

Phil Norrey
Chief Executive

To: The Chair and Members of the
Children's Scrutiny Committee

County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
Devon
EX2 4QD

(See below)

Your ref :
Our ref :

Date : 8 November 2019
Please ask for : Wendy Simpson 01392 384383

Email: wendy.simpson@devon.gov.uk

CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 18th November, 2019

A meeting of the Children's Scrutiny Committee is to be held on the above date at 2.15 pm at Committee Suite - County Hall to consider the following matters.

P NORREY
Chief Executive

SUPPLEMENTAL PAPER

7 **Children's Social Care Self-Assessment (Pages 1 - 22)**
Self-Evaluation

<p><i>Members are reminded that Part II Reports contain confidential information and should therefore be treated accordingly. They should not be disclosed or passed on to any other person(s). Members are also reminded of the need to dispose of such reports carefully and are therefore invited to return them to the Democratic Services Officer at the conclusion of the meeting for disposal.</i></p>

Membership

Councillors R Hannaford (Chair), D Sellis (Vice-Chair), S Aves, F Biederman, J Brazil, C Channon, I Chubb, G Gribble, J Hawkins, L Hellyer, R Hosking, T Inch, A Saywell, M Squires, C Mabin, A Connett and P Sanders

Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that they must declare any interest they may have in any item to be considered at this meeting, prior to any discussion taking place on that item.

Access to Information

Any person wishing to inspect any minutes, reports or lists of background papers relating to any item on this agenda should contact Wendy Simpson 01392 384383

Agenda and minutes of the Committee are published on the Council's Website and can also be accessed via the Modern.Gov app, available from the usual stores.

Webcasting, Recording or Reporting of Meetings and Proceedings

The proceedings of this meeting may be recorded for broadcasting live on the internet via the 'Democracy Centre' on the County Council's website. The whole of the meeting may be broadcast apart from any confidential items which may need to be considered in the absence of the press and public. For more information go to: <http://www.devoncc.public-i.tv/core/>

In addition, anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so, as directed by the Chair. Any filming must be done as unobtrusively as possible from a single fixed position without the use of any additional lighting; focusing only on those actively participating in the meeting and having regard also to the wishes of any member of the public present who may not wish to be filmed. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chair or the Democratic Services Officer in attendance so that all those present may be made aware that is happening.

Members of the public may also use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings at this meeting. An open, publicly available Wi-Fi network (i.e. DCC) is normally available for meetings held in the Committee Suite at County Hall. For information on Wi-Fi availability at other locations, please contact the Officer identified above.

Public Participation

Devon's residents may attend and speak at any meeting of a County Council Scrutiny Committee when it is reviewing any specific matter or examining the provision of services or facilities as listed on the agenda for that meeting.

Scrutiny Committees set aside 15 minutes at the beginning of each meeting to allow anyone who has registered to speak on any such item. Speakers are normally allowed 3 minutes each.

Anyone wishing to speak is requested to register in writing to the Clerk of the Committee (details above) by the deadline, outlined in the Council's [Public Participation Scheme](#), indicating which item they wish to speak on and giving a brief outline of the issues/ points they wish to make. The representation and the name of the person making the representation will be recorded in the minutes.

Alternatively, any Member of the public may at any time submit their views on any matter to be considered by a Scrutiny Committee at a meeting or included in its work Programme direct to the Chair or Members of that Committee or via the Democratic Services & Scrutiny Secretariat (committee@devon.gov.uk). Members of the public may also suggest topics (see: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/democracy/committee-meetings/scrutiny-committees/scrutiny-work-programme/>)

All Scrutiny Committee agenda are published at least seven days before the meeting on the Council's website.

Emergencies

In the event of the fire alarm sounding leave the building immediately by the nearest available exit, following the fire exit signs. If doors fail to unlock press the Green break glass next to the door. Do not stop to collect personal belongings, do not use the lifts, do not re-enter the building until told to do so.

Mobile Phones

Please switch off all mobile phones before entering the Committee Room or Council Chamber

If you need a copy of this Agenda and/or a Report in another format (e.g. large print, audio tape, Braille or other languages), please contact the Information Centre on 01392 380101 or email to: centre@devon.gov.uk or write to the Democratic and Scrutiny Secretariat at County Hall, Exeter, EX2 4QD.



Induction loop system available

Committee Terms of Reference

1) To review the implementation of existing policies and to consider the scope for new policies for all aspects of the discharge of the Council's functions concerning the provision of personal services for children including social care, safeguarding and special needs services, schools and learning;

(2) To assess the effectiveness of decisions of the Cabinet in these areas of the Council's statutory activity;

(3) To relate scrutiny to the achievement of the Council's strategic priorities and objectives and of delivering best value in all its activities;

(4) To make reports and recommendations as appropriate arising from this area of overview and scrutiny.

NOTES FOR VISITORS

All visitors to County Hall, including visitors to the Committee Suite and the Coaver Club conference and meeting rooms are requested to report to Main Reception on arrival. If visitors have any specific requirements or needs they should contact County Hall reception on 01392 382504 beforehand. Further information about how to get here can be found at: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/help/visiting-county-hall/>. Please note that visitor car parking on campus is limited and space cannot be guaranteed. Where possible, we encourage visitors to travel to County Hall by other means.

SatNav – Postcode EX2 4QD

Walking and Cycling Facilities

County Hall is a pleasant twenty minute walk from Exeter City Centre. Exeter is also one of six National Cycle demonstration towns and has an excellent network of dedicated cycle routes – a map can be found at: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/travel/cycle/>. Cycle stands are outside County Hall Main Reception and Lucombe House

Access to County Hall and Public Transport Links

Bus Services K, J, T and S operate from the High Street to County Hall (Topsham Road). To return to the High Street use Services K, J, T and R. Local Services to and from Dawlish, Teignmouth, Newton Abbot, Exmouth, Plymouth and Torbay all stop in Barrack Road which is a 5 minute walk from County Hall. Park and Ride Services operate from Sowton, Marsh Barton and Honiton Road with bus services direct to the High Street.

The nearest mainline railway stations are Exeter Central (5 minutes from the High Street) and St David's and St Thomas's both of which have regular bus services to the High Street. Bus Service H (which runs from St David's Station to the High Street) continues and stops in Wonford Road (at the top of Matford Lane shown on the map) a 2/3 minute walk from County Hall, en route to the RD&E Hospital (approximately a 10 minutes walk from County Hall, through Gras Lawn on Barrack Road).

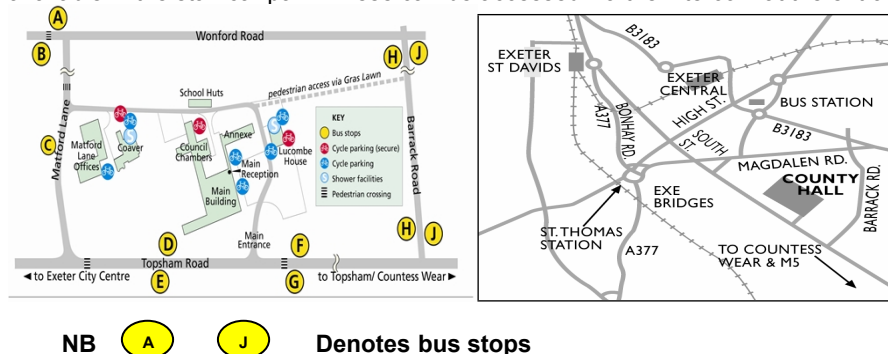
Car Sharing

Carsharing allows people to benefit from the convenience of the car, whilst alleviating the associated problems of congestion and pollution. For more information see: <https://liftshare.com/uk/community/devon>.

Car Parking and Security

There is a pay and display car park, exclusively for the use of visitors, entered via Topsham Road. Current charges are: Up to 30 minutes – free; 1 hour - £1.10; 2 hours - £2.20; 4 hours - £4.40; 8 hours - £7. Please note that County Hall reception staff are not able to provide change for the parking meters.

As indicated above, parking cannot be guaranteed and visitors should allow themselves enough time to find alternative parking if necessary. Public car parking can be found at the Cathedral Quay or Magdalen Road Car Parks (approx. 20 minutes walk). There are two disabled parking bays within the visitor car park. Additional disabled parking bays are available in the staff car park. These can be accessed via the intercom at the entrance barrier to the staff car park.



Fire/Emergency Instructions

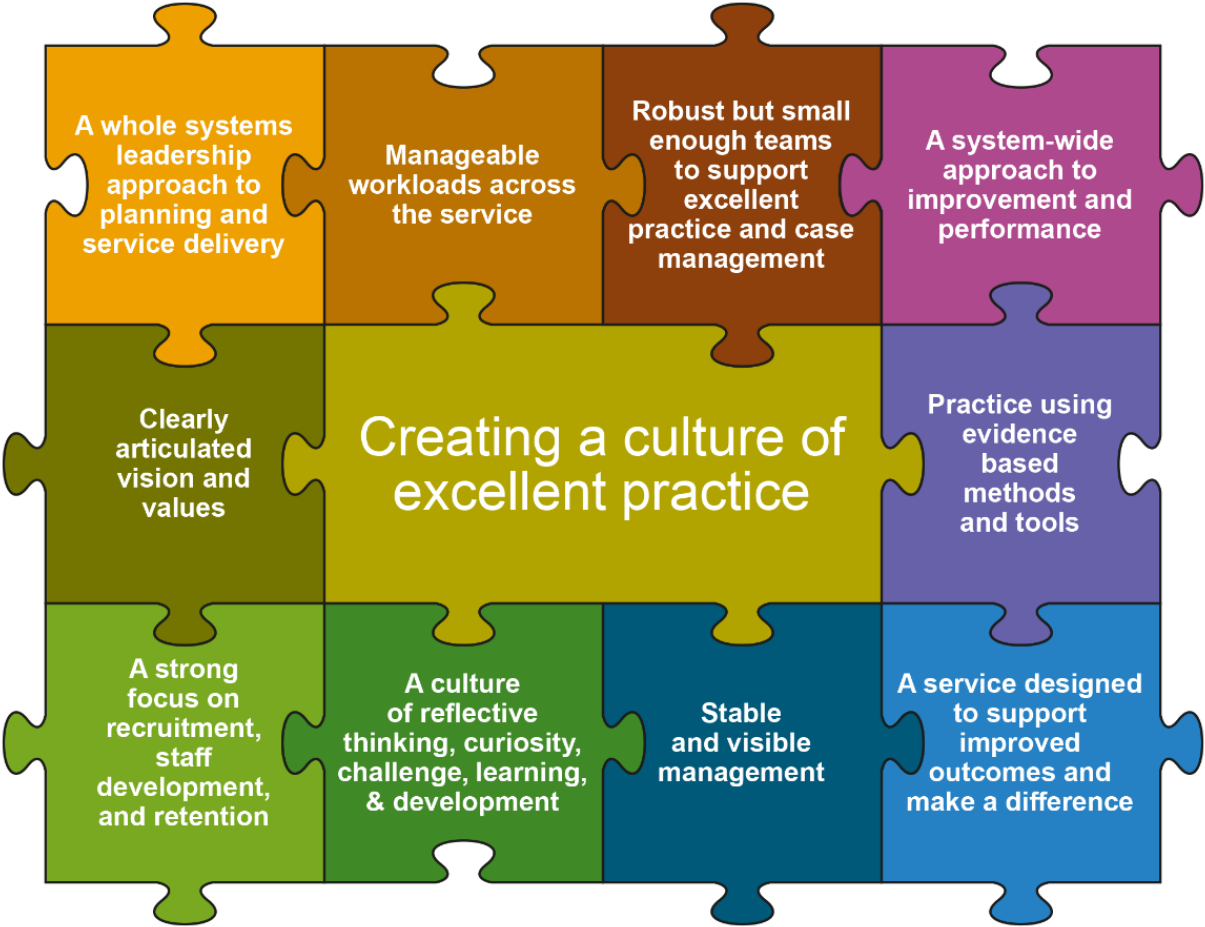
In the event of a fire or other emergency please note the following instructions. If you discover a fire, immediately inform the nearest member of staff and/or operate the nearest fire alarm. On hearing a fire alarm leave the building by the nearest available exit. The County Hall Stewardesses will help direct you. Do not stop to collect personal belongings and do not use the lifts. Assemble either on the cobbled car parking area adjacent to the administrative buildings or in the car park behind Bellair, as shown on the site map above. Please remain at the assembly point until you receive further instructions. Do not re-enter the building without being told to do so.

First Aid

Contact Main Reception (extension 2504) for a trained first aider.

SELF-EVALUATION OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

October 2019



CONTENTS

.....	1
Self-evaluation of social work practice	1
Children and Young people’s Plan 2019-2023. our vision:	3
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S PLAN: PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES	4
CHILDREN’S SOCIAL CARE: SERVICE PRIORITIES	5
1. The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	6
2. The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	12
3. The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	16
4. Our Plans to maintain or FURTHER improve practice	18
Appendix 1: Self-evaluation evidence catalogue	20
Appendix 2: ChAT report summary (CIN01.02 – 2 September 2019)	22

- We want to ensure children and families receive **the right support, at the right time, and in the right place.**
- We believe that every child in Devon should have the **best possible start in life** and the **opportunity to thrive**
- We believe children are **best brought up in families** with the right support that **wraps around them** when needed
- We recognise and value diversity in all its forms and know that **families come in many different shapes and sizes** and that these unique relationships are the fundamental building block of people's lives. Communities across Devon are often very different and diverse in nature and can **play a vital role** in helping to give children and families the support they need.



Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2023: <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/childrensplan/>

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN: PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

Our 4 principles are:

- Children are best brought up in families
- We will support families to find their own solutions
- We will listen to each other and work together with services shaped by all
- Children and families will always know where they stand with us

Our priorities:

We have set clear **priorities for action** in each main area of our activity, backed by specific plans and strategies.

- Life Chances – achieve their potential with the opportunities to thrive
- Be Healthy and well – have the best start in life, stay well and thrive. With good information and specialist help when they need it
- Feel safe – be protected from neglect and supported when vulnerable
- Be Protected from Harm – swift action to protect them from harm, abuse and exploitation

Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2023: <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/childrensplan/>



Every child will have an up-to-date Assessment of need that informs the current intervention.

Every child will have a SMART plan that clearly sets out the reason for the intervention and the outcomes to be achieved.

All practitioners will receive regular supervision that is of a high standard and that supports excellent practice. This will include observation of practice where appropriate, and appraisal.

Visits to children will be as frequent as required and will be purposeful and used to build relationships.

1. THE EXPERIENCES AND PROGRESS OF CHILDREN WHO NEED HELP AND PROTECTION

Front Door and Early Help

- 1.1 2% increase in the number of referrals received during the year to 31 March 2019 compared to the previous year. Our rate of referrals (per 10,000 of children aged under 18 years) at 376 remains lower than national and statistical neighbours, and comparable to other local authorities considered to have either 'good' or 'outstanding' children's services.
- 1.2 Re-referral rate (the percentage of referrals within 12 months of a previous referral) reduced, from 18.8% in 2018 to 13.5%. (Source: *CIN01.01*). Partners have a good understanding of threshold and the needs of many children and families are being better met through the early help system.
- 1.3 Fully embedded *EH4MH* (early help for mental health) in our schools. Ten School Nurses trained to provide text-based advice and support to young people via *Chat Health* (252 texts into the service in July 2019). Mental Health Support Team (MHST) funding approved for Cranbrook and Exeter, similar development plans in place for North Devon
- 1.4 PHN insourced, increased co-location and strengthened practice in Early Help. Transformation recognised in feedback from Troubled Families assessment. *Right for Children* embedding, 1000 more users in 2019 (total users 4698). 3416 open cases, 93% with nominated lead practitioner. Family Plans make good use of Outcome Star and Worry Scales
- 1.5 ***Eclipse, our new case management system introduced January 2019:*** as anticipated impacted adversely on performance reporting during quarter four of 2018/19 and quarter one of 2019/20. Ongoing user training and a series of technical fixes to address post-implementation glitches necessary. A Mobilisation Board has been established and progress against agreed priorities is monitored closely.

Next stage developments: Restorative Practice Approach - Autumn 2019. Threshold Guidance will be refreshed to reflect this and other initiatives.

Children in Need

- 1.6 5378 Single Assessments started in the year to 31 March 2019 (Source: CIN01.01), a small increase on the previous year (5020); rate of completion within timescales 72% at year end, with similarly reduced performance in quarter one of 2019/20. Position recovered, current performance 84% (Source: CIN01.02) further improvement expected.
- 1.7 Increasing number of children have an annually updated assessment. Increasing proportion of our assessments are of a good quality and inform a SMART plan.
- 1.8 Investment in development of managers at all levels continued. Ofsted Focused Visit May 2019 recommended strengthening challenge and scrutiny of managers. Improvement Board in place to address, evidence of improvement clear.
- 1.9 Average caseload in social work teams is 17.4 (as at 1 September 2019) with few individual workers having significantly higher caseloads (14.3 Initial Response; 16.8 Children and Families; 18.2 Permanency and Transition; 17 Disabled children) (Source: CIN01.09).
- 1.10 Practitioners know children and young people well and have a good understanding of their lived experience. Children are consistently seen and seen alone. Recording of direct work is more evident in case files; the introduction of Eclipse has better supported this.

Next stage developments: an increased focus on SEND and the timeliness and quality of social work contributions to Education, Health and Care Plans.

Children Subject of a Protection Plan

- 1.11 518 children subject of a Child Protection Plan (CPP) at 31 March 2019 (35.8 per 10,000 compared to 33.4 per 10,000 in the previous year) (Source: CIN01.01). Currently 501 at 1 September 2019 (Source: CIN01.02). Remains lower than both the Statistical Neighbour and England averages, as we might expect given Devon's demographic profile (CIN01.01). We are seeing more explicit recognition of sexual and emotional abuse and less use of neglect as a catch all.
- 1.12 The percentage of Child Protection Plans commencing at conference, during the six months to 1 September 2019 was 84% (Source: CIN01.02)
- 1.13 Re-registration rates for CPP (ever) had risen in 2017-18 to 26% and has reduced to 20% in the year 2018-19 (Source: CIN01.01).
- 1.14 Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) within 15 working days of a Strategy 61% in 2018-19 (Source: CIN01.01), currently 66% and further improvement in year is expected.
- 1.15 QARSS (Quality Assurance, Review, and Safeguarding Service) significantly strengthened. Very recent leadership changes may have a short-term, adverse impact. Positive impact of Child in Need Reviewing Officers recognised in Focused Visit 2019:

"CINIROs have started to make an impact on practice by working alongside social workers and managers. The initiative is a positive one and there are tangible improvements in assessment and planning where the CINIROs have been involved." (Source: CIN01.08)
- 1.16 Practice strengthened for unborn babies and children in pre-proceedings.

Next stage development: Adolescent Safety Framework - Spring 2020.

Vulnerable Young People

1.17 Youth Offending Service (YOS) performs well.

“Devon YOS are amongst the highest performers in the country in relation to the National Indicator set produced quarterly through PNC and YJB return data.....Alongside the impressive national data, the YJB recognise that Devon YOS are performing well across the basket of measures above. Significant changes have taken place in the delivery model of the YOS but core practice activity is maintained to an appropriate level. Development of a tri-YOS strategic approach and work to embed JAC provision is in hand which could bring further benefits”. (YJB Performance report, January 2018).

1.18 Increasing evidence of child criminal exploitation through emerging County Lines. A multi-agency group ‘The County lines Strategic Forum’ set up to ensure a cohesive response to this threat. Protocols in place to ensure that children subject to this exploitation are viewed as victims and protected and disruption activity undertaken by Devon and Cornwall police. This swift multi-agency work has been viewed by the Government as innovative and is being copied by other Local Authorities. A new [Exploitation Strategy](#) is in place and is supported by training and online information (available since February 2019).

1.19 A new **Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF)** designed to improve the quality of co-ordinated multi agency safety planning when an adolescent is at risk for which their parents are not culpable in respect of significant harm (for instance serious risk associated with gangs, peer group risk, county lines, CE, drug and alcohol misuse). The framework includes:

- An underpinning theoretical approach to multi-agency working with extra-familial risk
- A revised and unified model of Multi-Agency Coordination
- A clear pathway for the assessment of need and provision of help
- A comprehensive toolkit for professionals undertaking;
 - Referrals and screening
 - Assessment processes
 - Planning and review
 - Support, help and intervention

- A comprehensive document suite for all meetings and key elements of the framework.
- A multi-agency workforce training plan
- A monitoring and evaluation plan

Training for professionals rolled out Summer 2019; framework operational from January 2020.

1.20 Ofsted Focused Visit¹ May 2019 looked at our arrangements for children in need and those who are subject to a child protection plan. They concluded that we had “...*appropriately focused time and energy on creating an environment in which children can receive a better service than when Devon local authority children’s services were last inspected by Ofsted in 2015.*” Inspectors identified four areas where improvement was needed:

- the quality of assessments so that these include an analysis of all presenting risks and what they mean for a child
- the focus of children in need and child protection plans so that they link directly to and address the risks identified in assessments
- the level of challenge and scrutiny that managers give to social workers
- the accuracy of performance management data and the consistency of quality assurance audits.

All four areas have been the subject of focused attention. In addition, management challenge and scrutiny, consistency of quality assurance audits and workforce/caseloads have been the focus of a DCS-led Improvement Board, July to December 2019

1.21 *Partners in Practice* conducted diagnostic activity focused on the following service areas:

- Access to services and assessment for disabled children,
- Locality services for children in need

Identified strengths:

- The Locality Directors and Locality Managers are all visible and staff report that they are approachable and accessible.

¹ Ofsted: <https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50079995>

- Team Managers know their teams' strengths and weaknesses.
- Social Workers are passionate about working with children and families and talk about their families with respect and dignity.
- Strong footprint from the Child in Need reviewing officer is improving CIN work
- Cases are audited alongside the Social Worker which is inclusive and allows for reflection.
- Management footprint is seen on a number of cases with evidence of this continuing to improve.
- Risk is identified. CSE risk assessments are completed.

Areas for development:

- Case records do not routinely evidence focused interventions; visits/assessments/direct work need to be meaningful, purposeful and linked to the assessment and analysis.
- The voice of the child is at times absent, Social Workers can articulate the child's views, they are less adept at recording them.
- Some evidence of drift and delay
- The quality of supervision varies with some evidence of reflective supervision but there needs to be greater emphasis on challenge (timeliness and aspects of practice).
- Eclipse is not yet producing data that assists management oversight. Spreadsheets can't identify themes and patterns of practice across localities.
- Case Summaries are not on a consistent template and not on all cases.
- Chronologies and Genograms are seen but could be a more useful tool to identify patterns and themes.

The findings echo those of the Ofsted Focused Visit and have been incorporated into improvement activity. A further piece of *Partners in Practice* work has been requested to look at practice and partnership working in the MASH.

Next stage development: Edge of Care Service - late Spring 2020.

2. THE EXPERIENCES AND PROGRESS OF CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

“Corporate parenting is now a key strength in Devon, and leaders have also ensured that this has been embraced by partner agencies.”
(Ofsted, Focused Visit, September 2018) (Source: CLA02.01)

- 2.1 The number of children in care increased in the year 2018/19 to 759 (at 31 March 2019) from 694 the previous year (Source: CLA02.03).
- 2.2 Stability of placements (3+ moves) having improved in the previous two years, worsened in 2018-19 (13.3% from 12.1% in the previous year), currently 10.7%. Overall placement stability (length of placement) is 59% (60% in the previous year) (CLA02.03). Strong performance in other aspects of permanence affects this indicator.
- 2.3 **Placement stability remains a key priority.** New senior leader in place (recommendation of peer review 2018). Revised [Sufficiency Strategy](#) published late 2018. Sufficiency is a key driver of stability and it remains a very vexed strategic challenge, locally, and across the Region. The use of unregulated placements and/or exceptional arrangements continues to be an area of operational focus. There are currently no such arrangements in use and any such arrangements are overseen by the Deputy Chief Officer.

Most children in care and care leavers receive a good service. Most children live with carers who meet their needs effectively. As at 1 September 2019, 76% in foster homes, (49% in in-house provision) (source: CIN01.02).
- 2.4 In the year to 31 March 2019, 88% of Children in Care aged 5-plus and 100% of children in care aged under 5 had an up-to-date health assessment. (Source: CLA02.03).
- 2.5 Our [local offer](#) for care leavers was published in September 2018 (currently under review). This is linked to a review of our overall children in care and care leavers strategy.
- 2.6 Edge-of-care service agreed and in development, phased introduction of an operational service from Spring 2020.

- 2.7 At 1 September 2019, 25 of our Children in Care were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, 3% of the children in care population (Source: CIN01.02). Ofsted focused visit, September 2018: *“The level of support and expertise offered to unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people in Devon is a strength. Partnership working is effective and assessments and plans for this group of young people are routinely clear, specific and measurable, and result in consistently good outcomes for them”* (Source: CLA02.01).
- 2.8 90% of care leavers at 1.9.19 live in good quality accommodation (74% at 31 March 2019) and most have a choice from a range of options (source: CLA02.03).
- 2.9 The proportion of young people aged 16 to 18 who are not in education, employment or training is decreasing. 51% of care leavers with whom we are in touch are in education, employment or training. This is in line with statistical neighbours and the England average.
- 2.10 Apprenticeships for care leavers are available within the council and work continues to increase the number of these with employers other than the council.
- 2.11 Most children in care benefit from a good education. Personal education plans are of good quality. The Virtual School has developed effective systems for assessing the risk of each child missing education and trace the whereabouts of missing children. The Virtual School annually celebrates the achievements of achievements of children in care.
- 2.12 Foster carers are recruited, assessed and approved within appropriate timescales. Assessments are comprehensive and analytical, and consideration is given to the impact of fostering on the whole family. Connected carer assessments take account of both the potential carer’s history and the needs of the children to be placed. A revised fees and allowances framework for foster carers was introduced in January 2019 that delivers a fair and equitable support package, linked to the needs of the child. This has placed Devon in a stronger and more competitive position to be able to increase our recruitment of in-house foster carers, which is a key plank in the [Sufficiency Strategy](#). The framework includes elements linked to participation in training events and support activities which will contribute to the continuing development of a highly skilled and well supported group of carers.
- 2.13 Adopters are well prepared. They are given a good understanding of the needs of adopted children and the impact of early trauma. Experienced practitioners have a very good understanding of children’s needs and provide comprehensive advice and support packages

for adoptive families. For children placed for adoption, stable and secure placements with their adoptive families ensure positive outcomes.

- 2.14 The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family in Devon was 399 days (compared to 446 days in the previous year), compared to the England average of 486 days. (Source: CLA02.02). Devon is the host authority for the Regional Adoption Agency ([Adopt South West](#)) which celebrated its first anniversary in October 2019
- 2.15 Embedding IROs in the localities is facilitating a culture of problem solving without compromising independence or risking collusion. The vast majority of IRO escalations are resolved at Team Manager level and in the past year most have concerned planning, delays in achieving agreed outcomes, and the quality and timeliness of assessment.
- 2.16 Last year we identified emotional health and well-being of children in care and care leavers as a priority. This year as a result of Rapid Reviews we have had a stronger focus on self-harm, suicidal ideation and suicide planning; developing the capacity of staff to work with confidence and competence in these areas of practice
- 2.17 Ofsted Focused Visit² 2018 concluded that we had *'recently made purposeful and well-targeted progress in improving services for care leavers...'* and that *'Senior leaders recognise the need to increase the momentum of improvement so that good-quality practice is routinely delivered in Devon.'* Inspectors identified five areas where improvement was needed:
 - Managers' use of performance information and quality assurance processes.
 - The quality and timeliness of case recording and pathway planning for young people.
 - The quality and timeliness of return home interviews when young people go missing.
 - The range of training for personal advisers and social workers, specifically in relation to working with care leavers.
 - The updating of assessments of care leavers to reflect their current needs and to inform well targeted plans for young people effectively. (Source: CLA02.01)

² Focused visit to Devon county council children's service. Published letter. <https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50030100>

- 2.18 The DfE National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers (Mark Riddell) visited in February 2019. He was *“...very impressed by the leadership and management approach that was ambitious, aspirational and I got a real sense of passion and commitment to have a better offer for care leavers across the whole service area.”* (Source: CLA02.06) Good practice recommendations were made. All have been considered and plans put in place. A follow-up visit by Mark Riddell is planned for January 2020.
- 2.19 We recognised last year that the level of engagement activity with children and young people had reduced considerably and we have recruited a new manager and increased capacity in our Engagement Team. We have seen increased engagement activity over the summer and autumn including Children in Care Council activity; consultation events with care leavers; and involvement in recruitment of senior managers and other posts.

3. THE IMPACT OF LEADERS ON SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

“Senior leaders, including elected members, have appropriately focused their time and energy on creating an environment in which children can receive a better service than when Devon local authority children’s services were last inspected by Ofsted in 2015. They have succeeded in stabilising the workforce at all levels and in bringing down social work caseloads to a manageable level. In the areas covered by this visit, they know their strengths and weaknesses well.”

(Ofsted, Focused Visit, May 2019)

- 3.1 The leadership of the council, including the chief executive, leadership group, lead member, and other members recognise and prioritise the needs of children and are demonstrating a determination to improve outcomes for children. This has been supported by purposeful corporate investment and commitment. Leaders and managers are visible and available.
- 3.2 Strong strategic partnerships are in place providing an appropriate context for social workers and practitioners to work effectively with children and families.
- 3.3 There is a corporate sense of responsibility for children in care and care leavers.
- 3.4 The authority has a strong track record of responding effectively and quickly to areas for development or new demands and is resilient to new challenges.
- 3.5 Practice is informed by feedback, research, and quality assurance activity. The experiences of children, young people, and families is important, and we learn from their complaints and compliments.
- 3.6 Performance and management information is used at locality and service level to drive improvement.
- 3.7 Workforce stability is improved, with our turnover rate for case holding workers reducing in year from 16% to 13.8% (as at 31 August 2019); temporary staff account for 20% of the social work workforce of whom a significant proportion have been in post for more than

a year. It remains a challenge to recruit experienced social workers to Devon. Social workers are positive about working for Devon. Workforce challenges in the South Locality have been particularly acute with a more attractive package available in neighbouring authorities.

- 3.8 Higher quality supervision and management oversight are evident in many more children's case records than was the case last year. Supervision is timely and increasingly reflective.
- 3.9 Revisions to Supervision Policy introduced September 2019.
- 3.10 Audit practice is stronger and, following a series of workshops, judgements applied more consistently with fewer senior manager moderations.
- 3.11 An independent review of our partnership safeguarding arrangements has been commissioned to take place in October 2019, with the report expected to be published in December 2019. Responses from the National Panel on our Rapid Review practice are encouraging. The [Children and Young People's Plan](#) was published in September 2019.
- 3.12 Following our Ofsted Focused Visit in May 2019, decisive management action has focused on existing service priorities with an additional fourth priority area (concerning the quality of visits). At the time of writing this self-evaluation, there is evidence from a range of performance and management information sources, and from quality assurance activity of a further reduction in caseloads; increased recruitment activity; more management oversight, including challenge leading to practice improvement; elimination of drift/delay; more children and young people have an up-to-date assessment and SMART plan; and more frequent and better-quality supervision.
- 3.13 Our ambition is that every child and family in Devon receives a social work service that is at least good every time they encounter us. We know that in some parts of our service, we are achieving our ambition and we will continue to take major strides in the right direction.

4. OUR PLANS TO MAINTAIN OR FURTHER IMPROVE PRACTICE

- 4.1 Our ambition is to provide a social work service that is at least good. Our self-assessment is that we are in a stronger position in all areas, notwithstanding some setbacks on the way.
- 4.2 We have a Service Development Plan that incorporates the recommendations of recent Ofsted Focused Visits, the visit by Mark Riddell (DfE adviser), and feedback from Partners in Practice.

Areas of focus include:

- Resolution of all outstanding Eclipse related challenges, and particularly the impact on timely performance management data.
 - Management oversight, the level of challenge and scrutiny that managers give to social workers.
 - The quality of assessments so that these include more analysis of all presenting risks.
 - The focus of plans so that they link directly to identified risks.
 - The quality and timeliness of social work contributions to EHCP
 - The quality and purposefulness of visits to children, young people and families.
 - The consistency of quality assurance audits.
 - The quality and consistency of return home interviews
 - The strengthening and development of our learning and development offer for practitioners and managers.
- 4.3 A service-wide practice model (Restorative Practice with Motivational Interviewing) has just been launched and when embedded will provide a strong platform for further practice improvement and service development in 2020 and beyond.
- 4.4 An Edge of Care service has been agreed and is in development. It will become operational in the late spring of 2020. It will strengthen the support for families at risk of breakdown.

- 4.5 Last year we planned to commission a further independent and service-wide review in 2019. The work of Peer Reviews, SEND inspection, Focused Visit and Partners in Practice obviated the need for this.

APPENDIX 1: SELF-EVALUATION EVIDENCE CATALOGUE

Reference	Evidence
CIN01. The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	
CIN01.01	Child in Need Statutory return (2019)
CIN01.02	ChAT report (02/09/19) ChAT report Summary – Appendix 2
CIN01.03	Sufficiency Strategy
CIN01.04	SW Region Devon Self-assessment 2018-2019
CIN01.05	Deep dive report – Stronger Families : Safer Children
CIN01.06	Right for Children Performance Book
CIN01.07	Joint local area SEND inspection. Published letter.
CIN01.08	Ofsted Focused Visit May 2019 Published Letter
CIN01.09	Children’s Social Care performance dashboard (Power BI)
CLA02. The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	
CLA02.01	Ofsted Focused Visit (September 2018). Published Letter.

CLA02.02	Adoption Scorecard (2018)
CLA02.03	CLA Statutory return (2019)
CLA02.04	Peer Review feedback letter
CLA02.05	Care leavers Local Offer
CLA02.06	Feedback from National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers
SWP03. The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	
SWP03.01	Ofsted Annual Conversation 2019
SWP03.02	Workforce survey 2018
SWP03.03	Workforce data – August 2019
IMP04. Plans to maintain or improve practice	
IMP04.01	Children's Services Improvement Plan

APPENDIX 2: CHAT REPORT SUMMARY (CIN01.02 – 2 SEPTEMBER 2019)

Children's services Analysis Tool (ChAT)

Page 23

Comparisons of headline figures and performance data to published statistics

The table below shows the Local Authority's latest data for each indicator as calculated in ChAT, and the direction of travel since the latest published statistics (where available).

Decreasing, low is good
Increasing, high is good
No change, not RAG rated



Lowest 25% quartile, low is good
Highest 25% quartile, high is good
Mid 50% range, not RAG-rated



Indicator	Latest data (ChAT)			Latest published statistics for all local authorities					
	LA	Direction of travel		LA	Custom	Eng	LA compared to mid-50% range of all LAs		Date
Referrals received (annual rate per 10,000 of children)	242	Decrease	◀	369	366	553	Lower	○	2017-18
Referrals to social care that were within 12 months of a previous referral (%)	14	Decrease	◀	19	17	22	In range	○	2017-18
Assessments completed (annual rate per 10,000 of children)	265	Decrease	◀	340	389	532	Lower	○	2017-18
Assessments completed within 45 working days (%)	84	Increase	▶	77	91	83	In range	○	2017-18
Children subject to section 47 enquiries (annual rate per 10,000 of children)	140	Decrease	◀	142	85	167	In range	○	2017-18
Children subject of an initial child protection conference (annual rate per 10,000 of children)	42	Decrease	◀	52	42	67	Lower	○	2017-18
Initial Child Protection Conferences held within 15 working days of the start of the section 47 enquiry (%)	66	Decrease	◀	67	87	77	Lower	○	2017-18
Children in need (snapshot rate per 10,000 children)	188	Decrease	◀	275	253	341	Lower	○	2017-18
Children who are the subject of a child protection plan (snapshot rate per 10,000 children)	35	Increase	▶	33	29	45	Lower	○	2017-18
Children who became the subject of a CP plan for a second or subsequent time (%)	27	Increase	▶	26	20	20	Higher	○	2017-18
Children who ceased to be on a CP plan whose plan lasted 2 years or more (%)	2	Decrease	◀	5	3	3	Higher	○	2017-18
Children who are looked after (snapshot rate per 10,000 children)	53	Increase	▶	48	41	64	In range	○	2017-18
Children looked after who had a missing incident in the period (%)	11	Decrease	◀	15	11	11	Higher	○	2017-18
Children looked after who were away without authorisation in the period (%)	1	-		-	2	4	Higher	○	2017-18
Children looked after who had their teeth checked by a dentist in the last 12 months (%)	53	Decrease	◀	86	80	84	In range	○	2017-18
Children looked after who had their annual health assessment (%)	84	Decrease	◀	92	84	88	#N/A		2017-18
Children who ceased to be looked after in the period who were adopted (%)	10	Decrease	◀	20	13	13	Higher	○	2017-18
Children who ceased to be looked after in the period due to a Special Guardianship Order (%)	15	Increase	▶	12	14	11	In range	○	2017-18
Children leaving care over the age of 16 who remained looked after until their 18th birthday (%)	85	Increase	▶	82	76	74	Higher	○	2017-18
Care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation (%)	87	Increase	▶	74	86	84	Lower	○	2017-18
Care leavers aged 19-21 in education, employment, or training (%)	44	Increase	▶	33	57	51	Lower	○	2017-18
A1 - Average time between entering care and moving in with family for children who were adopted (days)	419	Decrease	◀	448	435	520	Lower	○	2014-17
A2 - Average time between LA receiving placement order and LA deciding on a match with family (days)	93	Decrease	◀	156	187	220	Lower	○	2014-17