



Oversight and Governance

Chief Executive's Department
Plymouth City Council
Ballard House
Plymouth PL1 3BJ

Please ask for Jake Metcalfe
T 01752 305155
E democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk
www.plymouth.gov.uk
Published 31 October 2023

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – SUPPLEMENT PACK

Tuesday 7 November 2023
2.00 pm
Warspite Room, Council House

Members:

Councillor Reilly, Chair

Councillor Carlyle, Vice Chair

Councillors Mrs Beer, Dr Cree, Dingle, Harrison, Holloway, Loveridge, McLay, Penrose, Stephens and Tippetts and one Conservative vacancy

Please find additional information enclosed for items 6,7,8,9 and 10.

Tracey Lee
Chief Executive

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 6. Council Tax Exemption for Plymouth City Council Foster Carers: (Pages 1 - 10)**
- 7. Children's Improvement Plan and Highlight Report: (Pages 11 - 44)**
- 8. Child Exploitation Update: (Pages 45 - 58)**
- 9. Q2 2023/24 Performance Report: (Pages 59 - 72)**
- 10. Children's Services Finance Report: (Pages 73 - 78)**

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	07 November 2023
Title of Report:	Council Tax Exemption for Plymouth City Council Foster Carers
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Interim Director of Children's Services)
Author:	Karen Blake (Head of Service)
Contact Email:	Karen.blake@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the proposal for implementing a Council Tax Exemption Scheme for Plymouth City Council internal Foster Parents and Connected Carers who are approved by Plymouth City Council (Foster for Plymouth) for the 2023/2024 financial year.

It is proposed that Council Tax Exemption is considered alongside a proposed new Support and Retention Offer to Our Foster Carers which is being consulted on and developed.

Recommendations and Reasons

The committee recommends to Cabinet that a Council Tax Exemption for foster carers is considered following the conclusion of the consultation on proposed new Support and Retention Offer to Our Foster Carers.

Reason:

This would ensure a clear and consistent support package is delivered to increase the number of new in house foster parents and to retain our existing, valued in house Foster Parents through an enhanced package of support.

Alternative options considered and rejected

As above, the motion regarding Council Tax exemption was deferred to Scrutiny by Full Council, however we respectfully request that this is further deferred to be considered alongside a holistic package of financial and practical support for Foster Carers to aid in both recruitment and retention.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

A key priority of the Corporate Plan is Caring for People and Communities and this has relevance within this priority area.

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Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Nigel Denning

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 30/10/2023

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Laing, approved via email

Date approved: 30/10/2023

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Council Tax Exemption for Plymouth City Council Foster Carers**Date: 30/10/23****From: Emma Speakman Service Manager
and Karen Blake, Head of Service****1. Reason for Briefing**

This report sets out the proposal for implementing a Council Tax Exemption Scheme for Plymouth City Council internal Foster Parents and Connected Carers who are approved by Plymouth City Council (Foster for Plymouth) for the 2023/2024 financial year.

This briefing was originally prepared for DMT in August 2023 and has been amended for scrutiny. It is proposed that Council Tax Exemption is considered alongside a proposed new Support and Retention Offer to Our Foster Carers which is being consulted on and developed.

2. Context

Council Tax Benefit is means tested and generally has the same conditions to qualify as Housing Benefit (HB). Any fostering allowances are not eligible when making a claim for Council Tax Benefit and this includes any reward element that a foster carer is paid for their services. If a sole foster carer is caring for a disabled child, then they may also qualify for a Disability Reduction in their council tax bill of up to 50%.

Council Tax deduction or exemption schemes have already been implemented within a small number of Local Authorities in the UK with a reported positive impact on the morale and retention of current foster parents, an increased recruitment of new foster parents and an increase in the number of foster parents transferring from Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs).

Upon analysis of the yearly cost of external placements for children and young people, it is evident that Local Authorities are able to save a significant cost by reducing Council Tax payments from in-house foster parents if the in-house cohort is increased and the IFA placements reduced.

3. Research

Liverpool City Council is an example of a Local Authority offering full council tax exemption to their in-house foster parents. They identified that they needed to recruit ten additional foster parents to offset the cost of introducing an exemption of council tax for foster parents. Having implemented their exemption scheme, Liverpool City Council saw 8 foster parents transfer from IFAs to their in-house Fostering Service within the first year of introducing the scheme, therefore almost hitting their target with IFA transfers alone. Liverpool City Council identified the key positive outcome from introducing this scheme was the positive boost to the morale of foster parents after receiving an indirect payment, reflecting the amazing work they do in protecting and supporting the City's most vulnerable children and young people. Liverpool Council looked to change their offer to make sure that foster parents only received an exemption once they had a placement, as they experienced carers who did not take a placement but received the exemption.

The following arrangements for council tax exemptions or discounts for in-house foster carers have been identified:

- Cheshire East Council – Full exemption
- Camden Council – Full exemption for those who live in Camden
- Waltham Forest Borough Council – 66% off council tax bill if foster carers live in Waltham Forest or a payment is given to cover cost if living outside of Waltham Forest
- Redbridge Council – discounted bills for foster carers
- Wokingham Borough Council - Full exemption

- Islington – Full exemption
- Liverpool – Full exemption

4. Proposal for Consideration

The proposal is to develop an offer which will help to attract and retain our own foster parents by exempting Plymouth City Council foster parents from paying council tax whilst looking after children who are resident in their households. Plymouth is proposing that to receive the full exemption foster parents will need to have consistently had placements for 26 weeks in the first and subsequent years following approval.

For respite only foster parents to receive 50% reduction they will need to have evidence they have had placements for a minimum of 91 days.

Plymouth City Council has invested significantly to support the recruitment and retention of foster parents in Plymouth through the development of a recruitment team and the recent review of payments to foster parents. The proposals within this report aim to build on this investment by improving our offer to our foster parents, giving Foster for Plymouth a unique selling point to families considering fostering and enabling some individuals who may have not felt able to foster or chosen another agency due to the financial payments in place. The aim is to make Foster for Plymouth the most attractive local option for foster parents and therefore increase our internal fostering capacity.

When children are placed in-house with Plymouth foster parents, our Fostering Team have a good knowledge of their carers' abilities and due to this, know that the children and young people will be provided with stability and good care resulting in good outcomes.

With a council tax exemption, we would be sending a message that as a Local Authority and as a city we value and celebrate the work that Plymouth foster parents do to make a vital difference to the lives of our most vulnerable children. If we can support more people to foster, this will ultimately benefit everyone in Plymouth by reducing costs for expensive out-of-borough care and enabling children to be placed in their home community.

5. Invest to Save Considerations

Table 1: Council Tax Bands in Plymouth

Valuation Band	Council tax 2023/2024
Band A	£1,407.71
Band B	£1,642.33
Band C	£1,876.95
Band D	£2,111.56
Band E	£2,580.79
Band F	£3,050.03
Band G	£3,519.27
Band H	£4,223.12

The average cost of an in-house placement for one children in Plymouth is £23,488 per annum. The average cost of placing a child in an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placement per annum is £53,289 this is a variance of +£29,801 per annum.

Calculations have been completed on the current fostering households who meet the proposed eligibility criteria. The cost for a full year based on Plymouth's 2023/24 Council Tax rate would be £224,530. It is noted that there may be some households within this cohort who are already receiving some sort of discount, however the £224,530 should be the maximum impact on the cohort below.

If Foster for Plymouth were able to achieve our stretch target of an increase of 20 additional in-house fostering placements per year over the next 3 years (20 placements would not be 20 new households but on average new foster carers offer 1 or 2 placements, so we can estimate this would represent 10-15 new households per year). This would equate to an approximate additional cost of £21,116 - £31,673 per year. These figures are a maximum projection and are based on all households that meet the criteria being eligible for a 100% exemption.

If the stretch target was achieved, the additional costs incurred by implementing this scheme would be offset by reducing number of children and young people placed with Independent Fostering Agency purchases and associated costs through the use of in-house Foster Parents. This proposal will also have the added benefit of creating capacity for more of our Cared for Children to remain close to their families, their homes, their schools and communities thus retaining essential local links and support networks.

In April 2023, Plymouth City Council had 159 children and young people placed in IFA foster homes with an estimated spend of £54,991 per week. If this number of our cared for children were to remain in IFA foster homes, the approximate spend per year on IFA foster homes would be £8,743,569. The spend for the same number of children placed in-house based on average placement costs would be £22,654 per week, or £3,601,986 per annum. This equates to an annual variance of £5,141,583 year.

The table below identifies what additional capacity our recruitment team would need to achieve in order to offset the costs of exempting our current foster parents from paying council tax and a projection over three years approximate figures.

Table 2: Invest to Save Calculations Based on Cost Avoidance

Period	Maximum Households eligible	Maximum cost to the LA (cumulative)	Additional built in fostering capacity (cumulative)	Cost avoidance of not placing with IFA
Current Year	137	£224,530	-	-
Year 1	15 additional households eligible	£256,203	20 children	20 children £596,020
Year 2	15 additional households eligible	£287,876	40 children	40 children £1,192,040
Year 3	15 additional households eligible	£319,549	60 children	60 children £1,788,060

6. Proposed Eligibility Criteria

It is proposed that foster parents who are approved by Plymouth City Council can get relief amounting to full exemption from paying council tax, where eligible. This exemption is in addition to payments of Fostering Allowances and is reviewed annually.

As a Foster for Plymouth foster parent, you will be eligible for full council tax relief if:

- You are fully approved as a foster carer by us and meet the foster carer training, support and development standards
- You have provided foster care to a child for a total of 26 weeks (182 days) in the previous 12 months from 1st April to 31st March. This need not be 182 consecutive days or for the same child, and may include 'staying put' arrangements where the arrangement meant you were not able to accept the placement of another child due to bedroom capacity;
- You maintain your approval as a foster parent with Foster for Plymouth;
- You maintain your availability to foster;
- You either live within Plymouth, or live outside of Plymouth but were a foster carer approved by us as of the previous 1st April 2023;
- You are already claiming all relevant benefits and discounts to which you would usually be entitled;
- You claim this exemption only on the one property in which you live;
- You agree to receiving this council tax relief

These eligibility criteria also apply if we have recognised you as a 'connected person' – that is, a relative, friend or other person connected with a child who has been approved as a 'family and friends' foster carer at Fostering Panel (not Temporarily Approved Connected Persons under regulation 24).

For foster parents who are approved for respite only, eligibility for partial or full exemption will be based on the number of days of respite that you provide within the financial year:

- If you provide a minimum of 91 days of respite in the previous 12 months from 1st April to 31st March (this need not be 91 consecutive days or for the same child) you will receive 25% reduction in your council tax relief or up to 50% reduction if you already receive a 25% reduction.
- If you provide over 182 days respite in any given financial year, full exemption will be considered as above.

Newly-approved foster carers can benefit from council tax relief when they meet all the eligibility criteria. This means you would have had to provide placements to children for at least 182 days in a 12-month period from 1 April and 31 March.

Foster parents transferring to Foster for Plymouth from an IFA or other fostering agency will need to meet the same eligibility criteria. If you transfer with a Plymouth cared for child already placed with you, then the days the child has been placed with you will count towards the 182 days for eligibility for that financial year.

Eligibility is not back-dated.

7. Proposed Process

If a foster parent is eligible for council tax reduction or exemption and pays their Council Tax to Plymouth City Council, exemption relief from paying council tax will be automatic. You will need to agree to the Fostering Team sharing your information with the Council Tax Team.

If a foster parent lives outside of Plymouth but is eligible for council tax relief as set out in the proposed eligibility criteria. The foster parent will provide their supervising social worker with a copy of your council

tax bill. The foster parent will still be responsible for making their council tax payments to the relevant local authority, but Foster for Plymouth will reimburse in quarterly payments to cover the cost.

If a foster parent lives outside of Plymouth and are approved by Foster for Plymouth after 1st April in any given year, they will not usually be eligible until the 182 days eligibility criteria has been met. This may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for transferring foster parents where the foster parent has already been caring for Plymouth children on a long-term basis and the council tax relief will contribute to stable care arrangements.

Approved foster parents moving in to Plymouth and not previously receiving council tax relief will become eligible when the other eligibility criteria are met.

Approved foster parents moving out of Plymouth will still receive council tax relief if all eligibility criteria remain met.

Approved foster parents who believe they are eligible but have been charged council tax, should write to the Fostering Team Manager evidencing how eligibility has been met.

Eligibility will end if:

- You resign as a foster parent for Foster for Plymouth;
- You decide to take break from fostering, but not resign, for more than 30 days. In this case liability for council tax will resume from the 30th day;
- You receive a qualifying determination for de-registration from our Agency Decision Maker, although you may get a refund if you make a successful appeal against the decision;
- You are a foster carer approved by another fostering agency but not by Plymouth City Council

If a foster parent ceases to be eligible they will pay council tax from the day eligibility ended. The Fostering team will notify foster parents when this applies.

If a foster parent lives outside of Plymouth and stops being eligible, they may have to pay back any overpayment of council tax relief you have received.

8. Analysis of Benefits and Risks

8.1 Benefits of implementing Council Tax exemption to Foster for Plymouth (in-house) Foster Parents

- Transfer of foster carers from IFAs who do not offer an exemption on Council Tax;
- Transferring of external agency foster carers will mean experienced foster carers may transfer. Narrowing the IFA payment fee gap;
- Unique selling point, which IFAs do not match or compete with;
- Positive publicity;
- Foster carers will feel valued by the local authority and their morale will be boosted and word of mouth recruitment will increase;
- Retention of foster parents will improve;
- Reduction in number of children placed at distance and through other agencies meaning that children maintain links with family network and community;
- Cost avoidance if this contributes to an increase of in house carers;
- Some fostering households will already have an exemption or reduction in their Council Tax payment and therefore the maximum cost to the Local Authority before saving will be less than the maximum figure stated.

8.2 Risks of implementing Council Tax exemption to Foster for Plymouth (in-house) Foster Parents

- Model based on cost avoidance, therefore will be an invest to save outlay initially;
- Complaints/ disruption from future in house foster carers who live outside of Plymouth and feel they are not being treated fairly
- Possible complaints/disruption from external agency foster carers living in the local authority who also have children placed by Plymouth. This is a lesser risk as there will be an opportunity for these carers to join Plymouth;
- Possible complaints from the general public

Recommendation

The committee recommends to Cabinet that a Council Tax Exemption for foster carers is considered following the conclusion of the consultation on proposed new Support and Retention Offer to Our Foster Carers.

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	07 November 2023
Title of Report:	Children's Improvement Plan and Highlight Report
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Interim Director for Children's Services)
Author:	Vivien Lines
Contact Email:	Vivien.lines@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

- 1.1.** This report sets out the Focused Improvement Plan that has been developed to drive the urgent improvements that are needed in the Council's children's social care service to improve the quality of practice and wider arrangements to keep children and young people in Plymouth safe and improve outcomes for them. The Highlight Report summarises the progress set out as of the end of September.
- 1.2.** Plymouth's Children, Young People and Families Service had its last full inspection by Ofsted in 2018, achieving a grading of Requires Improvement, followed by a Joint Targeted Area Inspection in 2019 and most recently a Focused Visit of 'front door' services in December 2022.
- 1.3.** The Focused Visit determined that the quality of social work practice for children at the 'front door' had declined and had serious and widespread failings.
- 1.4.** An improvement plan was put in place immediately following the visit to address the concerns identified. In May 2023 the Department for Education issued PCC with a statutory Improvement Notice requiring all of the areas of improvement identified to be addressed by the Council and its partners.
- 1.5.** The Improvement Notice required that PCC develop an Improvement Plan, establish an Improvement Board with an Independent Chair and report on progress against the improvement plan by providing data analysis and evidence of impact of improvements on the quality of services for children in need of help and protection. The Secretary of State also appointed an adviser for PCC to work with Plymouth until the SoS is satisfied that this is no longer required, i.e. that all areas requiring improvement had been addressed to her satisfaction.
- 1.6.** Plymouth Children's Improvement Board has been established and is being chaired by Theresa Leavy, Director of Children's Services from Dorset Council. Dorset has been identified as Plymouth's Sector Led Improvement Partner (SLIP). The Improvement Board is now meeting six weekly with membership of Officers from across the Council, including the Chief Executive and Interim Director of Children's Services, the wider partnership and cross-party Members.
- 1.7.** A governance framework for children's improvement priorities has been agreed and is in place to ensure that this Focused Improvement Plan aligns with other priority strategic plans in the

Children, Young People and Families Service and that together these plans set out how the Council, and its partners, will achieve their broader range of responsibilities to children and young people, including SEND responsibilities, and improve overall outcomes.

1.8. This Improvement Plan is focused on stabilising the service and setting out the actions that are needed for the next six months to deliver the priority improvements. The improvements will provide the firm foundations that are needed for the future.

1.9. Work is currently in place to ensure the actions are SMART, owned fully by the service and that the plan is clear about how improvements will improve outcomes for children and young people, when these improvements will be seen and how we will know that they are having the required impact. Service Plans will be refreshed by senior managers to ensure they align fully with the expectations of the improvement plan and progress will be monitored closely through the agreed governance framework.

1.10. The plan has six priorities;

PRIORITY 1 – GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

PRIORITY 2 – EARLY HELP AND FRONT DOOR RESPONSES

PRIORITY 3 – ROBUST AND EFFECTIVE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

PRIORITY 4 – AT RISK OF CARE, CARED FOR AND CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

PRIORITY 5 – QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AUDIT

PRIORITY 6 – A STABLE AND ABLE WORKFORCE

Recommendations and Reasons

I. To accept the Improvement Plan and note progress in the highlight report.

Alternative options considered and rejected

I. None.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The Improvement Plan sets out priority improvements needed to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The plan sets out improvements needed to children's social care practice. The improvements needed, in a context of increased levels of demand, have required additional staffing resources to be agreed. In addition, the service is experiencing the cost pressure of a high cost of placements for children in care.

Financial Risks

Failure to improve children's social care can lead to considerable financial risks for the Council including staff turnover and inability to recruit permanent staff leading to an increased use of agency staff, and increased levels of anxiety amongst partners leading to higher levels of demand.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.

There is a risk register in place setting out key actions in relation to risks including the impact on the Council and the community of Plymouth of failing to improve its children's services.

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report title							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

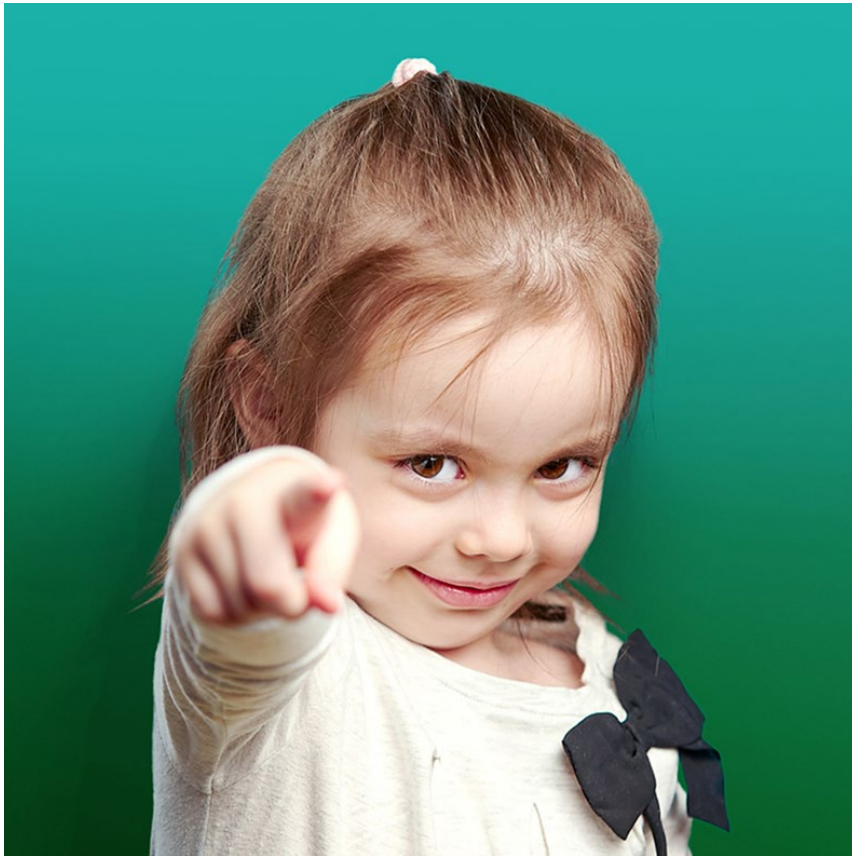
Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

Fin	Click here to enter text.	Leg	Click here to enter text.	Mon Off	Click here to enter text.	HR	Click here to enter text.	Assets	Click here to enter text.	Strat Proc	Click here to enter text.
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Nigel Denning											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 30/10/2023											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Laing, approved via email											
Date approved: 30/10/2023											

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Children, Young People and Families Improvement Plan



Improvement Plan Highlight Report

Page 15

Reporting position - end
of September 2023

Performance Dataset



Plymouth's child population:

From May 2023, the 2021 Census population is used as follows:

- 0 to 17 at 51,635 used for CYPFS rate per 10,000 children (1,656 less than the mid-2021 ONS population estimate)
- 10 to 17 at 23,307 used for YJS rate per 1,000 & 100,000 children (344 more than the mid-2021 ONS population estimate)

Key for RAG rating against target and direction of travel:

RAG rating for actuals against targets (it is not appropriate to have targets for all indicators)	On target	Within 15% of target	More than 15% from target
Direction of travel shown between current and previous month (green indicates an improvement and amber indicates a decline)	▲	▼	

Please note: the Direction Of Travel indicator is based on whether increase or decrease is a positive or negative change.

Priority I – Governance, Leadership and Management

Lead Officer: Service Director CYPFS



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Commitment

The Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services will ensure that governance, leadership and management in Plymouth are robust and relentlessly focused on improving and sustaining outcomes for children, young people and families and that all recommendations from inspection activity and quality assurance are addressed.

RAG Status

Previous

Current

Headline Performance Measures

ID	Description	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Target	Direction of travel
62	Early Help / Targeted Support - Child Level Caseload (where service is lead (inc Edge of Care))	195	207	190	Monitor	▶ Page 17 ▶
63	Initial Response Team - Child Level Caseload (where service is lead)	749	833	971	Monitor	
64	Children's Social Work - Child Level Caseload (where service is lead)	732	735	737	Monitor	
65	Children's Disability Team - Child Level Caseload (where service is lead)	102	112	120	Monitor	
66	Permanency Service - Child Level Caseload (where service is lead (inc Fostering Service))	325	318	314	Monitor	
67	Care Leavers - Child Level Caseload (where service is lead)	255	269	269	Monitor	
68	CIN, CP or CIC Children with missing or incorrect team (month end snapshot)	5	2	2	0	
69	Percentage of Social Workers with more 20 children allocated (month end snapshot)	52.0%	59.1%	47.6%	5.0%	▶
73	Percentage of Case Supervision's in time – Care Leavers Service (month end snapshot (all workers))	87.8%	48.3%	7.4%	90.0%	▶

Commentary;

63 - Additional Advanced Practitioners are in place in the Initial Response Service (IRS) in response to increased levels of demand. A focused action plan is in place to complete all outstanding assessments and reduce caseloads to acceptable levels over the next six weeks with weekly progress reporting to the DCS. A separate detailed report is being presented to the Board.

64 – a managed social work team has been commissioned to start early November to address the impact of increased demand and a high proportion of ASYEs and international social workers newly arrived in Plymouth are in place to ensure caseloads in the CSW service remain at acceptable levels. A strong Quality Assurance plan is agreed to have oversight of the practice and decision making in the managed team.

73 – due to long term sickness absence an additional Team Manager has been agreed for the Leaving Care Service to ensure supervision is completed in accordance with practice expectations. Weekly monitoring and Head of Service oversight is in place to ensure rapid progress.

Please note: KPIs marked as Monitor are snapshot throughput measures. Whole system caseload is reviewed through the ChAT tool. The Direction Of Travel indicator is based on whether increase or decrease is a positive or negative change.

Priority I – Governance, Leadership and Management

Lead Officer: Service Director CYPFS



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Project Milestones – (Month)					
Workstream	Owner	Status	DoT	This period	Next period
Ensure Elected Members are well-informed	Director of Children's Services		▲	Engagement and briefing systems are embedded now as business as usual.	Elected Members are invited to be involved in activities during Practice Week in November where the focus is on reviewing the quality of practice through the eye's of a child.
Workforce involvement in Improvement	Service Director CYPFS		▲	DCS led whole Service Events have taken place during Sept. to engage staff in improvement planning. Managers are engaged in improvement including through 'Leaders for Excellence' development sessions and in refreshing service improvement plans to ensure they align with this Improvement Plan.	A 'plan on a page' is planned to help staff understand the priorities in this Improvement Plan and will be presented to service meetings during November alongside engagement in the development of priorities for the next phase of the plan.
Corporate resources are aligned to support children and young people	Chief Executive		▲	A priority resourcing plan was agreed, and specific additional capacity needed has been being recruited this month. Additional Advanced Practitioners are in place in Initial Response Teams and the managed social work team will commence at the very start of November. Other additional roles identified in the TOM are being recruited to and interim resources retained and appointed.	Recruit to remaining posts, including a Programme Manager. Ensure additional resourcing impacts on specific agreed priorities.
The service operating model provides the conditions for high quality services	Service Director CYPFS		▲	Recruitment to key posts in the Quality Assurance function has progressed and 2 Practice Leads have been recruited to enhance audit capacity and completion of planned QA activity. The Additional SM is in post in CSW to enable the Disabled Children's Team to transition at the end of the October.	Implement forward plan for QA activity to include continued auditing and sampling of the Front Door. Ensure completion of follow through of actions from audits and dip sampling to 'close the loop' on practice improvement.

Priority 2 - Early Help and Front Door responses

Lead Officers: HoS Targeted Support / HoS Front Door



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Commitment

Children and young people will receive timely and appropriate help which will prevent escalation (or re-referral) to statutory services.

RAG Status

Previous

Current

Headline Performance Measures

ID	Description	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Target	Direction of travel
4	Number of children stepped down from Child In Need to Early Help (in month)	5	27	5	Monitor	Page 19
7	Percentage of MASH Contact decisions made within one working day (in month)	12.2%	52.2%	58.2%	90.0%	▲
10	Percentage of re-referrals within previous 12 months (rolling 12 months)	18.7%	18.6%	18.3%	23.0%	▼
14	Percentage of strategy discussions held within one working day of referral (where a Strategy Discussion was deemed necessary)	50.0%	51.6%	2.4%	90.0%	▼

Commentary:

7 – All contacts into the MASH inbox are reviewed within 24 hours to ensure they are responded to in the appropriate timescale given the nature of the safeguarding concern and risk. This indicator is recording the proportion of contacts which have an outcome decision within 24 hours and improvement has been maintained.

14 – This indicator is impacted by the timeliness of record being placed on the system for which a business support solution is being identified.

Please note: the Direction Of Travel indicator is based on whether increase or decrease is a positive or negative change.

Priority 2 - Early Help and Front Door responses

Lead Officers: HoS Targeted Support / HoS Front Door



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CITY COUNCIL

Project Milestones – (Month)					
Workstream	Owner	Status	DoT	This period	Next period
An agreed understanding and vision of Early Help across the City	HoS Targeted Support and Youth Justice		▲	The revised threshold document was approved at the Sept Partnership Board and well attended and well received multi-agency training has been taking place since. Link workers are in place with all schools and initial visits are taking place focused on inclusion KPIs. Increase in early help referrals being seen.	Continue partnership thresholds training events. Continue school visits by Early Help lead workers. Increase take up of Family Group Conferencing and Mediation Services at an early help stage. Progress Missing and Exploitation Strategies and agree and implement a revised Neglect strategy and continue GCP2 training. Determine solution to recording requirements.
Children and young people are safe in our communities, and we identify and respond to children at risk of exploitation and crime	HoS Targeted Support and Youth Justice		▲	Continued good progress in reducing first time entrants. Effective tracking and multi-agency response to identified child exploitation risks. Improved performance on Return Home Indicators including continuing to offer over 95% RHIs within 72 hours. Training on Outcomes Star being delivered to improve evidence of impact on outcomes.	Complete the national Missing Benchmarking Tool and complete revisions to Missing and Exploitation Strategy. Determine solution to data/recording requirements.
Develop and deliver effective Front Door arrangements.	HoS Front Door		▲	Dorset SLIP review in September confirmed continued improvement and sustained progress. MASH continue to work in 'live time' with no backlog. MASH Manual is complete. New MASH consultation line is now operational. Staff morale continues to improve. Strategic and Operational MASH Boards now in place and will support the focused programme of QA within the service, including use of consent, information sharing and strategy meetings. Additional APs recruited to IRTs to address assessments awaiting a response.	The MASH practice manual to include practices out of hours. Dorset SLIP to attend MASH Boards and review IRS response plan. Continue focused work in IRS to complete outstanding assessments. Sustain planned QA activity, including with partners, and identify and act on key findings. Monitor and respond to case escalations.

Priority 3 – Robust and effective social work practice

Lead Officer: Service Director - CYPFS



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Commitment

Children and young people will receive consistently high-quality social work practice and assessments and plans will ensure that purposeful work is undertaken so that children are safe, and drift is prevented. Children and young people will have greater involvement in the planning and delivery of their care.

RAG Status

Previous

Current

Headline Performance Measures

ID	Description	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Target	Direction of travel
20	Rate of Children subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) per 10,000 children (month end snapshot)	39.9r	39.1r	39.1r	42.1r England	◀
21	Rate of Children in Care (CIC) per 10,000 children (month end snapshot)	94.7r	92.8r	94.1r	70.0r England	▶
22	Percentage of single assessments completed within 45 working days (in month)	62.3%	55.0%	55.8%	90.0%	▲
23	Percentage of single assessments completed within 45 working days (year to date)	71.5%	66.8%	64.9%	90.0%	▼
25	Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences held within 15 working days of Strategy Discussion (in month)	86.7%	100.0%	100.0%	90.0%	◀ ▶
26	Current children subject to Repeat Child Protection Plans within 2 years	9.2%	8.9%	12.3%	10.5% Ofsted Good+	▲
31	Percentage of PLO (Public Law Outline) concluding within 16 weeks	27.3%	5.3%	50.0%	90.0%	▲

Commentary:

22/23: this is as a result of the increase in demand in IRS and the completion of outstanding assessments. This indicator will continue to be closely monitored and tracked until the targeted action plan is complete.

31: this relates to two families (four children) whose pre-proceedings ended during Sept. where 2 of these open to the Disabled Children's Team had been in place more than 16 weeks when they ended.

Please note: the Direction Of Travel indicator is based on whether an increase or decrease is a positive or negative change.

Priority 3 – Robust and effective social work practice

Lead Officer: Service Director - CYPFS



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Project Milestones – (Month)

Workstream	Owner	Status	DoT	This period	Next period
Review and relaunch Practice Standards	Service Director CYPFS		▲	Refreshed Practice Standards with a video from young people have been shared at the 'Leaders for Excellence' session this month and are being cascaded through team meetings.	Continue to cascade Practice Standards through team meetings. Fortnightly Leaders for Excellence sessions will focus on specific elements of the practice standards, in October this is visits and SMART planning and IROs are also attending.
Children at risk of harm are identified and responded to without delay	HoS Front Door and HoS Quality Assurance and Safeguarding		▶	Revised Assessment Training being delivered to teams. 100% of ICPCs were held in time. IROs have introduced pre-conference consultations during S47 enquiries to support decision making. Additional APs in place to progress assessments in the IRS. Children in Need tracker meetings are in place.	Prioritise ASYEs and new international starters for assessment training. Leaders for Excellence session to focus on visits. The CIN Framework will be reissued with SM lead.
Public Law Outline and Pre-Proceedings process	HoS Children's Social Work		▲	Terms of reference are being developed for the monthly pre-proceedings review meetings which continue to ensure timely support and intervention to children in PLO. Progress and actions are tracked by the Court Progression Officer leading to more timely use of pre-proceedings, only 6 children (3 families) are currently over 16 weeks. Planning is on track for the first Unborn Baby Panel.	Continued focus on timeliness and quality of PLO practice. Dip sampling to ensure Pre-proceedings letters are saved on children's files. Unborn Baby Panel is in place with a timeline to review all 54 unborn babies open in service.
Supervision and management oversight	Service Director		▶	Managers are using live data within teams to manage practice. Supervision expectations are included in the Practice Standards which has been reissued at Leaders for Excellence, Performance data has been reviewed at QAPIB, and expectations set. Senior Managers are tracking progress at service Performance Boards and clinics.	Additional TM to be appointed in Leaving Care to ensure supervision expectations are met. Progress on obsessions to be monitored at SMT/QAPIB. Increased completion of audit and dip sampling and reporting of findings. Session on 'line of sight' at Leaders for Excellence. Development of leadership/management development offer for managers to Team Managers and equivalent level..

Priority 4 – At risk of Care, Cared for and Care Experienced Children and Young People

Lead Officer: HoS Permanence



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Commitment

Children and young people will remain cared for safely within their family networks wherever possible. When necessary, they will have access to alternative homes close to Plymouth and have access to a range of effective services and support that promote stability, permanence, educational success, and positive health outcomes. **Care experienced young people will** experience trusting relationships with us and support to enable them to be safe and develop into successful adults.

RAG Status

Previous

Current

Headline Performance Measures

ID	Description	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Target	Direction of travel
29	Number of Safer Me Assessments undertaken in month	2	6	2	Monitor	Page 23
30	Children open to services with a Safer Me 'High Risk' status (month end snapshot)	7	7	9	Monitor	
34	Number of unregistered placements – Under 16 (month end snapshot)	3	4	3	0	
35	Number of unregistered placements – Age 16+ (month end snapshot)	1	2	1	0	
36	Number of residential placements (month end snapshot)	55	51	49	50	
37	Number of unplanned admissions to care (in month)	2	1	9	0	
41	Short Term Placement Stability (month end snapshot)	8.6%	9.6%	9.7%	10.0%	
42	Long Term Placement Stability (month end snapshot)	71.0%	69.6%	72.1%	70.0%	
43	Percentage of Initial Health Assessments offered admissions to care within timescales (where required) Note: Relates to children who entered care during the previous month	83.3%	62.5%	50.0%	95.0%	
44	Percentage of children in care with health checks up to date	78.7%	76.5%	80.5%	95.0%	
45	Percentage of children in care with dental checks up to date	47.1%	50.2%	53.7%	95.0%	
46	Percentage of children in care with optical checks up to date	71.9%	74.3%	77.9%	95.0%	
47	Percentage of children in care with immunisations up to date	66.5%	66.1%	67.8%	95.0%	

Commentary:

34/35; 5 young people currently placed in unregistered arrangements. 2 have placements identified, (1 is moving to Falcon Lodge) and 3 YP do not yet have a registered placement identified.

37: these 9 children have all been reviewed by the Service Director and the care entry was confirmed as appropriate for all children.

43-47; please refer to separate Board report.

Please note; the Direction Of Travel indicator is based on whether increase or decrease is a positive or negative change.

Priority 4 – At risk of Care, Cared for and Care Experienced Children and Young People

Lead Officer: HoS Permanence



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Project Milestones – (Month)					
Milestone	Owner	Status	DoT	This period	Next period
Children continue living with their families where possible.	Service Director CYPFS		▲	Children's Resource Panel and Overview Panel is operating in accordance with revised and extended ToR to ensure appropriate decision on care entry and Service Director tracking and oversight of priority groups.	Continue close tracking of progress for priority groups to ensure that children remain living with their families wherever possible and do not come into care. Provide evidence of outcomes for children where care is prevented.
Children who cannot remain in their family will live in the right home, close to Plymouth	HoS Permanence		▲	All children reviewed to ensure permanence plans clear and opportunities for reunification, SGO or Care Order discharge identified and progressing. Revised Sufficiency Strategy, being completed fostering recruitment plan, SGO offer being finalised. Confirmed involvement in Mockingbird support model for foster carers. Merrivale Project opened this month and 7 young people moved in. Falcon Lodge are awaiting Ofsted registration following positive visit.	Ensure identified child level actions progress through close monitoring and tasking. Business case for Special Guardianship Offer to SMT on 6/11 and DMT on 15/11. Sufficiency Strategy Fostering Recruitment Plan to be finalised and implemented. Fostering support/retention plan to be revised including Mockingbird and enhanced support model. Falcon Lodge to open.
Outcomes for cared for children	HoS Permanence		▶	Increased use of 'MoMo'. Updated Health offer incorporated in the revised local offer, co-designed with the Listen & Care Councils through the VOICE group.	Train the trainer model to support further increase in MoMo usage. Health to present report on health outcomes for CiC to November Board. November Practice Week to focus on voice of child. Virtual School included in SLIP work in October.
Outcomes for care experienced young people	HoS Permanence		▲	Merrivale opened and Ofsted visit to Falcon Lodge complete. Numbers of care leavers not in unsuitable accommodation improved. Local Offer to Care Leavers updated. Planning for events with potential employers. 'Your Future' programme launched and four YP attended.	Additional TM appointed to cover sickness and ensure supervision taking place. Young people to move into Falcon Lodge once registration confirmed. More young people to be engaged in 'Your Future' programme.

Priority 5 – Quality Assurance and Audit

Lead Officer: HoS Quality Assurance and Safeguarding



Commitment

Children and young people will benefit from a culture of continuous improvement and quality assurance that ensures the best possible outcomes and experiences for them.

RAG Status

Previous

Current

Headline Performance Measures

ID	Description	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Target	Direction of travel
54	Timeliness of Reviews of Child Protection Plans (month end snapshot)	99.5%	100.0%	100.0%	95.0%	↑
55	Timeliness of Reviews of Children in Care (month end snapshot)	93.0%	91.7%	91.1%	95.0%	↓

Please note; the Direction Of Travel indicator is based on whether increase or decrease is a positive or negative change.

Priority 5 – Quality Assurance and Audit

Lead Officer: HoS Quality Assurance and Safeguarding



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Project Milestones – (Month)					
Milestone	Owner	Status	DoT	This period	Next period
Implement the new Children's Services Quality Assurance Framework	Head of QA and Safeguarding		▲	Recruited 2 interim practice learning reviewers to evidence our practice and support with practice development with an appointment planned for Oct and further interviews planned. Expectations have been set for completion of Sept/Oct audits. Programme of planned audit and dip sampling is progressing well. Audit forward plan implemented including dip sampling and auditing of the impact of improvements in Front Door services and children on the Edge of Care. Planning for Practice Week progressing well.	Increase the number of audits that are taking place, capture and share learning from audits and ensure the audit loop is closed and impact measured. Practice reviewers to commence in post. Practice week scheduled for November.
Independent Chairs and IROs will support improved outcomes for children and young people	Head of QA and Safeguarding		▶	Implemented additional expectations to complete mid-point reviews and pre-conference consultations to improve decision making and support the timely progress of plans. Reset expectations regarding using the "Resolution and Escalation process" Included in 'Leaders for Excellence' development programme.	'Leaders for Excellence' sessions on service planning, line of sight and SMART planning. Development of targeted development offer by the Academy. Increased audit and dip sampling to evidence impact on new approaches.
Allegation management	Head of QA and Safeguarding		▲	Interim LADO commenced in post on 11 Sept. Current review of working practices and data recording being undertaken.	LADO function included in the SLIP work programme.

Priority 6 – A Stable and Able workforce

Lead Officer: Service Director - CYPFS



Commitment
Children and young people will benefit from a stable and skilled and supported workforce which provides high-quality, effective support, and interventions that meet their needs and aspirations.

RAG Status	
Previous	
Current	

Headline Performance Measures						
ID	Description	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Target	Direction of Travel
69	Percentage of Social Workers with more 20 children allocated (month end snapshot)	52.0%	59.1%	47.6%	5.0%	Page 27 ▲
76	Turnover rate for Social Workers (month end snapshot)	15.4%	Not available	15.4%	17.0%	◀ ▶
77	Vacancy rate for Social Workers (month end snapshot)	11.0%	Not available	12.6%	18.5%	▲
78	Sickness Average Days Lost Per FTE (Rolling Year) - CYPFS department as a whole	11.06	11.78	11.25	7.00	▼

Commentary
69: Additional capacity has been agreed for parts of the service experiencing increased demand, including 6 Advanced Practitioners in the Initial Response Service and a managed team of social workers in the Children's Social Work Service. The plan for reducing caseloads is set out in the Board report on MASH and IRS.

Please note the Direction Of Travel indicator is based on whether increase or decrease is a positive or negative change.

Priority 6 – A Stable and Able workforce

Lead Officer: Service Director - CYPFS



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Project Milestones – (Month)					
Milestone	Owner	Status	DoT	This period	Next period
Effective recruitment and retention	Service Director CYPFS		▲	Retention payments for the CSW teams implemented in Sept pay packets to reward Social Workers who remain working for Plymouth in the CSW teams. Social worker registration payments agreed for all social workers. 12 International Social worker started this month with a targeted induction offer and protected caseloads. A high proportion of ASYEs and ISWs in CSW Teams (50%) impacts on caseholding capacity for complex work in the medium term.	Continue induction and targeted Work Force Development with ASYEs/ ISWs. Progress the Early Career Framework for ASYE's in year 2 and 3. Recruit to remaining vacancies in agreed areas.
Additional interim capacity to reduce overall workloads	Service Director CYPFS		▲	Recruitment to additional capacity agreed across the IRS and CSW service has progressed. The 6 additional APs are in post in the IRS.	A focused plan for IRS will lead to reduced caseloads in the service and agreed progress in completion of outstanding assessments. The managed team for CSW will commence at the start of November and a QA plan is in place.
Workforce Strategy	HROD		▶	Revised Children's Workforce Strategy is in development.	A draft Children's Workforce Position Statement with an HR scorecard will be presented to CSTB in October and then finalised and shared with managers and staff. An action plan will be developed.
Workforce learning and development	HoS Quality Assurance and Safeguarding		▶	Review of restorative practice training to inform the development of a refreshed offer in progress (meeting with Mark Finnis). Academy is reviewing WFD offer to ensure it aligns with improvement priorities. High proportion of ASYEs and newly arrived international SWs are a priority group for targeted WFD. Management development in place through Leaders for Excellence sessions.	Progress recruitment of Policy Officer to review all policies and procedures. Continue targeted training with priority teams and groups. Plan and deliver two more Leaders for Excellence sessions on visits, plans and 'line of sight'. Develop leadership/management development offer.

PRIORITY I – GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT; The Chief Executive and Director of Children’s Services will ensure that governance, leadership and management in Plymouth are robust and relentlessly focused on improving and sustaining outcomes for children, young people and families and that all recommendations from inspection activity and quality assurance are addressed.

To be good; The leadership of the council, including the chief executive, lead member															
Risk register reference	Desired Outcome	Actions	Lead	Timeframe								How will we measure the difference to children and young people?	SEPT Monthly HoS update	RAG	
				23-Sep	23-Oct	23-Nov	23-Dec	24-Jan	24-Feb	24-Mar					
	I.1 Elected Members are well informed about service priorities and challenges and offer political challenge and support. Children will benefit from	I.1.1 Elected Members will attend the Plymouth Children’s Improvement Board chaired by the DCS from Dorset as our Sector Led Improvement Partners and provide challenge to progress of this Plan.	DCS	█									Statutory requirements, local policies and procedures will be complied with and good practice standards will be maintained. This will be evident within audit, dip sampling, management oversight and child level performance data.	Complete	█
		I.1.2 Elected Members’ will be involved in bi-annual Practice Weeks and observe services being delivered.	DCS			█								Complete - Member engagement is planned for November Practice Week	█
CYPF_RSK_11 CYPF_RSK_21	I.2 The CEO can ensure that the whole council supports children and young people by aligning resources and ensuring strategic plans are cross cutting	I.2.1 Agree and implement a priority resourcing plan responding to high workloads in practice and the need for increased capacity for Programme and Project Management	CEx	█									Resources requirements and plan for implementation agreed.	Additional resources for social work capacity in IRT and CSW have been agreed and implemented. The contract has been awarded for the CSW managed team and they will be operational from early November (TM - 30/10, SWs - 06/11). 6 Advance Practitioners for IRT are in post and workloads are reducing as assessments are completed and improved working practices are adopted, however some caseloads are still unacceptably high and this is addressed in full in the report presented to November Board. Additional Programme and Project Management capacity has been agreed. 2 project managers are in post, interviews are taking place for the remaining posts.	█
CYPF_RSK_23	I.3 Effective leaders and managers will ensure that priorities for the service and the standards to be achieved are clear and will lead, develop and motivate the workforce	I.3.1 Develop refreshed 6 month Improvement Plan priorities in partnership with the workforce	DCS	█									Priority action plan created with managers and practitioners and in place by 14/09/2023.	Complete - staff comms is planned this month	█
		I.3.2 Refresh all Service Plans with specific, measurable, prioritised actions that are clear on impact and outcomes and deliver the overarching priorities set out in this Improvement Plan.	SD			█							Plans will contain specific improvement targets for social work practice that have a positive impact on children and young people. All managers will ensure the workforce understand how their work impacts on priorities and are active in evaluating how their interventions positively impact on children’s outcomes	On track - Service Plans are being refreshed in line with this IP by 06/11.	█
CYPF_RSK_10 CYPF_RSK_12	I.4 The service Operating Model will provide the conditions for relationship-based, high quality services for children, young people and their families, with effective Early Help and	I.4.1 Introduce the Targeted Operating Model in a phased way and in a way that responds to the feedback from consultation with staff	DCS								█		Reduction in referrals into the statutory service and corresponding reduction in volume through the system. Stabilisation of the social work workforce with increased capacity for effective management oversight/supervision that will lead to improved performance and outcomes for children – improvement trajectories will be met.	The TOM consultation has now concluded and a phased approach has been agreed and is being implemented .	█

	effective early help and a Quality, Planning and Performance function providing a central intelligence focus for the business planning and infrastructure requirements of Children's Services that Children and Families will benefit from.	1.4.2	Recruit to key roles in an appropriately phased way, including the recruitment of the Quality Assurance, Performance and Planning Lead and additional Service Managers	DCS											Improved QA compliance and overall quality of practice. Improved evidence of timely effective management oversight and supervision Reduced caseloads, increased quality of social work practice, reduced numbers of social workers for children. Early Help being more readily available, A relentless focus on QA, including directly to schools.	On track - Recruitment to the QAPP function and other management posts agreed in the TOM is in progress.	
		1.4.3	Transition the Disabled Children's Team into the CYPFS	SD											Children with Disabilities will access the right level of support and intervention matched to their need.	On track - The additional agency Service Manager has started in Children's Social Work and the transition of the DCT to CSW is planned for the end of the October.	
CYPF_RSK_23		1.4.4	Commission our SLIP, Dorset, to carry out a review of practice within the DCT to inform the service improvement plan in CYPFS	HoS QAS												Planned for October	

PRIORITY 2 - EARLY HELP, AND THE FRONT DOOR; Early Help and Front Door services provide timely and appropriate help to children and their families which prevents escalation (or re-referral) to statutory services.
To be good; Children, young people and families will be offered help when needs and/or concerns are first identified. The early help will improve the child's situation and supports sustainable progress. The interface between early help and statutory work will be clearly and effectively differentiated. Professionals identify children and young people in need of help and protection. They make appropriate referrals to children's social care and are able to access social work expertise and advice. There is a timely and effective response to referrals, including out of normal office hours and referrals to the designated officer. Professionals understand thresholds. This leads to children and families receiving effective, proportionate and timely interventions, which improve their situation.

Risk register reference	Desired Outcome	Actions	Lead	Timeframe							How will we measure the difference to children and young people?	Monthly HoS update	RAG			
				23-Sep	23-Oct	23-Nov	23-Dec	24-Jan	24-Feb	24-Mar						
EARLY HELP																
CYPF_RSK_8	2.1 There is an agreed understanding and vision of each partners role in the provision of Early (Family) Help in the city which prevent avoidable escalation to statutory services that includes the wider offer (Family Hubs)	2.1.1	Provide thresholds training to all staff and partners 3 x per week for 12 weeks	HoS FD									We will see appropriate contacts and referrals into MASH	On track - Threshold training has been taking place through September and October and will continue. Attendance has been good from across the partnership.		
		2.1.2	Review, update and implement the partnership Threshold Document	PSCP										Monitoring conversion rates of contacts to referrals	Complete - The threshold document has been signed off by the Improvement Board in September 2023 and published on the PSCP website, it is being implemented within the training and contact to referral data is monitored closely.	
		2.1.3	Develop refreshed partnership multi-agency Early Help induction / workshops that includes Family Group Conferencing and mediation.	PSCP/HoS TS										Children will receive support earlier reducing the need for statutory support. All staff and partner agencies/ practitioners will understand how to utilise family, friend and community networks as part of their assessment and planning.	On track - In development with partners across Early Help System	
		2.1.4	Deliver regular multi-agency Early Help workshops across the children's workforce	HoS TS										All agencies will be able to provide appropriate advice, guidance and signposting to children and families so that children and families receive the support they need when they need it. We will see a reduction in inappropriate referrals to the MASH	On track - These have been taking place with good attendance and feedback. Early Help managers have identified partners/resources to deliver newly developed training which will start in November.	
		2.1.5	Allocate School Link Workers to schools and arrange initial meetings to set the baseline for children's attendance and well-being	HoS TS										Baseline will be set to ensure that we can monitor impact of support provided to families to include: Improved Attendance, Mobility, reduced timetables, exclusions and suspensions will be reviewed termly with each school Feedback from children and families and partners will be gathered at 3 and 6 months (March 2024) to evidence they understand where they can access support	On track - In place and initial meetings taken place. All schools will be visited by December with baseline data collected.	

	2.2 PCC and wider early help response is visible and accessible to families and partners	2.2.1	Review the Early Help Advice Line, implemented in January 2023, for impact and effectiveness and act in response to findings	HoS TS							Families know where they can get advice at a time that suits them. This will be evidenced through feedback forums and surveys and an increased use of the helpline. The response will be restorative.	On track - Helpline is established and feedback is good (emails). Working Group to be established by beginning of November 23 to include some young people and families who have accessed EH service to review content.		
		2.2.2	Task Family and Community Solutions with supporting the Early Help Advice Line with call back requests to enquiries for Family Group Conferencing and mediation.	HoS TS								Complete - FCS PM now meets weekly with the other PMs from EH to look at supplementing the current work. Data on increased take up to be provided next month.		
		2.2.3	Send a bi - monthly newsletter to all practitioners across Children's Social Care to provide insight into community-based services	PMFH's								Frontline practitioners can talk confidently about the availability of community services and support families to access them.	Complete - Family Hubs August newsletter circulated across multi-agency services, October newsletter in production.	
		2.2.4	Refresh and keep up to date Plymouth Online Directory (POD)	HoS TS								We will see an increase in the use of all forums. Parents can access support using a range of mediums that supports and encourages them to access help.	On track - A bi - monthly newsletter is sent to all practitioners across Children's Social Care to provide insight into community-based services to advice parents in December and the Web based online directory to be refreshed and kept up to date (POD).	
		2.2.5	Develop and refresh social media pages (Facebook / Instagram)	HoS TS								Parents will report they have improved knowledge and access to get support	On track - Facebook page is up and running with 323 followers, our posts reach approx. 473 people	
		2.2.6	Review and refresh Family and Community Solutions webpage	HoS TS									On track - Working Group to be established by beginning of November 23 to include some young people and families who have accessed FCS service to review content.	
		2.2.7	Refocus Family and Community Solutions (Family Group Conferencing and mediation services) on Early Help Targeted Response and reunifications for young people on Edge of Care	HoS TS								Consistent focus will be given to what family and community support is identified and can be drawn upon to prevent family breakdown at the earliest opportunity	On track - Referral data evidence a 51% increase in Early Help referrals for FGCs April 23-Sept 23 to previous six months.	
		2.2.8	One central online request for support for parenting programmes to go live	HoS TS								We see a reduction of duplication of work across the partnership	On track - and due to go live in October	
	2.3 Children receive the right support at the right time and staff feel confident to provide interventions that are evidence based and outcomes focused.	2.3.1	Train all Edge of Care, Community Based Assessment Team, Early Help and YJS staff to use the Outcome Star	HoS TS							We will be able to evidence impact and outcomes consistently across the service. Reporting of outcomes and distance travelled to be incorporated into performance score cards	On track - Two courses delivered and more booked in. Teams agreeing use of the Outcomes Star and beginning to test this in practice.		
		2.3.2	Support all staff above to use the Graded Care Profile 2	HoS TS							We see a clear and consistent response to neglect – appropriate referrals are made to provide intervention at EH to statutory level	On track - Training being delivered and review of the Neglect toolkit with practitioners is planned .		
	2.4 Systems will support effective case management and oversight of practice	2.4.1	Establish whether Eclipse can meet all of the requirements for early help case recording	HoS TS							Children and families have a team around them that provides the right level of support as needed	On track - 'Tell my story once' multi-agency task group leading on these developments. Exploring alternative options to eclipse as contingency if there is not the capacity to extend Eclipse to meet the wider requirements as a multi-agency system.		
		2.4.2	Scope alternative case management systems that can be used across the partnership	HoS TS							We will see a reduction of hand off's / referrals happening that creates delay, instability and anxiety for the family	Enquiries include investigating Right for Children used as Devon Early Help System. This will be addressed as part of planned Eclipse Phase 2 development		
CYPF_RSK_4	2.5 Children and young people are safe in our communities, and we identify and respond to children at risk of exploitation and crime	2.5.1	Work with at least 20 children per quarter to defer them from crime and prevent them from entering the criminal justice system.	HoS TS							The FTE rate remains below pre-Turnaround levels – (25.5% less than 2021 – 2022)	Complete - Since Turnaround (Impact) was introduced in February 2022 we have seen a 25.5% decrease in the FTE's as opposed to the England Average on 9% decrease. MoJ have received and reviewed performance and are happy with the progress to date		

		2.5.2	Implement daily risk meetings led by REACH / EoC to drive timely and informed responses and ensure alignment to statutory social work functions	HoS TS						Children at risk of missing / exploitation / entering the YJS are supported at the earliest opportunity.	On track - DIB ToR produced, the attendance at the meeting is good . Children are now tracked		
		2.5.3	Review participation in the Daily Intelligence Briefing to ensure that the right people are attending daily to respond appropriately	HoS TS						Routine dip sampling (weekly) will evidence we are responding appropriately to risk	On track - As a result of the DIB, we are currently mapping and monitoring 4 groups in the city involving 40 children and 10 adults with a multi agency response in place		
		2.5.4	Strengthen responses to children who go missing so that they are effective, well-co-ordinated and planned to reduce risk and mitigate against harm.	HoS TS						100% of children will be offered a return home interview within 72 hours of being found.	On track - 61% of RHIs are completed within 72 hours (65% national) and we have achieved an increase in attended by children and a reduction in the % of RHIs declined.		
		2.5.5	Complete the NWG Missing Benchmarking Tool to understand the city-wide response to exploitation	PSCP						We have a clear plan to improve the city's response to exploitation that will be developed by Strategic MACE	On track - on the agenda for the Strategic MACE 17/10/23 and at the missing tool workshop on 2/11/23		
		2.5.6	Develop the Missing and Exploitation Strategy and effective operational arrangements for adolescent safety, learning from action 2.5.5	PSCP						All agencies have clear guidance on how to recognise exploitation and how to support children appropriately reducing risk	On track - on the agenda for the Strategic MACE 17/10/23 and looking at development of the strategy in the MACE strategy meeting on 10/11/23		
CYPF_RSK_12	2.6 We have city wide data that supports us to understand the need of children and families	2.6.1	Meet with DHLUC / DFE and DELT to discuss data requirements for the supporting families programme and scope options and outline plan to progress	HoS TS						We have a citywide data set that is reviewed to ensure resource is directed where needed. Duplication of work is reduced. Resource / Capacity is maximised.	Initial meeting undertaken on 04 Sept 2023, Delt are examining options. This will be addressed as part of planned Eclipse Phase 2 development		
		2.6.2	Implement / Recruit / Procure resource to develop data system	HoS TS						New reporting system in place			
MASH AND FRONT DOOR													
CYPF_RSK_23	2.7 Plymouth will have an effective Front Door to Children's Services that signposts, supports and protects children according to their levels of need and within statutory timescales	2.7.1	Operational MASH group and Strategic MASH group to implement close oversight of the quality of multiagency practice and decisions	HoS FD						Daily DIP sampling and weekly audit	On track - MASH Ops Group has recommended QAS presence with input into the Dip Sampling schedule, planned to commence immediately - review in MASH Strategic Board on the 19th October. This will be a recurring action		
		2.7.2	Undertake quality assurance of contacts and referrals in MASH to understand decision making, use of consent, levels of need, information sharing, response to child sexual abuse and domestic abuse and act on findings	HoS QAS							Contacts and referrals have accurate consent, threshold applied and decision making	On track - MASH Operation group has been re-started, a schedule of dip sampling is in place. The QA&S Service Manager is attending the meetings to support the QA activity to be consistent and reliable.	
		2.7.3	Undertake quality assurance of children open to Initial Response Teams to evaluate quality and timeliness of assessments, decision making and use of Family Support Workers and act on findings	HoS QAS							Families receive a timely response which prevents needs from escalating and risk is identified and acted on swiftly	On track - Most of the dip samples achieved in Sept, awaiting final ones from HoS and SMs to complete the reports relevant to patterns and themes by end of October.	
		2.7.4	Undertake multi-agency training to ensure all statutory partners follow Working Together guidance to safeguard children by sharing information appropriately and timely.	HoS FD							Use of statutory assessment is proportionate to the needs of and risks to children	On track - To be reviewed within the October MASH Strategic Board around devising a plan of workshops/training at a Multi-agency level	
		2.7.5	Undertake development work with MASH TMs to ensure effective Strategy Meetings and Section 47 enquiries to safeguard children	HoS FD							Effective use of Section 47 Strategy Meetings to safeguard children evidenced in dip sampling and audit	On track - MASH Ops to commence a plan of multi-agency QA of effective use of strategy discussions and how these are used to inform the planning and assessment of significant risk of harm around children - November MASH Ops	
	2.8 Management Oversight is effective and evident on children's files.	2.8.1	Update the MASH manual to clarify practice standards and processes, including regarding consent	HoS FD						Quality Assurance, Dip Sampling and Performance Dashboard demonstrate improved consistency and quality of practice	Complete - The MASH Manual has been updated alongside the revised threshold document and will be rolled out in staff learning and development to 100% of staff		
	2.9 Children's concerns, safety and needs will be treated with care and diligence and any intervention applied to them and their families	2.9.1	Set standards with MASH staff that Initial assessments are added onto Eclipse within 24 hours of referral	HoS FD						Timely and quality assessments inform interventions for children and their families	Complete - Data shows 100% compliance on assessment start timescale		
		2.9.2	Set standards with MASH and IRT Managers that they outline on the assessment form the significant areas for SW to cover, timescales in which a child should be seen, assessment review date and assessment end date	HoS FD							Complete - Assessment workflow is now commenced within the MASH and sent to IRT for progression.		

		2.9.3	Develop the PSCP Case Resolution Protocol to include a 'Rapid Resolution Protocol' for the MASH	HoS FD						Supervision frequency monitoring	Complete - A tracker is now in place with regard to rapid resolutions and reported to the Operational and Strategic MASH groups.	
		2.9.4	Implement the revised Case Resolution Protocol across the partnership	PSCP							Complete - The resolution protocol is in presentation slide pack for the Professionals Enquiry Training Workshop and it is being discussed.	
	2.10 Management oversight of supervision of social workers in the MASH will ensure the right decisions are consistently being made for children. Children will receive a consistent, equitable response to their needs and any risks to them. Children's outcomes will improve as a result of signposting or intervention.	2.10.1	Operational MASH Group will undertake 20 dip samples per fortnight of: Referral to NFA; re-referrals; threshold decisions; consent and repeat contacts and act on findings	HoS FD						Partnership engagement via the MASH Strategic Group is evidenced to be strong and consistent	Complete - The partnership are strong and visible within the board with full participation in the production of the threshold and consent training. This is evidenced through regular attendance at the right level and has provided for improved relationships and a more joined up approach to safeguarding and the required improvements	
		2.10.2	Managers will use supervision format to focus on quality of practice and decision making	HoS FD						Dip sampling and audit will monitor the consistency and quality of practice	Complete - Dip sampling has commenced within the MASH Operational Board with the moderation and themes overseen within the Strategic Board. A representative from QAS is involved with the focus and learning so that previous concerns in relation to an absence of appropriate focus and drive has been rectified.	
		2.10.3	Hold Strategic MASH group monthly	HoS FD						Front Door Improvement Board and Strategic MASH Group will monitor progress against KPI's	Complete - monthly meetings taking place. SLIP attending to review.	
	2.11 Children will be protected outside of office hours by a team that is staffed and led by qualified experienced social workers and Children will receive a	2.11.1	Incorporate an OOH manual to be into the MASH manual reflecting commonalities with MASH process and outlining the different approaches needed outside usual working hours	HoS FD						The Front Door Improvement Board will provide oversight of operational multi-agency functioning HOS will undertake a review of the effectiveness of Front Door arrangements	On track	
		2.11.2	Ensure Section 47 Strategy Discussions happen out of hours where there is a need for safety planning and a threshold is met of reasonable cause to suspect significant harm.	HoS FD						Dip sampling will be undertaken in October	On track - this is planned and findings will be identified and shared next month	
CYPF_RSK_5	2.12 Domestic abuse practice and risk analysis, including recognition of the impact of repeated incidents, at the Front Door is robust and effective, including Triage of Domestic Abuse and access to specialist DA practitioner in the MASH.	2.12.1	Implement Triage of domestic abuse referrals to the MASH and record utilising a standardised domestic abuse tool (DASH)	HoS FD						Audit and quality assurance will demonstrate high quality, purposeful and timely intervention to improve safety and sustain change.	On track - this is planned and findings will be identified and shared next month.	
		2.12.2	Commission a Domestic Abuse Service co-located in the MASH	HoS FD						We will have services in place which provide safety when risks are first identified.	On track - Procurement activity has begun regarding the commissioned DASV service following Plymouth VAWG commission review and findings in 2021. This will include enhanced co-location and co-working opportunities. This is due to conclude by December 23. Refreshed Domestic Abuse Training and Toolkit has been developed and delivered for Social Workers and Family Support Workers and a training schedule has begun. Feedback re: impact on practice is being collated by Professional Development for reporting to Learning and Impact board	
CYPF_RSK_23	2.13 Timely and effective decision making is sustained leading to the right help being provided when it is needed	2.13.1	Work with SLIP Dorset to ensure improvements to processes and decision making in MASH and the front door are sustained	HoS FD						Data and quality assurance evidence support timely and effective decision making and help for families.	Further support planned during October to ensure progress is maintained and MASH and to review IRT remedial plan.	

PRIORITY 3 – ROBUST AND EFFECTIVE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE Social work practice is of consistently high quality and assessments and plans for children ensure that purposeful work takes place so that children are safe and drift is prevented. Children and young people will have greater involvement in the deliver of their care.

To be good; Children and families will experience child protection enquiries that are thorough and lead to timely action, which reduces the risk of harm to children. Allegations of abuse, mistreatment or poor practice by professionals and carers are taken seriously. Steps are taken to protect children and young people and the management of allegations against staff is robust and effective. Assessments and plans are dynamic and change in the light of emerging issues and risks. Assessments (including early help assessments) are timely and proportionate to risk. They are informed by research and by the historical context and significant events for each child. They result in direct help for families if needed and are focused on achieving sustainable progress for children. Help given to families is proportionate to the level of need. Information-sharing between agencies and professionals is timely, specific, effective and lawful. Children in need of help and/or protection have a plan setting out how they will be helped, how their needs are going to be met and how risk will be reduced within the timescales appropriate for the child. If families refuse to engage, clear contingency plans are in place. These are based on the assessment of need and risks to the child. Action is taken to avoid drift and delay. Plans and decisions are reviewed. Alternative decisive action is taken if children's circumstances do not change and the help provided does not meet their needs, or the risk of harm or actual harm remains or intensifies. Children and young people are protected through effective multi-agency arrangements. Key participants attend multi-agency meetings (for example, case conferences, strategy meetings, core groups and multi-agency risk assessment conferences). These meetings are effective forums for timely information-sharing, planning, decision-making and monitoring. Actions happen within agreed timescales and the help and protection provided reduce risk and meet need. Decisions are made by suitably qualified and experienced social workers and managers. Actions are clearly recorded. Systematic and high-quality management oversight of frontline practice drives child-centred plans and actions within the timescales appropriate for the child. Effective and timely planning, support and decision-making takes place during pre-proceedings work. Children, young people and families benefit from stable and meaningful relationships with social workers. They are consistently seen and seen alone by social workers if it is in the best interests of the child. Practice is based on understanding each child's day-to-day lived experience. Children are safer as a result of the help they receive. Children and young people are listened to. Practice focuses on their needs and experiences and is influenced by their wishes and feelings. Children, young people and families have timely access to, and use the services of, an advocate. Feedback from children and their families about the effectiveness of the help, care or support they receive informs practice and service development. Neglect, sexual abuse, physical abuse and emotional abuse are effectively identified and responded to. Children and young people who live in households where at least one parent or carer misuses substances or suffers from mental ill-health, or where there is domestic violence, are helped and protected. Social workers recognise the factors that can make children more vulnerable and tailor their interventions appropriately. This includes, but is not limited to, disabled children, children who are privately fostered, children not attending school, vulnerable adolescents and children at risk of radicalisation or exploitation or becoming involved in gangs. Children and young people who are missing from home, care or full-time school

Risk register reference	Desired Outcome	Actions	Lead	Timeframe							How will we measure the difference to children and young people?	SEPT	
				23-Sep	23-Oct	23-Nov	23-Dec	24-Jan	24-Feb	24-Mar		Monthly HoS update	RAG
CYPF_RSK_11	3.1 Consistently good Practice Standards are achieved across services	3.1.1 Refresh whole service Practice Standards	HoS QAS								Evidence in Performance Scorecard and quality assurance of improved compliance and quality of key practice areas. Audits will demonstrate an understanding of practice standards and that responses for children and young people adhere to these.	Complete - achieved by a working group from across the service	Green
		3.1.2 Launch Practice Standards to practitioners and managers in lunch and learn sessions	HoS QAS									On track - Practice Standards launched at Oct 5th Leaders for Excellence session with video from young people.	Yellow
		3.1.3 Communicate Practice Standards through supervision, team and service meetings	HoS QAS									On track - Expectation made clear at Leaders for Excellence session that the Standards are embedded within service and team meetings during October, model for doing this displayed at the Leaders for Excellence session. Link to video circulated 9/10/23	Yellow
		3.1.4 Plan and deliver workforce development in each service area to ensure priority Practice Standards are met	HoS FD, HoS CSW, HoS Perm									On track - This is taking place	Yellow
		3.1.5 Provide a fortnightly development programme on our practice priorities, including practice standards, through the Leaders for Excellence programme for Team Managers, Independent Chairs and Service Managers facilitated by the Academy and HoS	HoS QAS									Complete - Fortnightly Leaders for Excellence programme commenced 7th September. Session themes are our practice 'obsessions.' The practice improvement actions set within the sessions will be reviewed within later sessions.	Green
		3.1.6 Embed Practice Standards in audits and the November Practice Week	HoS QAS									On track - proposal for November Practice Week agreed by SMT on 9/10/23	Green
CYPF_RSK_11	3.2 Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and keep pace with legislation, statutory guidance and good practice so that children benefit from consistently high standards of practice	3.2.1 Recruit a permanent Policy Officer as part of the new delivery arrangement	HoS QAS								Policies will be up to date and improved adherence to best practice expectations will be evident through audit.	On track - Role will be graded by the 31st Oct, purposeful delay because the post was being considered for those whose roles are being deleted as a result of the TOM	Yellow
		3.2.2 The new Policy Officer will complete a wholesale review of policies and procedures, including TriX and produce a schedule for the updating of these, with priority sequencing	HoS QAS									On track - In the interim the PSW is supporting this action by archiving all out of date policies that have been replaced and producing a tracker of policies that are in date and those that need updating	Yellow
		3.2.3 The Policy Officer will update all policies and procedures in line with legislation and statutory guidance in collaboration with practitioner support task and finish groups	HoS QAS									On track	Yellow
CYPF_RSK_11 CYPF_RSK_17	3.3 A clearly articulated and coherent restorative, strengths-based and trauma-informed practice approach will underpin the quality and consistency of practice.	3.3.1 The Social Work Academy will systematically embed the revised Practice Standards in its workforce development offer	HoS QAS								Staff will consistently demonstrate the practice approach with children and families, this will be evidenced via the quality assurance framework Feedback from practitioners, managers, children, young people and families and quality assurance activity will evidence high quality relational and restorative practice	On track - Academy is completing a self assessment and a revised workforce plan by Oct 31st which will incorporate this.	Yellow
3.3.2 Review Restorative Practice training and impact		HoS QAS								On track. Meeting with Mark Finnis 11th Oct. Joint review of training completed and outstanding now in place.		Yellow	

		3.8.5	Family Proceedings Board chaired by HOS CSW to meet every 6 weeks to look at practice together as a system with legal and will feed into the LFJB	HoS CSW													Complete		
		3.8.6	Establish Unborn Baby Panel with Adopt South West in attendance, to ensure children's assessments, intervention and plan is progressing to ensure early permanence for children	HoS CSW													A reduction in the numbers of under ones coming into care and pre-proceedings	On track - ToR drafted for sign off on 16/10 with all Board members and first Panel taking place where all 54 UBBs will be reviewed. Review mechanism will be agreed depending on complexity.	
	3.9	Management oversight of social work will ensure Children will benefit from a timely and relationship-based service from social workers that ensures the right help at the right time. Effective case management will support practitioners to achieve manageable workloads and consistently good practice.	3.9.1	Practice Standards set out the requirement that management oversight is recorded on each child's file at prescribed intervals, or more frequently when necessary,	SD CYPFS												Management 'grip' demonstrates understanding of the child's needs and how the plan will meet them. Records will show effective case management direction, actions required to safeguard and support children and timescales TARGET: 75% of audit evidences children records showing good management oversight	The Practice Standards and Supervision policy set out the expectations for frequency of children's supervision. These have been reissued to staff. Whilst performance is improving in most areas some teams are experiencing high workloads and manager absence. Plans are in place to see further improvements by the end of October to mitigate the risks.	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3.9.2	Implement Performance Boards in each service area to ensure Team and Service Managers use performance management information weekly and supervision to understand and take action to manage the complexities of individual social workers workloads.	ALL HoS												Social Workers will report that workloads are mostly manageable and managers understand and respond to their pressures.	These are in place weekly and TMs/SMs are using data to performance manage progress in the teams on the seven 'obsessions'. Progress seen in completion of case summaries from 45% April 23 to 83% current.	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3.9.3	Implement Practice Standards to ensure timely allocation of work which includes effective management direction for practitioners	ALL HoS												Quality assurance and audit activity will demonstrate quality of assessments and plans. Allocation data will show timeliness	On track - Commitment given by managers at Leaders for Excellence to cascade Practice Standards into service and team meetings this month.	
	3.10	Assessments which are timely, comprehensive, holistic and analytical will lead to well-timed	3.10.1	The Social Work Academy will produce a revised training offer on the quality of assessments, which includes the 'safe uncertainty' model. This will be finalised at the Leaders for Excellence session on 21/09	HoS QAS												Performance data and monthly quality of practice graded audits will show whether assessments are achieved according to the child's needs, wishes and feelings and timescales	Complete - Revised training offer completed and shared at the 21st Sept Leaders for Excellence session	
		appropriate support and intervention for children and families	3.10.2	The revised training offer on assessments will be delivered to all SW Teams	HoS QAS													On track - The revised assessment training offer is now part of the programme offer, ASYEs, new international SWs and new recruits are being prioritised for this	
			3.10.3	Undertake quality assurance activity to evaluate whether assessment practice is now 'good'. Take actions on findings as needed	HoS FD, HoS QAS													On track - planned	
	3.11	Chronologies to be used as an analytic tool within assessments to enable patterns and capacity to change in families to be considered	3.11.1	The SW Academy will review its chronology training in line with the Eclipse chronology tool	HoS QAS													Children's lived experience will be clear which will inform assessment and enable the development of purposeful outcome focused plans that ensure that children experience sustained positive change	On track - the team is working with Eclipse to understand the eclipse tool so that this can be incorporated into the training
			3.11.2	Refreshed chronology training will be completed by every SW team	HoS QAS													On track	
			3.11.3	Practice Standards will include that all assessments are updated whenever significant events occur in a child's life	SD CYPFS													Quality assurance would evidence improved quality of single assessments across CSW/Edge of care and permanency service, which will better inform planning for children.	Complete - This has been included in the Practice Standards which have been relaunched to managers and cascaded to teams. Impact to be evaluated in planned QA
	3.12	Children's plans that are developed and reviewed in a timely manner, are comprehensive and SMART.	3.12.1	The Leaders for Excellence programme will provide targeted development for managers and Independent Chairs on SMART plans for children	HoS QAS													The quality of plans will be evident via monthly audits and improvement actions will ensure that best practice is achieved for children	On track - This is booked for the 19th Oct, Karen Blake is leading the session with Academy support

		Child in Need and Core group meetings include relevant professionals and are purposeful in ensuring that plans are implemented and effective. Children will recognise that they and their family are able to contribute to and influence plans.	3.12.2	Relaunch and fully implement the Child In Need Framework across all Children's Social Work Teams	HoS CSW						Children will have regular multi- agency reviews and we will see a reduction in the length of time children are open to the service	On track - CIN Tracker meetings are already in place four weekly to ensure timely progress of CIN Plans. SM Lead identified and framework is being updated for final sign off at SMT on 6/11/2023 ahead of implementation.
CYPF_RSK_2	3.13	Children will be better protected from the cumulative harm and acute risks of neglect because Social work practice will be well-informed and confident to ensure identification and effective responses	3.13.1	Produce a Neglect Strategy agreed by the PSCP Board	PSCP						Audits and managers' quality assurance activity will demonstrate high quality, purposeful and timely intervention to improve safety and sustain change where neglect is a primary concern.	On track - The Neglect Strategy Group is now in place, and is part of the wider creation of 5 one page strategies with practice guidance and toolkits being launched by the partnership early 2024. The Partnership manager is driving the completion of the Strategies by mid Nov.
			3.13.2	Deliver training on the use of the Graded Care Profile across the Partnership to embed the neglect tool	HoS QAS						Multi Agency Audits will evidence use of the tool and improved planning and outcomes where neglect is a concern	On track - Training is now being delivered to the partnership as the trainers have been trained from across the partnership
CYPF_RSK_3	3.14	Children will be better protected and supported from the harm of child sexual abuse, from being identified through to long term recovery work.	3.14.1	PSCP task and finish group to develop and implement a strategy and training to improve the city-wide response to children at risk of child sexual abuse, from being identified through to long term recovery work.	PSCB HoS FD						Quality assurance evidence that child victims of sexual abuse will be offered a full range of support both in the short term and in the longer term.	On track - Strategy due for completion by mid Nov. Guidance and tools to follow.

PRIORITY 4 – AT RISK OF CARE, CARED FOR AND CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE; Ensure that children can remain cared for safely within their families and family network wherever possible and that where necessary, high quality alternative care meets their needs and provides them with permanence and belonging and their outcomes are met. We maintain trusting relationships with our care leavers, help them to understand their histories and support them to be safe and develop the skills and confidence they need to become independent and successful adults,

To be good; Children and young people become looked after in a timely manner and in their best interests. Decisions that children should be in care are based on clear, effective, comprehensive and risk-based assessments, involving, if appropriate, other professionals working with the family. If it is not possible for children to return home, suitable and timely plans for permanence are made for them to live away from the family home. If the plan for a child is to return home, there is purposeful work carried out with the family so that it is safe for the child to return. Further care episodes are avoided unless they are provided as a part of an appropriate plan of support. The wishes and feelings of children, and those of their parents, are clearly set out in timely and authoritative assessments and applications to court. Assessments of family members as potential carers are carried out promptly to a good standard. Children's care plans comprehensively address their needs and experiences, including the need for timely permanence. Children's plans are thoroughly and independently reviewed with the involvement, as appropriate, of parents, carers, residential staff and other adults who know them. Plans for their futures continue to be appropriate and ambitious and consider how they will be supported and prepared for the experience of leaving care. Children are seen regularly and seen alone by their social worker and children understand what is happening to them. Children have positive and stable relationships with professionals and carers who are committed to protecting them and promoting their welfare. Children in care are helped to understand their rights, entitlements and responsibilities. They know how to give feedback or complain and understand what has happened as a result of their complaint. Their complaints are treated seriously and are responded to clearly. Children and young people have access to an advocate and independent visitor when needed. The local authority celebrates the achievements of children in care. It shows it is ambitious for their futures. Children in care and care leavers are well represented by a Children in Care Council or similar body, which is regularly consulted on how to improve the support for these children and young people. Children in care are protected or helped to keep themselves safe from bullying, homophobic behaviour and other forms of discrimination. Any risks associated with children in care offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, going missing or being sexually exploited or exploited in any other way are known well by the adults who care for them. Children receive help to reduce the risk of harm or actual harm. Children are safe and feel safe. They are helped to understand how they can keep themselves safe. Children in care are in good physical and mental health, or are being helped to improve their health. Their health needs are identified and met. Children and young people make good educational progress at school or other provision since being in care. They receive the same support from their carers as they would from a good parent. Children and young people who do not attend school have prompt access to suitable good-quality registered alternative provision. There is regular review of their progress. Urgent action is taken if children are missing from education or if their attendance reduces. Children and young people enjoy what they do and have access to a range of social, educational and recreational opportunities. Adult carers have suitable delegated authority to make prompt decisions about children's day-to-day lives. Children and young people are safe and settled where they live. They move only in line with care plans, when they are at risk of harm or are being harmed. They do not live anywhere that fails to meet their needs. They are able to live with their brothers and sisters when this is in their best interests, including when they are adopted. Children and young people have appropriate, carefully assessed and supported contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. Children who live away from their 'home' local authority have access to education and health services that meet their needs as soon as they move outside of their 'home' area. Placing local authorities notify the 'receiving' local authority that a child is moving to their area promptly and ensure that services are in place to meet the child's needs before the child moves. There is a sufficiently wide range and choice of placements available to meet the needs of children in care. Effective recruitment, assessment, training and support of carers (including, as appropriate, foster carers, adopters, special guardians and residential staff) ensure that children and young people receive high-quality, safe and stable care that meets their diverse needs. All agencies and professionals work together effectively to reduce any unnecessary delay in receiving support and achieving permanence for children. Children are effectively prepared for, and carefully matched with, a permanent placement. Their wishes and feelings influence the decisions about where they live. Children are helped to develop secure, primary attachments with the adults caring for them. They are helped to understand their life histories, experiences and identities. The accessibility, style and clarity of case records enhance the understanding that children in care have about their histories and experiences. Adoption is considered carefully and promptly for all children when needed.

Care leavers have positive, trusting and stable relationships with personal advisers, carers and other professionals. Professionals are committed to protecting them, promoting their emotional health and well-being, acting in their best interests and helping them to understand what is happening in their lives. They are ambitious for young people's futures and celebrate their achievements. Care leavers are supported to maintain relationships with people who are important to them (for example, family, friends, carers, former carers and professionals). They have strong social networks that they can rely on when they need support, and that keep them from experiencing loneliness and isolation. These relationships and social networks endure into adulthood. Care leavers have access to a range of social and recreational opportunities that help them to create and maintain supportive and positive relationships with people that are important to them and to feel a part of their community. Professionals create a culture where young people want to keep in touch. Social workers and/or personal advisers are proactive in creating opportunities to engage with care leavers, including those who are not currently in regular contact with the local authority. The level of engagement

Timeframe

SEPT

Risk register reference	Desired Outcome	Actions	Lead	23-Sep	23-Oct	23-Nov	23-Dec	24-Jan	24-Feb	24-Mar	How will we measure the difference to children and young people?	Monthly HoS update	RAG
THE RIGHT HOME FOR EVERY CHILD AND YOUNG PERSON													
CYPF_RSK_15	4.1 Every effort will be made to support children to continue living with their families wherever possible.	4.1.1 Complete a 6 month review of impact of Children's Resource Panel on decisions to initiate care proceedings or bring children into care and on unplanned entrants into care	SD CYPFS								Review will analyse the plans brought to panel against decisions made and outcomes achieved. Data and analysis to inform learning and development of practitioners.	Not yet due	
CYPF_RSK_9	4.2 Where children and young people cannot safely live with their birth parents, every effort will be made to support children to continue living within their wider family or community.	4.2.1 Fostering Team to deliver refresher training on Connected Carers and Viability Assessments to all CSW and Permanence Teams	HoS Perm								Children's Resource Panel will oversee and track decisions to take children into care or initiate legal proceedings, ensuring family are considered first. Analysis of data for children in care with connected persons. Dip sample of Viability Assessments considered to be negative	On track - training is taking place Team meetings. Dip sampling will be planned by SM/HoS this quarter to evaluate impact, including negative viabilities.	
CYPF_RSK_9		4.2.2 Produce business case for Special Guardianship Support Team and present to DMT	SD CYPFS									Analysis of the data for those children and young people living in Reg 24 arrangements and exiting to SGO or remaining as Connected Carers. Analysis of data for those exiting long term care to SGO with former foster parents or connected persons. Longitudinal study of outcomes for children/young people subject to SGO, including re-entry to care numbers due to SGO breakdown	Behind schedule - due to SM sickness. However, SM has returned to work and it is agreed that a costed proposal is presented to SMT on 6/11/23 and onto DMT 15/11/23
CYPF_RSK_9	4.3 Children and young people who need to be in our care, will live in the right home with a family or carers who can meet their needs. Family based care that is in or close to Plymouth will be the first option for children and young people.	4.3.1 Amend Terms of Reference for Children's Resource Panel and issue to all Teams. To include; 1) That all unplanned admissions to care to be agreed only by the Service Director and presented at the next Children's Resource Panel; 2) All new requests for residential placements to CRP, 3) All change of placement with an increased cost to CRP. and 4) Tracking of progress for all children and young people identified for step down/step forward from residential care.	SD CYPFS								6m review of Children's Resource Panel placement sufficiency data, including numbers in residential MTFP tracker. Data used to monitor stability of placements Number of unplanned moves will reduce. Use of unregistered arrangements will reduce.	Complete - Newly focused Children's Resource Panel ensures Service Director has line of sight and oversight of care entrants, that legal processes are initiated when threshold is met and oversight of high cost placements	
CYPF_RSK_9		4.3.2 Implement tracker of children and young people identified for step down/step forward from residential to ensure children's step down plans progress to agreed timescales and financial impact is monitored.	SD CYPFS								Children's step down/step forward plans will progress by the target dates	Complete - Tracker has been established and populated with information about specific children with agreed step down plans. Progress is tracked at CRP each week.	
CYPF_RSK_9		4.3.3 Work with providers to finalise opening of 2 block contract provisions and identify the children and young people who need these homes (Falcon Lodge (Keys) and Merrivale (Pivotal/Parallel)).	HoS Perm									Feedback from young people and Housing performance data	Complete - Falcon Lodge (2 bed) was inspected by Ofsted on 11/10/23 and we are hopeful this will enable them to open by end October once inspection outcome is confirmed. One young person is identified to move in once registration is confirmed.. Merrivale opened in Sept and 7 young people have moved in (3xU18 and 4x18+). Two more young people have plans for phased admissions.
CYPF_RSK_1 CYPF_RSK_9 CYPF_RSK_15		4.3.4 Revise Sufficiency Strategy based upon a detailed analysis of need of all children likely to be in the looked after system and emerging trends of demand and present to DMT	HoS Perm								Data used to monitor stability of placements. Number of unplanned moves will reduce. Use of unregistered arrangements will reduce.	On track - A revised Sufficiency Strategy is in draft and will be completed during October. We have 5 young people currently placed in unregistered arrangements. 2 have placements identified, (1 is moving to Falcon Lodge) and 3 YP do not yet have a registered placement identified.	
CYPF_RSK_16 CYPF_RSK_9		4.3.5 Update and implement a comprehensive fostering recruitment and retention strategy	HoS Perm								Increase in % of children placed with foster carers close to Plymouth	On track - an updated fostering recruitment strategy and action plan is being finalised for presentation at SMT in November.	

CYPF_RSK_16 CYPF_RSK_9		4.3.6	Develop a proposal, to be presented to DMT, for the In House Fostering Team to pilot a step-forward model (such as resilience fostering) for children stepping down from residential placements.	HoS Perm						MTFP Tracking of those children and young people in residential who have plans to move into foster homes	On track - We have trialled approaches of enhanced support to our foster carers which has successfully enabled three children to step down from residential care. The learning is being developed into a proposal for an agreed approach as part of our fostering sufficiency plans This will come to SMT in November.
	4.4 Children and young people in care will enjoy permanence in stable, happy homes where they are securely matched and will aspire and achieve	4.4.1	Team Managers will review all cared for children who have been in their foster homes for over six months with a permanence plan of long term fostering to ensure that the Matching process is progressed or a decision to search for a long term placement made if matching is not appropriate.	HoS Perm						Children's cases will be tracked to ensure plans for children are correctly recorded and progressed IROs will monitor and report through mid-point and statutory reviews	On track - All relevant children are currently being reviewed to ensure they are formally matched. This will be completed this month and data to evidence progress will be provided next month..
		4.4.2	Team Managers will review the recorded permanence plan for all cared for children and young people to ensure that the permanence planning process is followed and the correct permanence plan recorded on Eclipse.	HoS Perm						Children's cases will be tracked to ensure plans for children are correctly recorded and progressed IROs will monitor and report through mid-point and statutory reviews	On track - SMs and TMs reviewed all relevant children during Sept and actions identified are being progressed with oversight by TMs
	4.5 Young people seeking asylum will be placed in a suitable home and their needs met within the 5 day transfer requirement. Young people seeking asylum will be well supported to settle in Plymouth and secure their legal status.	4.5.1	Recruit Agency Social Worker with UASC experience to establish processes within the permanence service for direct allocation of young people seeking asylum directly from MASH	HoS Perm						Young people will have fewer changes of social worker. Data for timeframe from NTS referral to placement.	On track - Because of difficulties recruiting SWs it has been decided we will recruit two FSWs to support our own SWs with key practical tasks. This will enable our own workers to develop expertise in this area. Age assessment training is planned for 8/9th November.
		4.5.2	Amend Transfer Process to direct allocation of young people seeking asylum directly from MASH	HoS Perm						Young people will have fewer changes of social worker. Data for timeframe from NTS referral to placement.	On track - To be implemented in November (dependent on action above).
		4.5.3	Launch the UASC Participation animation across all services and with wider partners	HoS Perm						Staff will have a greater understanding of the lived experiences and need of young people seeking asylum Feedback from young people	Complete - The animation is complete and will be shared at the Corporate Parenting engagement event in November 23
CYPF_RSK_9	4.6 We will always review whether children and young people still need to be in our care and prioritise reunification to parents or wider family where this is possible	4.6.1	Team Managers and Service Managers to review all children and young people placed with parents to determine if they can be discharged from care.	HoS Perm						Children will not be subject to PWP for over 6 months without a plan to discharge from care or be placed in a more suitable arrangement. IROs will monitor and report through mid-point and statutory reviews Feedback from children, young people and carers	On track - Initial review by Service Managers of all relevant children has been completed and has identified 10 children who no longer needed to be in care, legal planning meetings have been held and discharge proceedings are progressing for 5 young people.
CYPF_RSK_9		4.6.2	Team Managers (social work and fostering teams) to review all children and young people placed with Connected Carers to determine if they could now progress to SGO with appropriate support.	HoS Perm/ HoS CSW						Children will not be in care where they can safely live with family under SGO. IROs will monitor and report through mid-point and statutory reviews Feedback from children, young people and carers	On track - SMs and TMs reviewed all children during Sept and actions identified are being progressed to ensure permanence plans are recorded correctly. All 22 children placed with connected carers have been reviewed, 2 children are now subject to SGOs and 5 children are in SGO assessment.
CYPF_RSK_9		4.6.3	In supervision for each cared for child and young person Team Managers will consider whether reunification to a parent or family member has been considered and what support would be necessary to progress this.	HoS Perm						Permanence plans for cared for children and young people will be reviewed and adapt to changing needs and circumstances. IROs will monitor and report through mid-point and statutory reviews. Feedback from children, young people and carers	On track - reviews have started and 1 additional reunification plan is now progressing.
CYPF_RSK_9		4.6.4	HoS to confirm to each IRO that at each mid-point review and statutory CiC review IROs will consider the potential reunification, discharge from care and progression to SGO for every child.	HoS QAS						Dip sample of mid point reviews and CIC notes to evidence progress with this action	Expectation has been set. Impact to be established by QA of last 10 mid point review and CIC notes by 27th Oct.

CYPF_RSK_6	4.7 Children in care and care leavers will achieve their full potential in education, training or employment.	4.7.1	Establish a personalised career development pathway for all cared for children from year 9.	VHT							Young people will have a clear action plan to remain engaged in EET post 16	All PEPs from Y10 onwards have planning for career development in a separate section called 'Post 16 EET Support and Achievement Plan'. QA planned.	
		4.7.2	Hold Corporate Parenting engagement event for PCC colleagues to broaden knowledge and widen opportunities for work experience placements and Supported Apprenticeships .	HoS Perm							The number of care leavers Not in Education, Training or Employment will reduce	On track - Now planned for November to link with Care Leavers Week focusing on care leavers protected status and developing EET training opportunities.	
		4.7.3	Hold Corporate Parenting engagement event for businesses and public bodies across Plymouth to increase sign up to the care Leavers Covenant and increase opportunities for work experience placements and Supported Apprenticeships	HoS Perm							The number of care leavers Not in Education, Training or Employment will reduce	In planning stage, conversations taking place with individual business, e.g. Balfour Beatty.	
		4.7.4	Deliver "Your Future" program more widely to reach more care leavers who are NEET.	HoS Skills							The number of care leavers Not in Education, Training or Employment will reduce	On track - "Your Future" program has been launched as designed with young people and 4 young people have attended	
		4.7.5	Virtual School to deliver workshops for Foster Parents, Residential Carers and Social Workers to develop knowledge and confidence in getting the best out of PEPs and EHCP reviews	VHT							Feedback from children and young people will evidence confidence in the adults to advocate for them and meet their educational needs Education attendance and attainment figures will increase Exclusions will reduce Audit and QA will indicate improved understanding and outcomes for education Children/ young people's feedback	Schools' training programme in place. Training to carers started September 2023, work in place to ensure good engagement. Meeting held between VSHT and Carer Advocate Group in Oct '23 to outline needs.	
		4.7.6	SLIP Dorset to carry out a review of Virtual School arrangements	HoS QAS							Improved educational progress and attainment of cared for children. Improved attendance and reduced exclusions of cared for children	This is included in the planned SLIP work in October A plan will be presented to the Board	
		4.7.7	Act in response to findings of SLIP review of Virtual School	HoS Skills							Monitoring of educational achievement of children in care at each key stage. Education attendance figures will increase Exclusions will reduce	On track - To agree approach at SMT during October.	
		4.7.8	Team Managers and Service Managers to incorporate the Inclusion Scorecard into their performance monitoring and reporting schedule to identify attendance, reduced timetable and exclusions for children in care and take timely action to address	ALL HoS							Health KPIs Audit and QA will indicate improved understanding and outcomes for health Children/ young people will report improvements in their health and wellbeing through reviews, audits and annual surveys.	See separate report to Board	
		PROPOSED NEW RISK	4.8 The physical and psychological health of children coming into care, Children in Care and Care Experienced young people will be improved and maintained	4.8.1	Take action to ensure 95% of all IHAs for children coming into care on time and 95% of all RHAs completed on time.	TU/ JB/ Health (Di D)							See separate report to Board
				4.8.2	Take action to achieve 60% of all children in care having an annual dental check on time (aspirational target 95%)	TU/ JB/ Health (Di D)							See separate report to Board
4.8.3	Take action to achieve 80% of all children in care having an annual optical check on time (aspirational target 95%)			TU/ JB/ Health (Di D)							See separate report to Board		
4.8.4	Launch Peninsula Dental School pilot for care leavers to provide treatment for 6 young people initially			TU/ JB/ Health (Di D)							See separate report to Board		
4.8.5	Set up Task and Finish Group to improve the communication and use of SDQs, review the process, develop and deliver workshops for carers, schools and social workers to increase use and benefit			CAMHS							SDQ KPIs Feedback from young people and carers CAMHS data	On track - work has started with CAMHS and a clear workflow for the completion of SDQs agreed. This will be shared with teams.	
4.8.6	Wider roll out of Mind of My Own across all teams, including Care Leavers Team to increase opportunity for children and young people to share their views and participate in care planning and service delivery			HoS QAS							Mind of My Own usage data Feedback from children and young people	On track - Pioneers have been trained and are using Mind of My Own. Train the Trainer training is complete – 4 trainers available ". 27th Nov Practice week will run a MoMo competition to increase awareness and registrations	

	4.9 Outcomes for Care Experienced Young People (Care Leavers) will be improved across all elements of their lives	4.9.1	Progress the procurement and build of the care leavers hub at Frederick Street	HoS Perm												On track - Funding is secured Design is complete Monthly meetings for the wider project are in place	
		4.9.2	Appoint second Team Manager for Care Leavers Team to provide increased management capacity and oversight	HoS Perm											Supervision data will increase Quality and performance of care leaver visits, recordings and pathway plans will improve	Complete - worker starting 6/11/2023 In addition, due to TM LT sickness absence we have agreed over-establishment agency TM cover to ensure core practice standards are met Currently shortlisting to appoint in October	
CYPF_RSK_6		4.9.3	Finalise and implement the Seeking Education, Employment and Training Plan	SD EPS											Improvement to % of all age groups in EET	On track - The plan has been finalised and approved at Cabinet and is now being implemented.	

IROs ACT AS CHILDREN'S RIGHTS CHAMPIONS

CYPF_RSK_9	4.10 Independent Reviewing Officers will provide statutory CIC meetings and promote the improvement of Care Planning for Children in Care, they will challenge drift and delay in any care and permanence planning and ensure full consideration is given to children with EHCPs and SEN(D).	4.10.1	Implement expectation that IROs consider the potential reunification, discharge from care and progression to SGO at each mid-point review and statutory review.	HoS QAS											Performance data and quality assurance activity via audits and dip samples will evidence the practice improvements alongside feedback from children. Improved placement stability, education and health and well being outcomes.	On track - Expectation in place -QA activity of the last 10 mid point review and CIC review notes by 27/10 will evidence progress with this	
		4.10.2	Implement expectation that IROs to complete visits to children to gather their wishes and feelings before each CIC meeting	HoS QAS												On track - Expectation in place - service manager review of visit activity via data, supervisions and conversations with children will evidence progress with this actions. QA to be achieved by 1/11/24	
		4.10.3	Implement expectation that IROs to write to children after the meeting to support their understanding of their plan	HoS QAS												On track - Expectation in place - QA of last 10 children who have had CIC meetings to view evidence of letters sent by 10/11/23	
		4.10.4	Implement expectation that IROs to develop consistency in the completion of pre-review discussions and mid points discussions, ensuring these set foundations for a well chaired, impactful care planning review meeting.	HoS QAS												On track - Expectation in place - QA of last 10 children who are at mid point of their reviews to understand quality of the reviews by 10/11/23	
		4.10.5	Recruit 2 permanent IROs/Independent Chairs to fill vacancies leading to IRO workloads reducing	HoS QAS												Complete - Start dates 9/10 & 12/10	
		4.10.6	IROs/Independent Chairs to complete a minimum of 1 audit a month as part of the QA framework	HoS QAS												On track	
		4.10.7	IROs to increase their role in monitoring of challenge to and resolving the completion and timeliness of health assessments, dental and optical checks, personal education plans.	HoS QAS												On track	
		4.10.8	IROs to strengthen the participation and advocacy offer to children including the use and implementation of "Mind of My Own"	HoS QAS												On track	

PRIORITY 5 – QUALITY ASSURANCE AND AUDIT; Ensure a robust Quality Assurance Framework is in place that provides a clear picture of performance and leads to strong grip, practice improvement and embedded learning.

To be good; Management oversight of practice, including practice scrutiny by senior managers, will be established, systematic and used clearly to improve the quality of decisions and the provision of help to children and young people. The local authority can demonstrate evidence of practice that is informed and sustainably improved by feedback, research and intelligence about the quality of services. The experiences of children, young people and families who use them are important, including learning from their complaints and from successful or disrupted placements or adoption breakdown.

Risk register reference	Desired Outcome	Actions	Lead	Timeframe										How will we measure the difference to children and young people?	SEPT Monthly HoS update	RAG	
				23-Sep	23-Oct	23-Nov	23-Dec	24-Jan	24-Feb	24-Mar							
CYPF_RSK_23	5.1 A Quality Assurance Framework will ensure that performance information is collated for all service areas that enables the evaluation of the impact of the improvement work and, where weaknesses are identified, ensures they are addressed urgently by	5.1.1	Implement a refreshed and comprehensive Quality Assurance Framework	HoS QAS											Children will benefit from having a systematic effectiveness, i	A comprehensive QAF has been agreed but is not yet fully operational due to the need to recruit dedicated audit capacity (see below)	
		5.1.2	Implement an annual programme of outcome focused audit activity, including deep dives, thematic audits and dip sampling to measure the effectiveness and impact of the improvement journey and act on practice strengths and areas for development	HoS QAS											The experience of and outcomes for children will be a central focus of the Quality Assurance activity.	Complete - a planned schedule of QA activity is in place for the year but will be reviewed to ensure it aligns fully with this plan.	
		5.1.3	Complete 10 audits of children open to the "edge of care team" to identify and act on practice strengths and areas for development	HoS QAS											Audit and dip sampling will show how practice is supporting children on the edge of care	On track - Audits of Edge of Care work were allocated for completion during Sept. The findings are currently being analysed.	

		managers at all levels.	5.1.4	Complete 12 audits of children open to CYPFS who are electively home educated to identify and act on practice strengths and areas for development	HoS QAS							Audit and dip sampling will show how practice is supporting children who are home educated	On track - These audits were allocated for completion during Sept. Findings are currently being analysed.	
			5.1.5	Achieve 100% of audits allocated to managers across the service.	HoS QAS							100% of audits are completed every month which inform continuously improving practice	15/22 Sept audits achieved so far, more expected to be submitted. Raising in SMT on 16/10 for assurance that October's will be achieved	
			5.1.6	Recruit a Quality Assurance Lead to co-ordinate the annual audit programme, provide support to auditors and audit moderators, provide guidance and leadership of QA activity across the service and PSCP and to track action in response to findings	HoS QAS							The increase in capacity in the QA team will enable a significant increase in QA activity to inform the ongoing review of practice improvement	Complete - Recruited in house to a secondment to start 30th Oct	
			5.1.7	Recruit 2 interim practice learning reviewers to evidence our practice and support with practice development	HoS QAS								On track - Shortlisting week of 9/10 interviews week of 16/10	
			5.1.8	Implement an audit action tracker that is reviewed by Service Managers to ensure that every audit action is achieved	HoS QAS							Every child whose case file is audited will experience "good" practice	On track - Audit action tracker is in place but it is not yet being reviewed consistently to ensure all actions are complete -this has been escalated to Heads of Service who are overseeing their Service Managers achieving the action	
	5.2	Identified learning from Quality Assurance activity will be evaluated and disseminated to all staff.	5.2.1	Capture learning from monthly audits each month and ensure findings inform policy and practice development.	HoS QAS							The regular dissemination of learning will enable the whole	On track - Monthly audit learning report completed and shared with SMT and the Academy to inform policy and practice development	
		Children will benefit from the knowledge that quality assurance activity recommendations will be followed up to ensure that the required action	5.2.2	Share learning from quality assurance activity interactively at service meetings	HoS QAS								Behind schedule; this is not being fully achieved as the QA Lead role is not yet in post, when they start in Nov they will attend the service meetings to share the learning. Revised deadline of November proposed.	
	5.3	Independent Child Protection Chairs will have effective oversight of multi-agency CP practice to ensure the CP conferencing process is used proportionately and is effective in protecting and safeguarding children via SMART plans, and ensure full consideration is given to children with EHCPs and SEN(D).	5.3.1	Implement expectation that Independent CP Chairs hold routine pre-conference consultations with SW/TM re: threshold and quality and preparation for Conference	HoS QAS							Weekly use of performance data and monthly dip sampling of CP chair activity will ensure that children with CP plans experience good practice in CP meetings	Complete - Pre Conference consultations are in place and have improved the proportion of children given CP plans	
			5.3.2	Undertake development programme with Independent CP Chairs to ensure CP Plans are SMART and focused on the child's needs and risks	HoS QAS							Audit and Dip sampling	On track - Independent chairs are attending the 19th Oct Leaders for Excellence session which is focused on SMART plans, Service Manager is also finalising a training offer from the Academy targeted at the specific development needs of CP Chairs	
			5.3.3	Implement expectation that Independent CP Chairs undertake restorative 'mid-point' and needs-led reviews of all children who are subject to CP plans and ensure that the plan is effective and relevant to the circumstances of the child	HoS QAS							Children will experience better quality services as a result of IROs ensuring good practice and outcomes	On track - Mid-point review are in place, the SM will plan quality assurance activity to ensure the quality meets expectations and gather evidence of impact on the progress of children's plans by 27/10	
			5.3.4	Set expectation that Independent Chairs use the 'Resolution and Escalation Process' whenever they find poor practice.	HoS QAS							Audit and Dip sampling	Expectation has been set with the team but there is limited evidence of change as yet, 33% completed in timeframe, 9 incomplete - 4 of these are open to IROs who have left the service so SM is reviewing these. November team meeting theme is use of resolutions and escalations to improve outcomes for children	
			5.3.5	Weekly review of performance data and monthly dip sampling of ICPC and CP Review notes and plans by the QA&S Service Manager and actions taken in response to findings	HoS QAS							Audit and Dip sampling	On track - this is in progress, learning will be known by 23/10 to inform service plan	
CYPF_RSK_13	5.4	The Local Authority	5.4.1	Recruit an interim LADO	HoS QAS							LADO performance will be measured by a score card	Complete - Interim LADO started on 11th Sept	

Designated Officer (LADO) will support organisations to manage allegations so that children are safeguarded	5.4.2	Implement processes and practices for improved LADO recording	HoS QAS										and quarterly dip sampling, this information will be compared with 2022/23 data to evidence improved practice on behalf of children	On track - LADO and Service Manager are reviewing the current policy and procedure to identify what's working well and the improvement actions needed, Improvement plan will be sent to Dorset for their feedback
	5.4.3	Recruit 2 QA & Safeguarding co-ordinators for improved business support	HoS QAS											On track - Roles have been uploaded for grading
	5.4.4	Improve support to providers & commissioners and collaboration with Adult Services regarding whole service reviews expanding reach into the voluntary sector	HoS QAS											On track
	5.4.5	Develop LADO scorecard to provide performance information	HoS QAS											On track
	5.4.6	Undertake quarterly dip sampling of LADO activity	HoS QAS											On track
	5.4.7	Commission SLIP, Dorset, to undertake a review of LADO practices	HoS QAS											This work has been agreed with Dorset and included in the SLIP forward plan.
	5.4.8	Act in response to findings of SLIP review of LADO practices	HoS QAS											

PRIORITY 6 – A STABLE AND ABLE WORKFORCE; Strategic arrangements regarding workforce development and the organisational environment maximises staff recruitment and retention leading to a stable, skilled and supported workforce which provides high quality, effective support and interventions that meet their needs and aspirations.

To be good; The local authority social care workforce is sufficient, suitably qualified and accredited to deliver high-quality services to children and their families. (For more information about accreditation, see the national assessment and accreditation system (NAAS)). Managers and practitioners are experienced, effectively trained and supervised and the quality of their practice improves the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families. There is effective organisational support for the training and professional development of social workers, personal advisers and managers. Leaders and managers have created an environment where good social work can flourish and this is evident in the overall quality and impact of social work. Careful monitoring of workloads and oversight of the impact of wider systems on working conditions for practitioners ensure that practitioners have the capacity and ability to develop meaningful relationships with children, families and care leavers. The impact of any systems change is well managed, with a sustained focus on the experience of children and families.

Risk register reference	Desired Outcome	Actions	Lead	Timeframe								How will we measure the difference to children and young people?	SEPT Monthly HoS update	RAG	
				23-Sep	23-Oct	23-Nov	23-Dec	24-Jan	24-Feb	24-Mar					
CYPF_RSK_11 CYPF_RSK_17	6.1 An effective workforce strategy will ensure a permanent workforce that is sufficient to enable effective workloads and management oversight. This will allow practitioners to build consistent and meaningful relationships with children	6.1.1 Implement the Recruitment and Retention strategy	SD CYPFS										Vacancy and turnover rates are reported on to the PCIB demonstrate increased proportions of permanent staff. Improvements to the quality of service provided to children as a result of stable long- term relationships with social workers will be evident through quality assurance and audit. Workforce will report higher levels of satisfaction and wellbeing.	HROD are drafting a Children's Workforce Strategy with the service that includes a scorecard with key performance metrics. This will be presented to CSTB in October.	
	6.2 Additional capacity is in place that reduces overall workloads for social workers and managers	6.2.1 Recruit and on board additional capacity in key areas as agreed in the resourcing plan	SD CYPFS										Once additional staff are in post we would expect to see: - MASH continuing to operate in 'live time' and evidence of improved quality. - Reduced workloads in IRT, improved timeliness of seeing children and completion of assessments within timescales - Reduced workloads in CSW leading to improved quality, reduced delays for children and timeliness and effectiveness of supervision - Increased management capacity in Care Leavers leading to improved quality and effectiveness of supervision. - Increased compliance with audits across the service	On track - The 6 additional Advance Practitioners are all in post in IRTs. Workloads in IRT are starting to reduce as the backlog is cleared but some caseloads remain high as reported in the workload report. Focused action is in place to address this. The contract for the CSW managed team has been awarded and the additional team of 6 experienced social workers and Team Manager will be in place in early November.	
CYPF_RSK_17	6.3 The Social Work Academy will provide a	6.3.1 Review the Academy's remit and scope	HoS QAS										The workforce will report improved levels of satisfaction and access to professional development. Improved	On track - This work has started	

		The Academy will provide a centre of learning and development for practitioners so that children experience workers with a greater range of skills and techniques.	6.3.2	Develop and implement a revised and refreshed learning and development programme for the Academy that is aligned to improvement priorities and recruitment and retention goals that includes bite size training, lunch and learn sessions, e-learning, blogs to wrap around the availability of front line practitioners	HoS QAS													and access to professional development improved workforce retention and progression. Quality assurance and audit activity will demonstrate the improved use of knowledge, research, evidence and skills in practice.	On track - Support in place from HROD to revise the workforce plan that supports the recruitment and retention strategy. We are completing a self assessment of the Academy by the 31st Oct to inform the future workforce plan, this will include the L&D needs of EPS.	
			6.3.3	Refresh induction arrangements for new starters following a review of the current induction offer, staff survey to support this (to include in-house career progression inductions)	HoS QAS															Not yet progressed due to capacity, staff survey taking place during November which will inform work
			6.3.4	Deliver weekly Eclipse refresher training slots for practitioners and Eclipse champion floor walkers	HoS QAS															On track - Capacity has been identified and Service Managers have been asked to submit their priority Eclipse learning needs so that the training sessions can be planned to focus on areas that meet the priority learning needs of frontline staff
			6.3.5	Progress the Early Career Framework (ECF) to support ASYEs in year 2 &3	HoS QAS															On track - Dave Neale is attending all ECF DfE meetings and we are achieving all requirements

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	07 November 2023
Title of Report:	Child Exploitation Update
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Interim Director of Children's Services)
Author:	Nigel Denning (Service Director for Children, Young People and Families)
Contact Email:	Nigel.denning@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

The Child Exploitation Update report provides an overview and update on the Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF) that was created as Plymouth's approach to supporting older children and young people experiencing harm from outside the home. The ASF is a way of responding to and supporting older children and young people aged 11 – 18 (aged 25 for care leavers). It aims to understand the different needs of this age group and is designed to respond to harm experienced outside the family home. These contextual risks and threats to young people's safety can include, child sexual exploitation, peer exploitation, child criminal exploitation, gang activity (county lines) and online exploitation.

The report from the Independent Scrutineer of Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership was presented to the Partnership Improvement Board in September and has informed the development of the improvement priorities and plan.

Recommendations and Reasons

Scrutiny is asked to note the reports and recommendations

Alternative options considered and rejected

The report sets out the plans to further develop the framework in Plymouth

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Focus on prevention, early intervention and keeping children, young people and adults protected.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

No implications at this stage

Financial Risks

This plan for improvement is mitigated against longer term risks

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

No known implications

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Child Exploitation Update							
B	Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership - Child Exploitation update							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Nigel Denning (Service Director for Children, Young People and Families)

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 30/10/2023

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader/ Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)

Date approved: 30/10/2023

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Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



CHILD EXPLOITATION UPDATE

Adolescent Safety Framework:

The Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF) was created as Plymouth's approach to supporting older children and young people experiencing harm from outside the home. The ASF is a way of responding to and supporting older children and young people aged 11 – 18 (aged 25 for care leavers). It aims to understand the different needs of this age group and is designed to respond to harm experienced outside the family home. These contextual risks and threats to young people's safety can include, child sexual exploitation, peer exploitation, child criminal exploitation, gang activity (county lines) and online exploitation.

This model of working at the individual level is through 'Safer Me' at an early help and child in need level and through 'Safer Me Plus' at a child protection level. It is designed to give a focus around the risks outside of the child's home. This is achieved through the Peer Group, Neighbourhood (Location) and School Context Conferences, which are facilitated by independent Safeguarding Chairs, Safer Plymouth Chairs, and Headteachers or Designated Safeguarding Leads respectively.

Current Situation:

The Daily Intelligence Briefing (DIB) is a multi-agency meeting that takes place daily to discuss every child deemed to be at risk of exploitation who has been reported missing, remains missing, or any child arrested in the previous 24 hours. The aim of the meeting is to share information relating to the child to agree immediate actions required and put in place a multi-agency plan. The meeting also discusses adults of concern, emerging themes and locations and this information is shared with the chair of the Operational Mace in order to discuss disruption plans. Examples of recent disruption activity include:

1. Citywide action on children using THC in vapes and distributing this. This involved work with the police and schools to educate school leaders on risk and identification and police disruption activity. This includes linking with public health and the hospital.
2. A number of children located in a house of multiple occupation in Plymouth. Children were reporting use of drugs, sexual abuse and unknown adult males attending the address. The police attended and made arrests. The children are working with REACH to support understanding and risk management.

Attendance at the DIB is good with The Edge of Care Team, Youth Justice Service, REACH, Police, MASH, Education, Health, SHARP (Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service) and ACE schools represented. This enables us to have a co-ordinated response in place to prevent a disjointed approach or an issue where everyone thinks someone else is responding. The DIB is currently chaired by the Edge of Care Manager and covered by REACH or Youth Justice in her absence and feeds directly to the Youth Justice Service manager and Chair of Operational MACE.

Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child who is not open to Children, Young people and Families Service, a referral will be accepted by the MASH who are represented daily. There may be some work to understand the risk undertaken by the REACH staff in the first instance.

The DIB has taken on much of the work previously managed in the MACE and offers us a more immediate response to exploitation. A strong element of the ASF is the mapping of children to identify and devise proportionate responses to groups at risk of exploitation. The quality of information provided by the police in this mapping exercise is excellent however there is a resource issue that causes delay in the production of this of up to 2 weeks, but we know that two weeks in a child's life is a long time and this has been raised in the recent strategic MACE to identify resource to address the time delay.

Operational MACE sits monthly and will discuss those children at the highest risk to ensure that plans are robust and reviewed. Themes, location and adults of concern are discussed at this meeting and multi-agency decisions made on disruption activity.

Strategic MACE sits quarterly and reports to the PCSB. Strategic MACE review data alongside themes and risks to ensure that as a city we are reacting appropriately to concerns.

Reducing Exploitation and Absence from Care and Home (REACH)

The REACH team is responsible for undertaking Return Home Interviews for all children who are reported missing. The team receive police notifications daily and will make contact with the child within 24 hours to offer an RHI within 72 hours. This is voluntary and the workers will need to draw on their skills to build quick relationships to encourage take up. During this assessment the worker will assess for any exploitation concerns.

Date	Missing Children	Missing Episodes	Children in Care - Children	CIC Episodes	RHI offered to take place within 72 hours	RHI completed inside 72 Hours	Exploitation CE and CSE
April 23	33	69	14	40	93.9%	68.3%	12
May 23	59	90	23	40	96.6%	69.3%	21
June 23	61	94	23	39	98.4%	71.4%	27
July 23	49	70	17	28	98%	61.2%	20
Aug 23	44	78	23	47	100%	56.7%	19
Sep 23	66	119	23	54	95.8%	60.5%	24

We have recently started to monitor those children who have their RHI outside of the 72 hours and the reasons for this. In September 20 RHIs were completed outside of 72hrs. Of these, 12 were requested by parents and 4 by children to be arranged as such. Three were delayed to outside of the timeframe because the child was in hospital, and one was due to multiple missing incidents being covered in the latest RHI.

Patterns and themes are identified through the RHI's. Most recent themes relate to children being found with street homeless who drink. When this occurs, the police are informed immediately and will disrupt.

Air B&B's remains an issue with parents / adults booking an Air B&B for children to have a party. The police have made attempts to address this directly with Air B&B however it is not a UK based company, and this has proven a challenge and therefore a program of education is being developed to include possible press release.

Car parks in the city remain a place for children to come together – when this is identified police will disrupt however we know this just moves children to the next space.

THC in vapes remains a concern and we continue to provide education.

Over the last 3 months we have worked with 90 children who have identified being at risk of criminal and or sexual exploitation (37 sexual exploitation and 54 criminal exploitation) all of which have been offered interventions from the REACH workers.

Safer Me Assessments

The Safer Me assessment supports decision making on the type of risk, level of harm and how to seek additional support, either through the Individual or Context pathways. The Safer Me and SaferMe+ approach is used alongside statutory safeguarding processes to ensure extra-familial contexts are being considered within and alongside traditional child protection processes. 44 Safer me assessment have been completed since April 2023 and there are 54 children with an open safer me compared to 41 in April 2023.

County Lines

Currently, we are mapping and monitoring 4 groups in the city involving 40 children and 10 adults linked to county lines. The Alpha and Bravo groups activities have now been disrupted involving Police operations, these children are still monitored weekly to ensure they are safe. The Charlie and Delta groups are still active. 4 adults are currently in custody, either on remand or recalled following activities to disrupt these groups. The group maps are reviewed weekly and individual children discussed daily at the DIB if risk remains. Any children requiring a NRM is then discussed with the MACE chair and referrals made by the allocated SW.

Learning to date and next steps:

The Adolescent Safety Framework was introduced to Plymouth after it was launched in Devon. Recent conversations with Devon have highlighted similar concerns raised in Plymouth and we will take this learning and make the decision to streamline our approach to ensure all partner agencies feel able to be on board with safeguarding our children against contextual risks in the city.

As we develop our practice and understanding of exploitation across the city, we are seeing an uplift in concerns raised for children which follow national trends. There are examples of very good practice and multi-agency working when there is a need to respond to crisis situations however there is a gap in working in a more co-ordinated way to prevent concerns escalating.

Exploitation is a difficult risk to manage and relies heavily on relationship-based work to build trust. We need to support our workers across the city but mostly within social care to feel confident and safe to identify risk and intervene.

The launch of the ASF took place January 2021 with the training delivered widely across the partnership but highlighted the need to clarify our approach with professionals.

- A task and finish group are now in place to amend the Adolescent Safety Framework following feedback from partner agencies and experience of other local authorities also using the framework and embed this across the partnership.

Partners report that the framework needs to be clearer with stronger co-ordination and a more focused assessment, coupled with professionals feeling that they need more support and development to manage the risk more confidently and this would lead to ineffective planning.

- The task and finish group will develop a simple screening tool for all professionals for exploitation and provide advice and guidance on how to use it alongside the Building Support thresholds,
- Maintain the current model of the DIB that includes a co-ordinator role that ensures we can collect data and monitor all exploitation across the city.
- Develop a training package for all professionals to ensure we can identify risk and be better equipped to respond.

The Safer Me assessment needs to be used more consistently and needs to be more focused.

- The task and finish group will develop a simple assessment framework and guidance that will compliment Early Help assessments.

The Task and Finish group are meeting on the 10th November 2023 to agree membership and plan the following work.

Action	By who	By when
The ASF is reviewed and refined to simplify the process	HoS TS and YJS	Dec 2023
A screening tool is developed for all professionals to use to identify exploitation (with guidance.)	HoS TS and YJS	Dec 2023
The Assessment Tool is reviewed and refined to ensure it is focused.	HoS TS and YJS	Jan 2024
Develop workshops / training sessions to increase knowledge and confidence of exploitation and how to respond across the partnership	HoS TS and YJS	Jan 2024
Produce an Exploitation Strategy	HoS TS and Partners	Jan 2024

Name: Martine Aquilina

Position: Head of Service

Date: 03.10.23

Plymouth City Council Children's Service Improvement Board

Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership - Child Exploitation update

Introduction

1. This report is submitted to provide the members and attendees of the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the local partnership response to child exploitation across Plymouth.
2. Child exploitation has emerged as a significant threat to our children, nationally, regionally, and locally. It affects children from all backgrounds and can have devastating effects on the lives of children and their families.
3. It is a particularly difficult safeguarding issue to respond to. Children often do not realise they are being exploited, have strong personal relationships with those exploiting them, many have vulnerabilities arising from complex issues earlier in their lives, and many are mistrustful of the staff trying to help and support them.

Summary

4. The response in Plymouth, as in many other areas, has developed at pace over recent years. There is a truly multi-agency response overseen by the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP). The response is supported by senior managers from the Devon and Cornwall Police, Plymouth City Council's Children, Young People and Families (CYPFS) and Education Participation and Skills services (EPS), NHS Devon Integrated Care Board, University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust, Livewell Southwest, Barnardos, NSPCC and the local education community.
5. The level of awareness overall, across the partnership, is adequate. Staff from key organisations understand what child exploitation is and can outline its different forms, i.e., sexual, criminal, radicalisation, modern slavery.
6. Staff from a range of different organisations identify the key signs and indicators and flag their concerns. This is encouraging and demonstrates a commitment across the partnership.
7. However, it is felt the number of children being identified does not reflect the true prevalence of child exploitation in Plymouth. More work is required to develop practitioner awareness into a greater and wider understanding. It is hoped this understanding will lead to signs and indicators being recognised more frequently, children being assessed accurately, their needs and risks identified, and appropriate courses of action determined.
8. The support provided to children who are assessed as being at higher levels of risk is assessed as good and effective. These children are supported by professionals who have appropriate levels of skill, experience, and time. The support provided to children with lower levels of risk, or for whom there is limited information, is variable. The universal workforce capability and capacity is inconsistent. Further work is required to improve understanding, confidence, and skill levels.
9. There are a range of meetings in Plymouth that support the overall response. At the operational level the higher-level risks and threats are managed well. Strategically, more work is required to improve how the PSCP drives improvements forward, in a timely way. There are promising signs

with plans to conduct a system assessment, review the local adolescent safety framework and improve data collection. These need to be achieved without any delay.

10. In conclusion, there is still much to do but the level of knowledge and expertise available within Plymouth should enable the improvements to be made. The gaps, and the means to close them are understood. Partnership leaders need to commit resources to ensure the plans are followed through as soon as possible.

Awareness of child exploitation

11. PCSP and its partner organisations have provided learning over recent years to ensure practitioners are aware of and understand child exploitation. This has been supported by national publications, including 'Keeping Children Safer in Education', the national statutory guidance for safeguarding in education settings.
12. Child exploitation features in all induction training and in many refresher inputs. Learning inputs are regularly updated as knowledge about child exploitation grows.
13. The level of knowledge, as a whole, is assessed as adequate, although it has been suggested that further learning would be useful to improve understanding and enable staff, including those in schools to be more confident. It is hoped this will enable certain staff to manage more cases at lower levels of risk.

The response to children who go missing

14. All incidents of children being reported as missing to the police, are notified to CYPFS' Reducing Exploitation and Absence from Care and Home (REACH) team. This team is the local authority's specialist team in this area of child safeguarding and examines each notification it receives.
15. All children reported as missing to the police are monitored by police managers. Risks are continually monitored, and all cases are reviewed at local daily police tasking processes where risks are assessed, and where necessary, action decided upon. There is evidence of appropriate and effective action being taken through these processes.
16. Efforts are made for family support workers from the REACH team to speak with every child who is reported as missing, to conduct Return Home Interviews (RHIs). There are good rates of engagement and the information gathered is used to identify risks in relation to children, individuals who pose a threat of harm to them and locations of concern. This information is fed into local risk management systems (outlined later in this report).

Referral and allocation of child exploitation cases

17. The pathway used by practitioners to access support has changed recently. All referrals are submitted to the local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The MASH ensures referrals are allocated to the relevant staff dealing with this subject. Work is being undertaken to ensure referrals are managed in a timely way by staff who have a good understanding of child exploitation and the support options available. It is intended that advice and support will be available to professionals dealing with cases, when they have queries. The partnership will check on these arrangements post-implementation to assess how they are working.

18. The options following a referral being received are:

- a) The referral can be allocated for a social care assessment within the CYPFS Initial Response Team
- b) The referral can be allocated for 'Peer Group' conference when there are concerns about a group of individuals, a location or a person posing a threat. The conference will be coordinated by CYPFS' REACH team.
- c) The referral can be allocated, often back to the referrer, to be managed in a school or community context conference

19. There are issues with Option C, currently, as it is felt there are limitations with the support provided in the school or community context. The limitations relate to staff either not having the level of knowledge, confidence, and experience to conduct the work, or not having enough time. There are plans to use staff from the REACH team to support school and community staff in raising knowledge, confidence, and skill levels to be able to help children more effectively.

20. Once children are managed under Options 1 and 2, it is felt that the response is good. Staff, particularly in the REACH team, have good levels of knowledge, have more time to be able to engage and work with children, have a good understanding of the techniques that work well with children affected by exploitation and access other resources that help child victims.

Adolescent Safety Framework

21. The Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF) is a multi-agency framework designed to identify and coordinate a response to contextual safeguarding risks faced by adolescents. It was introduced into Plymouth in early 2021.

22. The ASF is used effectively by CYPFS staff but is not consistently understood well or used by staff in other organisations, particularly schools.

23. The key document within the ASF is the Safer Me assessment tool. It is a comprehensive and thorough tool, but many staff have found it time-consuming and laborious to complete. A limited number of Safer Me assessments have been completed by staff outside of CYPFS.

24. The Strategic MACE has established a task and finish group to determine what is needed for the whole partnership to use the ASF more effectively and the group is about to start its work in earnest. Part of that work will be to explore if a simpler, easier to use assessment tool can be introduced. Another key part will be to identify what learning is required to fully engage and inform all the relevant staff across the partnership.

25. Another option is for the partnership to identify and implement an alternative framework.

Key Meetings/Forums

26. The local groups responsible for coordinating the response to child exploitation are:

➤ Daily Intelligence Briefing

Each weekday a virtual multi-agency meeting is held in Plymouth. It involves staff from the MASH, the Youth Justice Service, health, police, CYPFS and members of the local alternative

education provider, ACE Academy. It is well attended and well regarded by those who participate.

Children who have been reported as missing, children detained overnight in police custody or identified as a concern through being arrested and children identified as being at high risk of exploitation are discussed. Children may be discussed at the meetings more than once.

Decisions are made over actions, lead professionals, risk assessment and management, and oversight. This ensures children are provided with prompt and appropriate support by knowledgeable and committed staff. This is seen as good practice and has led to good outcomes.

➤ Operational Missing and Child Exploitation Group (MACE)

The group has become a routine feature of the response to child exploitation and is working well. It is chaired alternately by police and CYPFS managers and there is good representation from local partner organisations. With the daily management of children at risk of, or directly involved with, child exploitation, seen as being effective the Operational MACE does not need to routinely consider these cases. This has allowed the group to focus on other threats, i.e., locations, trends and those who pose a threat of harm.

➤ Strategic MACE

The group has good multi-agency representation and is well attended. The group reports into the PSCP Board each quarter with the chair being a full member. The group has a detailed work plan and is the primary driver of improvements.

There are concerns that the group is not fully effective. Over the past eight months it has had three different chairs and this has affected business continuity. There are concerns that some actions are taking too long to complete.

The key activities for the group currently are:

- Completion of the Children's Society Missing Children Response Assessment Tool, a system assessment tool that will allow the partnership to assess its effectiveness in supporting children who go missing and identify improvements that can be made. It is hoped to complete this multi-agency work prior to the Strategic MACE meeting on
- Review and implement the Adolescent Safety Framework. A Task and Finish Group has been established as part of the group. It is looking to understand why the ASF is not working as well as was intended, what needs to be done to make best use of it and then take action to improve its function.
- Improve the understanding of child exploitation through data collection and analysis. Currently, there is a gap in terms of data being collected, key information being recorded and this being analysed. Work is being undertaken to identify best practice and consider then how this can be introduced into Plymouth.

Recommendations

27. The recommendations arising from this review are:

- a) PSCP to identify the learning required to improve awareness, understanding and how to respond to the needs of children at risk of all forms of exploitation. Within three months.
- b) PSCP to review how child exploitation referrals are responded to, allocated and assessed. Between 1 – 30 November 2023.

- c) PSCP to determine how to improve the functionality of the ASF, including identifying the best multi-agency assessment tool and the learning needed to support its widest use. Within six months.
- d) PSCP's Strategic MACE Group to develop a proposal over how to gather and use child exploitation data that will enable the partnership to understand the prevalence and nature of child exploitation in Plymouth. Within three months.
- e) PSCP's Strategic MACE Group to complete the Children's Society Missing Children Response Assessment Tool and identify the actions needed to improve the partnership response. By 17 October 2023 (date of Strategic MACE Group meeting).

John Clements, Independent Scrutineer, Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership

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Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	07 November 2023
Title of Report:	Q2 2023/24 Performance Report
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Interim Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	Paul Stephens & Hannah Daw
Contact Email:	Paul.stephens@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To share key performance data information related to Children Services (Children, Young People and Family Services and Education, Participation and Skills)

Recommendations and Reasons

To note the attached briefing paper for information and discussion

Alternative options considered and rejected

- I. Not applicable

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Not applicable

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

For information

Financial Risks

Not applicable

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

Not applicable

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

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Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Q2 2023/24 Performance Report							

Background papers:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Nigel Denning											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 30/10/2023											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Jemima Laing, approved via email											
Date Approved: 30/10/2023											

Q2 2023/24 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and
Scrutiny Committee

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I. CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SERVICES

I.1. REFERRALS & RE-REFERRALS

I.1. REFERRALS & RE-REFERRALS				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Provisional	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q2 2023/24
1	Number of referrals received within the last 12 months	3,616	3,285	2,351	537.7 (2021/22)	713.4 (2021/22)	3,093
	Referrals received within the last 12 months - Rate per 10,000 children	678.5	616.4	441.2			599.0
2	Number of re-referrals within 12 months (last 12 months)	861	743	457	21.5% (2021/22)	23.1% (2021/22)	567
	% of re-referrals within 12 months (last 12 months)	23.8%	22.6%	19.4%			18.3%

In the 12 months to the end of quarter two, Plymouth progressed 3,093 referrals, this is 560 more than the 12 months to September 2022 and 4,90 less than the 12 months to September 2021. At a rate per 10,000 children (enabling comparisons against other authorities) Plymouth is reported at 599.0 at the end of quarter two. This is lower than Plymouth's published position for 2021/22 (616.4), lower than statistical neighbours but higher than the England average of 537.7. The increase in referrals has created a pressure in our Initial Response Service and additional Advanced Practitioner capacity has been agreed to ensure assessments are completed.

The proportion of re-referrals received (where a referral had been received for the same child in the 12 months prior) has seen further improvements. The end of quarter two position was reported at 18.3%, down 1.1 percentage points from Plymouth's provisional 2022/23 figure. Plymouth is currently at a level lower than the 2021/22 published level for its statistical neighbours and the England average.

Our most recent Ofsted report (published 30 January 2023) identified two priority actions for the 'Front Door', and these are being progressed through a detailed improvement plan for this part of the service. A review of progress by our Sector Led Improvement Partner, Dorset, in September identified that good progress was being made. Dorset will continue to support us to maintain momentum and progress against the Improvement Plan will continue to be reported to the Plymouth Improvement Board as well as to the MASH Strategic and Operational Boards which have been reintroduced. We continue our work to ensure thresholds are understood by partners, including issuing a revised threshold document and partnership briefings.

1.2. CHILDREN IN NEED

1.2. CHILDREN IN NEED				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Provisional	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q2 2023/24
3	Number of children subject to a Child In Need Plan (snapshot)	1,121	965	944	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	1,485
	Children subject to a Child In Need Plan - Rate per 10,000 children	210.4	181.1	177.1	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	287.6

Quarter two has seen an increase in Plymouth's 'Child in Need' caseload (which does not include children subject to Children Protection Plans or Looked after Children) and is currently at its highest level in recent years.

Through its recent quality assurance work, the service has identified seven areas of practice improvement and is currently working on structured plans to support practice development and Team Manager oversight in the Initial Response Service and Children's Social Work Teams to ensure robust, timely decision making, assessments and interventions for children. The seven areas of priority practice improvement are:

1. Assessment
2. Plans
3. Supervision
4. Management Oversight
5. Lived experience and voice of the child
6. Domestic Abuse
7. Neglect

As part of this practice improvement, Practice Standards setting out expectations across these seven areas have been shared with teams and a 'Leaders for Excellence' programme is in place for frontline managers to reset expectations. Our quality assurance framework is now aligned closely to these priority practice areas so that we will have the evidence from audit and dip sampling to help us evaluate whether practice is improving as we expect over time. We have a high proportion of newly qualified and newly arrived international social workers in our Children's Social Work Teams (almost 50%) who require this targeted workforce development. This also impacts on case-holding capacity and an additional team has been resourced for six months to enable the new workers to have a supported induction programme to prepare them for case-holding more complex work.

1.3. CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

1.3. CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Provisional	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q2 2023/24
4	Number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (Snapshot)	333	326	233	42.1 (2021/22)	53.1 (2021/22)	202
	Children subject to a Child Protection Plan - Rate per 10,000 children	62.5	61.2	43.7			39.1

5	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Neglect	50.2% (167)	51.5% (168)	45.9% (107)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	42.6% (86)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Physical Abuse	7.8% (26)	7.7% (25)	6.4% (15)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	4.5% (9)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Sexual Abuse	5.1% (17)	3.7% (12)	4.3% (10)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	5.9% (12)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Emotional Abuse	36.9% (123)	37.1% (121)	43.3% (101)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	47.0% (95)
6	% of children subject to multiple child protection plans - Within lifetime of the child (new plans starting in last 12 months)	27.4% (90)	27.5% (103)	25.7% (65)	23.3% (2021/22)	22.9% (2021/22)	25.6% (63)

At the end of quarter two (30 September 2023) there were 202 children who were subject to a Child Protection Plan. This is a rate of 39.1 children per 10,000 children, which is lower than both the published 2021/22 rate of 61.2 and our provisional position for 2022/23 (233 children / 43.7 per 10,000 children). The rate per 10,000 children is currently 3.0 below the England average and 14.0 lower than our Statistical Neighbour average.

The proportion of children who became subject to a Child Protection Plan within the 12 months up to quarter one (October 2022 to September 2023), who have been on a previous Child Protection Plan in their lifetime was reported at 25.6%.

This is at a level lower than the last four year-end positions, but we wish to improve further. During the last 12 months, 63 children/young people have started repeated Child Protection Plans (within their lifetime), this is an improvement on the 103 reported for the reporting year of 2021/22 and two less than our provisional figure for 2022/23 (reported at 65). The current percentage is higher than statistical neighbours and the England average. All local authorities experience repeat child protection planning processes for children.

There is a strong focus on requests for repeat Child Protection Plans with greater oversight by both the Safeguarding Service Manager and the requesting social workers' Service Manager. This provides more consistency and further opportunity to have reflective discussions to ensure that the care plan is right for these children, or whether we can work differently with the family.

The service is working with the Plymouth Safeguarding Partnership Board to roll out the 'NSPCC Neglect Graded Care Profile 2 Assessment Tool' to support all staff and volunteers working across the system to identify and improve support for children and young people who may experience neglect.

1.4. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (ALSO REFERRED TO AS CHILDREN IN CARE)

				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
RRef	Indicator Name	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Provisional	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q2 2023/24
7	Number of children subject to a Care Plan - Looked After Children (Snapshot)	485	490	501	70.0 (2021/22)	94.5 (2021/22)	486
	Children subject to a Care Plan - Looked After Children - Rate per 10,000 children	91.0	91.9	94.0			94.1
8	% of Looked After Children placed outside of the city of Plymouth (i.e., the placement is not within PL1 to PL7 or PL9)	39.0%	38.0%	39.9%	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	39.3%
9	Placement Type: Family Placement (fostering or connected carers)	336	325	339	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	344
	Placement Type: Children's Homes & Residential Care	53	56	57	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	51
	Placement Type: Hostels & other Supportive accommodation	31	33	48	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	50
	Placement Type: Lodgings or Independent living (16+)	12	16	x	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x
	Placement Type: Other Placement	x	x	5	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x
	Placement Type: Placed for Adoption	25	24	18	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	9
	Placement Type: Placed with Parents	25	28	32	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	26
	Placement Type: Other accommodation - NHS, Family Centres, Parent & Child	6	7	x	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x
Placement Type: Secure Units	x	x	x	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x	

On 30 September 2023, there were 486 children/young people who are children in care. This is a net decrease of 15 children on the provisional figure for 2022/23 and at a slightly lower level to the published figure of 490 for 2021/22. Unlike the levels of children subject to a Child in Need Plan that have seen an increase in recent months and levels of children subject to a Child Protection Plan that have seen reductions, the net number of children in care has been at an average of around 491 since November 2020. Our improvement work includes ensuring children's permanence plans are up to

date and working closely with our health partners to ensure children in care access health assessments and support when it is needed. This is overseen by our Corporate Parenting Board.

295 (60.7%) of children in care are placed within the city, the remaining 191 children (39.3%) placed outside of the city. This measure is simply based on the postcode of the child's placement address. Those not within PL1 to PL7 or PL9 are considered outside of the city. For example, PL12 refers to Saltash in Cornwall (potentially be less than a mile from a child's home address), but it is outside of Plymouth. Using provisional information, approximately 78.2% of children in care are placed within 20 miles of their home address (380 of 486). 29 children / young people were placed more than 125 miles from their home address.

There has been a slight reduction in the number of children and young people in residential settings and close tracking is in place of all children in residential to ensure plans to step them back into a family setting are progressed at the earliest appropriate opportunity. However, nationally, and locally there are significant challenges finding suitable placements for all children in care, in both residential and foster placements. There continues to be particular challenges finding a suitable home for a child in care where children and young people have complex needs. Weekly oversight of these children and young people not experiencing stable care in a placement that matches their permanence plan has been reintroduced through Children's Resource Panel.

The Fostering Recruitment Strategy is currently being refreshed to set out plans for recruiting more Plymouth Foster Carers, including looking at being part of a regional approach. However, we are competing in a challenging market with independent fostering agencies and to ensure we are competitive we are also reviewing the support we provide to our foster carers and are pleased that we have been successful in our application to establish a 'Mockingbird' model of supporting carers.

The offer made to Special Guardians, both to support the stability of current arrangements which can prevent breakdown and to reassure prospective special guardians which could result in increased discharges from care is being developed.

Please note: where the number of children is below five, the actual figure is suppressed and shows 'x'.

1.5. CARE EXPERIENCED (ALSO REFERRED TO AS CARE LEAVERS)

1.5. CARE EXPERIENCED (ALSO REFERRED TO AS CARE LEAVERS)				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Provisional	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q2 2023/24
10	% of Care Experienced young people in Unsuitable Accommodation (Statutory Service (aged 18 to 20))	9.6% (17/178)	6.1% (11/181)	4.1% (8/192)	12.0% (2021/22)	11.6% (2021/22)	7.4% (15/204)
11	% of Care Experienced young people in Education, Employment and Training (Statutory Service (EET aged 18 to 20))	52.8% (94/178)	56.4% (102/181)	50.0% (96/192)	55.0% (2021/22)	55.7% (2021/22)	49.0% (100/204)

Plymouth's quarter two figures show that the proportion of Care Experienced young people in unsuitable accommodation was at a lower level than the statistical neighbour and England averages (as published 2021/22). The cohort of young people in unsuitable accommodation has increased from

the 2021/22 and 2022/23 figures, while remaining significantly below the England and statistical neighbour figure, this cohort is rigorously reviewed and reported on a monthly basis.

Those in Education, Employment and Training were reported at a level circa 6.0 to 6.7 percentage points lower than the published figures for our comparators.

There is an increased focus across Children's Social Care and Education, Participation and Skills to review and develop Individual SEET Plans for those young people within the 51% of care leavers who are not in education, employment or training but are seeking education, employment, or training.

Following a successful pilot of the "Your Future" program, a SEND Employability Fast Track Residential scheme, two further courses have been arranged and the young people are being recruited. 100% of the participants from the first course achieved positive destinations in terms of education, employment, or training.

Three care leavers have started their Undergraduate Degree courses in September 2023.

2. EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS

2.1. OFSTED OUTCOMES

Ref	Indicator Name	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
				2021/22 Actual	England	South West	Q2 2023/24
1	% of all schools judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding	Inspections paused due to COVID	Inspections paused due to COVID	76.0%	88.0% (Sept 2023)	84.7% (Sept 2023)	83.7%
2	% of pupils attending Plymouth schools judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding	Inspections paused due to COVID	Inspections paused due to COVID	77.1%	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	85.1%

There are 98 state-funded schools in Plymouth and at the end of quarter two 83.7% of schools are judged as Good or Outstanding. When we break this figure down in to the number of primary, secondary and special schools judge as Good or better, we can see that 85.5% of primary schools are rated as good or better (compared to 89.6% nationally), 73.7% of secondary schools are rated as good or better (compared to 80.2% nationally), and 85.7% of special schools are rated as good or better (compared to 84.7% nationally).

Overall, 85.1% of pupils are attending a school judged as good or outstanding in our city.

2.2. ABSENCE MONITORING

Ref	Indicator Name	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	Previous Year & Benchmarking		Current Period
					England (Autumn and Spring Term 2022/23)	South West (Autumn and Spring Term 2022/23)	Autumn and Spring Term 2022/23
3	% of overall absence in all schools	Not reported	4.9%	8.8%	7.3%	7.6%	8.1%
4	% of persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) in all schools	Not reported	12.9%	28.1%	21.2%	21.9%	24.4%
5	% of persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) of pupils with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs)	Not reported	38.8%	45.0%	36.9%	-	Available March 2024

The information provided above is provided from the Department for Education "Absence rates" collection. This is a statutory return completed on a termly basis. The best available report is for the 2022/23 Autumn and Spring Term. Data was published on the 19th October 2023.

Local unvalidated data from the Plymouth Inclusion Scorecard showed that the overall absence rate for the 2022/23 Autumn and Spring term was 8.1%. The DfE Published data confirms this and benchmarks us above the regional rate of 7.6% and national rate of 7.3%. The Plymouth Inclusion

Scorecard indicates that the overall absence rate for the whole 2022/23 academic year which falls within quarter two, is likely to sit at 8.9% - The DfE will publish validated data in March 2024.

Moving into this academic year our Place based approach is focused on inclusion, particularly the attendance, mobility and outcomes for children who experience disadvantage. Initially this will be through a working group led by SEND 4 Change who have been commissioned to produce a set of recommendations for city education leaders.

The new national Attendance expectations for local authorities, multi academy trusts and schools is reshaping the work done by each of these partners with regard to attendance. Plymouth City Council are working with schools and trusts to ensure that this is implemented successfully. The first attendance network was held in July and there will be a further attendance conference in November. The new duties focus the work of schools towards direct engagement with their families and focuses the work of the local authority towards strategic oversight, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups and children with SEND.

A city wide campaign was set up for the start of the Autumn term 2023 which will promote strong attendance. Attendance is a key focus for all schools. Multi agency work to support those pupils who are severely absent is a focus for the locality work.

2.3. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

2.3. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q1 2022/23
6	% of 16 and 17 year olds in Education, Employment and Training	92.1%	92.1%	91.1%	92.5% (Q4 2022/23)	Not benchmarked	91.9%
7	% of 16 and 17 year olds with SEND in Education, Employment and Training	87.7%	83.1%	83.2%	88.7% (Q4 2022/23)	Not benchmarked	81.5%

At the end of quarter one 2022/23, 91.9% of 16 and 17 year olds were participating in Education, Employment, and/or Training (EET) and 81.5% of young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities are in education, training and/or employment.

110 young people have moved from being not in education, employment and training (NEET) to seeking (SEET), many of these young people need extensive support to transition into employment, education or training. This is an area of focus for the Participation and Skills areas of EPS in Plymouth City Council. A number of initiatives are under way to extend the options available to 16-25 year olds with EHCPs which includes growing the number of Supported Internships, Supported Apprenticeships, paid and unpaid volunteering placements and the newly developed 'Your Future' 5 Work readiness programme which includes a one week residential delivered by On Course South West.

2.4. KEY STAGE 4 OUTCOMES

2.4. KEY STAGE 4 OUTCOMES				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	England	South West	2022/23 Provisional
8	Key Stage 4 - % of pupils achieving 5+ in English and Maths	47.1%	51.9%	45.9%	45.3% (22/23 prov.)	44.7% (22/23 prov.)	41.3%
9	Key Stage 4 - Average Attainment 8 score	48.5 points	50.5 points	47.5 points	46.2 points (22/23 prov.)	46.3 points (22/23 prov.)	44.8 points

In 2022/23, 41.3% of pupils achieved the 'basics' (5+ in English and Maths). This sits below National (45.3%) and regional (44.7%) averages. Performance in Plymouth is 4.6 percentage points lower than the previous academic year, which is in line with the decrease seen nationally from 50.0% to 45.3% (4.7pp reduction).

The average Attainment 8 score is 44.8 points this is below the national (46.2 points) and regional (46.3 points) averages.

The attainment of specific pupil cohorts such as those eligible for Free School Meals or those with a Special Educational Need will be made available alongside the revised publication in February 2024.

Moving into this academic year our Place based approach is focused on inclusion, particularly the attendance, mobility and outcomes for children who experience disadvantage. Initially this will be through a working group led by SEND 4 Change who have been commissioned to produce a set of recommendations for city education leaders.

3. ANNEX 1: INDICATOR DEFINITIONS

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SERVICES
<p>Referrals & Re-Referrals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where concerns about a child have been raised to Children, Young People and Family Services, once the initial contact has been screened by our multi-agency hub, if appropriate, referrals will be accepted. The rate of referrals per 10,000 children is based on the number of referrals received in the 12 month period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities. A re-referral is where we receive a new referral for a child within 12 months of a previous referral. The indicator is based on a rolling 12 month period (e.g., 01 December to 30 November).
<p>Children In Need – CIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the purposes of this report, the number of children within the CIN cohort are those that have been assessed as being in need (but not CP or LAC) and the number of children who are in the process of being assessed to understand their level of need. The rate of CIN per 10,000 children is based on the number of CIN at the end of the period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities.
<p>Children subject to a Child Protection Plan - CP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Child Protection Plan should assess the likelihood of the child suffering harm and look at ways that the child can be protected. It should decide upon short and long term aims to reduce the likelihood of harm to the child and to protect the child's welfare, clarify people's responsibilities and actions to be taken; and outline ways of monitoring and evaluating progress. The rate of CP per 10,000 children is based on the number of CP at the end of the period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities. There are four categories for a Child Protection Plan; Neglect, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Emotional Abuse. The table shows the number and proportion under each category. The % of children subject to multiple child protection plans is the proportion of new Child Protection Plan starting within the period, that are for a child who has had a previous Child Protection Plan at any time in the child's lifetime. The indicator is based on a rolling 12 month period (e.g., the proportion of new Child Protection Plans that started in 01 December to 30 November).
<p>Looked After Children (also referred to as Children In Care) - LAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The table shows the number of Looked After Children at the end of the reporting period. The rate of LAC per 10,000 children is based on the number of LAC at the end of the period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities. The proportion of placements outside of the city is simply based on the postcode of the child's placement address. Those not within PL1 to PL7 or PL9 are considered outside of the city. For example, PL12 refers to Saltash in Cornwall, which could potentially be less than a mile from a child's home address, but it is outside of Plymouth. The figures provided for the placement types follow the Department for Education and Ofsted definitions, grouping multiple types into nine groups (for example, Family Placements contains six different placement types).
<p>Care Experienced (also referred to as Care Leavers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is deemed as 'Unsuitable' accommodation has been defined by the Department for Education. The following are examples of unsuitable accommodation: Bed and Breakfast / Emergency Accommodation, Prison, Temporary/No fixed abode/Street Homeless, Unknown/Not in Touch. The proportion of Care Experienced young people in Education, Employment and Training is based on our statutory service and therefore covers those young people ages 18 to 20. Whilst we work with Care Experienced young people aged 21 to 24, support is optional for the young person. Please note: The figures are likely to be different to the published Department for Education figures as they look at the age of the young person during the year at the period around their birthday and not at a specific snapshot.

EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS**Ofsted Outcomes**

Ofsted is responsible for inspecting schools and other social care services for children. There are four possible Ofsted ratings that a school can receive; Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate. These Ofsted grades are based on inspectors' judgements across four Ofsted categories – quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development of pupils, leadership and management as set out under the [Ofsted framework 2019](#).

Absence Monitoring

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance as set out in [Working together to improve school attendance](#).

Education, Employment or Training

The law requires all young people in England to continue in education or training until at least their 18th birthday, although in practice the vast majority of young people continue until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18. The responsibility and accountability for young people not in education, employment and training (NEET) lies with the local authority and is set out in [Participation Statutory Guidance](#). The Department for Education (DfE) monitors the performance of local authorities in delivering their duties, and specifically in their tracking and supporting of 16 and 17 year olds.

Key Stage Four Outcomes

Key Stage 4 (KS4) is the legal term for the two years of school education which incorporate GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education). During this time, pupils must follow relevant programmes of study from the National Curriculum. At the end of this stage, pupils are entered for a range of external examinations. Following a phased introduction since 2017, GCSEs taken in 2020 and 2021 are all reformed GCSEs graded on a 9-1 scale. Two particular measures are commonly reported on at key stage four:

- percentage pupils achieving 5-9s at English and Maths GCSE in the city, and
- average Attainment 8 scores achieved by schools across the city.

Attainment 8 is calculated by adding together pupils' highest scores across eight government approved school subjects. While these numbers are not made publicly available on a pupil-by-pupil basis, scores taken from across a school year group are averaged to produce a school's overall score. The eight subjects are divided into three categories, called "buckets":

- Bucket 1 - English and maths, which are worth double marks, but English will only count for double marks if both English literature and English (i.e., English language) are taken. The higher grade of the two is used;
- Bucket 2 – The top three scores from the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects taken, i.e. sciences, computer science, history, geography and languages;
- Bucket 3 – The top three scores from remaining EBacc subjects or other government approved qualifications (e.g., other GCSEs or Level 2 Certificates in some technical subjects).

The grades are converted into points, put through a formula and finally out comes the school's Attainment 8 score.

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	07 November 2023
Title of Report:	Children's Services Finance Report
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Interim Director of Children's Services)
Author:	Matthew Fulton & Louise Jenkins
Contact Email:	Matthew.fulton@plymouth.gov.uk – Louise.jenkins@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	CHIFINI 123
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform members around the budget for Children's Services for 2023/24 and the monitoring position at Quarter 2

Recommendations and Reasons

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the Children's Services Finance report.

Alternative options considered and rejected

N/A

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This finance report links to the following Corporate Plan priorities; Working with the NHS to provide better access to health, care and dentistry, and Keeping children, adults and communities safe.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

Provides information about budgets set in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan

Financial Risks

N/A information only

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

N/A

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

N/A

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Children's Finance – Scrutiny November 2023							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

Fin	DJN.2 3.24.13 6	Leg	Click here to enter text.	Mon Off	Click here to enter text.	HR	Click here to enter text.	Assets	Click here to enter text.	Strat Proc	Click here to enter text.
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: David Haley											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Date agreed: 30/10/2023											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Laing, approved via email Date approved: 30/10/2023											

CHILDRENS DIRECTORATE FINANCE

Quarter2



- The Children, Young People & Families Budget for 2023/24 is set at £50.092m. This is a decrease from 2022/23 of £1.289m.
- The Children, Young People & Families service was given a budget uplift of £3.053m in 2023/24 to allow for expected cost & volume pressures within Placements, resulting from increases to National Living Wage, Cost of Living & Inflation. Additional budget has also been allocated due to the 2023/24 pension contribution.
- Additional Medium Term Financial Planning targets were also identified by the service of £4.575m, to give a net budget decrease of £1.289m

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES - Budget by Year						
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Budget	35.437	37.277	42.515	43.106	51.381	50.092
Increase/(Decrease)		1.840	5.238	0.591	8.275	(1.289)

2023/24 Budgetary Changes	£m
Additional Cost & Volume	3.053
Pension Increase Adjustment	0.233
Reduce the use of residential care, increase the use of foster care and work to ensure children in care can return to their families or a connected person in their lives	(2.275)
Work with families to keep more children at home	(1.627)
Service & Budget Realignment	(0.673)
	(1.289)

- The Education, Participation and Skills Budget for 2023/24 is set at £12.227m. This is an increase from 2022/23 of £1.478m.
- Education, Participation and Skills were given a budget uplift of £1.370m in 2023/24 to allow for the additional pressures within Home to School Transport and SEND Short Breaks. There was also an adjustment for the 2023/24 Pension contributions.

EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS - Budget by Year						
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Budget	10.106	9.658	10.546	10.462	10.749	12.227
Increase/(Decrease)		(0.449)	0.888	(0.084)	0.287	1.478

- The below table breaks down the delivery plan savings targets identified for 2023/24.

2023/24 Delivery Plans	£m
Identify more appropriate placement settings for those in high-cost packages	1.400
Reunify Looked After Children back to a family environment	0.500
Increase our In-House Fostering sufficiency	0.450
Utilising Grant Funding to maximise revenue funds available to the Authority	0.650
CYPF Management - In Year Savings through Budget Monitoring	0.225
EPS Management - In Year Savings through Budget Monitoring	0.717
	3.942

Quarter 2 Monitoring Position

- At Quarter 2, the Children, Young People and Families department are showing an adverse variance to budget of £4.684m.
 - This adverse variance is primarily down to an increase in high cost Residential and Bespoke packages. Supported Living has also seen an increase in weekly placement costs.
 - The authority is currently backdating payments to our Special Guardianship carers as per a recent SGO Judicial Review (£0.618m)
 - The department have also declared non-achievable savings targets of £1.627m, which relates to the MTFP plan involving working with families to keep more children at home.

Children's Quarter 2 Monitoring

Budget Areas	2023/24 Approved Budget	Quarter 1 Forecast	Quarter 2 Forecast	Variance to Budget	Movement in Quarter
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
CYPF					
Services					
Placements & Packages	33.961	35.921	38.538	4.578	2.618
Permanency	3.851	3.851	3.923	0.072	0.072
Childrens Social Work	3.732	3.732	3.792	0.060	0.060
Targeted	3.030	3.030	2.958	(0.072)	(0.072)
Plymouth Referral and Assmnt	2.868	2.868	2.808	(0.060)	(0.060)
CYPF Central Costs	1.957	1.957	1.957	0.000	0.000
QA Safeguarding and Bus Suppt	1.791	1.791	1.791	0.000	0.000
Adoption	1.161	1.267	1.267	0.106	0.000
CAMHS Specialist Services	0.610	0.610	0.610	0.000	0.000
Virtual School	0.356	0.356	0.356	0.000	0.000
Delivery Plans	(3.225)	(3.225)	(3.225)	0.000	0.000
Total CYPF	50.092	52.159	54.776	4.684	2.618

- At Quarter 2, the EPS department are showing an adverse variance to budget of £1.453m. This adverse variance is primarily down to SEND Transport – 2023/24 budget was right sized with £1.000m but since then new routes and new children have met the statutory threshold and are now realising a £1.453m pressure.

Budget Areas	2023/24 Approved Budget	Quarter 1 Forecast	Quarter 2 Forecast	Variance to Budget	Movement in Quarter
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
EPS					
Services					
Transport	5.849	6.701	7.302	1.453	0.601
SEND	3.640	3.640	3.640	0.000	0.000
Centrally Managed Schools Exp	1.234	1.234	1.234	0.000	0.000
Educational Psychology	0.649	0.649	0.649	0.000	0.000
On Course South West	0.498	0.498	0.498	0.000	0.000
PIAS & Parenting	0.435	0.435	0.435	0.000	0.000
School Improvement	0.366	0.366	0.366	0.000	0.000
Management	0.341	0.341	0.341	0.000	0.000
Organisation	0.311	0.311	0.311	0.000	0.000
Inclusion	0.223	0.223	0.223	0.000	0.000
Skills and Post 16	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.000	0.000
Outdoor education	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.000	0.000
Admissions	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.000	0.000
Early Years	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Services for Schools	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.056)	0.000	0.000
Education Services Grant	(0.634)	(0.634)	(0.634)	0.000	0.000
Delivery Plans	(0.717)	(0.717)	(0.717)	0.000	0.000
Total EPS	12.227	13.079	13.680	1.453	0.601

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