



BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST

Annual Report 2018/19

31 July 2019



This is what our children and young people from **Birmingham Children in Care Council** and **Birmingham Care Leavers' Forum** said when they were reflecting on the Trust's first year, 2018/19:

"We can't believe it's been a year already and it has been an orange rollercoaster ride for us!

In our last report we challenged the Trust to make a difference and this year has been a year of making a difference and we are SO PROUD to have been part of that!

This is the year that Ofsted called us dynamic (and we agreed). It's also been a year of challenges. So when we were asked to stand up and present in front of nearly 1000 people we did it! We have interviewed the most senior people; we have led on campaigns and been asked to comment on new pieces of work, new approaches and have influenced front-line practice. Looking forward to year 2 we can't wait to tell you what we have planned but you will be hearing even more from us!

We have grown as individuals and as a group. We invite in new young people all the time and pride ourselves that both groups are growing in numbers. We believe any child in care, care experienced or care leaver has something amazing to say and we want to hear it.

One of our proudest moments in 2018 was supporting our 'mind your language' campaign and we know this year the Trust is 100 percent behind it.

We believe if you change your language it changes how you think. If you can change the way you think it will change the way you behave and you will be more 'caring'. Isn't that what we all want? We want Birmingham Children's Trust to be an organisation that really cares!

Our top tips for everyone in the Trust remain the same:

- Listen to real first hand experiences.*
- Work alongside me, work with me, explain things and then explain again! Remember I am at the centre.*
- Don't think you know what I am trying to say, don't second guess me, use the words I choose to use.*
- Talk to children and young people, have conversations, properly listen and take an interest in my life.*

We are excited to be going into YEAR 2!"

CONTENTS	Page
What our children and young people said ...	2
1. Introduction	4
2. Summary of the Trust's performance	6
3. Governance and relationships	10
4. Summary of the Council's performance of its obligations	11
5. Cost of performing the services in 2018/19	12
6. Summary of any changes to the Agreement agreed during 2018/19	12
7. Demand for services in 2018/19 and the expected demand for the services in 2019/20; social, demographic or other relevant factors which affected the services in 2018/19 and/or may affect the services in 2019/20	13
8. Effects of any changes in children's social care legislation or guidance on the delivery of the services and/or any actual or anticipated change in law and the implications of such changes	16
9. Strategic priorities and outcomes for 2019/20	16
10. Results of any audits or surveys carried out during 2018/19	17
11. Outcomes of any rectification plans	18
12. High-level review of applicable Central Government funding generally, including details of any anticipated Central Government funding (or changes to that funding) directed to the services in 2018/19 and/or 2019/20 or future contract years where applicable	19
13. Summary of the outcome of any surveys of service users, and relevant stakeholders and third parties in relation to the services	19
14. Matters relating to the risk register	20
15. Outcome of Ofsted monitoring visits and inspections	21
16. Statement confirming how the principles of the Business Charter have been implemented or are yet to be implemented	23
17. Proposed changes to the Agreement	24

1. Introduction

Birmingham Children's Trust became operationally independent from the Council on 1 April 2018. We have enjoyed an interesting, challenging, and ultimately successful first year operating as the Trust. Our Board is now well-established and providing a great level of challenge and support to executive officers to drive improvement. We have built an effective and successful relationship with the Council, as the owners, commissioners and key partners of the Trust. We have been active partners in the Children and Young People Partnership developments across the city. We have secured real improvements in the workforce of the Trust, and we have encountered real challenges around changing demand for services as we respond to emerging risks faced by young people in our communities as a result of gangs, county lines and knife crime, and other forms of exploitation. We are leading work with partners in the Police, the Council and the NHS to develop new models to respond.

We were clear in our first business plan that our key priority in our first year of operation was to improve services so that when we were inspected by Ofsted we would no longer have any services rated 'Inadequate'. Ofsted inspected us in December 2018, and they came back in January and February to inspect, separately, our fostering and our adoption service. The outcome of these inspections is that we achieved what we set out to: none of our services are rated 'Inadequate'. Our children's services overall, and our fostering service are judged as 'Requiring Improvement to be Good', while our adoption service is judged as 'Good'. Full Ofsted reports can be accessed by searching 'Birmingham' at: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

This is real progress for Birmingham. Children's social care services have been judged 'Inadequate' here for 12 years. The Minister of State, Nadhim Zahawi, wrote offering his congratulations to the Council and the Trust for the progress made and, more recently, wrote to confirm removal of the children's commissioner (a requirement since January 2014) in the light of improvements made. All of us who work to improve the lives of the city's most vulnerable children and families, whether in the Council or the Trust, should be pleased with the progress we have made. But it is just a start. We have reached first base. Some of the notable improvements Ofsted recognised include:

- More children are benefitting from early help
- No child was found to be at unassessed or unmanaged risk
- Practice has been revitalised by the Trust, and staff are proud to work for the Trust
- A strong and effective 'front door', with good partnership arrangements
- Comprehensive and timely assessments
- Responses to domestic abuse are effective
- Social workers know their children and visit them frequently. They build meaningful and trusting relationships
- The voices of children in care and care leavers are given a high priority
- Direct work with children is strong

They left us with 6 areas for improvement:

- The quality, effectiveness and pace of partnership working with external agencies, including partner-led early help services
- Trust and confidence between the courts and the Trust
- Effectiveness of the Fostering Service
- Robust and timely focus on all permanence options for children

- Alignment of the approach to contextual safeguarding
- The impact of the virtual school in improving provision for children in care

We have a development plan [<https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/developmentplan>]. The plan addresses how the necessary improvements in these areas will be taken forward. The plan also includes priorities around workforce and practice, reflecting the outstanding areas of improvement still needed.

Ofsted will be back to inspect us again within 3 years. We must expect and strive to be 'Good' when they next inspect us. In the meantime, we must make sure our internal and partnership evaluations, and the voices of those who use our services, give us an accurate picture of our progress towards being sustainably and consistently good.

We now have a strong platform on which to build, to start to design and deliver better services for children and families, and to develop stronger leadership and management as we set out our stall to further improve. This will involve some reorganising of roles and responsibilities, and some investment in new activity and expansion in some areas: doing more of what works. Where we are investing, we will do so through a robust project business planning process, and our investments will all be designed to better meet the needs of children and families and to save us money as a result (for example, through investment in family decision-making and Family Group Conferences, and expanding the reach of our Edge of Care services, we will secure better outcomes and change the demand for care placements, saving money as a consequence).

We face some financial challenges in the coming year to deliver agreed savings and contending with rising demand for care placements and for care proceedings. We believe we have the necessary plans in place to enable us, once again, to manage our finances effectively and to live within our means.

The Trust continues to have but one focus: to deliver better services and better outcomes for the city's most vulnerable children, young people and families. We will do this by further strengthening the quality of practice across the Trust; by creating the conditions that enable better practice and management; by ensuring that we understand and act upon the performance and quality information we gather about our work; and by engaging and forging strong and purposeful collaboration with children, young people and families, with those we work with, with the Council as our commissioner, with our partners, and with our staff.

We have made a good start. Now the real work begins ...



Andrew Christie, Chair



Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive

2. Summary of the Trust's performance

The Service Delivery Contract included a framework of 15 performance indicators against which the Trust would be held to account. In addition, a bi-monthly report is provided to the Council on the Trust's qualitative activity (for example, practice evaluations and audits) to provide an additional tier of assurance.

The table below provides a summary of the Trust's performance in the period up to 31 March 2019.

PI	Measure	No. where Target met or within tolerances last 12 months	% where Target met or within tolerances last 12 months
1	% of all referrals with a decision within 24 hours	10/12	83%
2	% of re-referrals to children's social care within 12 months	9/12	75%
3	% assessments completed within 45 working days	12/12	100%
4	Child in Need cases open for more than 2 years	12/12	100%
5	% Initial CP Conferences (ICPCs) held within 15 working days	10/12	83%
6	% of children who become the subject of a CP plan for a second or subsequent time within the last 2 years	12/12	100%
7	% of children (under 16 years) who have been looked after for 2.5 years or more, and in the same placement (or placed for adoption) continuously for 2 years or more	12/12	100%
8	% of looked after reviews held on time	12/12	100%
9	% of care leavers who are in Education, employment, and Training (EET)	12/12	100%
10	Average time between the LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match (A2)	12/12	100%
11	% of young offenders that re-offend	12/12	100%
12	% of agency social workers (including team managers)	12/12	100%
13	% child protection plans ending within 3 months or less	12/12	100%
14	Average caseload of qualified social workers	12/12	100%
15	% of social workers who have had supervision (in month)	12/12	100%

In summary: 12 indicators met target or were within tolerances for all 12 months of 2018/19.

What went well in Year 1:

KPI 3: % assessments completed within 45 working days

Assessments continue to be completed in a very timely way, consistently exceeding the target.

KPI 5%: Initial CP Conferences (ICPCs) held within 15 working days

This indicator has exceeded both targets and tolerances with the exception of January 2019 when it fell due to the December holiday period and, in particular, access to school staff.

KPI 6: % of children who become the subject of a CP plan for a second or subsequent time within the last 2 years

This indicator has fallen consistently within tolerances and is now exceeding the target with significant and sustained improvement. The trend is an improving one. A lower number means that children who are subject to child protection plans are benefitting sustainably from the intervention.

KPI 8: % of looked after reviews held on time

This indicator has either met or exceeded the target for the whole 12 month period.

KPI 9: % of care leavers who are in Education, Employment, and Training (EET)

This area of work continues to improve, and is well over the national and statistical neighbour (SN) averages. Target exceeded for the whole 12 month period. The trend is one of improvement.

KPI 10: Average time between the LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match (A2)

Good performance and an improving trend, exceeding both target and tolerance for the whole 12 month period.

KPI 13 % child protection plans ending within 3 months or less

Much improved performance for this indicator compared with the previous year.

What we still need to improve:

KPI 1: % of all referrals with a decision within 24 hours

Performance has been variable as we ensure that all lateral checks with those raising concerns, partner agencies and internal Trust services are in place prior to making the referral decision. Performance has been affected but we are making better informed decisions.

KPI 2: % of re-referrals to children's social care within 12 months

Performance has fluctuated but remains just above the national average. There has been an increased focus on practice oversight which has resulted in the number of children referred for a second or subsequent time reducing and remaining within tolerance. We have put in place measures to support improvements in practice in this area, both to assure ourselves that we do not close cases too soon, and to ensure that we do not intervene in family life unnecessarily. We continue to monitor this KPI weekly.

Progress on our 2018/19 Priorities

We set out our 'plan on a page' in our first business plan. We have colour-coded the elements below reflecting where progress has been made:

Green: significant progress

Amber: further work required

Red: work not started or at early stage

Leadership, Management and Governance of Practice	Support for Practice and Management of Resources	Quality and Performance	Partnership and Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce development: building a high performing, skilled and knowledgeable workforce • Creating the Trust culture: 'how we do things round here' • Embedding our practice model • Enabling, equipping, trusting practice leaders • Visible, responsive leadership • Supporting consistency of practice across city • Effective Trust Board: support, challenge, impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining strong family support offer • Maintaining manageable family support and social work caseloads • Swift, efficient, effective processes and systems • Reformed support service offer • Project Eclipse: better records, easier to use • Placement choice and sufficiency • Commissioning and procurement • Ensuring everyone knows their role and contribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice standards and expectations; a shared view of 'what good looks like' • Practice evaluation and audit: focus on quality; practice weeks; Trust and multi-agency audit (Children's Advice and Support Service and Birmingham Children's Safeguarding Board) • Enhancing use of data to support practice and service development • L&D offer informed by practice intelligence • Enhancing role of Chairs, Independent Reviewing Officers in driving practice quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building effective partnerships: strategic; local, operational • Building collaboration in practice and service development • Enhancing links with schools • Supporting early help improvements • Involving children and young people, children in care and care leavers in all we do: they say we have made a positive difference • Involving our staff • Involving stakeholders • Enhancing our reputation and status

The progress we have made reflects that our focus in Year 1 was absolutely about improving practice. In Year 2 we will make progress in reforming and strengthening support for practice in a range of areas.

Progress on the priorities set out in our first business plan is set out below:

- a. **Placements, Choice and Sufficiency:** improving the recruitment and retention of carers for the Trust, and enhancing the quality of our commissioning and placement decision-making, will bring benefits both in relation to outcomes for children and young people and in economic terms for the Trust.

***Progress:** limited. Reform and reorganisation of our foster carer and adopter recruitment arrangements is underway but incomplete. We led the regional work successfully to establish a new framework for commissioning residential care, with a significant increase in the number of providers on the framework. We now need to build our relationship with suppliers to start to capitalise on our size and 'purchasing power' within the market. We also have a pressing need to improve the standards and, as a result, the Ofsted rating, for some of our 'in-house' residential care provision.*

- b. **Quality and Performance:** refreshing and embedding the Trust's approach to quality of practice, how we assure and enable quality, and drive improved performance and consistency of practice across the service and the city.

***Progress:** Ofsted reported favourably on our improved Practice Evaluation tool and its impact. We now need to embed the Trust's QA model. In the first year of our contract with the Council our performance in relation to the contractual PIs has been strong. Most have remained on or exceeding target; those that have dipped below target have been rapidly corrected to bring them back on track. The contract review will lead to a new approach to the way the Council monitors the Trust's progress and holds the Trust to account.*

- c. **Workforce Development:** the Trust's success will depend on the quality, skills and experience of its workforce. We will look at recruitment and retention, our learning and development offer for our staff, how we equip managers with the skills and the tools to be the best they can be, how we can change HR policies and procedures to improve performance expectations and support to all our staff.

***Progress:** Ofsted reported favourably on the progress made in establishing a stable and effective workforce. Vacancy rates and turnover are falling; the rate of agency social workers in the service is now below 12% (compared with 33% three years ago); caseloads are manageable; more people are joining than leaving the Trust each month. Next steps need to focus on retention, and the 'pinch points' where we lose experienced staff avoidably.*

- d. **Young People at Risk:** we recognise that the needs of young people, and the risks that many face in our community, require new and different approaches from public services to meet need and manage risk. Criminal and sexual exploitation and gangs are significant risks to our young people that require new and different service solutions. Police, schools and third sector organisations will be key stakeholders and partners in this work.

***Progress:** work is advanced, with Police and other partners, to develop a new*

multi-agency response to the Contextual Safeguarding risks young people in the city face (gangs, all forms of exploitation, county lines etc.). Progress is increasingly urgent in this area and we know we have more still to do.

- e. **Effective and efficient processes, systems and support:** ensuring value for money in all the Trust does, exploiting the benefits of Eclipse as a replacement for CareFirst, effective budget management, continued reduction in external agency and locums, smarter policy and procedures and reviewing of business management and support.

Progress: *Limited in this area. Eclipse, the new social care information system, goes live in September 2019, replacing CareFirst. Implementation will lead to a review of the support systems and services around social work and family support. We have made some progress in stabilising our Legal Service. We are expecting to reach year-end with a balanced budget, despite rising demand for care placements.*

3. Governance and relationships

The governance arrangements for the Trust are set out in the Articles of Association and its scheme of delegation. As was always the intention, the Trust became a Community Interest Company on 24 October 2018.

The Trust Board of Directors has a wide portfolio of expertise and knowledge in children's services, commercial, financial and other disciplines. The Board sets the direction and the strategy of the Trust, holding the organisation to account for delivery.

The Board consists of a chair and 7 non-executive directors. In March 2019 the Council and the Trust agreed to create an additional director position for a Council-appointed director. Details of current Board members are available on the Trust Website at: https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/who_we_are.

The governance arrangements between the Council, Trust and DfE have worked effectively during the Trust's first year. The framework of Operational Commissioning Group, Trust Partnership Governance Group and routine engagement at Overview and Scrutiny, alongside regular meetings of the Trust Chair and Chief Executive with the Council Chief Executive, Director of Children's Services and Lead Member. These have proved successful in ensuring that the Council is well informed, and the Trust held accountable for delivering the right results and the necessary improvements.

The Council retains statutory accountability for children's services, and continues to provide and commission all those services for children that are not within the Trust: education support, school safeguarding, special educational needs and disabilities, school admissions and place planning, virtual school for children in care, and early years services.

Improved outcomes for children, young people and families depend upon the Council and the Trust establishing and maintaining strong and effective partnership and joint working arrangements.

The Children's Trust has played a key role in building stronger strategic and partnership work across the city. There is more to do still, but there is now certainly some evidence of commitment to improvement as a partnership. It is of note that of the six areas for improvement identified by Ofsted, only two relate exclusively to the Children's Trust, the other four all pointing to partner improvements required. These are some of the improving areas on which we can now build:

- The strategic partnership is up and running and defining priorities, with some dedicated shared improvement capacity funded by partners.
- Constructive and innovative work between partners to build an integrated solution to the emerging contextual safeguarding risks in the city faced by our young people.
- Enhanced partner work as part of our Think Family programme is beginning to bear fruit in terms of some growing evidence of effective early help and increased claims for resource from the Government's Troubled Families programme. The Early Help and Safeguarding Partnership has taken this work forward.
- Embedded partner presence in the CASS/MASH which was inspected positively, having improved considerably since 2016.
- The Youth Offending Service continues to deliver effective partnership responses. Whilst first time entrants into the criminal justice system remains high, re-offending rates are low, demonstrating the service's effectiveness.
- The partner-prepared Written Statement of Action in response to a very poor Ofsted inspection of SEND services reflects a renewed partnership commitment, backed by investment, to improve services for children with additional needs.

The Children's Trust will remain an active partner in the coming years, supporting and challenging to ensure effective integrated strategic and operational alliances deliver better and seamless services to children and families across the city.

4. Summary of the Council's performance of its obligations

As described in 3 above the Council and the Trust have worked well together to establish a strong and effective partnership and joint working arrangements. It is expected that partnerships and working arrangements will continue to mature and have a positive impact upon our shared areas of challenge. It is recognised that whilst wider partnership arrangements in the city have been strengthened over the last year these still need to be subject to ongoing focus.

The Council has fulfilled its 'intelligent client function' effectively over the last year, embedding learning following mobilisation of the contract on areas such as the management of historic legal cases and claims. The arrangements however need to become permanent to ensure the required level of attention to the contract and relationship management. The Council has been able to deliver the range of support services required by the contract to specification, quality and time, using suitably skilled, experienced and qualified personnel. Monthly sharing of performance information on the support services has enabled the Council and the Trust to have constructive discussions about shortfalls and agree timely responses.

With respect to dependencies and Council obligations key issues that need consideration include the Virtual School, the property and accommodation used by the Trust, the effectiveness of corporate parenting, the effectiveness of SEND arrangements, and risks faced by vulnerable children in temporary accommodation. Further details are set out in section 17 of the report.

Changes to the Agreement agreed during 2018/19 have been progressed smoothly and with urgency. Details are set out in sections 6 and 17 of the report.

5. Cost of performing the services in 2018/19

The Trust is a not-for-profit entity and aims to break even each financial year.

The Trust's financial performance in 2018/19 was an overspend of £59,000 against the annual net budget of £201.6m. This is a strong performance in the first operational year of the Trust. It is proposed to carry forward this small deficit into 2019/20 and to recover this as part of annual financial planning.

The cost of performing the services in 2018/19 can be summarised as follows:

Subjective Group	Annual Net Budget £000s	Final Outturn Expenditure / Income £000s	Final Outturn Variation £000s
Direct Employees	80,242	70,798	(9,444)
Agency	337	8,533	8,196
Indirect Employees	591	1,075	485
Premises	3,219	3,542	323
Transport	1,590	1,476	(114)
Supplies and Services	8,498	8,233	(265)
Third Party Payments	98,235	105,492	7,257
Transfer Payments	6,416	5,996	(420)
Recharges	2,467	2,204	(263)
IFRS	0	88	88
Income / Reserves / Earmarked Grants	(201,593)	(207,378)	(5,784)
Grand Total	0	59	59

6. Summary of any changes to the Agreement agreed during 2018/19

The following changes were made to the Agreement during 2018/19:

- Financial payment mechanism updated to reflect changes in the financial values of reserves and grants - from 23 July 2018.
- National Safeguarding Incident Notifications to be undertaken by the Trust on behalf of the City Council - from 1 August 2018.
- Change in reporting time for performance data so that the Trust provides the Council with a KPI summary report within 17 rather than 10 days following the end of each service period - from 1 September 2018.
- Addition of Translation Services Specification to the Support Services Specification - from 19 October 2018.
- Withdrawal of Contact Centre "abandoned calls" KPI - from 19 October 2018.

7. Demand for services in 2018/19 and the expected demand for the services in 2019/20; social, demographic or other relevant factors which affected the services in 2018/19 and/or may affect the services in 2019/20

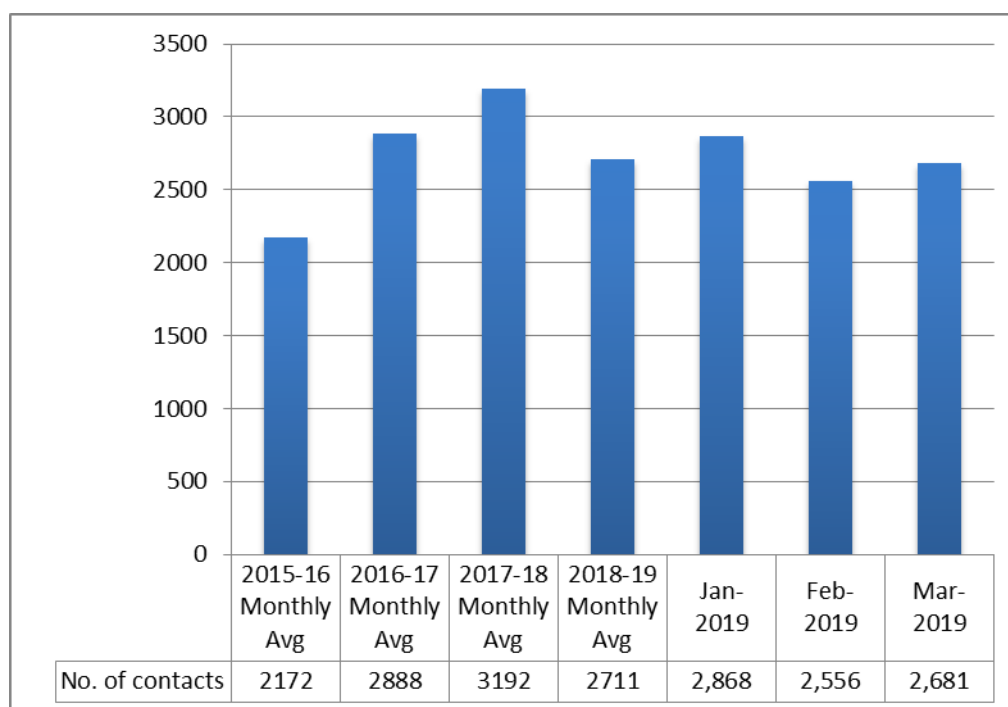
Birmingham is a young city with 450,000 of our population aged between 0-25 years and making up 40% of the total population compared to 32% at a national level.

The local population aged 0-24 years is predicted to increase by 2% in 2022 (an extra 10,000) and by 6% by 2027 (an extra 24,000). We expect demand to increase for all children's services including services for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Birmingham has high levels of deprivation. More than 1 in 4 children in the city live in poverty, significantly higher than in England as a whole (16.7%). In Birmingham nearly 79,000 children under the age of 19 live in a low income family, higher than in any other local authority in England.

These levels of deprivation and demographic qualities have not yet translated into sharp increases of demand across the key demand profiles of the Trust (see figures 1-3 below).

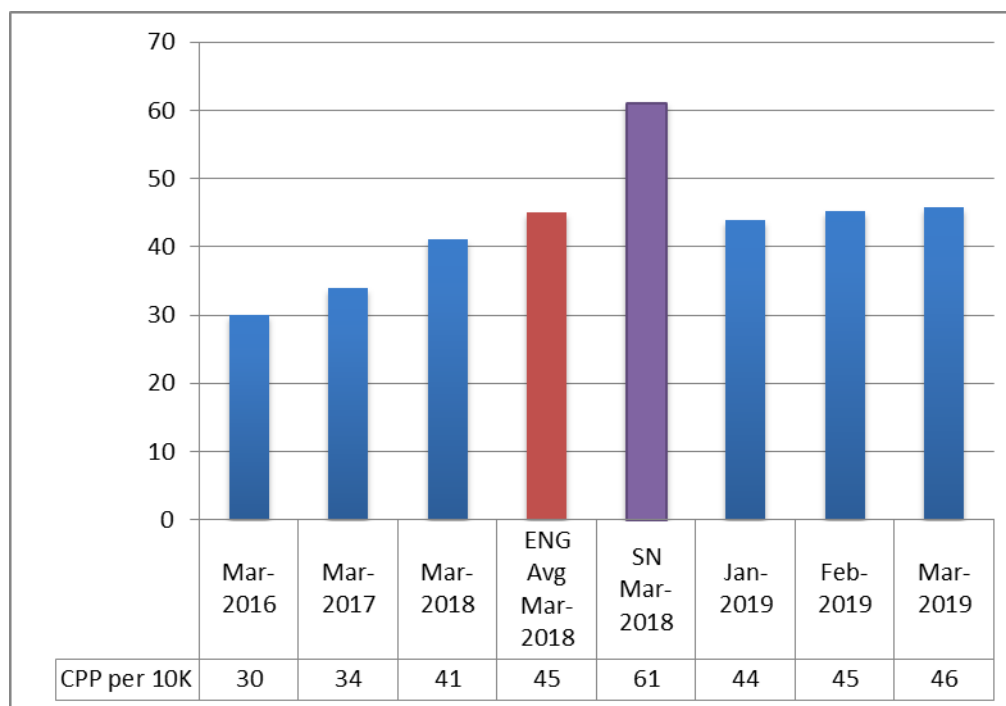
Figure 1 – Number of Contacts



The number of contacts is a measure of notifications the Trust receives where there may be a welfare concern relating to children and young people. In 2018-19 the monthly average of 2711 is lower than the previous 2 years. This reflects the impact

of early help on the management of notifications which are more likely to impact on rates year-on-year than the demographic social pressures that emerge.

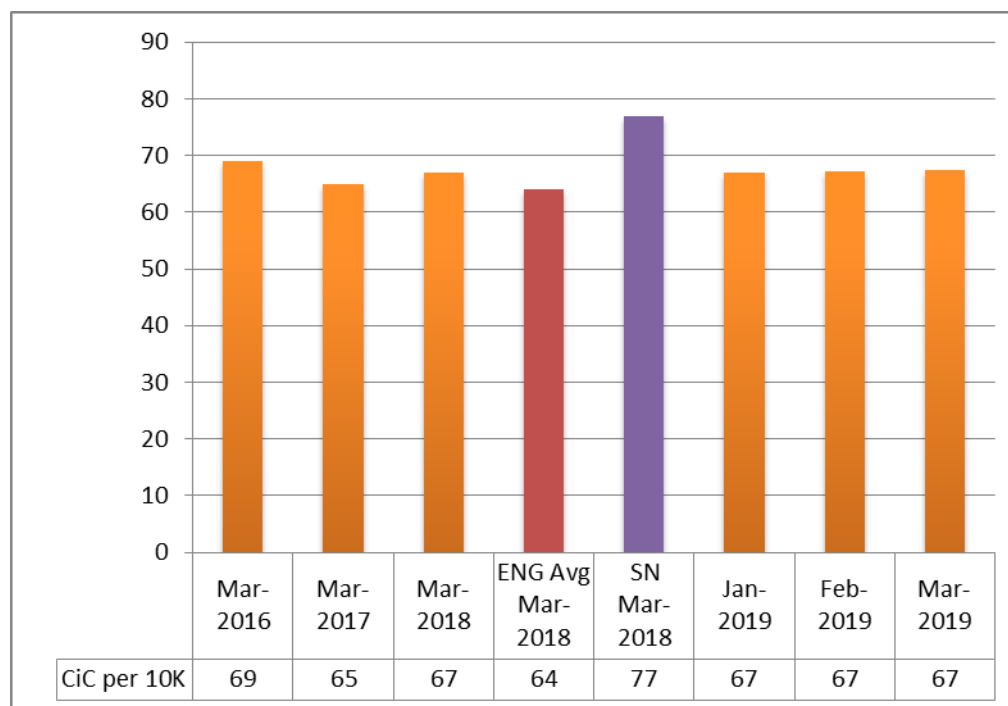
Figure 2 - Rate of children subject to a Child Protection Plan per 10,000



Note: the 2016, 2017 and 2018 March figures represent the year end position (SN: statistical neighbours)

The number of children subject to child protection plans increased over the last 2 years and the figure is in line with the England average, which is representative of the more deprived socio-economic context.

The Trust does not forecast any major demand increases across the key profiles relating to child protection and contacts.

Figure 3 - Rate of Children in Care per 10,000

Children in care numbers rose slightly between 2017 and 2019. The profile of children in care is under close review to analyse trends. The increase is the result of true demand and is increasingly placing resourcing pressures on operational and commissioning services.

At the current rate of increase for children in care, we can anticipate by year end 2019/20 the rate per 10,000 to be at 68. This would take the children in care population from the 2018 end of year position of 1817 to 1926. This will have resourcing and capacity issues for the Trust to manage. It is anticipated that the net impact by the end of 2020/21 would be a 6% rise in children in care numbers. This would represent £5m additional cost pressure in 2020/21.

Other areas of pressure (inherited from the Council at the point the Trust went live, and continuing to grow) include:

- remand costs for young people in the criminal justice system: c.£1m per year.
- expert and independent assessments ordered by the children's care courts for children in proceedings, and other legal disbursements: c £1m per year.

8. Effects of any changes in children's social care legislation or guidance on the delivery of the services and/or any actual or anticipated change in law and the implications of such changes

In the last 12 months we have seen the launch of the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership which is ahead of the national implementation date of September 2019. We have also seen the introduction of the core offer for care leavers, corporate parenting principles, changes to the role of the Virtual School head teacher and educational support for previously looked after children, child death notifications, GDPR and the Homelessness Duty.

The Trust has been proactive in responding to these changes and has implemented the necessary practice and procedural modifications in line with the new legislation and guidance.

Moving forward into this financial year there are further anticipated changes that are listed below. All of these will require scrutiny in respect of changes to procedure, practice and required resources to implement any potential changes during the year:

- Brexit – not known.
- changes to the Public Law Guidance anticipated September 2019.
- Regional Adoption Agencies - deadline is 2020.
- Joint Area Inspections from June 2019 which will focus on child exploitation and, in autumn 2019, will focus on emotional health and wellbeing.

9. Strategic priorities and outcomes for 2019/20

In relation specifically to our **Ofsted** judgement, we said our ambition was to achieve:

- A "Requires Improvement" judgment in our first Ofsted inspection following go live.
- With the next inspection expected in 3 years, a "Good" grading in our second Ofsted inspection, providing the foundation for outstanding practice in the longer term.

The first of these is achieved and we remain focused and determined to be judged 'Good' in all areas by the time of our next full inspection which is likely to be in 2020 or 2021.

Our priorities for 2019/20 are unashamedly set around the areas for improvement Ofsted identified:

- The quality, effectiveness and pace of partnership working with external agencies, including partner-led early help services
- Trust and confidence between the courts and the Trust
- Effectiveness of the Fostering Service
- Robust and timely focus on all permanence options for children

- Alignment of the approach to contextual safeguarding
- The impact of the virtual school in improving provision for children in care

In addition, we have priorities around workforce and practice, reflecting the outstanding areas of improvement still needed, including:

- Establishing efficient systems and processes that enable social workers and family support workers to increase the time they spend with children and families.
- Reorganised leadership and management in the Trust to focus on priority areas for improvement.
- Bespoke Practice Leadership and senior management development for all leaders and managers in the Trust (we are working with DfE and national partners to design and deliver this, and drawing on funding that means it will be delivered at no cost to the Trust or the Council).
- Stronger financial planning and management across the Trust, owned and led by operational managers trained to do it well.
- Reviewing the pipelines that bring social workers into the Trust, and our effectiveness at retaining social workers through a competitive package of pay and non-pay opportunities: we intend to be the best place to learn and to practice social work in the west Midlands.
- A full review of the Trust's use of property, including children's homes, administrative bases and service settings.
- A continued focus on social work and social care practice to ensure that we maintain the positive changes that have been made, but also further improvements in the quality of services with a particular focus on consistency.

At the year end we will review these priorities in the light of progress and our updated self-assessment.

10. Results of any audits or surveys carried out during 2018/19

10.1 Audits

Audits undertaken in 2018/19 covered strategic and operational reviews as well as work specifically focused on IT issues. Birmingham Audit has provided assurance that the Trust has established adequate, appropriate and effective controls which help ensure that risks are being managed and objectives achieved. The Trust has responded positively to issues raised within reports. For example:

- GDPR – completion of information assurance tasks needed to maintain a record of processing, procedures around the collection of data, legal basis for use and individual rights, and update of the data protection policy.

- Governance and risk management – formalising the employees' code of conduct and introduction of an operational risk register.
- Eclipse – stabilisation of the system prior to go-live to resolve any open defects and drive the solution forward to achieve the required business benefits.
- Robustness of management information.
- Consistency in supporting information held on CareFirst and E-records.
- Child protection – consistency of professionals attending initial child protection conferences and child protection conferences.
- Special guardianships – delays in completing reviews following the special guardianship order placement.

Internal Audit recommendations are monitored by respective Executive Directors and oversight is provided by the Board's Finance and Resources Committee.

As required by the Service Delivery Contract a copy of the Trust's first set of draft accounts was provided to the Council by the deadline of 29 April 2019. These were then subject to an external audit and it was a positive outcome in that no changes were made to the outturn figures which remained at an operational deficit of £59,000. The Trust was therefore able to meet its requirements to have a complete set of financial accounts agreed with its external auditors and in line with the Council's group auditor's requirements by 31 July 2019.

10.2 Surveys

The Trust surveyed staff on the launch of the Trust in April 2018 and again in September 2018. The responses indicated a high degree of pride in the work of the Trust and its impact, managers who are caring and motivated, good team relationships and regular opportunities for training and development. Areas for improvement included extending the positive experiences of most staff across all staff groups and manageability of workloads.

11. Outcomes of any rectification plans

There were no rectification plans required in 2018/19.

12. High-level review of applicable Central Government funding generally, including details of any anticipated Central Government funding (or changes to that funding) directed to the services in 2018/19 and/or 2019/20 or future contract years where applicable

The Trust receives payment from the Council in respect of services provided under the contract for which the Council receives Central Government grant funding. A summary of these amounts for 2018/19 and the expected funding level for 2019/20 is set out below.

- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children 2018/19 actual grant received was £4.588m and expected 2019/20 is £4.763m, an increase of £174,281.
- Youth Justice Board 2018/19 actual grant of £1.916m and confirmed grant for 2019/20 is £1.898m, a reduction of £18,039.

These grants were fully used in 2018/19.

During the financial year ending 31 March 2019 the Trust also received support from the Troubled Families (TF) Programme via the Council. The Trust spent £2.4m and £4.4m has been earmarked and carried forward to support future years' TF activity. The TF Programme is expected to continue until 31 March 2020.

13. Summary of the outcome of any surveys of service users, and relevant stakeholders and third parties in relation to the services

The Trust has an active Rights and Participation (RAP) service which engages primarily with care experienced children and young people. The RAP service demonstrates children and young people can be heard and can participate in service development.

Young people have been involved with the development and implementation of health passports for all children in care.

The Children in Care Council has been involved in the planning, design and creation of an e-learning training module around sexuality and healthy relationships as part of the Trust Academy offer to social workers.

The Rights and Participation service undertook a focused piece of work with children and young people involved in the child protection system which produced some important messages and learning for the system.

There has also been a campaign called Mind Your Language, which brings to our attention how the language we use can shape our relationships with children, young people and families and impact on how we make them feel. The Mind Your Language ethos has been used during audits of accommodation requests and has supported the developmental work for victim blaming language which can be found in situations of contextual safeguarding.

The Practice Hub has developed feedback forms for children, young people and families for Assessment and Short-term Intervention (ASTI), Safeguarding, and Children in Care services. The Trust will be collating feedback from these and developing further feedback

forms for other services. Currently, feedback forms are paper based and require manual inputting of data. Alternative methods of obtaining feedback through different technology will be explored.

Complaints and Compliments

The recurring themes from the Customer Services Team Annual Report were the conduct of staff, level of support received, staff not being contactable and the accuracy of information within reports.

In response the Trust Academy will be delivering a new learning and development programme in September 2019 which will develop practitioners' understanding of relationship-based practice in line with the Trust practice model.

The Trust has also been working to reduce caseloads to enable practitioners to be more readily available to children when they are needed the most.

The Trust Practice Hub will be working with the Customer Services Team to ensure the regular learning from complaints and the celebration of compliments informs and drives practice improvement work locally with teams. This will strengthen relationship-based practice with children, young people and families.

14. Matters relating to the risk register

The key risk for the Trust in 2018/19 related to the sufficiency of placements within the local area to meet the demand for children in care and care leavers. These combined risks in turn create a cost pressure from external placements and supported accommodation. Effective mitigating action taken during the financial year included converting residential placements to fostering, active management of external provider contracts, and delivery on support services efficiencies.

The Trust actively manages risk through its corporate risk register, which is routinely updated via its Executive and monitored through its Finance and Resources Committee and the Trust Board. Key risks going into 2019/20 include contract management, relationships with partners, increases in cost pressure from placements, other unexpected and unpredictable cost pressures, Council dependencies, and the replacement social care IT system Eclipse and the replacement of the Council's corporate systems which will have an impact on the Trust's finance, human resources and procurement processes.

15. Outcome of any Ofsted monitoring visits and inspections

Date of visit	Focus of visit	Outcome
May 2018	[Fifth] Monitoring visit - services to young people leaving care at 18 years, and children who have been in care for at least two years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Trust 'has made further progress in improving the quality of services for young people leaving care'. The report also noted children were benefitting from stable long term living arrangements, with further work needed to ensure outcomes are consistently good and that personal advisors knew their young people well and were aware of and ensure young people have access to their entitlements. The report highlighted areas for development, including the need to focus on quality over compliance, a greater understanding and use of reflection, and consideration of Special Guardianship Orders for children in long-term foster care.
August 2018	[Sixth] Monitoring visit – children in need and child protection in disabled children's social care and safeguarding teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Trust 'is continuing to make some progress in improving services for its children and young people'. Ofsted noted progress in services for children subject to children in need or child protection plans, stating that 'no children were seen to be at immediate risk', and that since the last inspection 'the Trust has demonstrated that it has made some continued improvements in the quality of social work practice'. Ofsted also noted the Trust's new practice evaluation process focused on the quality of work undertaken and the impact on outcomes for children, noting this was 'a positive move and should encourage and support a dialogue about good practice', but added that further work needs to take place to fully embed this new process.
December 2018	Full inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS)	<p>All categories judged to be "Requires improvement to be good":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families. The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection. The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers. Overall effectiveness.
January 2019	Inspection of the Trust's Fostering Agency	<p>Ofsted judged that the service "Requires improvement to be Good" with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> overall experience and progress of children and young people how well children and young people are helped and protected the effectiveness of leaders and managers <p>Ofsted concluded that Birmingham Children's Trust is not yet delivering good help and care for children and</p>

		young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.
February 2019	Inspection of the Trust's Adoption Agency	<p>The following judgements were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall experience and progress of service users: Good • How well children young people and adults are helped and protected: Good • The effectiveness of leaders and managers: Outstanding <p>A headline comment from Ofsted read "Highly skilled staff provide an individualised service across a range of adoption and adoption support services. They are passionate about their work and committed to providing the best service to adopted children and their adopted families".</p>

Inspections of Residential Services for Disabled Children and Young People

<p>August 2018 (full)</p> <p>March 2019 (interim)</p>	Charles House	<p>Overall experience and progress of children and young people: Charles House went from "Requires improvement to be Good" in August 2018 and sustained effectiveness at the interim inspection in March 2019. Ofsted said staff understand children's disabilities and are kind; there is good partnership working; children's emotional health and education are well supported; arrangements to protect children are good.</p>
<p>September 2018 (full)</p> <p>February 2019 (interim)</p>	Warwick House	<p>Overall experience of children and young people: Warwick House was judged as "Good" in September 2018. It had improved effectiveness in February 2019. Staff communicate well with children and capture their views, wishes and feelings; children feel listened to and valued; there are good working relationships with partner agencies.</p>
<p>September 2018 (full)</p> <p>February 2019 (interim)</p> <p>April 2019 (monitoring visit)</p>	Edgewood Road	<p>A full inspection was undertaken in September 2018 and judged that the home "Requires improvement to be Good". An interim inspection in February 2019 found that the home had "declined in effectiveness" on account of 3 compliance notices.</p> <p>The subsequent monitoring visit on 10 April 2019 concluded that in the light of a quick and effective response all 3 compliance notices be lifted.</p> <p>Ofsted said:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the provider is now actively identifying and reducing risk of harm to children. staff show a heightened regard for children's safety. monitoring and review of the service by management are now effective. <p>The provider is now protecting vulnerable children from harm. Children can play freely and safely in the playroom, the sensory room and the garden. The children's quality of care has improved considerably as a direct result of all the improvements made.</p>
<p>September 2018 (full)</p> <p>March 2019 (interim)</p>	Camborne House	<p>Overall experience of children and young people: Camborne House was judged as Requires improvement to be Good in September 2018. In March 2019 the home had declined in effectiveness. Ofsted found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> young people continue to make progress and benefit from positive experiences. children experience well planned moves in and out of the home. staff are using a broader range of communication aids to help young people communicate their wishes and feelings. staff are creative in their direct work with young people. improvements in the environment and equipment give young people greater privacy and comfort. <p>Despite the positive progress there are still significant shortfalls that mean the approach to safeguarding is still not effective.</p>

16. Statement confirming how the principles of the Business Charter have been implemented or are yet to be implemented

The Trust has:

- promoted equality, diversity and social inclusion principles throughout our practice and corporate processes.
- launched the Trust's Apprenticeship Scheme to support care leavers with employment opportunities, and promotion of care leavers through the Council's existing Apprenticeship Scheme.
- applied social value principles through our commissioning arrangements with external providers.

17. Proposed changes to the Agreement

Performance framework - the Trust and Council, having reviewed the performance framework in preparation for the annual contract review, have agreed a revised approach to the contractual performance measures, as follows:

- **Four small PI 'baskets'**, reflecting key elements of our business performance:
 - 'front door': repeat referrals; timely decision-making; timely assessments; timely initial child protection conferences.
 - child protection: children with a plan for a second or subsequent time; children on a plan for 2 years+.
 - children in care and care leavers: placement stability (short and long-term); timely children in care reviews; adoption timeliness and numbers; care leavers in education, employment or training and in suitable accommodation.
 - workforce: percentage of agency social workers; caseloads; regular supervision for social workers.

Targets will be agreed with the Council's commissioners in preparation for the new fiscal year.

In addition, the Trust will share regularly the ChAT, the more comprehensive suite of children's services performance indicators.

- **Progress against our Development Plan:** highlight/exception reporting.
- **Our regularly updated self-assessment** which will be informed by our more qualitative assurance work: practice evaluation, case audit, practice weeks, complaints and compliments data, survey intelligence etc. This will provide the Council with regularly updated qualitative data about the Trust's performance.

This 'balanced scorecard' approach should give the Council a more rounded and detailed picture of how the Trust is performing in discharging the Council's statutory accountabilities. It will also support the Trust's internal performance improvement model. Reporting and monitoring will continue through the established routes of the Children's Trust Operational Commissioning Group and the Children's Trust Partnership Governance Group. The Trust will also routinely report on progress to the Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the City Council.

Other proposed changes:

Corporate Parenting: the Trust and the Council recognise a step-change is required in 2019-20 in relation to providing effective corporate parenting. The Trust is developing a new strategy, working with the Lead Member, to improve the operation of the Corporate Parenting Board, and will work with the Council to improve a range of areas that support our children in care and care leavers, including transitions, Council apprenticeships, housing and accommodation, ongoing support for young adults etc.

Dependencies

The set of dependencies set out in the contract remain relevant. The two key dependencies the Trust would wish to highlight in relation to elements affecting service delivery by the Trust are as follows:

- The **Virtual School** for Children in Care: improvements are required following the Ofsted inspection. Ofsted were very critical regarding elements of the Virtual School, in particular its grip and understanding of data around the progress of children. The Trust has submitted to the Council a paper setting out its requirements of the school, on behalf of the children in care and care leavers served, in relation to good governance, leadership and delivery. The Trust has changed its representation on the school's governing body in 2019-20.
- **Property:**
 - Trust staff are working in buildings that are not fit for purpose. For families using some of these buildings, our current offer is a source of embarrassment. Office accommodation is over-crowded, compounded by the move of Trust staff, before the Trust went live, out of children's centres and into the main administrative buildings.
 - During Year 2 of the contract the Trust would wish to work with the Council to improve the offer to children and families and to our staff, through the accommodation we rent. The Trust also needs to be represented and engaged in the Council's asset management planning and strategic work on its property portfolio and approach to public facing building and services.
 - The Trust is developing its own property strategy which gives consideration to both operational property and office accommodation. Our priority is to improve our arrangements for contact and conferencing across the city, and ensure we have facilities which offer fit for purpose space for children and families. We are also in the process of relocating our Emergency Duty to support out-of-hours working and are looking to co-locate our Children's Legal Services Team into Lancaster Circus.
 - In initial discussions between the Trust and the Council the principle that the Trust will have access to capital funding via the Council has been agreed. This recognises that capital works and funding are the responsibility of the Council as the landlord and that the Council's capital programme needs to include any planned Trust works and ensure there is access to capital funding for any major unplanned Trust works as required by Ofsted or the HSE.

SEND: the Trust has to be an active partner in the SEND improvement priority led by the Council and the CCG. A better functioning system is a critical requirement for the city's children. There are emerging views through the SEND Development Board that the Trust should offer a social work assessment to all children who are undergoing an EHCP assessment. This would represent a change in practice for the Trust where currently assessments are only undertaken upon a specific request from the family. A change in practice would increase demand significantly, which the Trust is not currently resourced to meet. Birmingham City Council will be required to take a position on the commissioning expectations informed by the resource implications and the views of the Trust.

Vulnerable children in temporary accommodation: this is a significant issue for the city. The Trust is working with Birmingham City Council Housing to address the particular risks faced by the most vulnerable children in the city living in unsuitable temporary accommodation. Effective joint working, supported by appropriate protocols, will mitigate the worst effects of the housing crisis in the city for our most vulnerable families.

Support services: the Trust has a range of support service agreements (SSAs) with the Council which are monitored via KPIs. The Trust intends to review a number of these during 2019/20 to ensure they still provide value for money and effective support.

Change control: a number of change controls were agreed with the Council during 2018/19 which resulted in amendments to the annual contract sum as follows:

- adjustments to the grant amounts for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
- adjustment for receipt of payment of Early Adopters grant.
- agreement to the amount for the ICT support service agreement between the Trust and the Council.

Other matters where no changes are proposed:

Pensions: there have been no changes in the pension arrangements for the Trust during 2018/19.

Financial mechanism, finance/contract sum: the Trust was required to agree the annual contract sum for 2019/20 by 31 March 2019, and this requirement was met.

Changes arising from audits: there were no changes to the service delivery contract as a result of any audit recommendations.

Service specification: the contract sets out the service specification to be delivered by the Trust. No significant changes are proposed necessitating a contract variation in Year 2 of the contract. There will be some changes in delivery, as follows:

- Strengthened management of delivery: especially in the areas of Fostering, Contextual Safeguarding and Practice Improvement.
- Extended reach of the Edge of Care offer.
- Changes around Placements, Commissioning and other work to improve placement sufficiency.
- The introduction of some Invest to Save proposals as approved within the Trust's business plan, drawing down a portion of its Council loan facility.

These will be delivered within the Trust's established financial envelope. Any in-year changes to the specification will be taken through the established contract governance arrangements.