that cover relevant and appropriate parenting of their child/or unborn child.

8.17 The completed PAs continue to have a quality assurance process that is both robust and thorough, which allows for appropriate checks to be made to ensure that the documents are ready for court if required. This process has been well received by the frontline staff completing the PAs, their direct managers as well as representatives from social work teams. Refer to Appendix Five: Parenting Assessment Case Studies evidencing impact of PAs completed in quarter one.

Specific recommendations for the Parenting Assessment Model are:

8.18 St Andrews Contact Centre to undertake Parenting Assessments from quarter three.

8.19 Submit a proposal to develop a permanent Parenting Assessment Team within existing resources.

7 Financial implications

7.1 In the first half of 2020/21 80 children have been diverted from care as a result of new in-year referrals to MST/CAN and FFT with a forecast placement cost saving of £3.6m compared to a budget of £3.1m for the year. New cases diverted to date are 43% of the annual target at the half year. Financial savings are higher than budget despite the below target new cases because the placement costs avoided in MST have on average been assessed as higher than assumed in the budget because of the complex needs of the child.

Martin Judson, Head of Finance.

8 Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.
Pretty Patel, Head of Law, Ext 37, 1457

9 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

There are no significant climate change implications directly associated with this report. However, carbon emissions from staff travel required to deliver these services should be managed through a policy of asking staff to consider options for using sustainable travel such as electric pool cars, buses or walking and cycling where this is feasible and will not negatively affect the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

10 Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have statutory duties, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions they have to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. In doing so, the council must consider the possible impact on those who are likely to be affected by the recommendation and their protected characteristics.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The aim of these programmes is to provide a targeted response to those children most at risk of coming into care with a view to reducing looked after episodes, the financial cost of these and improving outcomes for children, young people and their families. It is important to note that during COVID 19 and its impact across services, the Public Sector Equality Duty remains in force. Whilst there are no direct equality implications

arising from this report as it is for noting, each of the intervention programmes have specific recommendations at the end of their section which are reviewed within the Edge of Care Interventions Board, these need to ensure equality considerations are embedded throughout and addressed appropriately, also equality monitoring should be carried out to identify if any protected groups are adversely impacted upon.

Ethnicity data is now available across a number of intervention programmes and going forward should be developed across the other programmes, which should be able to identify any issues that need addressing as appropriate. The second quarter has identified the over representation of White British groups across a number of intervention programmes and under representation of other ethnic groups, such as Indian Asian groups.

Sukhi Biring, Corporate Equalities Officer, 454 4175

11 **Background information, other papers and appendices**

Appendix One: Ethnicity by population and children social care and early help

Breakdown of families' ethnicities supported by edge of care interventions compared with allocated cases, local and national population.

Appendix Two : MST, MST CAN and FFT Feedback, Casework and Financial information

Evidence of impact for families supported between Jul – Sept 2020, includes feedback from families and professionals.

Appendix Three: Safe Families Case Studies

Evidence of impact for families supported between Jul – Sept 2020

Appendix Four: Pre and Post FGC Intervention Scaling

Scaling of progress made for families supported by FGC between Jul – Sept 2020

Appendix Five Parenting Assessment Case Studies

Evidence of impact for families supported between Jul – Sept 2020, includes feedback from families and professionals

12 **Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

No, however appendices will need to be exempt from publication due to sensitive and confidential information which may be identifiable.

13 **Is this a “key decision”?**

No

All Age Groups

	Asian/Asian British			Black/Black British			Mixed					White/White British			Other		Unknown					
Category	Bangladeshi	Indian	Pakistani	Any other Asian background	African	Caribbean	Any other Black background	White and Asian	White and Black African	White and Black Caribbean	Any other mixed background	Gypsy / Roma	White Irish	Traveller of Irish Heritage	White British	Any other White background	Any other ethnic group	Information not yet obtained	Refused	(blank)	Grand Total	
LAC-CL	10	35	18	21	47	13	17	30	10	49	67	4	5	1	483	35	19	10			874	26%
EHA-STW-AP	5	113	14	36	38	12	9	18	9	37	19	8	1	1	533	36	13	18		504	1424	42%
CIN	10	69	12	16	36	7	4	13	11	37	26	2	4	4	308	43	22	41	1	1	667	20%
OSP	1	36	12	15	12	1	4	11	7	21	33				208	18	1	21			401	12%
Total	26	253	56	88	133	33	34	72	37	144	145	14	10	6	1532	132	55	90	1	505	3366	
Percentage	0.8	7.5	1.7	2.6	4	1	1	2.2	1.1	4.3	4.3	0.4	0.3	0.2	45.5	3.9	1.6	2.6	0.02	15	100%	
Leicester	1.1	28.3	2.4	4.0	3.8	1.5	1	1	0.4	1.4	0.7	0.1	0.8	N/A	45.1	4.6	0.7					
England	0.8	2.6	2.1	1.5	1.8	1	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.8	0.5	0.1	1	N/A	79.8	4.6	0.5					

*England and Leicester population taken from Census 2011

From families:

- *My therapist has been marvellous. I was not expecting any of this, certainly nothing so positive and helpful. We have such a positive relationship. She is so different to the other professionals I have worked with. She works with an open mind. She weighs things up and makes her own mind up. She always listens. She has done everything that she can, despite the difficulties with covid and accessibility to services. She sees things from my perspective and sees my point of view. She understands my past. I really appreciate that she has asked other professionals to step back with support I don't need. She didn't judge me like everyone else has.*
- *My therapist checks in with me, remembers things, is so understanding, drops me a text – checking that I am ok, nice to know that she is thinking about me, she always talks about the children, is supportive with them. It doesn't feel like work and feels comfortable.. she is always always there.. will always call me back if I call her.. I wouldn't have got this far without her, she reminds me about things; she can reign me in when I'm having a bad day. Even when I am ranting and raving, and I'm swearing – she puts up with me, and is just so nice, feel like I can talk to her.*
- *From a parent: Your staff have been amazing; they are there every opportunity trying to support us. The Therapist is totally amazing- I can't fault your team. I've never felt judged by them. Without them we wouldn't have got this far- we can talk about everything- having someone to do checks with for meds/knives- just wanted to say thank you.*
- *Text from Parent: First of all I'd like to say a huge thank you to my therapist XXX for all the work she had put into my family. It wasn't easy for her as she had to gain my trust due to other agencies that have been involved in the past. I didn't make it easy for her if I'm honest. She stuck by me through the hard times and the good times and was always a phone call away when times was difficult. Not only was she here for me, she was here for my family and engaged really well with my son who has ADHD and it's difficult for him when change is involved. She worked with us both to make the small changes happen to make my family work. She always praised us when things improved, Although I mentioned to her, it was through her expertise and hard work the changes wouldn't have taken place with out her, which I'm truly great full for. Secondly, When she was on annual leave she always ensured another MST worker was there to carry on the support for my family. I can honestly put my hand on my heart and say what a good team MST are”.*
- *Text from parent: Hi would like to give some feedback. I would like to say a big thank you to XXX for all the support and hard work she put in to my family and especially my son, MST have taught me a lot that I didn't know of! My therapist encouraged me and showed my positives and taught me how to work with my negative there was a point where I wanted to give up and thought I couldn't do it but she encouraged me and didn't let me break down... if it wouldn't be for MST I would have never be where I am thank you so much”.*

To/
Dawn

Thank you for everything you
have done for us. we wouldn't be
where we are now if it wasn't
for you!

*With these thanks
a special thought
of all the happiness
you have brought*

Thanks for Everything

You are so much more than a
Support worker. I am sad to
be losing a good friend you are
like our extended family.
we will miss you!

Love from

Kerry, Adi,

Kieran, Ty, Lincan, Rowan
XXX

To
Lydia

I just want to say Thank you
for being a gr8 therapist
I can say from the bottom
of my heart, that I wouldn't
be done *...very, very much!*
as well as I have
done if I wouldn't have had
you as my worker...

Your passion and look +
action really helped.

More than you know.

So Thank you Lydia
on helping me find myself..

From other professionals:

- *From a Social Worker: The aforementioned case has concluded today with a supervision order for 6 months, with a plan that FFT will work with the family for the duration of that order, or as necessary. During the course of the hearing, Judge XXX was extremely complimentary of the FFT service and commented that FFT have a very good plan and model of working and that she has observed positive changes in families that the team have worked with the service. She encouraged the mother to work with the service in order to sustain long term changes for the future of the children*
- *Email from a police officer to their Sargent forwarded back to MST: "Whilst dealing with XXX this morning, I had cause to call their allocated MST worker. She was already aware that XXX was missing having made contact with his mother. She was very helpful and forthcoming with all the information that I needed and had already made an appointment to visit the family tomorrow. Useful to have them 24/7"*
- *From an ETE provider: Good morning. XX (child) consented to me making contact to advise you, that following a successful meeting, he has been enrolled onto his chosen course- Media and Games. He spoke very highly of you throughout the meeting stating "if it wasn't for XX (therapist)u, he wouldn't be here today*
- *From a National Consultant / Lead: I reviewed your action plan and to be honest it looks great. I have reviewed many plans and I am not one to hold back on feedback — but I think this one is just fine as is. It is clear, concise, and to the point. You have clear explanations of data points. You have a solid identification of priority areas and plans to address them. I think it is very well done. Thank you for your time on it.*

Table Showing Performance Summary All Programmes

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY					
ALL PROGRAMMES					
	Period 6 2020/21				
	2018/19 cases	2019/20 Cases	2020/21 YTD	Annual Target	
Number of families started	133	158	69	204	34%
Success rate to date	77%	80%	95%	80%	
Number of children started	225	258	100	292	34%
Savings in year 1	£4,012k	£3,483k	£4,763k		
Savings in year 2	£8,667k	£8,419k	£6,627k		
Savings in year 3	£4,670k	£4,936k	£1,864k		
Cumulative gross savings*	£17,349k	£16,838k	£13,254k	£15,922k	
Cumulative savings post targeting deflator	£12,771k	£14,615k	£10,045k	£12,331k	81%
Intervention cost	£1,775k	£1,845k	£1,976k	£1,972k	
Net savings over a 2 year placement	£10,996k	£12,770k	£8,069k	£10,359k	
In year only figures:					
In year successful LAC diversion	139	191	80	187	43%
In year gross LAC savings from successful diversion	£2,769k	£3,012k	£3,626k	£3,083k	118%
In year net LAC savings	£994k	£1,167k	£1,650k	£1,111k	149%
Average placement cost	£49k	£41k	£71k	£34k	
Children per family					
Overall success rate	77%	80%	95%	80%	

Table Showing Performance Summary STD 1 & 2

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY					
STD 1 AND 2					
	STD 1/2 Period 6 2020/21				
	2018/19 cases	2019/20 Cases	2020/21 YTD	Annual Target	
Number of families started	77	67	37	100	37% Of target
Success rate to date	87%	84%	92%	85%	
Number of children started	77	67	37	100	
Savings in year 1	£2,390k	£1,744k	£2,558k		
Savings in year 2	£4,402k	£4,116k	£3,609k		
Savings in year 3	£2,012k	£2,371k	£1,051k		
Cumulative gross savings*	£8,804k	£8,232k	£7,218k	£6,529k	
Cumulative savings post targeting deflator	£4,226k	£6,009k	£4,009k	£2,938k	56% Current average
Intervention cost	£708k	£650k	£724k	£724k	
Net savings over placement period avoided	£3,518k	£5,359k	£3,285k	£2,214k	
In Year only figures:					
Number of children successfully diverted	32	41	19	38	50% Of target
In Year only gross savings post deflator	£1,147k	£1,273k	£1,420k	£734k	194% Of target
In Year only net savings post deflator	£439k	£623k	£696k	£10k	
Average annual placement cost avoided	£72k	£77k	£109k	£38k	

Table Showing Performance Summary CAN 1 & 2

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY					
CAN1&2	CAN 1/2 Period 6 2020/21				
	2018/19 cases	2019/20 Cases	2020/21 YTD	Annual Target	
Number of families started	28	21	12	24	50%
Success rate to date	68%	90%	100%	85%	
Number of children started	86	65	31	48	65%
Savings in year 1	£929k	£703k	£784k		
Savings in year 2	£2,577k	£1,309k	£1,063k		
Savings in year 3	£1,663k	£606k	£279k		
Cumulative savings*	£5,169k	£2,618k	£2,126k	£2,611k	
Intervention cost	£582k	£749k	£764k	£764k	
Net savings over placement period avoided	£4,587k	£1,869k	£1,362k	£1,847k	
In year only figures:					
In Year children successfully diverted	58	59	31	41	76%
In year only gross savings	£929k	£703k	£784k	£653k	120%
In year only net savings	£347k	(£46k)	£20k	(£111k)	
Average placement cost	£47k	£24k	£34k	£32k	
Children per family	3.1	3.1	2.6	2.0	
PERFORMANCE SUMMARY					
FFT	FFT Period 6 2020/21				
	2018/19 cases	2019/20 cases	2020/21 YTD	Annual Target*	
Number of families started	28	70	20	80	25%
Success rate to date	79%	73%	95%	75%	
Number of children started	62	126	32	144	22%
Savings in year 1	£693k	£1,036k	£1,421k		
Savings in year 2	£1,688k	£2,994k	£1,955k		
Savings in year 3	£995k	£1,958k	£534k		
Cumulative savings*	£3,376k	£5,988k	£3,910k	£6,782k	
Intervention cost	£485k	£446k	£488k	£484k	
Net savings over placement period avoided	£2,891k	£5,542k	£3,422k	£6,298k	
In year only figures:					
In year successful LAC diversion	49	92	30	108	28%
In year gross LAC savings	£693k	£1,036k	£1,421k	£1,696k	93%
In year net LAC savings	£208k	£590k	£933k	£1,212k	
Average placement cost	£25k	£31k	£62k	£31k	
Children per family	2.2	1.8	1.6	1.8	

Appendix Four: Pre and Post FGC Intervention Quarter Two 2020-21

The table below demonstrates scaling pre and post FGC intervention with relevant commentary regarding the family situation.

At point of FGC referral	3-Month follow-up	Pre-FGC SoS Scaling	3-month follow-up SoS Scaling	Case summary and comments
EH	↔ EH	7	8	16-year-old moved into live with friend's family home. Plan made to support him, family and friend's family and to plan if current living situation changes. FGC plan is working, still living with friend. EH remains open as working with younger children.
CP	↓ CIN	4	9	Concerns around DA, substance misuse and poor home conditions. Positive changes made stepped down to CIN. SW - There is a sense of moving forward with positive change. Both parents have demonstrated good physical care of the children. Basic care is being consistently met.
CP	↓ Closed	4	10	Closed - Plan made to support mum and 2 young children if there are further DA incidents and support for dad to help him stay calm. No further DA instances, support working, closed to all services.
CP	↔ CP	5	6	Plan made to support parents once baby is born, mum has mental health issues and dad misuse substances. They have enough support for baby to go home with mum and dad. Review FGC has been held to strengthen family plan as small changes were needed after the birth of the child.
CP	↑ LAC (PWP)	4	3	Placed with parents - Mum. Fragile home placement, mum was not managing things, child's behaviour was deteriorating, mum does not access help that has been offered. Plan made to ensure help is being taken up. There is a review FGC being planned at the minute, to make sure is having the support she needs, as there has been further complication as dad was released from prison and has been recalled (DA against mum)
CP	↑ LAC	6	6	Young parents - with substantial substance misuses. Mum has learning disability and is very vulnerable. Child was 12 weeks premature & has significant health issues. Family plan made to support mum and dad to see if the child could go home and to identify who in the family could care for child if high risks could not be managed. It is still being decided if the parents are able to appropriately care for their child.
EH	↔ EH	2	8	14-year-old has girlfriend 4 years older, self-harm and suicide attempts, CAMHS involved. Family are about to be closed to EHA, review FGC held in Sept, to review plan, as it has been working well. Review FGC plan to help family keep up the good work when closed to services.

At the point of referral, we ask the lead professional for a copy of their most recent scale score. 3 months after the FGC is held, we ask for their new current scaling, this is so we can track the movement and impact having an FGC has had on the family.

Appendix Five : Parenting Assessment Case Study - Early Help and Prevention Service

Family Composition – A (unborn), AB (Mother – 35 years old), AC (Father – 51 years old – AB's partner)

Danger Statement from Social Worker

The Social Worker and the other professionals are worried that AB has had a really difficult childhood and has experienced a lot of abuse at the hands of adults who were supposed to protect her. This has had an impact on AB's ability to parent her own children. As a result of this AB has put her children at risk of harm, where they have experienced physical and emotional abuse, and they are no longer in her care. AB had a psychological assessment which identified because of the significance of AB's early life experiences, she needs a high level of therapeutic input in order to develop healthy and safe coping strategies. We are also worried that this is a very new relationship, and untested, especially because caring for babies can be very stressful.

Background - at time of referral

This referral has been received from a midwife advising that AB is pregnant and in a new relationship.

AB has 5 previous children removed from her care due to her lifestyles and AB's youngest child now 7 was placed in the care of her father at 5 months old, she was removed from her mother's care from birth and placed into foster care on an Interim care order.

AB had 4 previous children who are now living permanently elsewhere (two of these children are as a result of an incestuous relationship with her father).

Contact has been made with AB, she confirmed that she is pregnant and in a new relationship and this is going ok.

Discussed with AB about previous concerns which led to her children removed from her care, she said she has moved on, has reflected on her past, realises her mistakes, has regular contact with her 7 year old child, AB feels she is now mature and wants to put things right with the unborn baby and she has given consent for Single Assessment.

Due to previous history with AB, AB is pregnant, in a new relationship with partner who is not assessed and it is not known if AB is able to meet unborn baby's need and baby's needs when born, the current level of need as highlighted by the LLR threshold for intervention suggests that case progress for a Pre-birth assessment to be completed.

The assessment to assess risk, AB's parental ability, AB's ability to protect and safeguard and ensure that unborn baby is not put at risk when born.

Current situation at time of referral

A parenting assessment was requested just before the birth of A, to be completed due to this being AB's sixth pregnancy and none of her older children being in her care. Historical concerns surrounding AB's capacity to parent safely involved concerns relating to neglect and poor home conditions, failure to seek and respond appropriately to medication and medical issues, and 2 of her children being born of an incestuous relationship with Maternal Grandfather. There is a pattern of concerns with regards to AB's relationships and these involving Domestic Violence and high levels of manipulation and coercion which have historically impacted on how AB has engaged with CSC. AB is vulnerable in her own right, and has not had meaningful therapeutic intervention, and feels that she does not need this. However there are significant concerns that previously AB has put her children at risk by exposing them to risky persons, whom she has been in relationships with and therefore I am worried about AB's ability to maintain this observed changes without work completed regarding her own history of trauma and subsequent emotional needs.

AB is engaged to A's father, AC. Checks that have been made have so far been reassuring but it is noted that this is a relatively new and untested relationship, and AB and AC have not yet lived together, although this is in part due to restrictions surrounding AC's contact with AB's 7 year old child due to previous written agreements surrounding AB and her contact with this child.

AB has the 7 year old in her care unsupervised and frequently, and at this time, no concerns have been raised

with respect to the care offered by AB and her ability to safeguard her.- in fact the 7 year old's social worker describes AB as a 'protective factor'.

AB's lifestyle in the absence of any further concerning information from partner agencies appears somewhat more balanced compared to chaotic as it has been described in the past.

AB appears to be engaging openly and honestly with the LA, and shows a willingness to work together with the LA to achieve her aim of bringing unborn baby home.

Although AB and AC's relationship appears to be one which is mutually beneficial and safe, it is a relatively new relationship which is untested. However, the checks that have returned regarding AC are reassuring, and AC also expresses a willingness to work closely with the LA and support B.

Parenting assessment

All sessions of the PA were completed and fully engaged with by AB and AC with A also in attendance once born. Areas of intervention provided in the PA covered the following:

- Past History – 'What is different now?'
- Ensuring Safety
- Emotional Warmth
- Stability
- Stimulation
- Basic Care
- Guidance and Boundaries

Both AB and AC have engaged very well with the PA. AB in particular due to her hazardous past has demonstrated that she has A's safety and well-being at the forefront of her mind in working towards developing and maintaining a safe and positive relationship with A. AC has engaged well and has continued to show his support for both AB and A when born, with his relationship with both flourishing.

AB has been able to self-reflect on her past and although a lot of this is due to the early trauma that she suffered, she has also been able to acknowledge that she has also made some negative choices both with previous partner's but also when the children that she had removed were in her care. AB has remained positive throughout the PA and speaks with enthusiasm and hope in regards to her future relationships with both A and AC. To think that the full duration of this PA was carried out in the middle of the Covid 19 pandemic too, shows just how hard AB and AC to a lesser extent have worked at engaging with all services on board and with the PA being carried out.

AC has continued to show a sustained level of support for both A and AB and this needs acknowledging and praising too. He has abided by the written agreement that AB had in place for her 7 year old child which restricted him from living with AB, which could have tested their relationship, but this has remained positive throughout the PA. The PA obviously concentrated on AB, and her knowledge of what historical changes needed to be made, and to reflect on past mistakes/decisions and assessing the ability of these changes being put into practice and not just being discussed.

This was a positive assessment that was engaged with well. The final PA report was completed in early August 2020 with the outcome for A (just under 4 months old at this time), being that he was able to stay in the care of AB. During the PA, positive progress had been maintained that saw the case be stepped down from a CP plan to a CIN plan when A was around 7 weeks old.

This positive movement by all parties then saw the case close completely to social care 3 weeks after the PA was closed as it was deemed that A was safe and having all of his needs met by AB and AC, who continued to be in a positive relationship.

Please see below the feedback from the social worker in this case study in regards to work completed by Early Help on the PA mentioned:

Feedback from Social Worker

“The assessment is very well written and structured and addresses all areas expected.

In terms of constructive feedback, there is a lot of emphasis on the practicalities like home safety, feeding, bathing etc which is brilliant and very detailed”.

“I had a post birth assessment completed for baby A earlier this year. We had a lot of worries about this family due to the history and were monitoring it very closely.

Emma (the Early Help worker) was fantastic. She completed an assessment of baby with the whole family, and developed a great understanding of the history, concerns and what needed to happen. Emma developed a fantastic relationship with the family and maintained great contact with AB and other professionals. The parent in question has had some difficult experiences with CSC, but Emma was able to develop a positive and professional relationship with her. The assessment enabled the LA to support the family to stay safe and stay together and we were able to complete the work needed and close on a very positive note.

Without this assessment, I expect we will have been open on a cp plan for considerably longer, possibly under pre/ proceedings. The assessment enabled me to provide a holistic social work assessment to demonstrate the positive changes sustained by this family.

Many thanks again to Emma and You (the Lead), re this piece of work. It was an absolute pleasure working with you. Having this service available has been so helpful at a time where managing and progressing cases is even more challenging than usual”!

Feedback from AB

“Thank you for everything, I've really enjoyed working with you, and I will hope to continue in the right direction”.

Feedback from Social Worker on a separate PA

“The assessment is very well written and structured and addresses all areas expected.

In terms of constructive feedback, there is a lot of emphasis on the practicalities like home safety, feeding, bathing etc which is brilliant and very detailed”.

Feedback from Parent/s on a separate PA

“I totally agree with the findings of the report and realise that I require further support in the future to enable me to continue on this positive journey.

Edge of Care Interventions Report Quarter Two 2020-21

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Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission

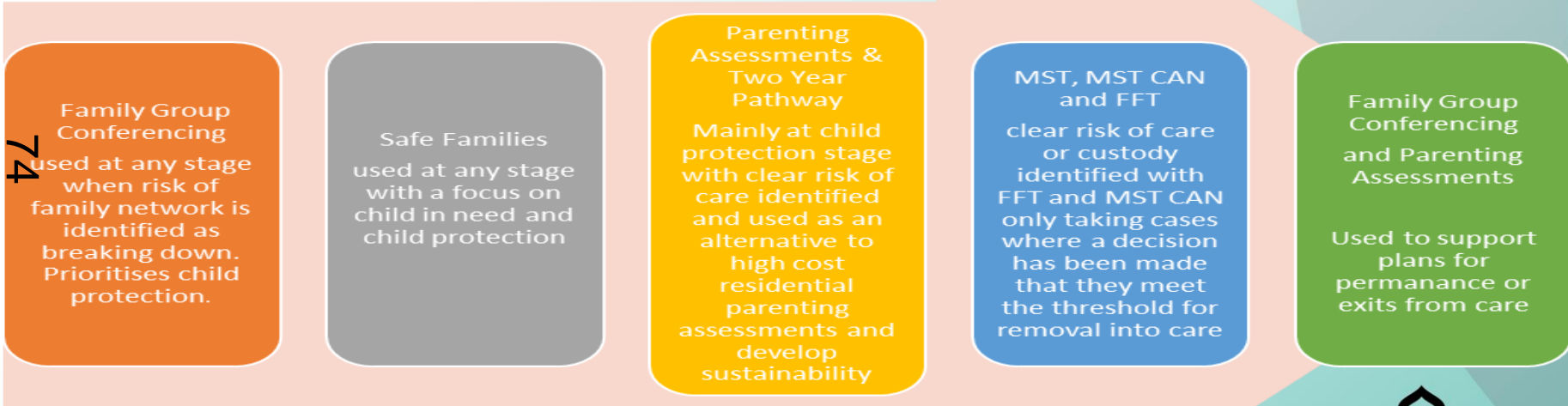
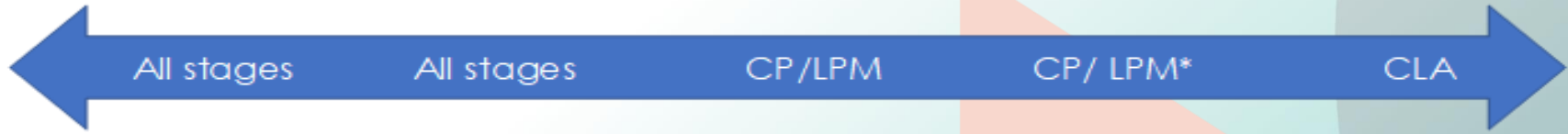
14th April 2021

Caroline Tote - Director for Social Care and Early Help



Leicester
City Council

Approach to edge of care services



Summary

- Delivery model resumed, 24% increase on interventions concluded compared with previous quarter.
- 49 children EOC concluded – 45 children (92%) remained at home, closed to social care and early help or exited from care.
- 18 children who had an EOC intervention stepped down from pre proceedings

By end of Q2 (2020-21), cost avoidance can be evidenced:

- ⁵MST-FFT - £1.6m net forecast exceeding target of £1.1m
- Safe Families (Annual)
- FGC/Parenting Assessments – No financial evaluation but established models evidencing impact
- Parenting Assessments – Only 5 residential assessments commissioned, annual reduction maintained
- Children Looked After cohort report in progress, EOC offer reviewed with proposals for 2021-2022.



Comparator data by ethnicity for families supported by edge of care interventions

Disproportionality in particular, an under representation of mixed heritage young being supported by edge of care interventions when compared with the total population of children who are in care and care leavers. EOC supporting higher numbers of white british children and those living in areas with the most deprivation, Braunstone and Rowley Fields highest.

Ethnicity Category	Edge of care intervention	Children Looked After	Care Leavers	Combined CLA and Care Leavers	Leicester population
White British	68.8% (126)	57.2% (346)	50.7% (137)	55.2% 483	45.1%
Mixed Heritage	5.46% (10)	19.37% (117)	14.4% (39)	17.84% 156	3.5%

MST, MST CAN and FFT

- 51 children/ 35 families opened in the quarter
- Referral status: 12.5% Early Help, 50% Child in Need, 37.5% Child Protection
- EOC interventions concluded for 38 cases (43 children)

Team	Cases closed	Success Rate		
		Remain at home	CLA	Closed
77 MST	15 (3)	15 (2)	0 (1)	0 (0)
MST CAN	5 (3)	5 (3)	0 (0)	0
FFT	18 (14)	12 (9)	3 (4)	3 (1)
Total	38 (20)	32 (14)	3 (5)	3 (1)

- Adherence scores remain high, 100% of 'failed cases' come into care
- Projected to exceed annual target: 3.6m gross (1.6m net), increased costs of placements due to greater needs (mental health/exploitation)

Safe Families

Category 1 – need support but not at risk of accommodation, Category 2 is without SF support, on trajectory to coming into care - 55% of referrals were determined as Cat 2 - comparable to other LA's using Safe Families.

22 families (63) children referred (23% increase from Q1)

37 children supported in Q2 - 46% for social care, 54% for Early Help – 80% are aged 0 – 11

0 bed nights, however hosting planned for 1 child imminently

Engagement rate is 66%, better than comparable LA's at 50%

3 care leavers supported

16 host families/ 117 vols

73% of all children supported to date have maintained or de-escalated, 24% closed, 3% LAC

Proposal to extend contract using Troubled Families PBR to continue service till Mar 22 for child protection, exits from care and care leavers (£60k)

Family Group Conference

- Referrals for 10 families, 28 children comparable with Q1
- Referral status: 32% Early Help, 42% Child Protection, 32% CLA
- 7 FGC's held - 49 family members invited, 33 attended meetings
- 100% produced a family plan independently

62 Cases closed (previous quarter)	Success rate				
	Remain at home	Remain LAC	CLA	Closed	Exist from Care
7 (13)	4 (7)	0 (1)	2* (1)	1 (2)	0 (2)

- 1 x LAC is placement with parents, the other exploring options to return home
- Signs of Safety scaling: average at point of referral was **4.5**, after 3 months moved up to **7.1** (out of a scale of 10)
- Proposal to use Troubled Families PBR to continue service till Mar 22 for child protection and exits from care (£100k)

Parenting Assessments (PA)

- 45 requests for PA, 41 children (34 pre birth) St Andrews 0 due to CV-19
- Referral status: 22% Single Assessment, 22% CIN, 22% , 45% Child Protection, 11% CLA

PA completed		Success rate				
		Remain at home	Remain CLA	Became CLA	Closed	Exit from care
Early Help	9 (4)	3 (0)	1 (0)	2 (0)	3 (4)	
St Andrews	0					

Year	No of residential PA	Bed nights	Cost	Comments
2017-18	55	3,261	1.2m	Avg assessment is 60 nights, £200 per day
2018-19	23	1,116	470k	Developed in house PA model within existing resources
2019-20	21	675	450k	Some assessments higher cost due to CCTV etc
2020-21	5	320	154k	(All 5 ended)

MST AND FGC

FGC

16-year-old moved into live with friend's family home. Plan made to support him, family and friend's family and to plan if current living situation changes. FGC plan is working, still living with friend. EH remains open as working with younger children.

MST CAN

My therapist has been marvellous. I was not expecting any of this, certainly nothing so positive and helpful. We have such a positive relationship. She is so different to the other professionals I have worked with. She works with an open mind. She weighs things up and makes her own mind up. She always listens. She has done everything that she can, despite the difficulties with covid and accessibility to services. She sees things from my perspective and sees my point of view. She understands my past. I really appreciate that she has asked other professionals to step back with support I don't need. She didn't judge me like everyone else has.

Safe Families - Z

- **Background:** Z is a care leaver who was removed from his birth family when he was 10 due to chronic neglect and abuse. He went from foster carer to foster carer and now lives independently. He is very lonely with nothing to do.
- **Support requested:** A family friend for Z to give him emotional support and to help him gain life skills he has missed out on learning. He says he wants to learn how to talk to people.
- 82. **Support provided:** Z has been linked with a family friend who has been out with him on walks, been round to play X Box with him and has offered him emotional and practical support. The volunteer has helped Z sort through his finances and helped him know what to do when he had earache. The volunteer has also been helping him and supporting him to keep going to his football training and has helped him to better understand how to communicate with his coach.
- **Outcomes:** Z narrates that although he was initially very anxious to meet the volunteer, he is really glad that he has and has been opening up to him more and more. Z says that he wants to learn 'to speak to other people as easily as I speak to you [the volunteer]'

Parenting Assessment for AB - Feedback from a social worker

“The assessment is very well written and structured and addresses all areas expected.

In terms of constructive feedback, there is a lot of emphasis on the practicalities like home safety, feeding, bathing etc which is brilliant and very detailed”.

“I had a post birth assessment completed for baby A earlier this year. We had a lot of worries about this family due to the history and were monitoring it very closely. Emma (Child Development Worker) was fantastic. She completed an assessment of baby with the whole family, and developed a great understanding of the history, concerns and what needed to happen. Emma developed a fantastic relationship with the family and maintained great contact with AB and other professionals. The parent in question has had some difficult experiences with children's social care, but Emma was able to develop a positive and professional relationship with her. The assessment enabled the LA to support the family to stay safe and stay together and we were able to complete the work needed and close on a very positive note.

Without this assessment, I expect we will have been open on a cp plan for considerably longer, possibly under pre/ proceedings. The assessment enabled me to provide a holistic social work assessment to demonstrate the positive changes sustained by this family.

Many thanks again to Emma and You (the Lead), re this piece of work. It was an absolute pleasure working with you. Having this service available has been so helpful at a time where managing and progressing cases is even more challenging than usual”!

Key Recommendations

1. Ongoing analysis to be completed on ethnicity of children supported, identifying any trends and actions. Meeting with Cllr Patel early Jan to identify key lines of enquiry.
2. Safe Families to increase pool of volunteers from asian communities – ongoing, delay due to CV-19, planned to meet with faith groups. Link up with fostering service who also want to recruit asian foster carers.
3. St Andrews Contact Centre to undertake parenting assessments from Q3.
4. FGC to deliver a workshop with members within Q4.
5. Use Troubled Families PBR to continue temporary edge of care interventions for FGC (£100k) and Safe Families (£60k)

Any questions?

Jackie Difolco

Head of Service: Early Help and Prevention

Social Care and Early Help Division

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If you can predict something, you can prevent it.....



Leicester
City Council

Terms of reference for the independent review of children's social care: a bold and broad approach to support a fundamental review of children's experiences

Context

Government is committed to levelling up across the country. In order to do this, it is absolutely vital that we start with children and families – particularly the most vulnerable – to reduce the downstream impacts and costs to both the children themselves and society. Every child, no matter their background or the circumstances in which they grow up, must have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Children's social care is at the heart of this endeavour, with a unique ability to protect children and young people from risks or harms both inside and outside the home, and to help them realise their talents and aspirations for the future. We want to improve children and young people's lives and outcomes at the earliest opportunity, to strengthen families, and to realise the benefits of establishing firm and loving foundations early in life, both to individuals and to society for generations to come.

It is for this reason that in our manifesto we committed to undertaking a review – the review will take a fundamental look at the needs, experiences and outcomes of the children it supports, and what is needed to make a real difference. In doing so, the review will contribute to ambitious and deliverable reforms, taking into account the sustainability of local services and effective use of resources. The review will also consider how the children's social care system responds to all children who are referred to the system. It will address major challenges, including the sharp increase in recent years in the number of looked after children, high and rising unit costs, the inconsistencies in children's social care practice and outcomes across the country, and the failure of the system to provide sufficient stable loving homes for children.

The review should consider the capacity and capability of the system to support and strengthen families in order to prevent children being taken into care unnecessarily.

Building on what we know and taking an evidence-led approach

This review will be bold and broad – a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reform systems and services. Children's needs and the context in which they are growing up have evolved. A children's social care system which can respond appropriately now and in the future is needed. The review will build on the strong foundations we have established: recent reviews over the past decade have given us rich insights into the component parts of the children's social care system such as fostering and residential care, alongside analysis of support in and around schools through the review of children in need. We have learnt a great deal about a range of policy 'enablers' and tools at our disposal, such as workforce reform and increasing professional freedom, that have unlocked real changes. We will improve our understanding of which levers offer the greatest potential to make a difference to children's experiences through social care and be open to new ways of conceiving and

delivering them. The wealth of existing evidence from national reviews and local practice should act as a stepping off point – so that we build on this understanding and move forwards, taking an evidence-led approach throughout. The review will also work alongside ongoing programmes for reform around raising standards in local authorities, boosting adoption, improving support for care leavers, and responding to the consultation on unregulated provision.

Scope for a bold and broad review

Starting from children’s experiences

What marks this review out is the singular opportunity it presents to take a fundamental look at the experiences of the people who matter most, children and young people themselves, and the services they receive through children’s social care and partner agencies. This starting point will ensure the review tells us what would serve children best based on their needs. The review will consider how the provision of services in one part of the system influences a child’s experiences and outcomes later. The review will prioritise hearing the voices of children, young people, and adults that have received the help or support of a social worker, or who have been looked after.

All children who are referred to or involved with statutory children’s social care

The review will look at the whole system of support, safeguarding, protection and care, and the child’s journey into and out of that system, including relevant aspects of preventative services provided as part of early help. This will include children throughout their interaction with children’s social care, from referral, child in need and child protection plans, through to becoming looked after. Evidence has shown that the outcomes of all children involved with children’s social care in this way are comparably challenging – for instance, children on a child in need plan had an average Attainment 8 score of 23 in 2016, the same as children in care (the national average is 50). The review will focus on what is needed to meet these children’s needs, starting with the contribution that children’s social care can make to these children’s lives – keeping them safe, improving their lifetime outcomes and reducing the impact to children and to society of failing to provide effective support – whilst also considering the role and contribution of the wider multi-agency system. The implications if we are not able to fully support children to achieve their potential are clear: children who have been in care comprise 25% of the homeless and 24% of the prison population. Over a third of care leavers (39%) are not in education, employment or training compared to 13% of all 19-21 year olds and just 13% progressed to Higher Education by age 19 compared to 43% of all other pupils.

The review’s focus should include children who are in care in formal settings such as fostering arrangements or residential care and also those receiving support under informal, kinship care. The review may want to consider support for children as they prepare to leave care and those receiving ongoing support once they have left care, drawing on care leavers’ experiences. It may also want to consider the support provided for adoption. The

review will give due regard to the SEND Review, which will consider the main questions relevant to children with special educational needs and disability.

Children's social care and interaction with partner agencies

Children's social care is central to improving lives but cannot achieve it alone. The influence of related social issues is fundamental, for instance domestic abuse, mental ill health and substance abuse. The responses to these issues are led by key partner agencies, such as police and health settings. In order to fully meet children's needs it is necessary that they and their families receive all the right support. The review will investigate how those services' roles, responsibilities and accountabilities interact with children's social care and recommend improvements to the way they work together.

Deliverable reforms that make the most effective use of resources

The review must be workable, leading to deliverable reforms that are evidence based and demonstrate a measurable impact. It is vital that recommendations are made following consideration of the key questions of sustainability and how social care funding, workforce and other resources can be used most effectively to change children's lives and represent good value for money.

Review's themes and questions

The review will focus on the following themes and questions:

1. **Support:** what support is needed to meet the needs of children who are referred to or involved with social care, in order to improve outcomes and make a long-term positive difference to individuals and to society?
2. **Strengthening families:** what can be done so that children are supported to stay safely and thrive with their families, to ensure the exceptional powers that are granted to the state to support and intervene in families are consistently used responsibly, balancing the need to protect children with the right to family life, avoiding the need to enter care?
3. **Safety:** what can be done so that children who need to be in care get there quickly, and to ensure those children feel safe and are not at risk of significant harm?
4. **Care:** what is needed for children to have a positive experience of care that prioritises stability, providing an alternative long-term family for children who need it and support for others to return home safely?
5. **Delivery:** what are the key enablers to implement the review and raise standards across England, such as a strong, stable and resilient workforce, system leadership and partnerships, and what is needed so that this change can be delivered?
6. **Sustainability:** what is the most sustainable and cost-effective way of delivering services, including high-cost services, who is best placed to deliver them, and how could this be improved so that they are fit for the future?
7. **Accountability:** what accountability arrangements are necessary to ensure that the state can act appropriately, balancing the need to protect and promote the welfare of

children with the importance of parental responsibility, and what is needed to ensure proper oversight of how local areas discharge those responsibilities consistently?

The review will engage with children, young people, and adults with direct experience of children's social care, in order to ensure those individuals' views and lived experience are fully embedded in the review's work.

The review will report to ministers and the government will publish a report and response.

Josh MacAlister, Chair of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care

By email to: Review.Childrensocialcare@education.gov.uk

26 February 2021

Dear Josh,

Many thanks for meeting with my colleagues and I recently. Since our meeting, ADCS Council of Reference has met and we took this opportunity to discuss the independent review of children's social care and I wanted to feedback to you some of the themes arising from that discussion.

DCSs welcome the review and agree it is a significant opportunity to addresses the challenges in the system to ensure it works well for children and families. ADCS is committed to engaging with the review in a meaningful way and would welcome the opportunity to be represented on the public sector group you are establishing. For the purposes of continuity, our nominated representative would be Charlotte Ramsden, who takes up the role of ADCS President on 1 April 2021. As mentioned in my earlier letter to you, ADCS would also be happy to facilitate access to a small, representative group of DCSs for you to test emerging thinking and recommendations. We believe the review must recognise the range and experience of views across all LAs, and this could be one of the mechanisms to achieve this.

The review presents a timely opportunity to debate how far the state should intervene in family life and to understand what actually helps families to thrive, and what is the purpose of care? It could be argued that over time and as resources have become tighter, we have moved away from the original principles enshrined in the section 17 of the Children's Act 1989 to focus on the more acute end of the business. The binary "in" or "out" system of care in this country no longer best meets the needs of the children and families we work with, particularly late entrants and adolescents. The boundary should be much more porous to reflect the fluctuating needs of children and families, many may benefit from some regular respite to provide time and space to reflect rather than fulltime care; the inspection and regulatory frameworks could also better accommodate more flexible ways of caring for children. The role of kinship care is an important consideration here also, and how we ensure that, where appropriate, children can remain successfully within their own families in the least intrusive way possible and with the right kind of support.

We welcome your expressed determination to listen and learn from those who are care experienced. Our current cohort of children and young people in care and care leavers should also have the opportunity to contribute, this is in addition to those who have experience of children's social care services but did not need to be brought into care. Their views provide us with current learning and we would want the review to have access to these views too.

Form must always follow function, we have the safest child protection system in the world and other countries consistently look to us for learning. So, we must safeguard the elements that work well whilst being open about the challenges in the system and how best to address

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them collectively; structural solutions will require time, money and attention and offer no guarantees of delivering meaningful, sustainable change. Indeed, the history of structural reforms, be that to children's services, schools or the NHS, is one of over-stating the benefits and under-estimating the disruption of reform.

Throughout this, the child's journey should be front and centre, the importance of local, connections and connectivity, relationships and love may be difficult to quantify but can never be underestimated. We are aware of the government's intention to reform adoption further, with a view to introducing a more national approach to some aspects of adopter recruitment. Whilst there may be benefits to be gained of scaling up some aspects of adopter recruitment it would be a mistake to think that nationalising aspects of the service would achieve the government's desired outcomes. This is also true of fostering, where of course, the vast majority of children looked after are cared for.

The scope of the review will be key and as you mentioned when we met, the wider societal determinants of family distress, particularly poverty, are a burning question. In Hertfordshire, my teams see first-hand and on a daily basis the impact that domestic abuse, unemployment and low pay, poor housing, ill-health and hunger have on many families. These challenges are not new for many families and the economic and societal impacts of Covid-19 will sadly bring others to our attention. This is a complex and multi-faceted issue but as a system, we need to be open and honest about the drivers of demand for children's social care. Improving the system response to relatively new risks faced by young people is also key. There is much more we need to learn about the complexities of contextual safeguarding, we are dealing with high level sophisticated criminals exploiting our young people, often with limited access to the intelligence the police have about these people.

Despite longstanding and ongoing discussions about the needs of children across the children's social care, mental health and youth custody secure estate, the three systems continue to be separately commissioned, have separate legislative frameworks and are the responsibility of different government departments. Yet it is clear that children who are in secure placements have similar complex and overlapping needs and it is often where and when they present that determines whether they receive a social care, health or justice response. Young people need secure provision which can address their mental health and welfare needs; the current lack of join up and integration hampers our ongoing work with this vulnerable group of children.

The role of the judiciary and Ofsted should be brought into the scope of the review as their behaviours directly impact on outcomes for children, for example the concept and use of care orders at home, and the children's home regulatory framework that inadvertently denies access to regulated provision for our most vulnerable young people.

The contribution of health and its poor prioritisation of the needs of vulnerable children, not limited to the role of CAMHS, and youth justice should also be key lines of enquiry. We need to always come back to the ways in which these services are contributing to the collective endeavour to meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people, supporting them to achieve the best possible outcomes and thrive. The health system has joint responsibility with children's social care, for ensuring that the needs of young people with complex health and mental health needs are met, with suitable provision, that is jointly

funded. Where this is not happening, the right accountability measures need to be in place. Although the Home Office is responsible for immigration, the provision of support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and care leavers who are former UASC falls to individual LAs. The Home Office funds LAs for former UASC care leavers to age 21 but their entitlements as care leavers extend to age 25. As the numbers of UASC have significantly increased over recent years, so have the expectations on LAs and for some, this is now unsustainable with the numbers of care leaving UASC rising quickly. ADCS Safeguarding Pressures research suggests that between 2017/18 and 2019/20, there has been a 60% increase in the number of care leavers who are former UASC.

The published terms of reference do not touch on the significant role of the workforce. Over recent years there has been a continued national focus on the social work profession, almost exclusively and we know that only just over 50% of the social work workforce are case-holders. This is an opportunity to really explore and draw out the real value of our wider workforce and the vital work they do with children and families, particularly in the early help and prevention space. But we also need to be cognisant of the key role of residential care workers (in open and in secure settings), therapists, and personal advisors for care leavers, for example.

ADCS would want to see the review explore and develop strong links with transition to adult services, particularly in relation to support for care leavers, young people with learning disabilities, and young carers. Transitioning between services has often be described as a cliff edge by many young people whose needs do not stop when they are 18 or indeed 25, yet different eligibility criteria creates confusion and real barriers for some.

The children's social care system is complex and while the review will want to tackle head on some of the challenges we face, it must also guard against being a victim of its own ambition. In terms of prioritising areas of focus, ADCS would welcome an emphasis on:

- **What is care for and what does success look like:** the concept of care, what are we trying to achieve through the system?
- **Journey of the child:** best prevention, best purposeful nurturing care experience, best exit from care
- **Drivers of demand:** wider societal determinants (specifically child poverty), parental need including domestic abuse, mental health and drug and alcohol misuse
- **Prevention:** early help and prevention models, edge of care models
- **Placement sufficiency:** capacity (welfare secure, fostering), quality, geography, cost. The aging demography of foster carers is of concern
- **System response to specific cohorts:** adolescents and extra-familial risk, babies (particularly where parents are care leavers themselves), UASC, care leavers (including former UASC)
- **Resources:** funding, spend and outcomes, private equity and risk in the placement 'market', e.g. Safeguarding Pressures research shows that the six biggest IFA companies account for 51% of all IFA households, integrated commissioning, invest to save approaches and evidence of success

- **Role of partners:** referrals, health – CAMHS and links to SEND, wider health services meeting needs of vulnerable children and young people, the YJB and YCS, judiciary, the Home Office
- **Inspection and regulation:** regulatory reform, the impact of inspections on practice and behaviours
- **Workforce:** the role and value of the wider workforce beyond social work
- **Education:** the value of education, educational outcomes, and narrowing the attainment gap (for CiN, CP and CiC)

ADCS has produced several reports and policy position papers, which the review may wish to draw on during the initial fact finding phase:

- [ADCS Safeguarding Pressures 1-7](#) (2010 – 2021)
- [What is care for?](#) (2012)
- [What is care for – alternative models of care for adolescents](#) (2013)
- [A country that works for all children](#) (2017)
- [Building a country that works for all children post-Covid](#) (2020)
- [A vision for an inclusive and high performing education system](#) (2018)
- [Building a workforce that works for all children](#) (2019)
- [A health care system that works for all children](#) (2019)
- [Serious youth violence and knife crime](#) (2019)
- [Comprehensive Spending Review submission](#) (2020)
- Response to both the [review of residential care](#) (2015), the [fostering stocktake](#) (2017) and the [reforms to unregulated provision](#).

We are in the process of updating the ADCS position paper *What is care for?* and are planning to develop a policy paper on youth justice this year as well. We will share these with you in due course.

We agreed to meet again in the not too distant future, would it be helpful to do this prior to the publication of the review's scoping document? I will ask Esther Kavanagh Dixon, ADCS Senior Policy Officer, to contact the review team with a view to getting a date in the diary.

Yours sincerely,



Jenny Coles
ADCS President 2020/21

CC: Shazia Hussain, Department for Education

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21 January 2021

Katrina Gueli HMI
Regional Director – East Midlands

Martin Samuels
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Sent by email to: Martin.Samuels@leicester.gov.uk

Annual Engagement Meeting 13 January 2021

Dear Martin

Thank you to you and your team for meeting with Nick McMullen SHMI, Deirdre Duignan SHMI and me to consider your self-evaluation and to discuss developments in children's services in Leicester.

Local authority context

You reflected that since taking up post in March 2020, the city has been in some form of lockdown due Covid-19 for most of this time. You feel children's services have responded well to the challenges this has presented with most services sustained, improvement work continuing and staff showing great resilience. You cited staff and management stability and experience as key factors in this. You also described strong political support from your lead member. The current Chief Operating Officer is leaving for a new post and plans to recruit a replacement are well advanced. The City's aspiration is to achieve excellence in its children's services and you are developing a three-year strategy to help deliver this.

Progress since last full inspection and focused visit

Your last full inspection was in 2017 and your last focused visit early in 2019. These inspections showed evidence of steady improvement from the authority's previous inadequate performance. Your most recent self-evaluation describes how this

improvement journey is continuing, despite the particular challenges of 2020. The self-evaluation is succinct and supported by a range of other documentation. You are confident it provides clear and accurate evidence of your line of sight to front line services. Your progress continues to be overseen by your Improvement Board, which has partner engagement and is independently chaired.

Service Responses to Covid-19

You described how staff and services made the transition to lockdown fairly quickly and how you have shifted between virtual and face-to-face contact over time, in line with public health advice and your individual risk assessments. Some services, such as your contact centre and short breaks, have needed to be curtailed or closed for periods, but overall, you feel you have sustained strong service delivery. You have had relatively little additional staff absence over the period and this remains the case. However, you are concerned about the impact of home schooling and ongoing high Covid-19 levels on staff availability.

Referrals dipped during the first lockdown but steadily increased after this and are now roughly at pre-Covid levels. You have operated a pre-threshold help line to encourage schools in particular to identify and discuss children who may be experiencing hidden harm.

You are pleased with the impact of your edge of care services and hope to build on this through the development of a new multi-agency service. This will be based on the 'No Wrong Door' model but will have a distinctive Leicester approach and title. You felt your engagement in this development was an example of an increasingly outward looking approach in Leicester, reflecting a greater openness and self confidence around service review and development.

Like many local authorities you are experiencing challenges in maintaining placement choice and sufficiency during the pandemic. You have confidence in your internal residential provision and feel in many cases this is providing better value and quality than a number of private providers. You are therefore considering whether to expand internal provision as part of your planning for children's residential care.

You believe your care leaver service continues to develop and improve, although the economic slowdown has created additional challenges to providing these young people with suitable training or employment. We also discussed the importance of recognising vulnerability post-18 and protecting care leavers from exploitation. We noted how care leaver services are also having to evolve to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of young adults aged 21 and over entitled to support.

Summary

Overall, you described an increasingly mature service which knows itself well and is able to respond confidently to new challenges. Over time, although there have been several changes at DCS level, underneath this there has been senior management stability and continuity which you believe has helped sustain a steady path of service improvement.

Inspection Update

Ofsted has now announced that we will resume our extended focused visits in January, and still anticipate returning to routine ILACS from April 2021. Please pass on our thanks to colleagues for their preparation and contributions to the meeting. I look forward to hearing about further developments in Leicester.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Gueli", enclosed within a large, loopy oval flourish.


Katrina Gueli HMI
Regional Director, East Midlands

Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission – *DRAFT* WORK PROGRAMME 2020 – 2021

MEETING DATE	TOPIC	ACTIONS ARISING	PROGRESS
25 th June 2020	1) Impact of Coronavirus on Leicester's Children's Services and schools	Commission accepted the verbal report and congratulated officers and schools for the work which had been done in maintaining services during lockdown and agreed that an update should come to the next meeting.	
29 th Sept 2020	1) Impact of Coronavirus on Leicester's Children's Services and schools 2) Adoption Service Annual Report and Statement of Purpose 3) Fostering Service Annual Report and Statement of Purpose 4) Participation Strategy – verbal update	1). The commission supported the strategy being deployed in schools which has minimised the impact of infections on schools, students and parents. It agreed to continue to receive updates on the position in Leicester. It agreed to continue to monitor the position relating to safeguarding children and young people. The performance – delivering the same levels of care with outcomes the same as or better than under normal circumstances – had been noted by DfE at regional level 2). Service had continued to operate under lockdown using remote and screen-based introductions and consultations. A programme with LLR and Lincs to be launched in October 2020. Members asked to be kept informed of performance/progress. They found the putting together of annual report and statement of purpose helpful. (also for fostering service report). 3). Members noted to comments that the fostering cohort was rising and that there was a need to recruit younger fosterers. Local fosterers and local communities were being targeted. Report requested on progress of young people coming out of care. 4) First mainland UK authority to adopt the Lundy model for integrating children's participation rights into city council services across the city.	

	5) High needs block banding consultation	Consultation to be part of a bigger piece of work looking at the wider SEND landscape across the city.	
<p>Agenda meeting: 11 November 2020</p> <p>Deadline for papers 18 November 2020</p> <p>Papers despatch: 20 November 2020</p> <p>30th Nov 2020</p>	<p>Impact of Coronavirus on Leicester's Children's Services and schools</p> <p>Draft Local Plan – issues relevant to CYPS</p> <p>LADO annual report</p> <p>IRO annual report</p> <p>Youth Justice Plan annual report 2020-21</p> <p>Edge of Care interventions report 2020-2021</p>		

<p>13 January 2021</p> <p>Agenda meeting: 22 December 2020</p> <p>Deadline for papers: 31 December 2020</p> <p>Papers despatch: tbc</p>	<p>Impact of Coronavirus on Leicester's Children's Services and schools (Martin Samuels)</p> <p>SEND JC strategy (Tracie Rees/Sally Vallance)</p> <p>GRF: (Martin Judson)</p> <p>Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report (Lindsey Brampton)</p> <p>Permanence Strategy (David Thrussell)</p> <p>Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Jan 19 to Dec 19 (Claire Lakin)</p> <p>GRF</p>		
<p>25th February 2021</p> <p>Agenda meeting</p> <p>27 January 2021</p> <p>Deadline for papers TBC</p>	<p>Impact of Coronavirus on Leicester's Children's Services and schools (Martin Samuels)</p> <p>Virtual School Head Teacher report (Vivien Tetley and David Trussell)</p> <p>Edge of Care report and presentation Q2 (Caroline Tote)</p> <p>QA Presentation – Q1 and 2 (Teo Bott)</p>		

Papers despatch:	Taxi transport service for SEND children Black Lives Matter issue (arising from written question to the January meeting)		
11th March 2021 Special meeting	SEND grading consultation		
14th April 2021 Agenda meeting: 12th March 2021	Impact of Coronavirus on Leicester's Children's Services and schools Taxi transport service for SEND children: update Government children's social care review: setting the scene papers	Deferred from February meeting	

<p>Deadline for papers 30 March 2021</p> <p>Papers despatch: 6 April 2021</p>	<p>Edge of Care report and presentation Q2 (Caroline Tote)</p> <p>Educational Underachievement of Black Caribbean and White British Working-Class Pupils in Leicester: Executive response.</p>		
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CYPS WORK PROGRAMME 2020 – 2021 FORWARD PLANNING

Topic	Details / Progress	
Performance Reporting and data monitoring, including Quarterly and Qualitative Reports	The commission to receive regular 'Quarterly Quality Assurance & Performance' Reports - (<i>Performance Book</i> and <i>Dashboard</i> is sent to members as background information).	STANDING ITEM
Ofsted Improvement Plan	Commission members agreed to have this item as a standing item to monitor progress (<i>following Ofsted re-inspection of children's services in June 2017 and report published 4th September 2017</i>).	STANDING ITEM
Virtual school head teacher	A report on the impact of COVID on the service and its users (referred from February 2021 meeting).	tbc
Safeguarding Partnership Annual report	To receive a report for members consideration.	Tbc
School Attendance Annual Report (incorporating update on Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education)	To receive report on progress for members consideration	Tbc
MST-FFT annual report		tbc
SCE Social Work Progression Framework		tbc

Signs of safety update		tbc
Adventure playgrounds		tbc

DRAFT