

INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE REPORT FOR 2022/23
Report of the Chief Officer for Children's Services

What is the current risk position and likely possibility of a young child in Devon losing their life in similar circumstances to Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson? How is this risk been managed and what steps are in place to mitigate the risk. Is this risk been reviewed in the light of these cases?

Discussion:

Every child should be safe, secure and feel happy living with their families and within their communities. In Devon our ethos is to offer help at the earliest opportunity, at the lowest level of intervention, and to build on existing family and community strengths to effect positive change. We believe in working with families to help them get back on track whenever challenges or problems arise, because children do best when living with their families. For the minority of children for whom this is not possible, our focus is on finding them permanent alternative homes, maintaining sustainable family bonds and important relationships.

Devon Children's Services aspires to provide consistently good, or better, services to children and their families. We have considerable work to do to achieve this. We will take what we have learnt from the pandemic, from our on-going intervention support from the DfE, and from Leeds Relational Practice Centre colleagues as a pivotal opportunity for change. We will build on the improvements we have begun to make to our children's services, and transform our approach, to ensure we fulfil our clear ambition for every child in Devon to get the right help at the right time.

We aim to create a cultural shift - to move beyond 'fixing' issues, towards a culture based on continuous improvement and system wide transformation. To do this with families, we must remember our vision and values about working with them, offering tangible help, and creating a culture of high support and high challenge for our practitioners. Crucially we must change our own behaviours to reflect and live this restorative approach, working within an ambitious culture to achieve the best we can for our children living in adversity.

Our improvement plan sets out our journey to do just that. Attached is an update on our self-assessment as to where we are on our improvement journey, what we have achieved so far and our priority focus areas.

Our Children's Services Performance Dashboard is also presented to Audit Committee – this reflects our current performance indicators in ensuring children receive the right service, at the right time, in the right way.

List of Background Papers

1. Children's Services Improvement Plan
2. Children's Services Performance Dashboard

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<u>Background Paper</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>File Ref</u>
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