

# **BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

## **EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 09 DECEMBER 2020 AT 10:00 HOURS  
IN ON-LINE MEETING, MICROSOFT TEAMS**

### **A G E N D A**

**1     NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

The Chairman to advise/meeting to note that this meeting will be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site ([www.civico.net/birmingham](http://www.civico.net/birmingham)) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

**2     DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Members are reminded that they must declare all relevant pecuniary and non pecuniary interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting. If a disclosable pecuniary interest is declared a Member must not speak or take part in that agenda item. Any declarations will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

**3     APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies.

**3 - 18**

**4     ACTION NOTES AND ACTION TRACKER**

To confirm the notes of the 28th October 2020 meeting and note the action tracker.

**19 - 92**

**5     CHILDREN'S TRUST UPDATE**

Andrew Christie, Chair and Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive, Children's Trust in attendance.

**93 - 138**

**6     BIRMINGHAM SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP**

Penny Thompson, Independent Chair, BSCP and Simon Cross, Business Manager in attendance.

7 **WORK PROGRAMME**

For discussion.

8 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 20 January 2021 at 1000 hours via an online meeting.

9 **REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)**

To consider any request for call in/councillor call for action/petitions (if received).

10 **OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any items of business by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) that in the opinion of the Chairman are matters of urgency.

11 **AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

Chairman to move:-

'In an urgent situation between meetings, the Chairman jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee'.

## BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

# EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (O&S) COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1000 hours on Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020, Online Meeting

## Action Notes

### Present:

Councillor Kath Scott (Chair)

Councillors: Mohammed Aikhlaq, Barbara Dring, Kerry Jenkins, Chaudhry Rashid and Alex Yip

Other Voting Representatives: Omar Hanif, Parent Governor Representative, Rabia Shami, Parent Governor Representative and Sarah Smith, Church of England Diocese Representative

### Also Present:

Councillor Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing

Darnish Amraz, Youth Worker

Becky Crampton, Youth Worker

Nichola Jones, AD, Inclusion and SEND

Rachel O'Connor, Assistant Chief Executive, Birmingham and Solihull CCG

Dr Tim O'Neill, Director, Education and Skills

Ceri Saunders, Acting Group Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Soulla Yiasouma, Joint Head of Youth Service

Ilgun Yusuf, Acting AD, Skills and Employability

## 1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chairman advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site ([www.civico.net/birmingham](http://www.civico.net/birmingham)) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Alex Yip declared that his sister works for National Express, who is the parent company for National Express Accessible Transport (NEAT) and he is a Governor at Wilson Stuart School.

Councillor Mohammed Aikhlaq declared an interest as a Director at Leigh Multi Academy Trust.

### **3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Adam Hardy, Roman Catholic Diocese Representative.

### **4. ACTION NOTES AND ACTION TRACKER**

(See documents 1 and 2).

Dr Tim O'Neill committed to providing Members with a written answer by the end of the week regarding reviewing the decision to not issue additional PPE to City of Birmingham School (COBS). It was queried whether there had been any communication with the schools and Dr Tim O'Neill agreed to provide the information on the communication with schools as part of the reply.

The Chair advised that Members had received written information regarding the action for 'a report on children's with SEND needs not being met in schools because of capacity and Covid'. Nichola Jones provided a brief verbal update on this and the Chair queried whether there had been any work with mainstream schools in providing the required space for children with special educational needs. Nichola Jones advised that conversations had happened with both mainstream and special schools.

Nichola Jones provided a brief update on home to school transport that included bubbles, travelling times and routes. The Chair advised that she had received a commitment from the Chief Executive, that although the outcomes from the inquiries will not be presented at Full Council next week, there will be a separate meeting, potentially on week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020, with all the relevant stakeholders and this will include the Parent Carer Forum.

#### **RESOLVED**

The action notes were agreed and the action tracker was noted.

### **5. SEND WSOA UPDATE**

(See documents No. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8).

Cllr Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing, Dr Tim O'Neill, AD, Education and Skills, Rachel O'Connor, Assistant Chief Executive, Birmingham and Solihull CCG and Nichola Jones, AD for Inclusion and SEND were in attendance.

The Chair informed Members that included with the papers were the presentation, the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) agreed in December 2018, the WSoA Action plan that was updated in October 2020, locality working in the six areas (North West, Central, East, North, South West and South), five Parent Link Service case studies and the SEND support for families leaflet.



Cllr Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing outlined that they are in attendance to discuss the progress of the WSoA in just over two years and this is very much a partnership approach, with Dr Tim O'Neill and Rachel O'Connor being jointly responsible for the programme. Examples of progress were provided and this included improvements made to the Local Offer.

Dr Tim O'Neill and Rachel O'Connor delivered a presentation and the following were among the main points raised during the discussion:

- Due to Covid the re-inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has been delayed and is now expected 2021.
- Averaging 90% completion overall, although there are areas that officers and parents and carers remain concerned about.
- Where actions are showing completed, there is still ongoing work to capture feedback and they are increasing efforts to ensure they have a good quality lessons learned approach and have enough information to assure themselves on the outcomes of those completed and ongoing actions. An example of this is the waiting times for therapies and a remedial plan is currently being developed.
- There has been significant work done regarding culture and how we do things in Birmingham.
- Dr Tim O'Neill would like to engage Scrutiny's support and challenge in the early intervention programme that is beginning in the Council and has a critical interplay with this programme.
- Independent support was brought in during the Summer with regards to the two year self-assessment and they now have quarterly self-assessments and will build in a mock inspection around March/April 2021. The dashboard combined with complaints and conversations with the Parent Carer Forum and survey etc., give a rounded perspective on how they are doing and the impact they are having on families and children.
- Actions may be showing as completed but some still need to be embedded.
- Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Information Advice & Support Service (SENDIASS) was identified as an area of strength and there is currently a commission lead undertaking a piece of work in relation to capacity and reach. There should be an outcome early next year and this fully involves key partners, the CCG and Children's Trust.
- Parent Link Workers provide a signposting service as well as link families to their local advisory professional attached to the local school. In addition, the service provides a link support in relation to the statutory assessment and Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) review process.
- The critical change, similar to other local authorities, is that of the locality teams. This is where there are a group of professionals linked to a group of schools within a consortia. Each term the professionals meet with the school to discuss children where the school may want more help and support with

individual children and / or specialist resource. Through this joined up way of working the link professional develops ongoing relationships with the family and the school.

- By adopting an integrated joined up approach using teams based localities, professionals don't operate in isolation. Birmingham is made up of six localities, 16 consortia and six Parent Link Officers.
- There is still a long way to go with regards to ensuring the process for administering and reviewing EHCPs is effective and efficient. However, clear pathways have now been developed and this includes putting in and monitoring provision. The redesigning of the service is happening and expected to go out to consultation some point later in the year for implementation in the new year.
- The targets for the therapies are the ones that received first business case approval and reflected the workforce and problems to recruit. Therefore, they absolutely want to bring down the 120 weeks target for Speech and Language Therapy (SLT). This is included in the remedial action plan.
- In response to a question regarding absence and exclusions for children with SEND, Members were informed that for children with SEND who have poor attendance, the development work of the home bridging team will support schools in supporting these children, whilst also supporting children and young people with more prolonged periods of concern. There is also an Exclusion Team and the Chair queried the relationship with regards to sharing information. Alan Michell to be invited to a future meeting to cover absence and exclusions and this is to include children with SEND and the interplay between the different teams.
- The Chair would like to see more case studies and this includes bad news stories and lessons learned about what we are doing differently. Members were informed that officers are having monthly meetings with SENDIASS and the Parent Link Officers to reflect and unpick some of the data. The Chair requested the committee be forwarded copies of the minute from the self reflecting meeting.

Cllr Kate Booth thanked the Committee for their input and support with the launch of the local offer at the end of November 2020, the locality model and the work with SENAR would be really appreciated.

Dr Tim O'Neill thanked the Committee for the support and challenge and noted it is really having an impact on the change process.

### **RESOLVED**

The committee noted the update and requested the following:

- Scrutiny to be kept updated on the self-assessments.
- Dr Tim O'Neill will look at what the Local Offer does and doesn't say in relation to SENDIASS and the advertising of the service and report back.

- An update and overview of the commissioning piece of work in relation to capacity and reach and SENDIASS.
- An overview of the relationships and how families are benefitting from the Parent Link Service and how this links to the CCG, to ensure health services are delivered to children and the school networks and the bridging team.
- Information on the remedial action plan that is being developed regarding the waiting times for therapies. This is to include how it works and builds capacity, so the system has the confidence and expertise at all levels to support children and this is to include the health input. Rachel O'Connor confirmed she is happy to attend a future committee meeting to discuss this item with Birmingham Community Healthcare (BCHC).
- Confirmation as to whether the refreshed SEND Strategy went to Cabinet.
- Officers to check whether the completed baseline of SEND services can be shared with the Committee.
- Details on the reduction of mediations including figures, reasons and comparative data.
- Alan Michell to be invited to a meeting to cover school absence and exclusions and this is to include children with SEND and the interplay between the different teams.
- The SEND Improvement Board reports to be sent to scrutiny on a monthly basis.
- The committee to have regular updates on progress and the leadership teams / forums.
- The Chair requested the committee be forwarded copies of the minutes from the self reflecting meeting.
- Clarity on how parents and carers are elected onto the Parent Carer Forum.

## 6. YOUTH SERVICE

(See documents No. 9).

Ilgun Yusuf, Acting AD, Skills and Employability, Soulla Yiasouma, Joint Head of Youth Service, Darnish Amraz, Youth Worker and Becky Crampton, Youth Worker were in attendance for this item.

Introducing the report, Ilgun Yusuf provided the context and the direction of travel.

The following were among the main points raised during the discussion:

- This is an incredibly challenging time with Covid and the Directorate is well positioned to meet that challenge.
- There were a number of people who couldn't access the service. However, they were still able to reach out to a considerable number of people in a safe environment.

- There will be further work on the early help and prevention strategy and Ilgun Yusuf would like to update the Committee.
- Participation of young people in the decisions that are made about them is important and there is a piece of work where they are searching ways to involve young people in decisions before they become policy and also making policies that make a difference.
- They work with the Children's Trust and there is a piece of work that is under development where they are looking at the transitions 14-16, 16-19, 19+ and 25+ year olds. The idea is to get ahead of the curve, working with the Children's Trust so that those opportunities that become available, for example for apprenticeships there is one overall package. Also, they are looking at where there are any overlaps around services and looking to set up a skills and jobs group across the council and the Children's Trust is a part of this.
- In relation to participation they are looking at creating a forum for young people and are looking at different models and how other local authorities include their children in care to ensure it is representative.
- They have a Youth City Board and they are aware that the representation needs to be looked at to ensure the voices of all young people are heard.
- It was queried whether the Education and Skills Directorate was the best place for the Youth Service and there is a need to ensure the resources for the Youth Service is appropriate, especially as challenges have intensified because of Covid, for example mental health support.
- The income from renting the buildings is c.£40,000 per month and it has roughly evened out because of the corresponding reduction in costs and therefore they are on track to be in balance at the end of the year and this is being monitored and is under review.
- The Youth Service receives £1.8m from the Council and they raise £1.5m externally and this includes the money from renting out the buildings which is crucial to deliver the service.
- The corporate response to the Drop and Collect Service and staff resource within the Youth Service was identified and this is being monitored and there has been no impact to date on the Youth Service.
- Having a participation approach that also informs services and co-design of services they need is important.
- They are working with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to look at what post 16 providers are offering. The higher rates of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) tends to be in year 13 rather than year 11.
- They were able to access the hardship funds via the early help partnership based in localities and they have supported a lot of young people to access

support. They have also run a food bank and supported young people with activity and resource packs.

- Ilgun Yusuf sits on the Commonwealth Games Board and they are looking to put a proposal as to how young people can be involved in the Commonwealth Games.
- They need to further develop the transition to adulthood.
- They have agreed to create a Youth Hub with DWP in the Library of Birmingham.
- Employment is part but not the sole purpose of the Youth Service.
- Becky Crampton and Darnish Amraz provided Members with practical examples of their work that Members welcomed and demonstrated that Youth Workers are highly qualified, the breadth of work they do and how they help young people to make good choices.

### **RESOLVED**

The Committee noted the update and the following are to be provided:

- Update on the early help and prevention strategy and how Youth Service fits into this vision.
- What portion, if any, of the Government's Covid support money was allocated to the Youth Service.
- Timeline and plan for the Commonwealth Games proposals, including the legacy.
- The Youth Service to be invited back in the Spring and the Community Safety Partnership to be invited to the Committee (Cllr Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities).

## **7. WORK PROGRAMME**

(See document No. 10).

There was a general discussion about the future work programme and the work programme will be updated accordingly.

### **RESOLVED**

- The committee noted the work programme.

## **8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 1000 hours via an online meeting.

## **9. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)**

None.

## **10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

Cllr Aikhlaq referenced the e-mail some Members had received regarding ethnic minorities exclusions and the Chair advised that she is having conversations with the Cabinet Member, officers and the Parent Carer Forum etc.

### **RESOLVED**

- Exclusions to be added to the work programme.

## **11. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

### **RESOLVED**

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

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The meeting ended at 13.04 hours.

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2020-21**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
17 Jul 2020	SEND Home to School Transport Update	SEND Dashboard	E-mailed Members the information on 25 <sup>th</sup> August 2020.
		Details regarding SEND Youth Forum	E-mailed Members the information on 25 <sup>th</sup> August 2020.
		WSoA Action Plan and Progress	E-mailed Members 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2020 & to be discussed at the October 2020 meeting.
		A simple snapshot showing what the council has contracted for against what is being delivered.	Daily calculations are assessed in relation to route cancelations. For a period of 3 weeks at the beginning of the Autumn Term, 4 % of cancelations related to one operator. Once remedial action was put into place, the majority of cancelled route have been in relation to Covid isolation issues.
17 Jul 2020	Work Programme Discussion	A short report be provided to the scrutiny office to be circulated to members on any re-start issues with Home to School Transport following the return to school in September.	<p>The Chief Executive has commissioned Ernst &amp; Young to undertake this task. Their brief is to review the service and provide recommendations for the medium to longer term. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reviewing the circumstances that led to the service failures in the run up to and at the start of term;</li> <li>• a critical assessment of the improvement planning arrangements;</li> <li>• their recommendations about how those arrangements need to be strengthened;</li> <li>• and a transparent road map for service recovery and improvement with clear milestones and dependencies highlighted.</li> </ul> <p>To this end, they will produce a report that answers the points above, which will form the basis of an improvement</p>

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2020-21**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
			programme that the council will take forward. This programme will specify the resources required as well as map all necessary dependencies. This report will be presented to the relevant council committee to ensure complete transparency.
16 Sep 2020	Covid-19 Impact on Schools and Preparations for Return to School in September 2020	Regular updates on the school's inability of staff and pupils to access Covid-19 tests.	Education and Skills officers do not have the information for all the 443 schools in relation to the inability of staff and pupils to access Covid-19 tests.
		The number of children and teachers isolating.	As at 18.11.20 the numbers of isolating pupils and teachers/teaching assistants were as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 28,818 pupils are currently isolating, almost 25k of which are as a result of a contact within the setting.</li> <li>• 889 teachers and 987 teaching assistants are currently isolating.</li> </ul> As at 25.11.20: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26,408 pupils are isolating, a reduction from the numbers earlier in the week.</li> <li>• Teachers – 849</li> <li>• Teaching assistants - 993</li> </ul>
		The number of school admission appeals this year and the projection for 2021.	E-mailed to Members on the 5 <sup>th</sup> November 2020 and requested information on children with SEND and Children in Care. This was e-mailed on the 10 <sup>th</sup> November 2020.
		The presentation on online learning.	E-mailed to Members on the 17 <sup>th</sup> September 2020.



**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2020-21**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
		Dr Tim O'Neill undertook to take back the decision to not issue additional PPE to City of Birmingham School (COBS).	E-mailed information to Members on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2020.
		A letter to be sent to the Cabinet Member regarding Member's concerns that schools are being re-charged for the free school meals voucher scheme.	Letter sent on 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2020 and response received from Cllr Francis on 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2020.
16 Sep 2020	SEND Response to Covid	Officers to check and report back on the answer in C8 written question regarding post 16 and those that are out of time.	E-mailed information to Members on the 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2020.
		A report on children's with SEND needs not being met in schools because of capacity and Covid.	Emailed Members the information on 28 <sup>th</sup> October 2020.
		A report on the communications and problems that occurred with the new on-line system for bus passes over the summer.	<p>The council's target for processing bus passes is 20 working days from receipt of the bus pass. In September the council failed to meet this target.</p> <p>The service has put in place additional capacity to administer the process within 20 working days and are currently dealing with the backlog with the aim for this to be completed by the end of November.</p> <p>The council have noted that the on-line system is only part developed. Further work has been escalated, to ensure that the on-line system is fully operational, providing the service with a mapping system and measuring tool for a walking route which will allow for more automated decisions.</p>
		A report on DBS compliance to be provided.	The Chief Executive has commissioned an investigation.

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2020-21**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
			To this end, a report will be issues and presented to the relevant council committee to ensure complete transparency.
		A report on how schools notify problems with home to school transport to the Council.	Weekly calls are undertaken with special schools, providing an overview of the failures from providers. The returns are reported to the team lead for safeguarding and compliance and form part of the quality assurance programme, alongside the work of the compliance officers who undertake site visits.
16 Sep 2020	Other Urgent Business	An informal meeting of the committee to be arranged to discuss the outcomes of the home to school transport inquiry.	Held this on the 16 <sup>th</sup> October 2020.
28 Oct 2020	SEND WSOA Update	Scrutiny to be kept updated on the self-assessments.	
		Dr Tim O'Neill will look at what the Local Offer does and doesn't say in relation to SENDIASS and the advertising of the service and report back.	The new BCC Local Offer website is on track to being completed by 30th November 2020 – the agreed deadline. It has been co-produced with the PCF. Information about SENDIASS can be found within the Parents and Carers section of the website: <a href="https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/parents-and-carers/parent-carer-services/">https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/parents-and-carers/parent-carer-services/</a>
		An update and overview of the commissioning piece of work in relation to capacity and reach and SENDIASS.	Compliance assessment against the minimums standards has been undertaken. Consultation to go out to parents/ carers, CYP and professionals for their thoughts on the service. Best practice review underway. Soft market test to be started to look at how the market would respond should the decision

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2020-21**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
		<p>An overview of the relationships and how families are benefitting from the Parent Link Service and how this links to the CCG, to ensure health services are delivered to children and the school networks and the bridging team.</p>	<p>be made to externalise the service following an options appraisal.</p> <p>Parent Link Officers work alongside all agencies to seek a resolution, improving the outcomes for the child/young person. The team consists of one team coordinator, and 5 Parent Link Officers. The service has successfully recruited a 6th member of the team who will start in November so that the service will work in line with the new Locality model and each locality will have a designated Parent Link Officer. The calls are received through the contact line and are primarily to provide information and to signpost. Where appropriate the caller can be signposted to a Parent Link Officer or a link professional. The themes for the referrals received are primarily linked to requests for an EHCP assessment, school placements, general advice and guidance.</p> <p>At the moment cases are assigned to the appropriate officer according to their area of expertise; one officer has experience of working in SEND and Inclusion with parents and families and within SENAR; one has experience of working with Post 16 students and counselling, particularly within that age range, one officer has experience of supporting families at the point of diagnosis in a multi-agency environment and the other two officers have experience working within an education environment, supporting young people and families. Requests for information are sent to Link Advisors who are professionals</p>

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2020-21**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
			<p>working within the locality and have knowledge of the young person/school/setting.</p> <p>The Parent Link Coordinator is part of Multi-Agency Decision Making Groups for EHCP decisions on assessment &amp; issue and liaises specifically with a Community Speech &amp; Language Therapist and Occupational Therapist around the provision of monthly webinars for parents.</p>
		<p>Information on the remedial action plan that is being developed regarding the waiting times for therapies. This is to include how it works and builds capacity, so the system has the confidence and expertise at all levels to support children and this is to include the health input. Rachel O'Connor is happy to attend a future committee meeting to discuss this item with Birmingham Community Healthcare (BCHC).</p>	<p>As a starting point to restarting this service there were 19 cases</p> <p>4 (approx. 20%) are now closed:</p> <p>2 changed their mind and went to appeal instead of through mediation</p> <p>1 is inappropriate for mediation as it is a complex social care case</p> <p>1 was closed as we worked with family to improve</p> <p>Of the 19 cases</p> <p>15 are for referral to assess (80%)</p> <p>2 are for refusal to issue (10%)</p> <p>2 are about final content (10%)</p> <p>75% of requested mediation is from Kids, 15% is from SEN Mediation and 10% is from Prime Resolutions</p>
		Confirmation as to whether the refreshed SEND Strategy went to Cabinet.	

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2020-21**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
		Officers to check whether the completed baseline of SEND services can be shared with the Committee.	
		Details on the reduction of mediations including figures, reasons and comparative data.	
		Alan Michell to be invited to a meeting to cover school absence and exclusions and this is to include children with SEND and the interplay between the different teams.	Programmed for the 20 <sup>th</sup> January 2021 committee meeting.
		The SEND Improvement Board reports to be sent to scrutiny on a monthly basis.	
		The committee to have regular updates on progress and the leadership teams / forums.	Marie Dobson to action
		The Chair requested the committee be forwarded copies of the minutes from the self reflecting meeting.	Members e-mailed the Family Support Strategic Management Meetings paper on the 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2020.
		Clarity on how parents and carers are elected onto the Parent Carer Forum.	
28 Oct 2020	Youth Service	Update on the early help and prevention strategy and how the Youth Service fit into this vision.	
		What portion, if any, of the Government's Covid support money was allocated to the Youth Service?	

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2020-21**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
		Timeline and plan for the Commonwealth Games proposals, including the legacy.	
		The Youth Service to be invited back in the Spring and the Community Safety Partnership to be invited to the Committee (Cllr Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities).	
28 Oct 2020	Other Urgent Business	Exclusions to be added to the work programme.	Programmed for the 20 <sup>th</sup> January 2021 committee meeting.



**BIRMINGHAM  
CHILDREN'S TRUST**

## **Report for Education and Children's Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**9 December 2020**

### **1. Introduction**

This report updates the Committee on the progress of the Children's Trust since previous reports to O&S. It also summarises the work of the Trust during the pandemic.

Three documents are appended to provide further detail:

- The Trust's most recent performance report to the Council for October 2020.
- The report following Ofsted's February 2020 focused visit to examine the Trust's contact, referral and assessment arrangements: the report was published in March.
- The Trust Business Plan for 2020/21.

### **2. Trust Activity and Performance**

Throughout the last six months (and indeed the life of the contract so far) the Trust has maintained strong performance against the contract performance indicators: the majority have been on or better than target throughout that time. In October 8 were on or better than target and the remainder were all within the agreed tolerance. This level of performance has been maintained throughout the period of the pandemic and both periods of lockdown.

The ethnicity of the children with whom the Trust works is as follows:

Ethnicity %	Children in Need	Child Protection Plans	Children in Care	2011 Census
White	40	48	52	42
Asian	24	17	11	34
Black	14	9	12	12
Mixed Heritage	15	18	23	10

When the pandemic hit, and lockdown ensued in March, social workers continued to visit families in their homes, as well as deploying technology to maintain contact. This was largely effective, and important, as a large number of partner agencies stopped all face-to-face contact with families in their homes. As higher-level restrictions are reintroduced it will be important that the work and the responsibility for maintaining contact with the most vulnerable children is shared by all partners. The Trust has led work with partner agencies to ensure that face-to-face contact with our most vulnerable families is maintained.

60% of the Trust workforce are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. As with all organisations, our attention in this area has been galvanised through the summer and we are putting much stronger arrangements in place to improve our performance as an employer and as a service delivery organisation to a richly diverse community.

For a period of time our short breaks residential care offer ceased. One of the units was temporarily converted, successfully, to provide crisis care for young people. Short breaks have now resumed and will continue to be offered during this period of restrictions.

When schools closed, like every children's social care system nationally, the Trust saw a sharp decline in contacts and referrals from other agencies. Once schools reopened activity levels quickly returned to pre-pandemic levels and are on a rising trajectory.

In March work started to create an entirely new early help offer based on 10 localities across the city, providing direct support and supplies to families, as well as grant funding to local community organisations and a new online mental and emotional health support offer. The Trust was prominent in building and supporting the new offer, with the Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC), and this now offers a sustainable footprint for the delivery of a more significant early help offer, supported by the Partnership and funded by the City Council. The Trust will be a key delivery partner of this service which, over time, will also allow us to intensify our support offer to families facing more significant difficulties. Closer working with schools was an important part of the offer, and we have seen some outstanding examples of support by schools to their most vulnerable children.

During the first lockdown the support provided to 7000 families through this Early Help offer undoubtedly impacted positively on those families and their children and suppressed demand for services from the Trust. Maintaining this offer through this second period of restrictions will be critical.

There is an emerging picture from research conducted into this Early Help service, of emotional neglect having a significant impact on children, often associated with family breakdown. It is also well understood that rates of domestic abuse rose steeply during the initial lockdown period.

This research also illustrates the effectiveness of the Early Help offer that was rolled out, and points to the importance of an inclusive, local approach that builds on the strengths of community and community organisations across the city, built on co-production rather than command and control. The Early Help arrangements were a good example of partnership work between the Trust, the Council and local voluntary organisations, coordinated well by BVSC. A strong platform for potential future local service delivery has been established.

While schools remain open during the second period of restrictions, this will provide a vital resource for the city's most vulnerable children, few of whom attended school during the first wave of the pandemic. Most schools maintained contact effectively and supportively with their vulnerable children while they were closed.

The Trust has continued to develop its services with a principle aim of supporting more children and young people to stay safely and successfully within their families:

- We have expanded our Family Group Conference service (enabling families to make decisions and plans for their children's safety): from 50 FGCs a year 12 months ago, we now have capacity for 350.
- Families Together Plus: services supporting children on the 'edge of care' to stay with their families.



- Lifelong Links: support for older young people in care to reconnect with family and important connections in their lives to support the transition into independence.
- Safer Families: a partnership with a voluntary organisation providing intensive family support.

In December we will have re-established three key services in Lancaster Circus: bringing Trust and partner staff back together safely, to operate the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, the EmpowerU Hub (tackling exploitation and missing children) and the new Preparing for Adulthood service, supporting young people into adulthood and independence.

### **3. Children in Care and Corporate Parenting**

During the pandemic the Trust's foster carers showed great commitment to our children in their care. Placement stability for children in care is stronger than has ever been the case, with fewer children having to change placement. Since schools reopened 98% of our children in care have resumed their learning at school.

Social workers supported their children in care well during lockdown, using both face-to-face contact and technology-enabled meetings and visits. For many young people these virtual contacts worked well.

We had to pause face-to-face contact between children in care and families during the first lockdown period, but we have since started to open buildings to enable contact to take place.

One of the City Council's, Trust's, and partners' most important responsibilities is to act well as Corporate Parent to our children in care and care leavers. Ensuring young people benefit from good care, good education, support to stay fit and well, opportunities to develop independence skills and live safely as independent young adults, in good accommodation, are responsibilities we share.

We have a clear understanding, from our young people about what is important to them (through our work with our Children in Care Council and Care Leavers' Forum) and my strong belief is that the responsibility should extend beyond the Council and the Trust to all of our statutory partners. Our Pledge to children in care and care leavers, overseen by the Corporate Parenting Board, and signed by the Council, the Trust, West Midlands Police and the CCG, commits us to enabling all young people to say:

- I am fully aware of this City Pledge.
- I am settled where I live, and I feel safe and well cared for.
- I enjoy school and I am being supported to fulfil my learning potential.
- I go to college or university or I am in work learning the skills I need for the future.
- I have opportunities to develop my talents, have fun and enjoy my free time.
- I know who I am, where I am from and I am in touch with the people in my life with whom I will have lifelong links, relationships and support: they might be family, or friends.
- I am healthy, I feel good about myself and I get the help and support that I need.
- I have a good and stable relationship with professionals who support me.
- I know what the next year will bring, where I am going to live and who in my life will support me into the future.
- I have someone independent in my life to support me should I wish.
- I am given opportunities to have my say and shape the services I receive.

Over the last few months, despite the pandemic, great strides have been made in creating a new Vulnerable Adults and Transitions service, between Adult Social Care and the Children's Trust. This new service will greatly enhance our work in supporting vulnerable young people, including care leavers and those with special educational needs, into adulthood and independence.

There is more that we can and should collectively do, to honour our commitment to children in care and care leavers. This should include:

- Ensuring children in care and care leavers are identified as a priority for receiving services.
- Encouraging staff in our agencies to commit to offer mentoring support to young people as they move toward and into independence.
- Offering opportunity through work experience, internships, apprenticeships (the Trust is currently working with 7 young people leaving care as apprentices: the experience has been transformational for them and for us).
- Active engagement in, and support of, the work of the Corporate Parenting Board.

A piece of work has been initiated with the Council to support improvement in the Council's offer as corporate parents.

#### **4. Trust Financial Position**

The Trust has worked hard during 2020/21 to bring down its overspend which was forecast earlier in the year to be close to £7m. It has most recently been reported as c.£1m. In addition, the Trust has incurred £1.6m of Covid-specific costs to date, which are eligible for the Government Covid grant.

The Trust has reached an agreed position with the Council for 2021/22 and beyond (we are hoping for an agreed 3-year position) that reflects the growth in demand that is coming into view now in the Trust, and is also a national phenomenon (referral and care numbers rising). This will be subject to the Council agreeing its budget in the New Year.

#### **5. Key Risks**

The key risks faced by the Trust presently are as follows:

- Failure to agree a sustainable financial settlement with BCC.
- The impact of further demand growth as we emerge from this phase of the pandemic.
- Maintaining an adequate social work workforce while we are constrained by the Council's Equal Pay concerns and in a competitive regional market for social workers.

**Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive**

**Birmingham Children's Trust**

**December 2020**



# **Report to OCG**

## **Contract Key Performance Indicators of Birmingham Children's Trust**

### **October 1st – 31st 2020**

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No.	Indicator
KPI 1	% of all referrals with a decision within 24 hours
KPI 2	% of re-referrals to children's social care within 12 months
KPI 3	% assessments completed within 45 working days
KPI 4	% Initial CP Conferences (ICPCs) held within 15 working days
KPI 5	% of children who become the subject of a CP plan for a second or subsequent time within the last 2 years
KPI 6	% 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
KPI 7	% children experiencing 3 or more moves in a year
KPI 8	% of looked after reviews held on time
KPI 9	% of care leavers who are in Education, Employment, and Training (EET)
KPI 10	% YTD care leavers in suitable accommodation (19-21)
KPI 11	Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted. (A1)
KPI 12	No of children who have been adopted in the year or who leave care
KPI 13	% of agency social workers (including team managers)
KPI 14	Average caseload of qualified social workers
KPI 15	% of social workers who have had supervision (in month)

## 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide contractual performance information.

## 2. Background

2.1 The contractual performance of Birmingham Children's Trust is monitored monthly through the Operational Commissioning Group.

2.2 Information contained within this report will include all 15 of the Key Performance Indicators judged against target, tolerance, trend chart and narrative from operational staff.

2.3 The performance information relates to the period 1st to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020.



## Comparisons of headline rates per capita to published statistics

Rate per 10000	Latest published statistics				
	Birmingham		SN	National	WM
	October 20	Nov-19			
Referrals	536 (Rolling 12M)	519	681	545	593
Assessments completed	423 (Rolling 12M)	513	660	532	569
Children subject to S47 enquiries	141 (Rolling 12 M)	160	234	168	187
Children subject of an ICPC	46 (Rolling 12 M)	63	83	65	71
Children in Need	279	291	397	334	352
Children with a CP Plan	46	45	54	44	47
Children in Care	67	67	80	65	82

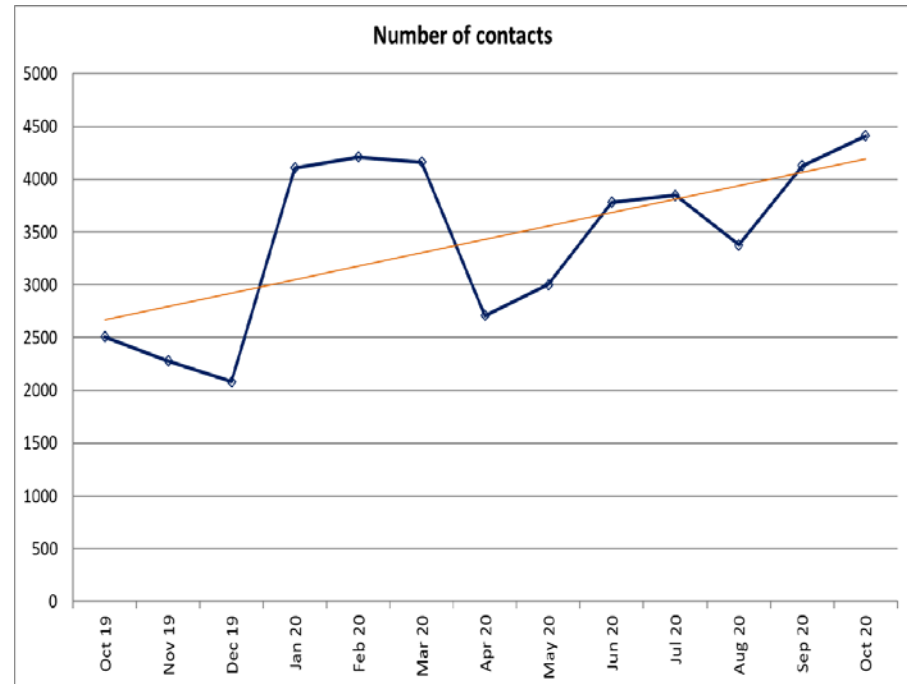


## Number of contacts received: CASS

		Prev. 12 months	
	Oct-19	average	Oct-20
No. of contacts	2,509	3,350	4,413

### Commentary

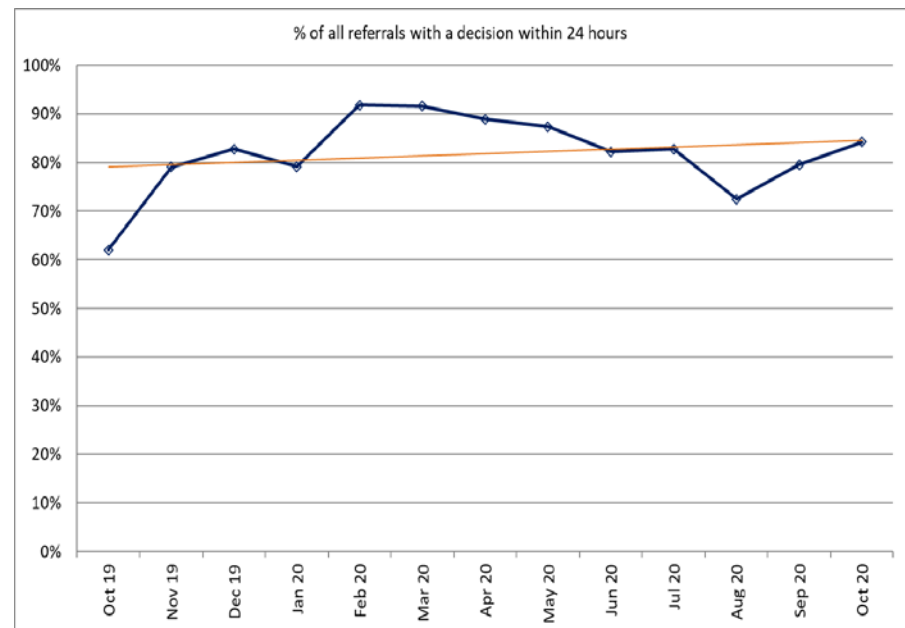
Contacts to the Trust have increased by 285 this month. As expected, we have seen this increase as a result of children returning to school in September.



Performance Indicator 1	% of referrals with a decision within 24 hours Good = High/Increasing	Target 19/20 80%	Tolerance 75 - 95%
	Oct-19 62%	Prev. 12 months cumulative	Oct-20
Referrals with a decision within 24 hours		11,203	1,130
Total referrals authorised		13,488	1,342
% of all referrals with a decision within 24 hours		83%	84%

## Commentary

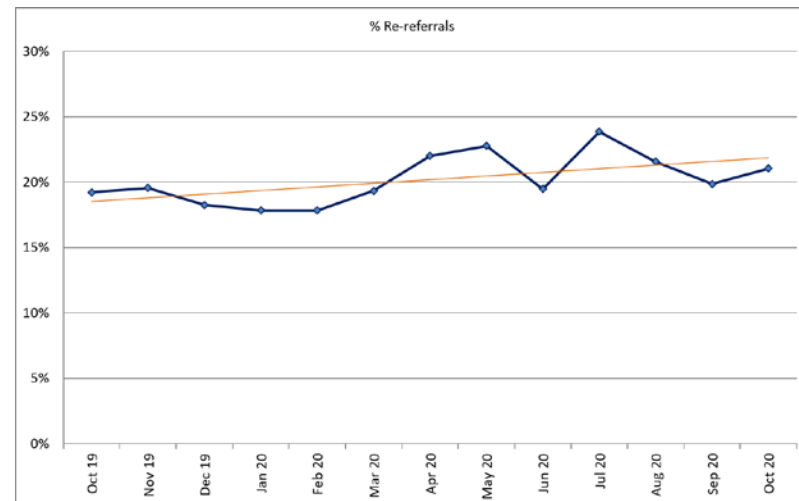
Timeliness of decision-making has improved this month. There continues to be a focus on timely and appropriate decisions at the front door of children's services.



Performance Indicator 2	% of re-referrals to children's social care within 12 months Good = Low/Decreasing	Target 20/21 22%	Tolerance 17-24%
		Oct-19 19%	Prev. 12 months cumulative Oct-20
No. re-referrals			3,167
Total referrals Initiated			15,865
Re-referrals %			20%

### Commentary

Performance in this area continues to be on target. Given the increase in referrals this is a good news story. We continue to work with partners to ensure that families are signposted to the correct services or receive statutory services where appropriate.



National average	23%
Statistical neighbour average	21%

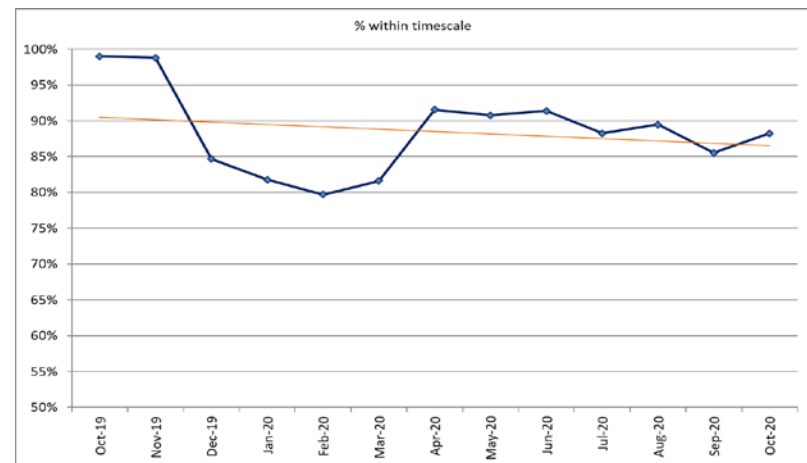




Performance Indicator 3	% of assessments completed within 45 working days Good = High/Increasing	Target 20/21 85%	Tolerance 80-90%
		Oct-19 99%	Oct-20
No. inside		809	1,066
No. outside		119	142
Total		928	1,208
% Inside		87%	88%

## Commentary

Performance in this area has improved again this month and has regularly remained above target since April 2020. We consistently perform better than the England average and our statistical neighbours.



National average	83%
Statistical neighbour average	81%

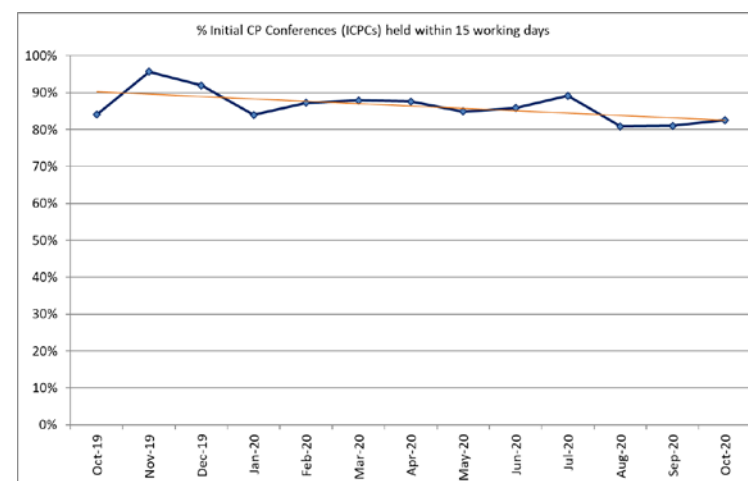


Performance Indicator 4	% initial CP conferences (ICPCs) held within 15 working days Good = High/Increasing	Target 20/21 80%	Tolerance 75-85%
		Oct-19 84%	Oct-20
Number of ICPCs held within 15 working days		Prev. 12 months average	106
Number of ICPCs			123
% of ICPCs held within 15 working days			86%
			83%

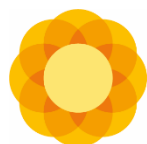
## Commentary

This month 83% of initial child protection case conferences were held within 15 days of the strategy discussion. Practice continues to remain above our target and within tolerance.

We continue to monitor the reason why conferences are outside of timescales.



National average	79%
Statistical neighbour average	82%

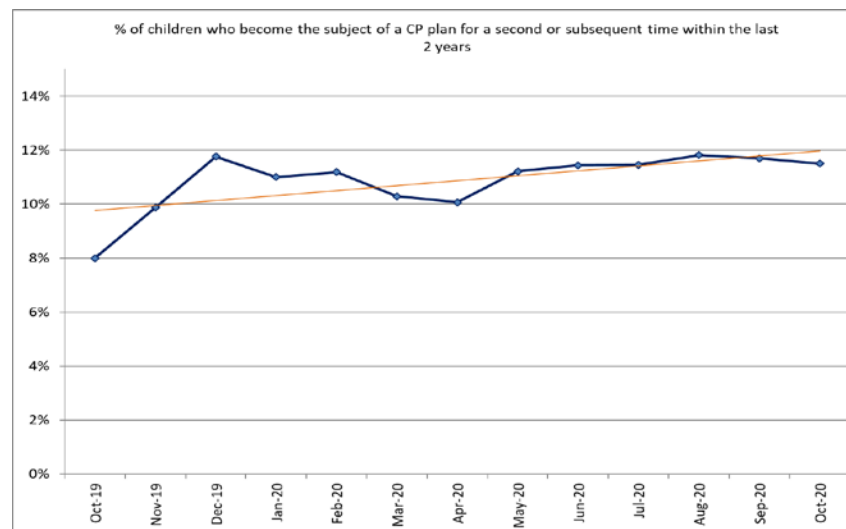


Performance Indicator 5	% of children who become the subject of a CP plan for a second or subsequent time within the last 2 years Good = Low/Decreasing	Target 20/21 10%	Tolerance 9-14%
	Oct-19 8%	Prev. 12 months average	Oct-20
Total CP Plans opened from 12 months to reporting date		1,515	1,722
Number of children who become the subject of a CP plan for a second or subsequent time within the last 2 years		165	198
% of children who become the subject of a CP plan for a second or subsequent time within the last 2 years		11%	11%

## Commentary

We expected to see an increase in second or subsequent plans as a result of the pandemic. Current performance remains within tolerance, although above target.

We continue to monitor this indicator closely.



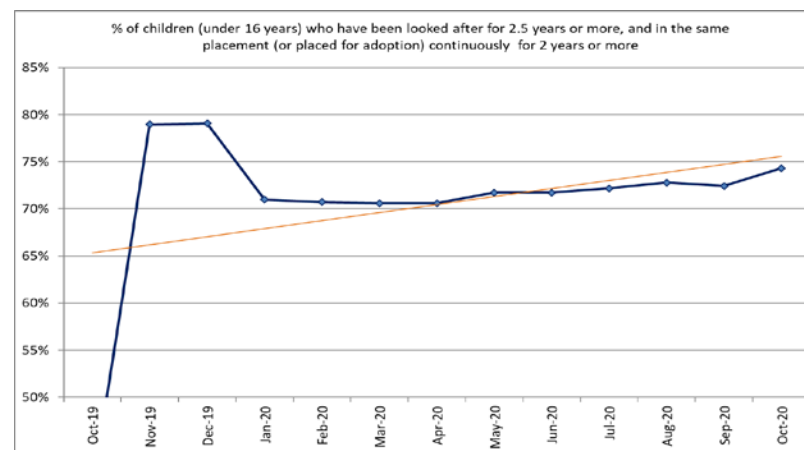
<b>Performance Indicator 6</b>	<b>% of children (under 16 years) who have been looked after for 2.5 years or more, and in the same placement (or placed for adoption) continuously for 2 years or more</b>	<b>Target 20/21</b>	<b>Tolerance</b>
	<b>Good = High/Increasing</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>65-70%</b>

	Oct-19	Prev. 12 months average	Oct-20
Looked after > 2.5 years, same placement > 2 yrs, or placed for adoption	40%	542	616
Total children		773	829
%		70%	74%

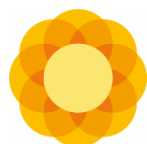
### Commentary

We have exceeded our target again this month.

We continue to perform better than the England average and statistical neighbours. This demonstrates we are continuing to improve our practice in respect of placement stability.



National average	69%
Statistical neighbour average	67%



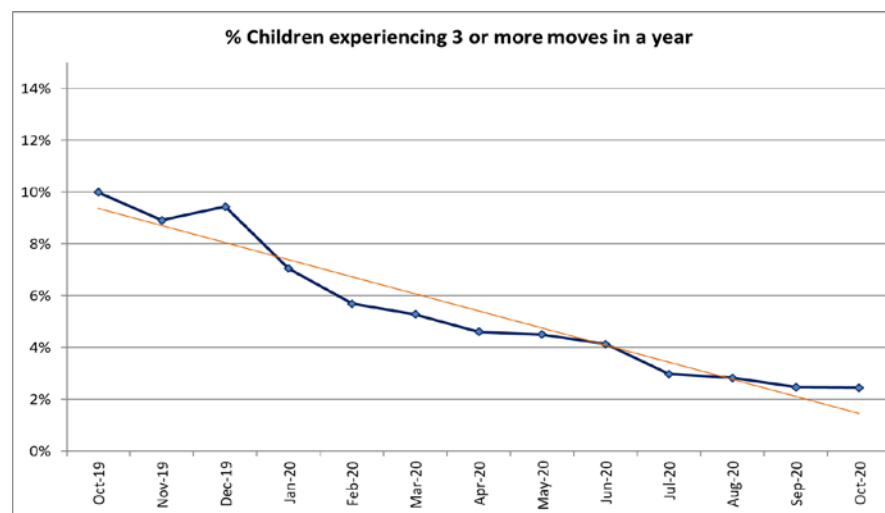
<b>Performance Indicator 7</b>	<b>% children experiencing 3 or more moves in a year</b> <b>Good = Low/Decreasing</b>	<b>Target 20/21</b> <b>10%</b>	<b>Tolerance</b> <b>5% - 13%</b>
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	<b>Oct-19</b> <b>10%</b>	<b>Prev. month</b>	<b>Oct-20</b>
<b>No. of children who had 3 placements or more</b>		108	48
<b>No. of placements in 12 months for children in care</b>		1,909	1,954
<b>%</b>		6%	2%

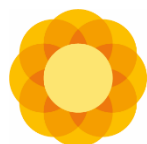
## Commentary

This month we have again recorded 2% which demonstrates excellent progress and evidences fewer children are experiencing placement moves within the Trust.

We are continuing to perform better than the England average and our statistical neighbours and are exceeding both our target and tolerance figure.



National average	10%
Statistical neighbour average	10%

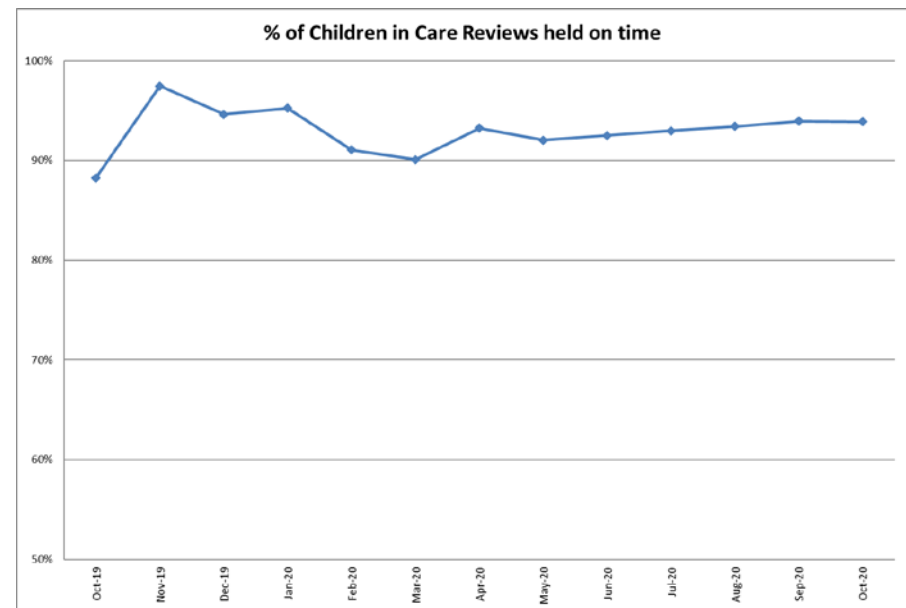


Performance Indicator 8	% of children in care reviews held on time Good = High/Increasing	Target 20/21 96%	Tolerance 90-100%
		Oct-19 88%	Prev. month YTD Oct-20
In time (YTD)		2,206	2,591
Total children in care reviews (YTD)		2,348	2,760
%		94%	94%

## Commentary

We continue to ensure the majority of children in care receive timely statutory reviews.

In October we recorded 94% of reviews in time which remains well within tolerance but slightly below our target of 96%.

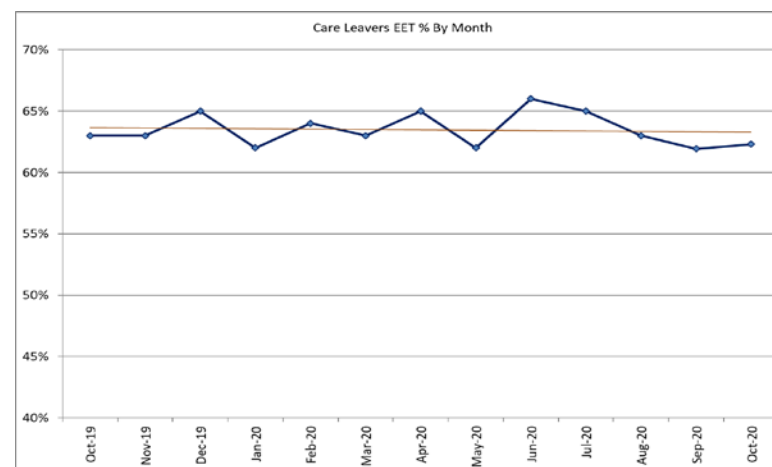


<b>Performance Indicator 9</b>	<b>% of care leavers who are in education, employment and training (EET) (19-21)</b> <b>Good = High/Increasing</b>	<b>Target 20/21</b> <b>62%</b>	<b>Tolerance</b> <b>50-80%</b>
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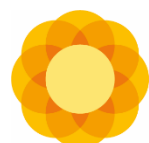
	<b>Oct-19</b> <b>62%</b>	<b>Prev. month</b> <b>YTD</b>	<b>Oct-20</b>
Care leavers in EET (YTD)		218	243
Total care leavers (YTD)		352	390
EET %		62%	62%

### Commentary

The EET performance for this month has stabilised but still represents a challenge to the service. We have now formalised arrangements with the Job Centre to ensure that all of our young people who are NEET receive additional support from Youth Employment Coaches. This is a new initiative by the DWP in response to the steep rise in unemployment amongst 18 – 24 year olds. Youth Employment Coaches have lower caseloads than Work Coaches and can offer more intensive support. The employer engagement work is ongoing with the aim of gaining more ring-fenced opportunities for care leavers and we continue to get additional NEET support from four intervention workers through Youth Promise Plus.



National average	52%
Statistical neighbour average	53%

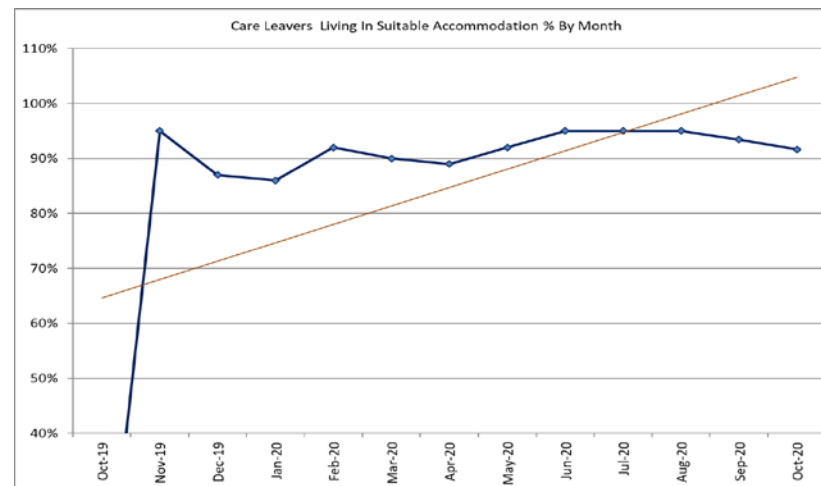


<b>Performance Indicator 10</b>	<b>% of care leavers who are living in suitable accommodation (19-21)</b> <b>Good = High/Increasing</b>	<b>Target 20/21</b> <b>93%</b>	<b>Tolerance</b> <b>85 -100%</b>
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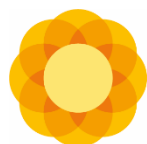
	<b>Oct-19</b> <b>87%</b>	<b>Prev. month</b> <b>YTD</b>	<b>Oct-20</b>
Care leavers living in suitable accommodation (YTD)		329	385
Total care leavers (YTD)		352	420
In suitable accommodation %		93%	92%

### Commentary

Performance this month has reached 92% which has remained consistent for many months now. The KPI remains above the national and statistical neighbour averages. This is supported by the availability of accommodation through the City Council and third sector housing providers, care leavers being a priority for City Council housing. Although there is an established Care Leavers Housing Pathway, the 'choice' as to the location and type of the accommodation remains limited and there is more to do in this area.



National average	84%
Statistical neighbour average	79%





**Performance Indicator 11**

**Average time between a child coming into care and being placed with an adoptive family (A1)**

**Good = Low/Decreasing**

**Target 20/21**  
578 days

**Tolerance**  
550-600 days

**Oct-19**  
534

**Oct-20**  
**(3 Year Average)**

**Average no. of days taken to placement**

497

## Commentary

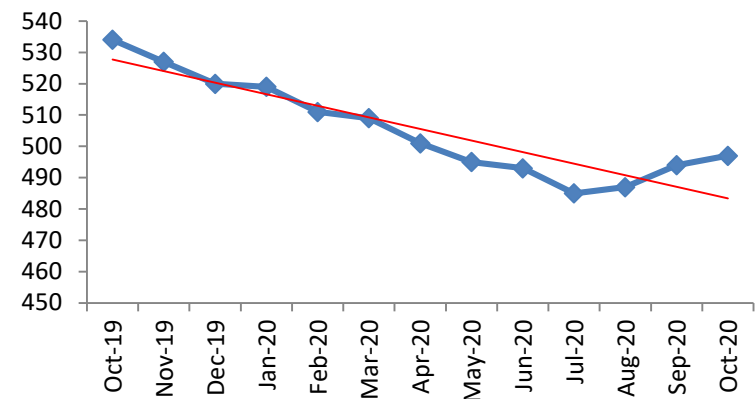
Performance over the last 3 years can be broken down as follows:

- November 2017 – October 2018: 81 children adopted with an A1 average of 478 days.
- November 2018 – October 2019: 91 children adopted with an A1 average of 501 days.
- November 2019 – October 2020: 43 children adopted with an A1 average of 525 days (0 adoption orders granted April/May/June 2020 due to Covid-19 impact on court priorities).

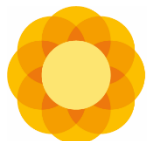
Whilst performance in October has improved against last October, the figure may start to rise over the next few months as with so few adoptions compared to previous years, this could adversely affect being able to offset any outliers.

Improvement actions in place:

- Family Finding Pilot from September 2019 with PACT whose adopters consider Trust children first, resulting in 13 children placed or matches made to date.
- National recruitment campaign to run 16.09.20 - 08.12.20 as well as a Black African and African Caribbean campaign focussed on Birmingham and London.
- Increase in the number of Early Permanence carers and promotion of Early Permanence through bespoke training. Rise in number of Early Permanence referrals and some placements taking place.
- Monthly Adoption Monitoring meeting in each area to track progress of children who have a plan of adoption and to review changes of plans, revocations, new plans and placement orders.



National Average	486
Statistical Neighbours Average	547

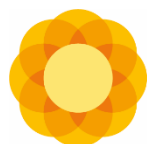
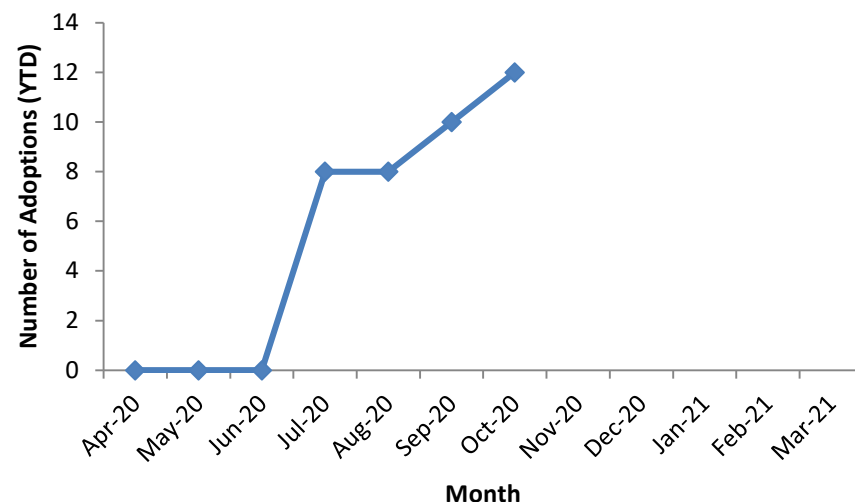


**BIRMINGHAM  
CHILDREN'S TRUST**

Performance Indicator 12	No. of children who have been adopted in the year Good = High/Increasing	Target 20/21 70	Tolerance
	Oct -19 63		Oct-20 (YTD)
No. of children who have been adopted in the year			12

### Commentary

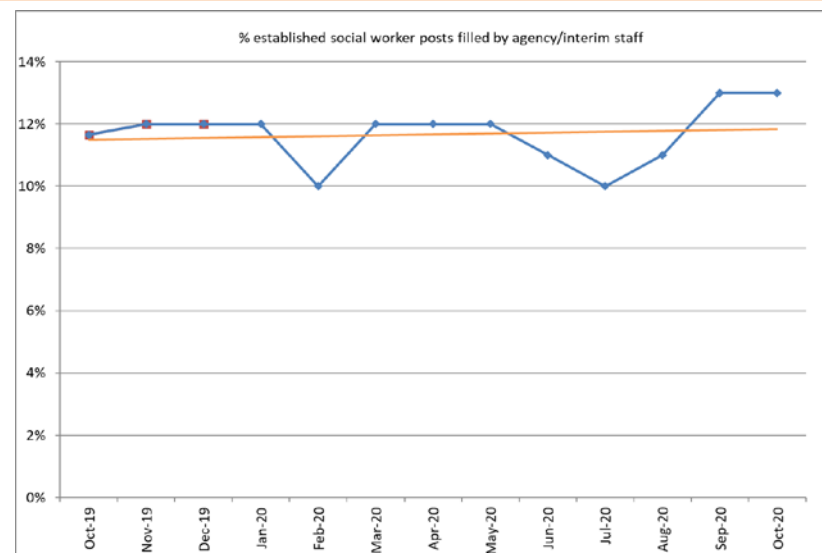
- 2 adoption orders were granted in October.
- Due to the impact of Covid-19 on court proceedings, only 12 children have been adopted YTD compared to 63 adoptions in the same period last year.
- There are currently 95 children in an adoptive placement awaiting an adoption order. Therefore, we are expected to be back on target later in the year.
- This lack of progression has been raised with the DfE, the Judiciary and the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board and there are a number of adoption order hearings now listed.



<b>Performance Indicator 13</b>	<b>% established social worker posts (including team managers) filled by agency/interim staff</b> <b>Good = Low/Decreasing</b>	<b>Target 20/21</b> <b>12%</b>	<b>Tolerance</b> <b>10-15%</b>
	<b>Oct-19</b> <b>12%</b>	<b>Prev. 12 months</b> <b>average</b>	<b>Oct-20</b>
	% agency social workers	13%	17%
	% agency team managers	9%	9%
	% agency total (Social Workers & TMs)	11%	13%

## Commentary

There are challenges both nationally, regionally and for the Trust in both the recruitment and retention of qualified social workers. This means that our use of agency staff has increased slightly. We are working hard to mitigate against the use of agency staff and we plan to issue a revised strategy in the coming weeks.



National average	15%
Statistical neighbour average	20%

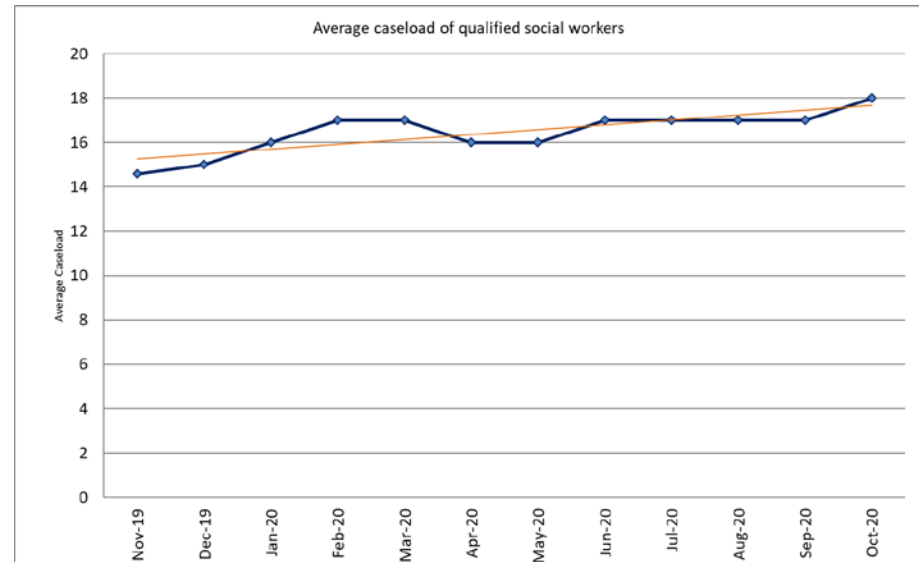


<b>Performance Indicator 14</b>	<b>Average caseload of qualified social workers</b> <b>Good = Low/Decreasing</b>	<b>Target 20/21</b> <b>15</b>	<b>Tolerance</b> <b>13-20</b>
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	<b>Oct-19</b> <b>13</b>	<b>Prev. 12 months</b> <b>average</b>	<b>Oct-20</b>
<b>Average caseload - city</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>

## Commentary

The caseload average for October is recorded at 18 which has increased compared to the previous four months. This relates to the recruitment and retention matter discussed in KPI 13. This figure remains within tolerance but above our target figure for 2020/21. We know that caseloads across the Trust vary and propose to review the operating model to ensure equity of caseloads and smoother transitions for children across the social care/social work system.



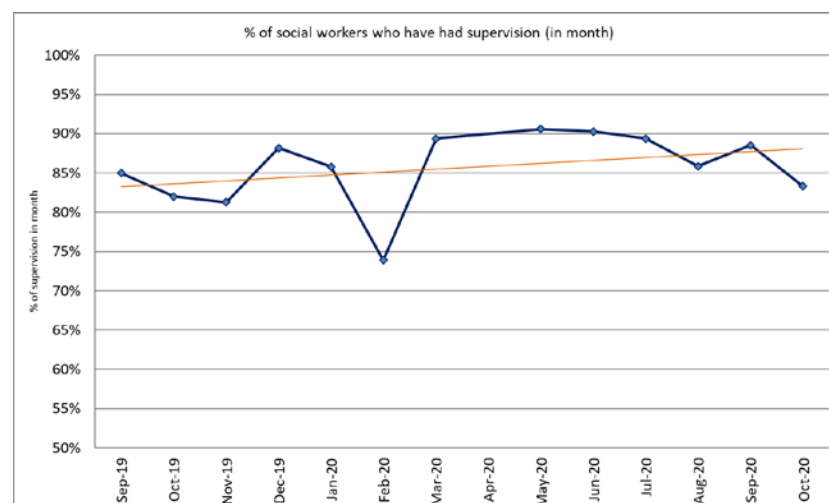
National average	17
Statistical neighbour average	17



Performance Indicator 15	% of social workers who have had supervision (in month) Good = High/Increasing	Target 20/21 86%	Tolerance 80-90%
	Oct-19 82%	Prev. rolling 12 months average	Oct-20
Supervisions		430	439
Total no. of social workers		500	527
% supervised		86%	83%

## Commentary

We are closely monitoring supervision frequency and effectiveness. We are currently reviewing the Trust supervision policy and a managers' webinar is planned for December 2020 to discuss the importance of supervision and reflective practice.



Council Business Plan Measure	First time entrants into the youth justice system (per 100,000 population aged 10 to 17) Good = Low/Decreasing	Target 20/21	Tolerance
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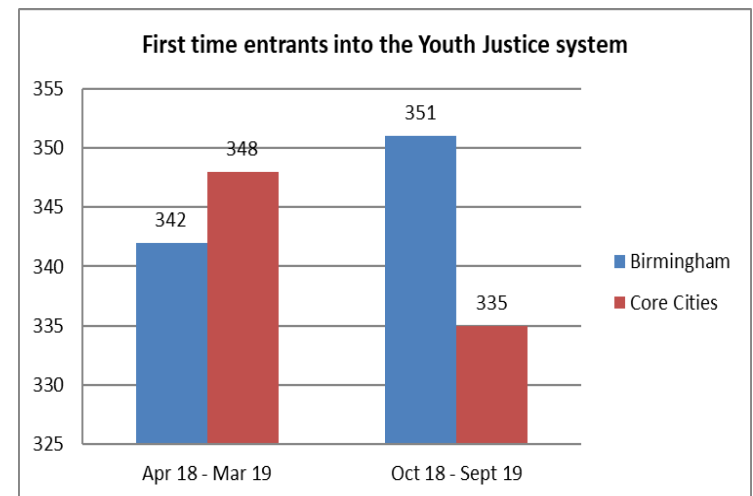
		(Oct 18 – Sept 19)
First time entrants into the youth justice system		351

## Commentary

While we are not performing as well as core cities, our performance has improved on the last period by 9.5%. The figures have been going in the right direction over the last six months and we are approaching our comparator.

Improvement actions in place:

- Review decision-making and guidance with Police and CPS for Community Resolutions and entry into formal youth justice system.
- Greater analysis of those most likely to enter the system including those young people on Education, Health and Care Plans or with Special Educational Needs.
- Support the OPCC’s commissioning of intensive mentoring across the city and a broader community and faith offer for young people not in the formal youth justice system but at risk of gang affiliation and criminal exploitation.
- Identify funding sources to wrap support around those young people subject to community resolutions, those at risk of exclusion and SEND young people.



Birmingham (Oct 2018 – Sept 2019)	351
Core cities (Jan 2018- Sept 2018)	371





**Jenny Turnross**

Director of Practice

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BIRMINGHAM  
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13 March 2020

Tim O'Neill  
Director for Education and Skills  
Birmingham City Council  
Children and Young People Directorate  
PO Box 17550  
Birmingham B2 2DP

Dear Tim

### **Focused visit to Birmingham Children's Services**

This letter summarises the findings of a focused visit to Birmingham children's services on 19 and 20 February 2020. The inspectors were John Roughton, HMI, and Andy Waugh, HMI.

Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for contacts and referrals in the Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS) and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Inspectors reviewed the threshold application for children in need and child protection, arrangements for children and families stepping down to early help and to the Assessment and Short Term Intervention Service (ASTI) for social work assessment, carried out on behalf of the council by Birmingham Children's Trust.

Inspectors considered a range of evidence, including case discussions with social workers and children's case records. They also looked at local authority performance management and quality assurance information.

### **Overview**

There has been continued progress and improvement in the front door arrangements since the December 2018 inspection, particularly in respect of threshold application, management oversight and decision-making. This is positive for children and families in Birmingham, who receive an appropriate response to initial identified needs and concerns. Quality assurance and performance information arrangements have been strengthened. Leaders have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. The trust is aware of the continuing need for partner agencies to strengthen the quality of referral to the CASS. Further work is also needed to ensure

that partners complete more early help assessments and interventions so that children and families get the right help early enough to prevent harm.

### **What needs to improve in this area of social work practice**

- The consistent timeliness of the professional screening of new contacts and referrals, including out of hours arrangements for this.
- The completion and quality of safety planning.
- The pace of development of the multi-agency early help offer.
- Improved access in CASS to information held by schools.

### **Findings**

- The quality of contacts and referrals from partner agencies remain inconsistent, and consent is not routinely obtained by the referring agency. However, social workers in CASS seek to obtain consent in all cases, even where consent has been recorded.
- When contacts are made over the weekend, they are not always screened by the out-of-hours service, meaning that children's circumstances may not be responded to quickly enough. The trust is aware of this, and has well-developed plans in place to improve the seamlessness of out-of-hours services.
- Once new contacts and referrals are taken, there are sometimes delays in the initial professional screening. This means that the circumstances of some children and families are not considered soon enough when there may be immediate needs or safeguarding concerns. However, no children were seen to be left in situations of risk or harm. During the visit, senior leaders established enhanced arrangements and monitoring systems, with the aim of ensuring earlier management screening at the point of contact.
- Once children and families are screened, work is promptly allocated to relevant CASS workers for further information-gathering from case files and agency checks. Social workers routinely record their rationale and recommendation for next steps, with effective use of the threshold document and practice methodology to inform them. In most cases, thresholds are applied correctly.
- When undertaking agency checks in the MASH, a centralised-request-for-information system is in place to enhance the ease and timeliness of information-sharing for police and health partners. Education services do not offer this resource, which means that information from schools about

children's progress and well-being is not always promptly available to inform decision-making on next steps.

- Management oversight in CASS is clear and effective. Managers provide clear directions, and give the rationale for decisions that are recorded or endorsed. Work moves on swiftly from CASS to other relevant service areas.
- Since the last inspection, more early help assessments are being carried out by partner agencies. This has been aided by the trust's appointment of additional family support workers to assist schools and other agencies to engage better with early help. Effective quality assurance arrangements help improve the quality of assessments and lead to improved earlier outcomes for children. This is reflected in the reduction of re-referrals into the trust. However, there remains an overreliance on the trust, by universal health and education providers, to provide much of the early help response. Family support staff are still completing more than 60% of all early help assessments in Birmingham. This is impacting on their capacity to support children and families at the higher statutory threshold, where they should be targeted. A proposal for investment in multi-disciplinary early help, properly integrated with trust services, is in development, which is both necessary and appropriate. Swifter pace is needed to implement this more effective service model for early help across the city.
- Strategy meetings consistently involve appropriate partner agencies and, in most cases, are held promptly. Information provided to strategy meetings appropriately reflects the risks to children. Actions are clearly recorded and focus on immediate protection, as well as considering wider issues, such as referral to the designated officer. However, once immediate protection is assured, there is an inconsistent approach to safety planning for children. Parties are not clear about mutual expectations if heightened risks emerge. The trust is aware of this and has planned audit and review arrangements to improve this area of practice.
- Contacts relating to domestic abuse, triaged by MASH police, result in detailed information, clear recommendations and priority actions. High volumes of referrals are received daily. Triage does successfully and appropriately filter out approximately half of the domestic abuse referrals to MASH, enabling MASH workers to focus on those cases that present a greater risk and require further assessment.
- The contextual safeguarding and missing hub is a strong and effective addition to front door services. This recent development covers all aspects of child exploitation. The daily triage meeting has clear processes in place for young people to be referred to and discussed in the hub. Multi-agency discussions from a wide range of partners use live information to enable staff to formulate plans, request complex strategy meetings and provide guidance

for social workers. Young people who are being exploited now receive a service from a passionate and committed group of professionals, who work directly with them to increase their safety.

- The ASTI service promptly allocates work received from CASS. Most cases have a management direction to guide social workers in the progression of the assessment. Most children are visited within three days of allocation. Where s47 investigations are agreed at a strategy meeting, children are visited on the same day. Social workers' recording of children's views is consistently of a high standard.
- Since the last inspection, a new case recording system has been successfully implemented. Initial problems have been well managed and staff are growing in confidence in their use of the system. Staff note that senior leaders listen to them and respond quickly when problems emerge.
- The associated live performance management system has also been recently implemented. This is beginning to be used by managers to support their day-to-day management and prioritisation of work. Quality assurance arrangements have strengthened through the development of the practice hub. Learning from audits is routinely shared with staff, supporting practice improvement. The trust is aware of further work required to strengthen the audit process and this work is underway, led by the practice hub.
- Staff morale in the CASS, MASH and ASTI services is very good. All staff spoken to are positive about working for the trust and the progress made since its inception. Staff report receiving consistently good support from all tiers of highly visible leaders and managers, which is positively impacting on recruitment and retention rates. This means that children and families are experiencing fewer changes of workers and are thus able to build more trusting relationships.

Ofsted will take the findings from this focused visit into account when planning your next inspection or visit.

Yours sincerely,

John Roughton

**Her Majesty's Inspector**



# Strategic Business Plan

2018-2023

2020/21 (Year 3) Update



**Birmingham Children's Trust Business Plan  
2018-2023 2020/21 (Year 3) Update**

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## Foreword from the Birmingham Children in Care Council and Care Leavers' Forum



Thank you for once again inviting the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers' Forum to write a foreword for Birmingham Children's Trust Business Plan.

In our last report we challenged the Trust to make a difference and it definitely has, we are SO PROUD to be a part of this!

It has been a hugely busy year with some amazing achievements. This is the year that Ofsted called us dynamic (we agree!). It's also been a year of challenges. So, when we were asked to present in front of nearly 1000 people we did it! We have interviewed the most

senior people (waves at Jenny); we have led on campaigns and been asked to comment on new pieces of work, new approaches and have influenced front-line practice.

The Mind Your Language campaign we started in 2018 continues to gather momentum - **"Don't call me LAC... I am a child in care AND I am not LACKING in anything."**

We ran workshops at two national conferences and one regional conference and are working with other young people's groups who are taking this forward in their own areas. We know the Trust is 100% behind this and have shown their commitment clearly – THANK YOU!

We were integral in the production of the new Extended Care Leavers Offer and campaigned successfully to have Council Tax exemption extended to 25. We have also successfully campaigned to change the Trust's policy so that children in care get a £500 Maternity Grant. We have produced our first (but certainly not last!) e-learning tool for frontline professionals to help them talk to young people about sexual health, puberty and relationships. We had hugely positive responses to this from those who have used it.

We have grown as individuals and as a group - we invite in new young people all the time and pride ourselves that our 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 - we are continuing to meet and work virtually at this time.

The work we do makes a real difference to all of Birmingham's children in care and care leavers and we are very proud.

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 3 and have so much more planned!



# Section 1

## Introduction



# 1. Introduction

Welcome to this, the second update to the Children's Trust Business Plan.

Looking back over our first two plans, it is plain to see the progression to the point we have now reached. This plan sets out an altogether more ambitious vision for the future as we strive to improve outcomes for those with whom we work and to make the Trust the best possible social care organisation, as an employer, as a partner and as a delivery organisation.

We know we have made progress. We know there is more to do. We are determined that the Trust will be delivering, on behalf of as well as in partnership with Birmingham City Council (BCC), consistently and sustainably good services to children and families across the city within the period of the first five years of the contract. This means 'Good' as judged by Ofsted on their next full inspection, likely to be in 2021.

So what does 'Good' look like? Amongst other things:

- the quality of practice is consistently good in all areas of the city and all parts of the Trust.
- our partnership work with other agencies is producing better, and better joined-up, services for children, young people and families: Early Help, Family Support, MASH, Contextual Safeguarding: all of our work is characterised by strong multi-disciplinary collaboration and integration.
- our work with families is collaborative: based on relationships, and building on families' strengths, recognising the impact of trauma, clear that for the vast majority of the children and young people we work with, their families are the best places for them to be.
- the Trust as an employer supporting its staff, through manageable caseloads, good supervision, development and progression opportunities, becoming the social work employer of choice in the region.
- the Trust grows into an integrated, collaborative organisation where every one of our 1850 colleagues feels part of, and understands their role in, delivering the best services we can to the most vulnerable in the city. An organisation where everyone has a voice, and every idea to improve what we do is valued and heard.

This is very much work in progress, but led with a determination, from the Trust Board and its leadership, to push on and to maintain our pace of improvement.

We face some significant financial challenges. This business plan sets out the scale of these: based on benchmarking data around current funding levels, and on forecasts for rising demand for services from the Trust, we have set out what we believe our future looks like, and welcome the additional national funding for children's social care announced by the Government. While we have areas in which we will continue to seek to deliver greater efficiency in our services, and resultant savings, these will be simply off-setting rising demand. For many years, Birmingham has had a low number of children in care, measured against national, core city and statistical neighbour comparators. As we improve our services we are seeing the number rise towards a level more commensurate with similar authorities.

This plan is being published while we are all under the shadow of the threat posed by the Coronavirus. Like every agency the Trust is reshaping, as we strive, with our partners, to continue to deliver effective services while the full impact of the crisis on our capacity and on staff illness or absence through self-isolation is unknown. At the time of writing, it is too early to tell for how long the crisis will last, too early to tell the impact on the ability of the Trust to meet all the objectives set out in the plan and deliver its services, and too early to understand fully the financial/economic impact of the unprecedented situation in which we find ourselves.

However, we are clear our key responsibility is to ensure that we are providing the right type, and level, of intervention and support to the right children at the right time, for the right reasons. While there is more that we and the Children's Partnership can do to bolster our prevention and early help services, it would be naïve to assume the number of children in care will not plateau at a higher level than has been the case in the last five years. This plan sets out our forecast, the rationale, and the impact in terms of funding. We have a strong relationship with the City Council: it is built on mutual respect, openness and transparency, and we are confident we can work together to ensure the Trust is able to meet the needs of the city's most vulnerable children and families.

We have much we can be proud of, in what our people working in the Trust have achieved to date, but we are humble about the work we still need to do to be the best we can be.

Andrew Christie  
Chair

Andy Couldrick  
Chief Executive





# Section 2

## Our Vision and Values



## 2. Birmingham Children's Trust 2020: Our Vision and Values

**Our vision is to build a Trust that provides excellent social work and family support for and with the city's most vulnerable children, young people and families.**

**We will do this:**

- with compassion and with care.
- through positive relationships, building on strengths.
- in collaboration with children, young people, families and partners.
- by listening, involving and including.
- in ways that are efficient and deliver value for money.

**Success will mean significant progress towards these outcomes:**

- healthy, happy, resilient children living in families.
- families able to make positive changes.
- children able to attend, learn and achieve at school.
- young people ready for and contributing to adult life.
- children and young people safe from harm.

Birmingham Children's Trust has now 'found its feet'. After an initial deliberate, unswerving focus on the quality of practice, which led to an improved Ofsted judgement in December 2018, 2019 was largely about consolidation and building our knowledge and understanding of the services, how they operate and interact, and where we can find further improvement. We have been doing this whilst demand for services grows. Opportunities to do things differently have been identified, and some significant savings yielded to mitigate the upward care cost pressures.

As we move into 2020/21, consolidation continues: the Trust operates the largest social care system in the country, with many social workers and teams. Driving consistency of practice remains a key priority. There is still variability in practice, but audit and evaluation suggest it is now narrowing. The reputation of Birmingham, in relation to children's social work, is changing. People across the region want to come here to work. We are attracting inward investment: the Department for Education, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Youth Endowment Fund, the Violence Reduction Unit all support Trust activity, with confidence.

Partners from the corporate sector (including Fortem, Barclays, Jacobs, Birmingham City Football Club, Aston Villa) have all invested time and resources and created new opportunities for our young people. We are a trusted partner, and a system leader, in the Children's Partnership in the city.

We have also identified some key areas where improvement, expansion and doing things differently will have an important impact going forward. These are set out later in the plan. The initiatives are underpinned by our core values:

**BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN'S**  
**ONE TEAM**  
**ACCOUNTABLE AND RESPONSIBLE**  
**QUALITY**  
**RELATIONSHIPS**  
**HIGH SUPPORT HIGH CHALLENGE**

These values are reflected in the model that underpins our practice right across the Trust:

- **Relational:** practice invested in relationships with child and family; understanding of relationships and attachments and their importance in assessments and plans. Built on the idea of 'High Support, High Challenge'.
- **Contextual:** understanding the context in which people with whom we are working are: family; economic; social; school; employment. Understanding context is pivotal to learning how we can help.
- **Trauma-informed:** practice based on an understanding of the impact of past adverse events and experiences, that is sensitive to trauma and focused on the means of moving beyond trauma, for children and young people and for families, building resilience and confidence.



# Section 3

## Demand and Costs

### **3. Demand and Costs in the Children's Trust**

#### **Introduction**

Since its inception, Birmingham Children's Trust has sought to operate within its funding envelope, achieving a successful balanced budget in its first operating year. Year 2 has proved more challenging as services have improved, risk assessment and responses sharpened, and demand for services has changed. The Trust, in Year 2, overspent its budget by £7m (3.5%).

Nationally, Government has recognised that there is pressure in most local authority areas around children's social care services (the average overspend across England in 2019/20 is reported at 9%). The key demand and cost drivers are all rising: numbers of children in care, on child protection plans, and assessed as children in need, requiring a social work intervention. There are multiple causes, including poverty and the impact of universal credit, austerity and the denuding of universal services' capacity to meet children's needs earlier and to 'hold' children and young people in universal services, and raised professional anxiety about risk to children. These factors together drive demand in children's social care systems.

In Birmingham, the emerging picture is complex. The Trust has attempted to set out a realistic picture of demand in the system and its impact on costs and contract value going forward. For 2020/21, in recognition of the Council's position, and the challenges posed by a 1-year Spending Round, the Trust has agreed a position where it will receive a modest £6.1m (or 3% of the budget) investment to address growth, committed for only one year. It is the Trust's intention in 2020 to test these assumptions through independent reviews, around demand management and commissioning, around our practice model and structure, and in doing so to set out an independently verified position, which we hope can be agreed with the Council as our commissioners, of what demand and growth look like over the next 3-5 years, and the management arrangements in the Trust to address these. This will inform the medium-term financial planning of both the Council and the Trust. The reviews commissioned are from CIPFA (on Trust financial management) and C.Co (CIPFA's commercial arm) on cost management, commissioning and market engagement: getting value from our planning, care commissioning and procurement

#### **Changes in Demand**

When the Trust went live there were 1805 children in its care. Today that number hovers around 1950. This growth takes the rate of children in care in Birmingham up to just below 70/10000. The average for our statistical neighbours is around 77/10000, for core cities nearer to 80/10000. There are several factors influencing this rate including historic under-identification of risk of harm and an approach determined to keep children at home or to characterise care by family members as 'private arrangements', contrary to current statutory guidance. Of the increase in children entering care since the Trust went live, over half the children had been subject to social work intervention for 2+ years. While some families need and benefit from such long-term support, the Trust has to be able to know, and to evidence, that the situation for the children in the family is improving, and risks are reducing. In too many cases, we could not be confident this was the case and children remained with their families for too long when they should have been in care.

The sharpest rise has been in admissions of young people aged 16+. This reflects growing awareness and concern about the range of 'contextual safeguarding' and exploitation risks faced by young people. The Trust's development of the multi-agency Contextual Safeguarding Hub introduces discrete expertise and tailored interventions for these young people. Care will not routinely equate to safety for many, so we need family and community responses that make young people safer. However, the early work of the Hub is uncovering evidence of some unmet need and unassessed risk that need to be managed safely and successfully.



The absence of an effective Early Help offer for families across the city has also meant that Trust resources have filled this space to a considerable extent, meaning that our resources to support families to prevent care admission have been denuded. Establishing an effective Early Help offer will enable some repositioning of Trust Family Support resources to provide more intensive, targeted support. This, alongside greater investment in family decision-making through Family Group Conferences, and renewed focus on 'exits' for children in care, through permanence, returning to families, should enable the Trust to avoid ever-increasing care numbers. But the rate is unlikely to fall to the previous low level and might be predicted to rise slightly further in the absence of effective mitigating actions. The Trust's working premise is to plan around a care population that could rise as high as 2200. This would represent a rate still lower (73/10000) than statistical neighbours and core cities.

It is important to remember that previous DfE commissioners, notably Lord Warner, raised the issue of whether enough vulnerable children and children in need in the city were receiving appropriate levels of support and there was quite likely to be hidden harm; so some upward adjustment might be seen as a necessary and appropriate correction. Certainly nothing emerging from audit, practice evaluation, threshold reviews or family court feedback is suggesting that we are caring for children for whom it is not necessary and appropriate.

### **Funding of Children's Social Care in Birmingham**

In the public consultation on the City Council budget for 2020/21, child protection and support for families emerge as two of the five top priorities for the city's citizens. This replicates previous years' results.

And yet despite the Council's additional investment Birmingham's spending on children's social care is comparatively low. The average spend amongst core cities, according to recent Grant Thornton (CFO Insights) benchmarking for 2019/20, is £120 per child more than is spent in Birmingham. This spending gap amounts to £30m a year lower funding in Birmingham than the average for core cities.

### **Spend on Children's Social Care 2019/20 – Core Cities: Source Data CFO Insights**

Local Authority/ Trust	Total Spend Children's Social Care (each city's spend divided by that city's child population aged 0-17)
Birmingham	<b>£770.41</b>
Bristol	<b>£807.64</b>
Leeds	<b>£855.34</b>
Liverpool	<b>£1,011.70</b>
Manchester	<b>£933.51</b>
Newcastle	<b>£934.63</b>
Nottingham	<b>£924.62</b>
Sheffield	<b>£771.18</b>

When the budget was established for the Trust a lower number of children in care (1630) had been forecast, along with a significantly higher proportion of children in care living with Trust foster carers. In fact, the number in care was 1805 on 1 April 2018, and the number of foster carers was falling, as it had the previous three years, as resignations outstripped new recruits. It is only in the Trust's second year, 2019/20, that this picture has reversed, but numbers remain very low.

There were, therefore, considerable pressures 'baked in' to the Trust's budget. Further reductions were made at the start of 2019/20 when the Trust budget reduced by £5m (2.5%, at a time when nationally spending on children's social care rose by an average of 6.8%).



## **Inherited Budget Anomalies**

The Children's Trust inherited a significant vacancy factor in its staffing budgets: in effect, in most of the social work teams, there is a post in the establishment that is not funded. There is no capacity to cover periods of extended sickness or maternity leave, and the tension between staying within budget and enabling social workers to retain manageable caseloads, when demand is rising, is becoming increasingly difficult to manage safely.

The Children's Trust manages the Troubled Families programme on behalf of the Council. The programme grant-funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, with a fee generated when we establish an 'attachment' to a family, and a second 'payment by results' award when we can demonstrate sustained change in the family (whether in terms of reduced offending, improved school engagement, return to work for parents etc).

Another inheritance the Trust has to manage within this, is that approximately £2m of Troubled Families grant was used by the Council as core funding for the Trust's Family Support and Youth Offending services. So when the grant stops, funding for these critical areas stops. This was not a sustainable decision and will need to be addressed so that core Trust services receive core funding. This in turn will release Troubled Families grant to be redeployed supporting further Early Help services, as was intended in the programme.

## **The Trust Budget 2019/20, and Beyond**

Despite these challenges, the Trust's budget deficit at year-end 2019/20, is £7m or 3.5% of overall budget, compared with the reported national average overspend of 9%. This has been achieved through a combination of revenue savings and one-off treatments, use of reserves, etc.

Agreement was reached on a one-year budget increase for the Trust for 2020/21, of £6.1m. This means that the Trust begins 2020/21 with a significant savings target: to recoup the £6.1m that is one-off funding, and to recoup the existing in-year revenue pressures masked by the one-off treatments. In total, the Trust starts 2020 needing to save £7m to deliver a balanced budget by year end 2021. Given the one year nature of the settlement, the ongoing underlying pressure on the Trust remains at £13.2m.

Two 'Invest to Save' proposals were agreed in the Council's budget-setting, to support achieving this challenge:

- the introduction of adult specialists in children's teams: domestic abuse, substance misuse, adult mental health specialists working with and alongside social workers will increase our capacity, resilience and risk management arrangements to keep children within their families where adults have these particular issues in their lives.
- capital investment to enable the Trust to provide its own supported accommodation to vulnerable older young people, at a higher quality and lower cost than that available in the private sector currently.

These, along with significant Council and partner investment in Early Help, are intended to contribute to 'stemming the flow' of children and young people needing Trust intervention and to provide diversions from care that are risk-assessed, safe and appropriate. To an extent this will, however, be offset by the need and risk we are now uncovering as we develop more joined up, multi-agency, intelligence-driven responses to children going missing, at risk of exploitation, 'county lines' etc. This is why we are planning for the possibility of a permanent increase in our care population to 2200. Without investment in Early Help, as outlined above, there is every reason to assume a care population rising to a rate closer to other core cities: this would mean a further 200 children in the Trust's care.

A higher number in care, along with more children on child protection plans, would put increased pressure on caseloads, for social workers, child protection chairs and independent reviewing officers. It would become necessary, over the next three years, to plan for an expansion in the Trust's social work establishment. This upward pressure would make the inherited vacancy/turnover factor in the social work teams increasingly unviable into the future.

Higher numbers in care would mean higher spend on placements too. While we look to grow more of our own foster carers, and to provide more supported accommodation, the cost pressure around older children in care, for more of whom residential care becomes the likely care type, is likely to rise.

And finally, more children in care would convert to an increased number of care leavers who need, and have a statutory right to, support up to the age of 25. Our 18+ service has large caseloads already (an average of 27 compared to 17 for social workers) and this element of the establishment would also need to expand.

In summary, the Trust's proposition is that to be financially sustainable it needs some significant revenue investment from the City Council: detailed budget papers will be developed and shared with commissioners during 2020 in preparation for the 2021 budget. The request is likely to come in at £10-15m in revenue funding growth (still less than half of the total received by the Council to support growth in demand for social care for children and adults).

In the event the early help and other preventative measures are more successful than the plan assumes, the contract allows for a 'gain-share' return to the Council as commissioner of the Trust. The appropriate model, therefore, is that the Trust is not subject to annual departmental spending and savings rounds, but rather is held to account within its internal governance, and by its commissioners, and that any surpluses achieved are returned through the contractual mechanism to the Council.

The Trust is, of course, engaged in a programme of efficiency delivery, looking across our support services and focusing on the two key elements that drive our financial health: demand and supply.

**Demand:**

- an effective, multi-disciplinary Early Help system across the city can meet need and support families without needing to refer on to the Trust. The Trust can then also reposition its Family Support resources to offer more intensive services to families at greater and more immediate risk of breakdown, avoiding unnecessary care admissions.
- investing in targeted Family Support: reallocation of resource, combined with DfE Supporting Families funding, to increase the reach and scope of our Family Group Conferences, enabling families to make decisions and find solutions for their children and young people; investment in targeted family support in the community, supporting the most vulnerable families.
- developing our multi-agency Contextual Safeguarding Hub: supporting families and communities to keep young people safe when at risk of exploitation.

**Supply:**

- increased and improved marketing and recruitment activity leading to a rise in the number of Trust foster carers and adoptive families for our children.
- improved contract management and care commissioning for children and young people.
- increased contributions to placement costs from partners (NHS, Education) reflecting a more equitable share of responsibility.
- providing in-house supported accommodation rather than purchasing placements from the private sector.



# Section 4

## Strategic Context

## **4. Strategic Context for the Children's Trust**

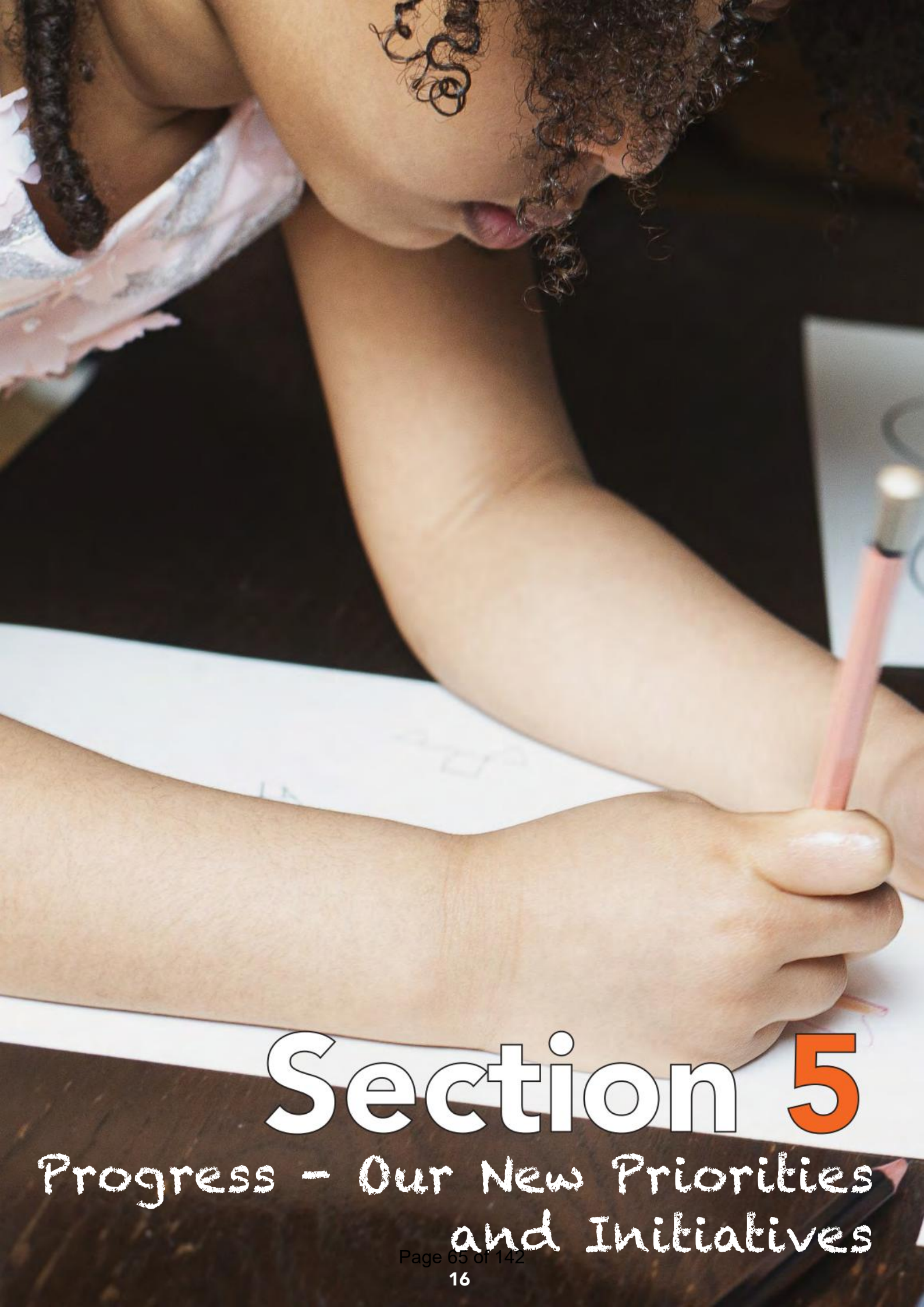
Two years on from our creation, the Children's Trust is now an established partner amongst service providers for children and families across the city. Collaboration with Police, Health, Education and the third sector are all stronger, and the Trust's leaders are now respected contributors to system leadership across the City now.

The context for children's services remains challenging. Poverty, social exclusion, domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse all drive demand for Trust services. Our new, integrated partnership work on Contextual Safeguarding is already beginning to identify hidden need around young people's exploitation in the city. We are seeking, as set out in Section 5 below, to take a more creative approach to tackling these issues with our partners, building capacity and resilience through earlier intervention, and equipping social workers with greater skills and resources on which to draw with and for their families.

The financial environment remains a challenging one, but strong and effective partnership working between the Trust and the Council means that sensible short and longer term plans are in development to recognise the pressures under which the Trust is operating.

Increasingly Birmingham is seen as the exemplar set of arrangements in terms of Trust delivery and partnership with the Council as the Trust's owner and commissioner.





# Section 5

Progress - Our New Priorities  
and Initiatives

## 5. Progress and Our New Priorities and Initiatives

Our Trust Development Plan, established to capture our response to the 2018 Ofsted ILACS inspection, outlined our priorities. The plan has been regularly updated, along with the Trust self-evaluation, and in February 2020, as part of the Focused Visit, we shared with Ofsted the progress we have made, and the impact we have had, across the domains of the Development Plan. Outstanding areas, and those needing further focus, will now be carried forward into the next Trust plan.

In summary, progress is evident across all of the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted in 2018. In addition we have:

- made progress in the first stage of our review of Business Support, including to release savings and establish a fit for purpose management structure.
- strengthened our children's legal service and increased capacity to progress cases through the courts, leading to improving practice and improving trust and confidence with the judiciary.
- strengthened our out of hours Edge of Care offer to combat emergency care admissions.
- established a stronger leadership structure in the Trust to enable greater grip on, and accountability for, our services.
- maintained manageable caseloads across social work and family support.
- rolled out Practice Leader Development for 100+ managers (every manager and leader in the Trust, from Team Manager to Chief Executive, will have participated by the end of 2020).
- strengthened our 'front door': Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS), Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), and Contextual Safeguarding. The February 2020 Ofsted Focused Visit, examining the Trust 'front door', CASS, MASH, assessment and short-term intervention (ASTI) and the new Contextual Safeguarding Hub, has provided a valuable check on progress.

The Focused Visit letter, setting out Ofsted's findings, was published in March 2020 and confirmed further progress and improvement in the front door arrangements since the December 2018 inspection, particularly in respect of threshold application, management oversight and decision-making. Ofsted also commented on very good staff morale in the CASS, MASH and ASTI services. Ofsted said "All staff spoken to are positive about working for the Trust and the progress made since its inception. Staff report receiving consistently good support from all tiers of highly visible leaders and managers, which is positively impacting on recruitment and retention rates. This means that children and families are experiencing fewer changes of workers and are thus able to build more trusting relationships".

As well as continuing to lead, drive and support better practice across the Trust, and in support of improving practice and outcomes for children, young people and families, our key strategic priorities for 2020/21 are set out below:

### Birmingham Children's Trust Strategic Priorities 2020/21: Impact and Risks

Strategic Priority	Impact/Benefits	Risks (Mitigation)
<p>Review our service structure to develop a new <b>operating model</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social work structure</li> <li>• Emergency Duty Team</li> <li>• Disabled Children's Social Work Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer social worker changes for children</li> <li>• More integrated day/out of hours service offering better responses and improved safety planning; longer, 'flexible day' in operation</li> <li>• Resources, focus and practice are better integrated with wider service to support Trust priorities and best practice: child-centred, family-focused</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trade Union opposition to change (<i>early engagement; adherence to process</i>)</li> <li>• Loss of staff unhappy with changes proposed (<i>early and frequent consultation; clear evidenced rationale for change; staff support</i>)</li> <li>• 'Extended day' proposals frustrated by lack of staff uptake (<i>messaging; offer of flexibility as part of wider Trust Agile Working programme</i>)</li> </ul>
<p>Lead/support the development of a new, city-wide <b>Early Help</b> service</p>	<p>If Trust is the chosen deliverer of new service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New locality-based multi-disciplinary service 'up and running' swiftly</li> <li>• Increased active early help to children, young people and families</li> <li>• Potential reduction of contacts/referrals to Trust</li> </ul> <p>Potential reduction in demand across Trust: Child in Need; Child Protection; Child in Care</p> <p>If Trust is not the deliverer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation supported to ensure focus on the right children and families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust capacity stretched to deliver new service (<i>programme includes leadership and delivery capacity</i>)</li> <li>• Failure to recruit (<i>low risk</i>)</li> <li>• Reputation risk if service does not deliver agreed outcomes (<i>partnership governance and support to delivery</i>)</li> <li>• Capacity too limited to achieve intended outcomes (<i>develop model that includes secondment of existing capacity to grow service</i>)</li> <li>• Focus of service does not impact on contact/referral into the Trust (<i>agreed impact</i>)</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority	Impact/Benefits	Risks (Mitigation)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome measures/success criteria agreed and in place</li> <li>Reduced demand on Trust services</li> </ul>	<p><i>measures/success criteria; Trust support to new service to focus on risk at right points)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact does not allow reductions in Trust funding as need for care not avoided (<i>active service and financial monitoring and risk reporting in the Children's Partnership</i>)</li> </ul>
Redesign our <b>Family Support</b> service	<p>(Linked to implementation of Early Help service)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less capacity used in Early Help</li> <li>More focused support to children and families at greater risk of breakdown</li> <li>Stronger links with Edge of Care Service</li> <li>Fewer care admissions, particularly of older young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change of focus leaves some staff dissatisfied: churn in service (<i>clear early consultation; secure buy-in around rationale; recruit to vacancies that emerge</i>)</li> <li>Loss of identity and value of the Family Support role and service in remodelled structure (<i>recognition of value of FS; communication and messaging; development of closer aligned/integrated SW and FS leadership and management</i>)</li> </ul>
Establish our <b>RAA partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress towards position of 100% of Birmingham children placed with Birmingham adopters</li> <li>Maintained highly regarded adoption support services</li> <li>Compliance with Government requirement</li> <li>Stronger partnership service model with VAA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service does not deliver adopter sufficiency (<i>active partnership working with VAA partner; bring together best of VAA and the Trust; monitoring and exception reporting on progress</i>)</li> <li>Failure to achieve necessary partnership (<i>low risk: VAA interest considerable</i>)</li> <li>New model not accepted by DfE as compliant (<i>low risk; maintain close communication</i>)</li> </ul>



Strategic Priority	Impact/Benefits	Risks (Mitigation)
Review and recommission our <b>residential care and short breaks</b> offer to children with disabilities and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved service effectiveness and efficiency</li> <li>Improved occupancy levels</li> <li>Greater tailoring of support to need</li> <li>Enhanced service offer through new commissioning approach (including potential strategic partnership for delivery)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parental dissatisfaction with proposed changes (<i>early engagement and co-production; clear articulation of benefits/improvements</i>)</li> <li>Staff unhappiness with new model (<i>early engagement and co-production; clear articulation of problems we are trying to address</i>)</li> <li>Political dissent (<i>early engagement and co-production; clear articulation of benefits/improvements</i>)</li> </ul>
Develop new <b>commissioning models</b> : care and support; new, Trust-owned supported accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move away from inherited block contracted model</li> <li>New care models commissioned, better integrating residential and family-based care</li> <li>New cross-sector delivery partnerships established</li> <li>Jointly commissioned Emotional/Mental Health Tier 3.5 provision</li> <li>Replace independent/private sector supported accommodation with Trust-run services: better quality, lower cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to stimulate market to co-produce new models with the Trust (<i>building relationships and common interests; competitive dialogue approaches</i>)</li> <li>Capacity challenge around delivery of 'in-house' supported accommodation (<i>ensure project delivery, as well as leadership capacity</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Improve financial management</b> via Trust-wide CIPFA financial management review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger financial management across the Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of engagement (<i>Trust leaders and managers accountable for making it happen, and implementing improvements</i>)</li> </ul>
Complete <b>Business Support review</b> post-Eclipse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efficient business support supporting social work teams to maximise time spent with children and families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trade Union opposition to change (<i>clear, compliant engagement and consultation processes; evidence-base clear for required changes</i>)</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority	Impact/Benefits	Risks (Mitigation)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective use of Eclipse as a time-saving recording tool</li> </ul>	
<b>Commission (with Birmingham City Council) independent reviews:</b> looking at demand; unit costs; practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To feed into 2021-22 budget-setting, an objective and independent position, agreed with the Council, reflecting future demand and growth in the Trust and consequent funding requirements</li> <li>A shared Council/Trust position around prevention, early help and targeted support</li> </ul>	
<b>Recruitment and retention</b> pipeline; pay and rewards to keep the Trust competitive as the social work employer of choice in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective recruitment</li> <li>Retention mechanisms, through progression and reward, that keep experienced social workers in the Trust</li> <li>Further conversions of agency social workers into Trust employees</li> <li>New social work apprenticeship scheme operating: first cohort of 'home grown' social workers commencing training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The constraints of Birmingham City Council Equal Pay lead to a deteriorating recruitment and retention pipeline (<i>independent legal advice for the Trust on what we can do to incentivise retention of experienced staff; close monitoring of exit patterns and reasons</i>)</li> <li>Budget pressures limit our potential to implement non-contractual incentives (<i>maintain active focus and management pressure on care and costs</i>)</li> </ul>

In addition, we will be developing and implementing a range of new and innovative services and activities to drive and support practice improvement, including:

- investment in **targeted family support**: enhancing families' support systems and enabling them to care for their children well.
- expanded **Family Group Conference** service, enabling more families to take control and make decisions with and about their children and young people. The model draws and builds on families' strengths and supports families to create plans that keep children with them safely. Within the expanded service, we are implementing two programmes: we will be running the **Lifelong Links** programme, supporting young people in care to reconnect with their families so they have safe and strong family relationships as they move towards adulthood and independence. And we will be running a DfE-funded programme providing **conferences in pre-proceedings**, for children and young people on the cusp of court action and care.
- a second DfE-funded programme, this one to create a **Family Drug and Alcohol Court** in the Birmingham and Solihull Family Court. The court focuses on cases where alcohol and drugs are key factors in risk to children, where specially trained judges work differently with parents, supported by a team of drug, alcohol and child protection specialists.
- we are rolling out the Breaking the Cycle programme, now owned by the Trust, to support parents after the loss of a child through adoption or alternative permanence solution, to consider their future choices and make different decisions about and for future children.
- we will deploy **specialists in domestic abuse, substance misuse, adult mental health, to work in and with our social work teams**, supporting children's social workers to deal more effectively with these issues, bringing new, bespoke support to parents involved with the Trust, and tackling and reducing the root causes of many risks to children.
- we will further roll out the new **multi-agency Contextual Safeguarding Hub**, bringing dedicated focus and expertise to bear to address the risks to young people across the city of exploitation, 'county lines' and frequent episodes of going missing. We will explore how we can manage risk differently, in a multi-agency context, recognising that the risks young people face are increasingly in the community rather than in their families (it was the latter that the traditional child protection system was built for).
- we will continue the roll-out of the **Practice Supervisor Development Programme**, reaching every team manager in the Trust. We will design with the providers the programme for Heads of Service, ADs and Trust leaders, so that we are all equipped to work in the ways that support and enable the best possible practice on the front-line.
- we will continue to **transform our fostering service**, recruiting more carers and working with ever more Family and Friends carers coming forward to care for children. We are positioned to have a more positive Ofsted inspection of the service, and to further transform and improve beyond that.

This is an illustrative list rather than an exhaustive one. It seeks to demonstrate the breadth of change and innovation on which we are embarking, developed to reflect our ongoing determination to improve the support we provide to families, to safeguard children and to build an organisation that is the best it can be.

There is much still to do, but the Trust has established a strong platform from which to develop, improve and to innovate. Improving practice and management, better partnerships and stronger leadership all contribute to an increasingly effective organisation with vision, drive and determination to go on getting better.





# Section 6

## Performance

## 6. Performance

For the second year in a row, performance against the contract performance indicators has been strong all year. At no point since the Trust went live has the Council had to enact the rectification processes designed, in the contract, to deal with underperformance by the Trust.

In addition to the contract performance indicators, the Trust has shared its wider suite of performance measures (captured in the ChAT report), demonstrating strong and/or improving performance across the full suite of children's social care indicators. This full picture of Trust performance has been examined at both the Operational Commissioning Group and the Children's Trust Partnership Governance Group.

The Trust has implemented a new, real-time performance reporting tool, Power BI. This enables every manager, from Team Manager to Chief Executive, to view key data regarding need, demand and performance, down to individual level.

PI	Measure	Number of months 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	12/12	100%
3	% assessments completed within 45 working days	12/12	100%
4	% Initial CP Conferences held within 15 working days	12/12	100%
5	% of children who became the subject of a CP plan for a second or subsequent time within the last 2 years	12/12	100%
6	% 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	11/12	92%
7	% children experiencing 3 or more moves in a year	12/12	100%
8	% of children in care reviews held on time	11/12	92%
9	% of care leavers who are in education, employment, and training (EET)	12/12	100%
10	% of care leavers who are living in suitable accommodation (19-21)	12/12	100%
11	Average time between a child coming into care and being placed with an adoptive family (A1)	12/12	100%
12	Average time between the LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match (A2)	12/12	100%
13	% of agency social workers (including team managers)	12/12	100%
14	Average caseload of qualified social workers	12/12	100%
15	% of social workers who have had supervision (in month)	11/12	92%

As well as the performance measures, the Trust now has a well-embedded Quality Assurance framework, overseen by the Practice Hub. There is a wider range of performance audit undertaken, and the learning from audit feeds back into practice to drive improvement. Reports on our quality assurance work are shared at the Operational Commissioning Group.





# Section 7

## Governance Arrangements

## 7. Governance Arrangements

The Trust is owned by the Council. But its day to day operational delivery is controlled by the Trust Executive Team which is accountable to the Trust Board in order to ensure operational independence. The role of the Board is to set the strategic aims of the Trust, oversee the management of the business and hold the Executive Team to account. It is the responsible body for the performance of the Trust in terms of delivering its legal and contractual obligations and achieving outcomes for children in Birmingham.

For the period during which children's social care and family support services remain subject to Government intervention, the Chair of the Board is appointed by the Secretary of State for Education. The Council retains "reserved powers" for certain significant matters including, for example, approval of this Business Plan.

The governance arrangements for the Trust are set out in the Articles of Association and its scheme of delegation. The Service Delivery Contract details how the Trust will work with the Council to ensure the priorities and objectives specified within the contract are delivered, how decisions are made and how the Trust is held to account.

A Governance Side Agreement is in place between the DfE and the Council, describing those areas of the Trust's governance over which the DfE retains some control, or influence, whilst the Council is subject to intervention.

The Trust Board of Directors has a wide portfolio of expertise and knowledge in children's services, commercial, financial and other disciplines. The Board provides support and challenge on the direction and strategy of the Trust.

The Board consists of a chair and 7 non-executive directors. Details of current Board members are available on the Trust Website at: [https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/who\\_we\\_are](https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/who_we_are).

The Trust Board has established the following committees:

- Finance and Resources.
- Performance and Quality Assurance.
- Workforce.

The governance arrangements, between Council, Trust and DfE, have worked effectively during the Trust's first two years, despite limited capacity in the Council's 'Intelligent Client Function'. The framework of Operational Commissioning Group, Trust Partnership Governance Group and routine engagement at Overview and Scrutiny, alongside regular meetings between the Trust Chief Executive and the Council Chief Executive, Director of Children's Services and Lead Member, have together 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 Trust's Executive Directors consist of the Chief Executive, the Director of Practice, the Director of Commissioning & Corporate Parenting and the Director of Finance & Resources. The Executive provides management oversight of operational activities of the Trust under a scheme of delegation approved by the Trust Board.





# Section 8

## Trust Services



## 8. Trust Services

The Trust is commissioned by the Council to provide the following services:

- Family Support
- CASS and MASH
- Social Work Teams
- Contextual Safeguarding Hub
- Services for Disabled Children: social work; short breaks
- Fostering and Adoption
- Residential Care
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, No Recourse to Public Funds, Homelessness service, Edge of Care, Family Group Conference service
- Care Leavers' Service
- Youth Offending Service
- Independent Review and Child Protection Chairs
- Support Services (including Finance, Legal Services, ICT, HR and Business Services & Support)
- Business support to the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership

A pen portrait of our children and our service is appended.



# Section 9

Our People

## 9. Our People

The Trust is committed to workforce development both in terms of how we reward our people and investing in learning and development. The Trust has refreshed its workforce development plan, a key element of which is to promote the Trust as “an employer of choice”. A number of key initiatives include:

- introduction of a new “value proposition” to attract and retain staff.
- introduction of a social worker apprenticeship scheme to “grow our own”.
- launch of a new training offer aligned to “Knowledge and Skills” for all the workforce.
- consideration of a wider apprenticeship scheme for other professions.
- launch of the Trust’s own “Trust in Wellbeing” initiative.
- improvements to our succession planning.

The Trust has recently updated a number of HR policies including its Code of Conduct, Sickness Absence Procedure, Capability Procedure and Grievance Procedure. Our plans are to update the remaining policies around Disciplinary Procedure.

Our management structure has been completed at Assistant Director level and will deliver real capacity to continue to drive improvement across the Trust. The number of posts filled by agency social workers continues to reduce and we aim to further reduce our reliance on agency legal staff.

Recent feedback from Ofsted as part of the Focused Visit was that morale was good. Staff feel listened to and proud to work for Birmingham Children’s Trust.





# Section 10

## Financial Position and Budget

## 10. Trust Financial Position and Budget

The Trust overspent in 2019/20 by £7m as a result of an increase in the number of children in care and high costs of residential care which reflects a sufficiency challenge in the market in the West Midlands. The overspend on placements equates to £13.2m. Mitigations applied by the Trust have reduced the net overspend figure. In response to this pressure a request was made to the Council for an additional £6.1m in 2020/21 as shown in the table below.

	£m	£m
<b>Cost pressures</b>		
Demand: Placement costs	12.6	
Demand: Staffing and other costs	2.3	
Remand	1.0	15.9
<b>Demand Management</b>		
Diversions from care	-4.0	
Assessments	-0.3	-4.3
Sub-Total		11.6
<b>Supply side</b>		
Supported accommodation	-1.0	
Fostering	-0.8	
Adoption	-0.7	
Residential placements	-1.4	
Sub-total		-3.9
<b>Efficiency</b>		
Business Support	-0.4	
Other	-0.2	
Sub-total		-0.6
<b>Growth</b>		
Increased tripartite contributions		-1.0
Total		6.1

### Contract Sum 2020/21

As part of the Annual Review (Schedule 3 to the Contract) and the Annual Budget Setting Process, the Trust is required, by 30 October in each Contract Year, to submit the Contract Sum Proposal to the Council for consideration as part of the Council's general budget-setting process. In response the Trust submitted a proposal based on the above scenario which represents a net increase in demand pressure of £6.1m for 2020/21.

The provisional results from the triennial review of the West Midlands Pensions Fund indicate a reduction in the Trust's employer's contribution for pensions from 23.6% ("Initial Contribution Rate") to 20% ("Reduced Contribution Rate"). In accordance with the Pensions provisions (Schedule 10 to the Contract), in the event the rate is decreased, then the Council is able to retain the benefit of the decrease by means of an adjustment to the Contract sum payable (as shown below).

Notified changes in grant for 2020/21 are as follows:

- reduction in the UASC grant by £1,988,690
- increase in the Troubled Families (Transformation) grant of £750,000
- the removal of the Rough Sleepers grant of £95,000.

The final Contract Sum 2020/21 is summarised below.

	£m
<b>Net Contract Sum (b/f) 2019/20</b>	<b>193.2</b>
Permanent adjustments	
- UASC Grant	(2.0)
- Troubled Families	0.7
<b>Sub-total (pre indexation)</b>	<b>191.9</b>
Indexation	4.3
Contract changes	
- Demand pressures (net)	6.1
- Pension contribution rate	(1.2)
<b>Total Contract Sum (payable) 2020/21</b>	<b>201.1</b>

### How we spend our money and how we are funded

A breakdown of how the Trust spends its money is given below.

	£m	£m
Employees		84.2
Premises		3.3
Transport		1.6
Supplies and Services		8.1
Third Party Payments		102.6
Transfer Payments		5.3
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>205.1</b>
<b>FUNDED BY:</b>		
Core Contract Sum from Birmingham City Council	192.3	
Government grants paid via Birmingham City Council	8.8	201.1
Other direct grants and contributions		4.0
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>205.1</b>

## Modernisation proposals

The Trust has submitted to the Council a number of modernisation proposals which include investment in adult services specialists working in children's social work teams and developing our own 'in house' supported accommodation. This proposal would involve £3.7m of capital investment to create up to 60 beds with associated staffing and maintenance costs. By replacing existing market provision with our own service, providing higher quality support at a lower cost, we can offer a better, as well as a more efficient, service to our young people.

The table below provides a summary of the Trust's funding proposals over a five year period.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Core Contract Sum *	192.3	192.8	193.3	193.8	194.3
Government grants paid via the Council	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8
<b>Total Contract Sum</b>	<b>201.1</b>	<b>201.6</b>	<b>202.1</b>	<b>202.6</b>	<b>203.1</b>
Other grants and contributions	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Total Budget	205.1	205.6	206.1	206.6	207.1
<b>Modernisation bids:</b>					
<b>Adult specialists working in children's teams</b>					
Investment – staffing and accommodation	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Benefits – reduce demand	0.0	0.0	1.3	2.7	2.7
Net Investment/Benefit (-)	2.5	2.5	1.2	-0.2	-0.2
<b>Supported accommodation</b>					
Investment – staffing and property	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
Benefits – placement costs			4.0	4.0	4.0
Net Investment/Benefit (-)	<b>3.2</b>	3.2	-0.8	-0.8	-0.8
<b>Total Funding proposed including modernisation</b>	<b>210.8</b>	<b>211.3</b>	<b>206.5</b>	<b>205.6</b>	<b>206.1</b>

\* The Council has assumed an increase of £0.5m per annum each year from 2020/21 onwards for demographic changes. The Trust's view is this is insufficient and will need to be reviewed as part of updated forecasts of children in care numbers.

## Capital programme

The Trust has made a capital bid of £2m in relation to improvements and maintenance of Trust properties. This funding will be held by the Council as landlord, on behalf of the Trust. The replacement of the South Access Contact Centre and the remodeling of Lifford House for conferencing has been programmed for 2020/21. Proposals to replace the remaining contact centres in 2020/21 will be developed as the next priority. The table below provides a summary of the programme:

	£m	£m
Improvements – programmed works	0.5	
Improvements – contact centres	1.2	1.7
Planned maintenance		0.3
Total capital programme		2.0





# Section 11

## The Trust and the Council



## 11. The Children's Trust and the Council

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.

These 'dependencies' have been set out in the Service Specification of the Trust Service Delivery Contract. These reflect arrangements and services for children that the Council must put in place to enable the Trust to achieve its priorities and performance targets, and include:

- ensuring all children have a school place.
- ensuring where children are not in school, support is provided to help them return to school.
- ensuring all children have 25 hours education a week.
- where children are excluded, removed from roll or otherwise prevented from attending education full-time, the Council will speedily make alternative arrangements.
- that vulnerable children between the ages of two and four have access to free day nursery provision.
- adequate housing for families in need.
- an improved early support and local offer for children with special educational needs and disabilities: this area needs to improve following the June 2018 Ofsted inspection of SEND.
- provision of the Virtual School for our children in care, ensuring children in care, adopted and 'former looked after' children make the best possible progress and receive appropriate support to enhance their potential in school. This area needs to improve following the December 2018 Ofsted inspection.
- youth services that can be mobilised to support the city's most vulnerable young people in the community.
- further education, training and access to employment support.





# Section 12

## Working with Partners



## 12. Working with Partners

The Children's Trust has played a key role in building stronger strategic and operational partnership work across the city and is represented across all of the key partnership forums. The Trust plays a prominent role in particular in the Birmingham Children's Partnership which consists of all the most senior representatives across Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Children's Trust, Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group, Birmingham Women and Children's Hospital, Birmingham Community Healthcare Trust, West Midlands Police, Birmingham Public Health and the Birmingham and Solihull Sustainability and Transformation Programme.

The partnership is currently in the process of building a business case for investment (circa £15m) with an associated portfolio of activity to achieve the following:

- to support immediate need and generate cashable efficiencies across the children's system.
- to reduce long-term future demand to acute services that is projected to grow.
- to address latent demand that has not been met in preceding years.
- to improve service quality through enabling activities such as culture change.

The business case incorporates new Early Help delivery, integrated commissioning, improved support to schools, better connections with community and the third sector, and more effective Transitions. The Trust is ambitious for change and will work collaboratively with the partnership to develop the vision and principles for change and stands ready to deliver new services if commissioned so to do. In particular, the Trust is working with the Council's Education and Skills and Adult Services to develop a 'Life Course' approach to service design and delivery, recognising our collective ambition is to create the conditions that allow our children and young people to receive the support they need, from their families, communities and state agencies, to grow into independent, socially and relationally connected, economically active adults. Creating more seamless services in a more connected culture will make this happen.

We believe the Trust is uniquely well-placed as a delivery vehicle with increasing skills and impact. Leadership, culture change and engagement are all critical aspects of the approach needed from the partnership.

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



# Section 13

## Managing Risk

## **13. Managing Risk**

The Children's Trust actively manages risk through its risk register, which is routinely updated via its Executive and monitored through its Finance and Resources Committee. Key risks going into 2020/21 include the threat posed by and disruption arising from the Coronavirus epidemic, contract management, relationships with partners, increases in cost pressure from placements, other unexpected, unpredictable and unfunded cost pressures, Council dependencies, and ensuring the successful 'bedding in' of the new social care IT system, Eclipse.

Key strategic risks are monitored and managed through the Trust Executive, and regularly reported to the Finance and Resources Committee.

# Pen portrait of our children and our service

(April 2020)



BIRMINGHAM  
CHILDREN'S TRUST

**Our vision** is to build a Trust that provides excellent social work and family support for, and with, the city's most vulnerable children, young people and families. We give our best so young people can achieve their best.

Gross budget

**£197.5m**



Number  
of employees

**1,832**



## Child breakdown by age

Under 1 - 525 children  
0-4 - 1,633 children  
5-9 - 1,905 children  
10-15 - 2,645 children  
16-25 - 1,920 children/young people

**850**  
care  
leavers

Trust  
working with  
**8,628**  
children and  
young people

**89** unaccompanied asylum seekers

**484** Trust foster carers offering **651** placements

**12%** of children left care through adoption

**81** children adopted

**4** disabled children's homes

**32.7%** youth reoffending rate (39.2% Eng & Wales)

Number of  
children with a  
child protection plan



**1,295**

Number of  
children  
in care



**1,929**

**772**

Number of  
disabled  
children



**1,527**  
Children  
in need

**2,356**

Children in families supported  
by Family Support and/or  
Think Family









BIRMINGHAM  
**Safeguarding  
Children**  
PARTNERSHIP



# Independent Chair's Accountability Report 2019-20

## **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 This report formally discharges my responsibility to the Safeguarding Partners in Birmingham.
- 1.2 It is my fourth Accountability Report and is a personal reflection, which I have prepared for statutory 'Safeguarding Partners' and which I am sharing with members of the Safeguarding Leaders Assembly.
- 1.3 In this report I seek to provide assurance as to my activity and to reflect on my independent view of progress that the Safeguarding Partnership is making in achieving its Ambition, Purpose, and Priorities.

## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) adopted locally in April 2019 define the statutory safeguarding partners as Birmingham City Council (BCC), Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group (BSol CCG) and West Midlands Police (WMP). Since children's services are provided by Birmingham Children Trust (BCT), they are treated as the fourth partner.
- 2.2 I meet regularly with the Chief Executives and senior leaders of these partner organisations as well as convening and chairing the Executive Board of the Partnership, convening and chairing quarterly Practitioners' Forums and an annual Practitioners' Conference, and sitting on the Children's Partnership Board and Council Leader convened City Board. I am also a member of the Regional Chairs and Business Managers' meeting which encompasses 14 Local Authority areas and three police forces. I try to operate in a constructive way, drawing on my experience, bringing independence and providing support and challenge.
- 2.3 Through the year, I seek to meet with each of the Sub-Groups and connected forums (Health and Education) and I have induction meetings with any new members of the Board. I meet with the Cabinet member for Children and the Scrutiny Chair, as well as my colleague Independent Chair of the Adult Safeguarding Board.
- 2.4 I attach the Independent Chair role description agreed with partners which I have updated in the light of the new MASA responsibilities. (*Appendix 1*)
- 2.5 I attach a simple chart of the Partnership Sub-Groups and connectedness. (*Appendix 2*)
- 2.6 During the last year, I have been appointed as a Board Member and Trustee of Barnardo's children's charity. I am aware that there could appear to be a conflict of interest should that organisation feature in a serious case or take on a significant local contract. By being open about this unremunerated post I am seeking to ensure that there is no perceived or actual conflict of interest. For a full resume of my current commitments and responsibilities please see my LinkedIn profile.



### **3. Business Support and Board Members**

- 3.1 As Independent Chair, I am hugely dependent on the Business Support Unit hosted by BCT and led by Simon Cross, Business Manager. He in turn is supported by a team of dedicated, experienced programme managers and administrative staff who ensure the effectiveness of our Sub-Groups and delivery of their work programmes. Simon is accountable to Graham Tilby, Assistant Director, who has joined the Trust in the last year. I am grateful for the team's commitment, and their advice and support.
- 3.2 We have just bid farewell to Tony Diaram who led the Learning and Development Programme with flair and delivered two excellent Practitioners' Conferences. He has also teed up this year's Conference with a stellar line up, addressing the theme of Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding. We wish Tony well in his new role.
- 3.3 Board members bring to their role both the responsibilities and knowledge from their day job and a commitment to contribute to the wider safeguarding system. They co-chair sub-groups, are members of other relevant statutory partnerships (Community Safety, Children's or Health and Wellbeing, for example). I am grateful to each of them for their commitment and their confidence in me to convene and chair them as a leadership group. Our judgement was that in Birmingham the active role of an Independent Chair was required by the system to support the sustained improvement agenda. We are not yet ready to have just a "Scrutineer".

### **4. Our Ambition**

- 4.1 When we established the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements in April 2019, we articulated our agreed ambition:

*"Birmingham is a family friendly city where children will flourish, feel safe, listened to, learn and grow up, able to actively contribute to society."*

- 4.2 This laudable ambition can only be a work in progress. It is truly encouraging that this last year has seen inexorable progress from Birmingham Children's Trust and partners to deliver well for children. On 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020, Ofsted published a letter following a "focussed visit" looking at the "front door" and including the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Inspectors found that arrangements are "positive for children and families in Birmingham, who receive an appropriate response to identified needs and concerns." They further commented that "all staff spoken to are positive about working for the Trust and the progress made since its inception." Clearly there is further to go to achieve recognition as a "Good" area, yet there is tangible evidence of progress toward that goal.
- 4.3 The city ambition for children cannot be delivered by the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) alone. So, I am pleased that I am contributing to the wider Children's Partnership, established last year and now at the point of agreeing a Business Case which will see significant investment in its five key priorities: Early Help, SEND, Mental Health 0-25, high cost placements, and school inclusion. Learning from serious cases and audits contributed to the identification of these priorities.

4.4 The UNICEF Rights and Responsibility Initiative, led in the Council by Razia Butt and undertaken by over 200 schools, plays a significant role in equipping young people to understand their rights and to protect one another. Attending the celebration of their work at Birmingham Repertory Theatre is a highlight of the year. I hope I will find more schools have joined over the last year.

4.5 When we are hosted for our Executive meetings in schools or colleges the importance of Birmingham being experienced as a safe place always comes up. With knife crime and exploitation in our midst, there is active concern from young people and can be no room for complacency. This topic has been the subject of discussion at the City Board and is the focus of action from the newly developed Violence Reduction Unit. This year we have undertaken learning reviews following one fatal and another life-changing incident involving teenagers. We published a learning bulletin, "County Lines: Ruining Young Lives" in January 2020. Developing an effective response to exploitation is one of our four priorities and I will discuss progress further below.

## **5. Our Purpose**

5.1 We determined that our purpose was one of convening the four lead safeguarding partners to work in close collaboration with "relevant agencies" to "safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people in Birmingham". Specifically, the new Partnership would provide "system leadership, challenge, and hold organisations to account". We committed to the BSCP creating "a learning culture, sharing good practice and driving improvement in partnership working to deliver better outcomes."

5.2 To deliver on this purpose we have refreshed our subgroups: Learning and Development; Quality Impact and Outcomes; and Serious Cases. Each is co-chaired and has a work programme and a commitment to communicate. Additionally, we have reinforced the value of the Safeguarding in Education, Health Safeguarding and Practitioners' Forums. Under the new arrangements, from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 the CCG and Public Health took strategic lead for overseeing the review of all child deaths, having a population-wide responsibility rather than a safeguarding one. The Early Help partnership is being refreshed, with accountability to the Children's Partnership recognising that early support for children and families should be universal.

5.3 At a high level, I think there is evidence that BSCP is delivering on its purpose:

- There is a clear set of procedures and arrangements for practice;
- There is a programme of assured learning and development and a vibrant sub-group delivering it and developing new content in response to reviews and demand. The Practitioners' Conference on Neglect last June was outstanding. The quality of keynote speakers and workshops were worthy of a national conference and the feedback reflected that;
- The Serious Cases Sub-Group has responded to the new arrangements for Rapid Reviews and has met the demanding timescales of 15 working days in all eight cases, with the

## **Independent Chair's Accountability Report 2019-20**

exception of one case which was submitted a day late. Simon Cross has led regional work to develop the approach and accompanying guidance, and has been rewarded with sign-off from all 14 West Midlands authority areas and also significant interest from across the country. BSCP is being generous with intellectual property, asking only to be acknowledged in adapted local documentation;

- The Quality Impact and Outcomes Sub-Group, jointly chaired by Birmingham Children's Trust and Birmingham and Solihull CCG, has sustained and further developed the Board Assurance Framework. It has delivered its audit programme, whose focus was derived from issues and outliers in safeguarding performance data. Learning lessons briefings on "Discharge Planning – context is key" (May 2019) and a Mental Ill-Health File Audit based on joint area inspection methodology (Jan 2020), were both productive and identified useful learning for practitioner team discussions;
- Learning bulletins produced after events (e.g. Practitioners' Forums, audits and conferences) or summarising serious cases, are well received. Their house style is recognised and they are pithy and accessible. They are all distributed widely and can be found on our refreshed website;
- We have sustained our habit of considering all "outstanding" reports from across the country. We remain highly visible on social media, taking the opportunity to stay connected and abreast of developments and new initiatives, in addition to sharing our learning and campaigns. This year as well as continuing to promote "Safer Sleeping" and "Safeguarding is Everybody's Business", we eagerly await the positive impact from the Community Trust's "Who's In Charge?" campaign, which is highlighting the serious impact that parental misuse of drink and drugs can have on young children. Sadly this is a feature in all too many serious cases of significant harm;
- Twice a year our Safeguarding Leaders' Assembly is convened at the MAC to discuss a key topic with an external national speaker. They enable senior leaders to be actively involved in influencing the safeguarding agenda, challenge and witness the progress of the Partnership. In April 2019, the Assembly formally launched the new compliant Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements. In October 2019, Carlene Firmin addressed the subject of Contextual Safeguarding; a strategic and partnership priority which I will address below. The Assembly provides the opportunity for the wider system including leaders from the voluntary, faith and community sectors and "relevant agencies" to join Executive Board members in deliberation, learning and assurance.

## **6. Our Priorities**

### **6.1 Strong Leadership and Strong Partnership**

- 6.1.1 This year has again seen as much churn as continuity in leadership at a number of levels. The departure of the City Council Chief Executive after a little over a year means that I have now worked with four LA CEOs in as many years, and await the designation of a new Interim. The lack of an established and permanent top team in the Council House is regrettable and is hampering the finalisation of strategic partnership arrangements and

as importantly, the establishment of enduring relationships to support the sizeable agenda which the City's elected and managerial leaders face. The disconnect between the City Board and other statutory partnerships is illustrative of this point.

- 6.1.2 That said, the continuity in Health Chief Executives and within the top team in Birmingham Children's Trust is providing much needed stability. Together with the DCS, Tim O'Neil, they have developed a shared agenda which is being taken forward by the relatively new Children's Partnership (chaired by the LA CEO with CCG CEO as Vice Chair). With clear priorities and a funded Transformation Team, which is developing a business case to change and deliver services on the ground, there are grounds for optimism that there will be a positive impact on the lives of children.
- 6.1.3 This shared improvement agenda together with growing confidence from the Children's Trust, is encouraging a more confident, proactive and creative approach to big issues. An example of this is the system leadership being provided by Andy Couldrick (CEO, Birmingham Children's Trust) in respect of extra familial exploitation and abuse, sometimes referred to as Contextual or Transitional Safeguarding, which I discuss below.
- 6.1.4 Within the leadership of the Safeguarding system itself, there is developing a growing confidence and ability to constructively challenge as well as support one another. With a new Chief Superintendent for the West Midlands Police Public Protection Unit and a new Chief Nurse in the CCG there has been a welcome injection of curiosity and learning. We held a development session with external facilitation in December 2019 to assist in relationship-building and honest conversations, and its positive impact is evident. There is more work to do to enshrine these positive behaviours in all levels of multi-disciplinary working; still we find case reviews commenting on a lack of information sharing and appropriate escalation of issues.
- 6.1.5 I remain concerned that at a local level in General Practice, Community Health and in schools, there is too much variation in the quality of collaboration with other partners, in information sharing and in mutual understanding of roles and capabilities. This is evidenced in those few serious cases where no-one has been fully seized of the child's real life experience.
- 6.1.6 That said, this is the second largest city and the youngest, and yet it is not an outlier in terms of numbers of serious cases, and this we must remember.
- 6.1.7 All my experience of system leadership and working in partnership tells me that there is no quick fix. The quality of relationships is essential and must be developed over time, supporting a common purpose with some shared values and priorities that all are committed to. In Birmingham, this is a work in progress.

## **6.2 Continuous Improvement of Child Protection Practice Across the System and in All Agencies**

- 6.2.1 From the start of my time in Birmingham I have prioritised support for practice. This is best exemplified in the development of the annual Practitioners' Conference; my commitment to the quarterly Practitioners' Forums; the publication of practice bulletins; and the practice focus of the Quality Impact and Outcomes and the Learning and Development Sub-Groups.

- 6.2.2 The explicit principles underpinning the Partnership are that it espouses a learning culture, effective multi-disciplinary working, a commitment to early help and a focus on families as the best place for children to grow up. These principles are only meaningful if they are led into practice.
- 6.2.3 The findings of external inspection and regulation are encouraging, especially for the Birmingham Children's Trust.
- 6.2.4 Action between the Community Trust, CCG, Public Health and partners to address unsustainable workloads in Health Visiting is beginning to show results and will be positively impacted upon when the Children's Partnership Business Plan becomes an investment and delivery agenda for Early Help.
- 6.2.5 The habits of multi-disciplinary audits, debriefing and learning reviews are being developed. The Serious Cases Sub-Group's 15 working-day Rapid Review process has been commendably responded to by all agencies, and undoubtedly is speeding up key learning from and into practice.
- 6.2.6 Unfortunately, the fast-moving Coronavirus pandemic will doubtless have a significant effect on current practice and brings with it secondary safeguarding implications that have not yet being fully recognised, planned for or mitigated.
- 6.2.7 I have met with our new Probation member on the Executive Board and am assured that the further reunification and reorganisation of these vital risk and offender management services which is underway is seized of safeguarding concerns.
- 6.2.8 The Safeguarding Partnership has been asked to contribute to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) chaired by Professor Alexis Jay. Specifically, the Inquiry is interested in local practice with religious organisations and their approach to safeguarding. We have prepared a statement and are ready to give oral evidence, though the latest Public Health emergency is temporarily halting the hearings. That we can speak with one partnership voice is encouraging; that we have had to concentrate on fundamental practice in mainstream organisations at the expense of more wide-ranging actions is a reality. That said, this year we have forged a positive relationship with Birmingham Council of Faiths and its Chair, Daniel Griffiths. We also welcomed the Head of Safeguarding for the Archdiocese to our December Board meeting and learned of the strengthened approach to safeguarding in very recent times.
- 6.2.9 The focus of the Practitioner Conference in June 2019 was Childhood Neglect with an expert by experience, Jenny Molloy ("Hackney Child" ) and Professor Anna Gupta of Royal Holloway, University of London, providing the key note speeches. Jenny Turnross, Director of Practice in the Birmingham Children's Trust, introduced the Neglect Strategy which was launched on the day. The eight improvement workshops gave delegates a rich menu from which to choose. Nationally, research, audits and serious cases tell us that neglect is a serious and increasing issue, especially for some young children and teenagers. Therefore the conference was timely.

- 6.2.10 Practitioners' Forums have continued with a range of discussion topics including Honour-Based Violence and Domestic Abuse. Each session has an opportunity for a Q&A with me as Independent Chair and provides for good networking. A bulletin is produced for the benefit of all and is widely distributed and available on the website.
- 6.2.11 One serious case review has been published this year, in December 2019. This addressed the sad death of two-month-old Terri Rae Palmer at New Year in 2017. The briefing note outlining the learning from her review was titled "Just because they say they are not drinking or taking drugs...be curious, seek evidence". It was published once Terri Rae's mother had been imprisoned for thirteen and a half years for manslaughter and GBH. Despite tenacious professional support once potential neglect was identified, no one foresaw the catastrophic injuries that this baby would endure.
- 6.3 Developing an effective multi-agency response to Contextual Safeguarding, recognising exploitation of young people in all its forms
- 6.3.1 The safeguarding threats to young people from outside the home and family have been rising up the professional and political agenda over recent years.
- 6.3.2 The recognition of violence resulting from County Lines; the devastating impact of Child Sexual Exploitation; the development of a knife-carrying culture in some places; and a longstanding gangs problem, sometimes geographic in its focus, often with criminal exploitation as a feature: all these and more come within the orbit of Transitional or Contextual Safeguarding.
- 6.3.3 Locally, the Safeguarding partners have recognised these phenomena and the inadequacy of traditional child protection approaches to effectively meet these issues. Nationally, "Working Together" guidance has highlighted the need for a joined-up and serious response to threats from outside the family.
- 6.3.4 We were very fortunate in having both Dez Holmes (Director of Research In Practice) and Dr Carlene Firmin (University of Bedfordshire) address us at the two Safeguarding Leaders' Assemblies during the year to challenge and enlighten us on adolescence and the developing practice of Contextual Safeguarding. The Birmingham Children's Trust and West Midlands Police have risen to the challenge. The establishment of a multi-disciplinary Practice Hub for recognising and tackling all forms of exploitation is well underway, informed by best developing practice. With joint leadership from social work and police, commitment of other partners and strong sponsorship from Andy Couldrick (CEO, BCT) and the Children's Partnership, prospects are good. That said, the significant number of violent incidents over the past months only underlines the importance of getting a grip on these complex issues. Already the Partnership has published a learning review of two cases titled "County Lines: Ruining Young Lives". The National Panel have also published on this topic.
- 6.3.5 The success criteria for this priority must include a reduction in deaths and serious injury to young people from exploitation and violence outside the family. But the achievement of that aim will require a whole community, indeed a whole society response, and will take time. The necessary ground work is underway. We welcomed meeting Red Thread, an organisation tackling this issue on the frontline in acute hospital settings, when we



## **Independent Chair's Accountability Report 2019-20**

were hosted for one of our Board meetings by Good Hope Hospital, part of the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust. I look forward to visiting the Hub in coming months and take solace from the positive comments from Ofsted when they visited these “front doors” of services recently.

6.3.6 This priority is most definitely a work in progress.

### **6.4 Evidencing the impact of the new Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership**

6.4.1 Sir Alan Wood, the architect of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements which had to be in force by October 2019, is already undertaking a review of the impact of the new arrangements nationally. But for Coronavirus, he was to join us at our Safeguarding Leaders' Assembly on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020; that meeting will have to be postponed.

6.4.2 My own view is that it is too early to tell, or to tell completely. In Birmingham we have been working with the new arrangements for a full year. We had already streamlined our meetings, purpose, principles and priorities. We had influenced the widening of the partnership system with the introduction of the Children's Partnership. We have placed an emphasis on leadership, partnership, practice, learning and communication. We can evidence action and progress on all of these fronts. Our approach to Rapid Reviews has been recognised as valuable well beyond our borders. We have welcomed the emphasis on quickly reviewing with practitioners, identifying learning, and taking action.

6.4.3 However, as a system we are still “requires improvement”. We know that the Early Help, SEND, and Mental Health offers for children, young people and their families require rapid and fundamental development. There are plans, there is commitment, there should be resources ... impact will follow.

6.4.4 So give us another year to demonstrate sustainable impact, I would say.

## **7. Conclusions**

7.1 When I started this look back at the past twelve months, April 2019 - March 2020, I totted up the activity and evaluated the relationships, compared with the intent at the start of the year. My judgement is that there has been progress in service and system quality and responsiveness; there is independent testimony to that. There have been some notable achievements by the BSCP programme team in delivery of its agenda (Rapid Review scheme, Conference; Sub-Groups' delivery). However, I am frustrated that some of the strategic developments beyond safeguarding have not progressed as speedily as I would like.

7.2 What I did not foresee a mere two weeks ago when I started this report, was that I would produce it with the country in virtual lock-down, facing a pandemic and seeking to prevent the worst death toll since the 'flu of a hundred years ago.

7.3 So I end my report thanking everyone for responding calmly and thoughtfully to the new normal with remote working, virtual meetings, and still a fixed focus on identifying and supporting those most vulnerable and at risk of significant harm.

- 7.4 I wish you well and can confirm that I have accepted an extension of my contract to September 2021 at least, determined to build on progress and to see us deliver on our ambition for Birmingham's children.

**Penny Thompson CBE**

17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Role of BSCP Independent Chair – Leadership of Assurance, Learning, Partnering  
Appendix 2: BSCP Structure Chart

**Appendix 1:**

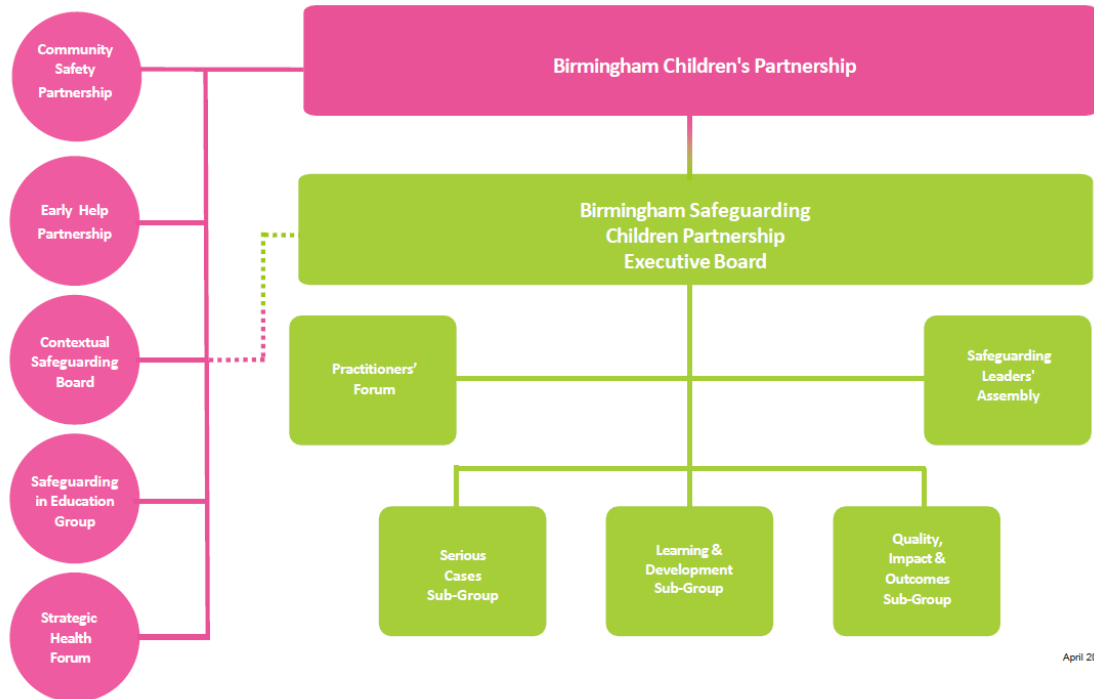
**Role of BSCP Independent Chair – Leadership of Assurance, Learning, Partnering**

**Key Functions:**

- a) Independent convener of all those charged with the wellbeing, including safeguarding, of children and young people in Birmingham;
- b) A champion for children and best practice;
- c) Independent Chair of the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive Board and Safeguarding Leaders' Assembly.
- d) Supporting and challenging the Birmingham leadership in their quest to achieve a sustainably safe city for children and young people, in the context of family, community and wellbeing;
- e) Modelling openness, challenge, support, mutual respect, professionalism and learning for application by leaders in Birmingham;
- f) Ensuring political and managerial leaders are demonstrably accountable for the resourcing and strategic priority given to the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people;
- g) Ensuring the Safeguarding Partners' leadership role is understood, valued, respected and fulfilled;
- h) Demonstrating a robust approach to evaluation, practice audit & research whose dissemination will support valuable learning for multi-agency leaders, managers and practitioners in their critical roles;
- i) Through robust independent support and challenge, contribute to developing confidence of citizens and the state in the city of Birmingham.

**Appendix 2:**

## Structure Chart







# Annual Report 2019/20



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## Foreword

I am writing this piece in extraordinary circumstances. Covid-19, has changed life completely. Whilst no longer in a lockdown, I (and so many others) am working remotely. For me there is no return to Birmingham in sight. The political priorities of juggling life and livelihood is affecting us all. Inevitably, the impact on the vulnerable is most acute. In the second city, the youngest city in Europe, many of those are the children. I would like to recognise the commitment of all partners in working together to rise to the challenge of sustaining our safeguarding priorities, whilst moving with speed to improve early and local help.

This is an Annual Report and so although last year seems like another country, we must look back, evaluate progress and learn, in order to continue to build on progress. 2019/20 was a year of steady progress and consolidation in safeguarding practice. It was the first year of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA).

In Birmingham, we agreed to build on the changes we had made in the past few years and not opt for radical change. Specifically, the lead partners: Local Authority (BCC); Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT); Health (BSol CCG) and Police (WMP) determined that they wanted to keep an Independent Chair rather than moving to a more hands-off Independent Scrutineer function. We have prioritised building on progress, and this has been validated by external inspection and assessment.

We have concentrated on building partnership confidence and learning from practice, locally, regionally and nationally. Whilst we have only published one Serious Case Review during this time, we have continued to produce learning bulletins. Our quarterly Practitioner Forum and annual conference have been much valued.

Partnership developments have been focussed on the Birmingham Children's Partnership and its priorities, in particular the development of a locality based Early Help Offer and improvements for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). My contribution has been one of independent support and challenge. I very much welcome the growing priority being afforded the Children's agenda in the country's youngest city, and I trust that the planning for resurgence after the pandemic, can include an ambitious, hopeful and kind agenda for Children, Young People and Families.

I am struck by the commitment and energy that partner organisations and their practitioners have brought to working together in the Children's safeguarding arena over the past year. Already, it is enabling a robust, creative and effective response to the challenges of 2020, and some new ways of working which will be sustained. Many thanks, especially to those who have played a part in leading and supporting our Sub-Groups and delivering our work programme.

Good luck for the future. Stay safe.



**Penny Thompson CBE, Independent Chair**



## Introduction

This Annual Report sets out how agencies have worked together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Birmingham. The report provides a rigorous and transparent assessment of the effectiveness of these arrangements during the financial year, commencing 1 April 2019 until 31 March 2020.

The Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership have been developed to:

- Facilitate and drive action beyond usual institutional and agency constraints and boundaries.
- Ensure the effective protection of children is founded on practitioners developing lasting and trusting relationships with children and their families.

The Independent Chair Penny Thompson CBE works alongside statutory 'Safeguarding Partners' and 'Relevant Agencies' to continuously improve the safeguarding arrangements and ensure that the statutory role and functions as defined in the national guidance, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)' are effectively discharged.

The published Annual Report is available to read and download from the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership website [www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk](http://www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk). Penny Thompson CBE will formally present the Annual Report to the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, Birmingham Children's Partnership and the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A copy will be sent to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care. The report comprises five sections:

### **Part 1 - Context and Key Facts about Birmingham**

This section provides background information and statistical data to provide a local context to protecting and safeguarding children and young people in the second largest Local Authority in Europe.

### **Part 2 – The Effectiveness of Safeguarding Arrangements**

This section of the report focuses on the first year of the Business Improvement Plan 2019-21 evaluating progress made on the four key priorities:

1. Strong Leadership and Strong Partnership;
2. Continuous Improvement of Child Protection Practice across the system and in all agencies;
3. Developing an effective multi-agency response to Contextual Safeguarding, recognising exploitation of young people in all its forms;
4. Evidencing the impact of the new Safeguarding Children Partnership.

### **Part 3 – Governance and Accountability Arrangements**

This section examines the funding arrangements, resource utilisation and the impact of the Executive Board and Sub-Groups.

### **Part 4 – Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews**

This section provides a summary of decision and action taken by partners to implement learning from local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

## Part 5 - Conclusion and Priorities for the Year Ahead

The conclusion reflects on the challenges and progress in the first year of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and sets out the safeguarding priorities for the year ahead.

### Authors:

Penny Thompson CBE, Independent Chair & Simon Cross, Business Manager  
Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership

This Report can be downloaded from the BSCP website: [www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk](http://www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk)

Alternatively, you can email us: [BSCP.contactus@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk](mailto:BSCP.contactus@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk)

Call us on 0121 464 2612

or write to us at:

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership

PO Box 17340

Birmingham

B2 2DR



## Part 1 – Context and Key Facts about Birmingham



Birmingham is the second largest city in the UK, with an estimated population of over 1,141,000 residents. The vibrant heart of the city is home to iconic buildings such as Grand Central, the Library of Birmingham and Selfridges. The city stretches from Sutton Park in the North, to Longbridge Technology Park in the South and is home to the famous Bull

Ring Shopping Centre. With accessibility to air and rail transport links to the rest of the UK and beyond, living in Birmingham can be both exciting and challenging. Birmingham has more green space of any European city, more canals than Venice. But...**41%** children growing up in poverty. **19%** of households experiencing acute Mental Health problems, Substance Misuse and Domestic Abuse.

Birmingham is a super-diverse city. Around 42% of residents come from a minority ethnic group (national average 14%), with about 50 languages spoken in the city [ONS Census 2011].

The population is expected to grow by 14.9% over the next twenty years. This growth will have an impact on public services, such as Education, Housing and Health. Birmingham is one of the youngest cities in Europe, with an average age of 35 and 84,000 children under the age of 5.



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Children received a  
specialist Social Care Service

**1,295**  
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**2,356** Children in Families  
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**1,929**  
Children in Care



**35.6** children live in  
poverty  
(Local Indicators of Child Poverty 2017-18).



**17.1%** of children in Birmingham have a  
recognised SEN. **3.24%** have a statement of  
EHCP. A further **13.9%** receive SEN support. (National figure  
15.5%, 3.2% and 12.1% respectively)



**84,000** of children are under the age of 5.  
**78%** of our under 5's live in **40%** of the most deprived areas. **6,829**  
children per 1,000 are homeless. **14.4%** of households are overcrowded.



**40.3%** of children at age  
11 are obese & overweight.  
Higher than the National  
average

**8.5%** (2018) of 16 to 17 years  
olds are not in employment  
education or training .  
(National figure 5.5% 2018)



Birmingham has a **3.65**  
Youth Re-Offending rate.  
Lower than the  
National average of 4.05

## Part 2 – The Effectiveness of Safeguarding Arrangements

The Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) published a two-year Business Improvement Plan for 2019-21 (Figure 1), setting out four priority areas for the continuous improvement of the partnership arrangements to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people in Birmingham and realise our ambition:

***‘Birmingham is a family city where children will flourish, feel safe, listened to, learn and grow up, able to actively contribute to society’.***

This section focuses on progress made within the first year of the plan.

**Figure 1: Business Improvement Plan 2019-21**



The Safeguarding Partners share equal responsibility for ensuring effective oversight and implementation of the Business Improvement Plan, which commenced on 1st April 2019. The plan builds on the strong foundation left by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, which the new safeguarding partnership arrangements replaced. The Partnership has worked collaboratively to streamline and strengthen the existing arrangements to further improve how agencies work together to safeguard and protect children and young people across the city.

The four key priorities are:

**Priority 1:** Strong Leadership and Strong Partnership;

**Priority 2:** Continuous Improvement of Child Protection Practice across the system and in all agencies;

**Priority 3:** Developing an effective multi-agency response to Contextual Safeguarding, recognising exploitation of young people in all its forms;

**Priority 4:** Evidencing the impact of the new Safeguarding Children Partnership.










All our work will be underpinned by a consideration of the views and experiences of Birmingham's children and young people. We acknowledge that successful implementation of the Business Improvement Plan will be judged on the difference it makes to the safety and wellbeing of Birmingham's children and young people. We intend that progress will be reported to the Birmingham Children's Partnership as well as the Health and Wellbeing Board and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on an annual basis.

Figure 2 provides an overview of progress against the fifteen specific actions set out in the Business Improvement Plan 2019-21. The first column highlights the '*What we set out to achieve*'. The second column provides a summary of '*Progress End of Year 1*'. The final column provides a RAG rating: Green indicates action completed; amber shows that the action is progressing and on schedule for completion within agreed timescales and red indicates significant slippage, requiring strategic intervention. 80% (12 out of 15) of the workstreams have been completed. Significant progress has been made on the outstanding actions, with the launch of the Empower-U Contextual Safeguarding Hub, however the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on finalisation of the citywide Contextual Safeguarding Strategy and conference programme. This work has been incorporated within year two of the work programme.

**Figure 2: Overview of progress against the sixteen specific actions**

Priority 1 - Strong Leadership and Strong Partnership		
What we set out to achieve	Progress End of Year 1	
1. The BSCP Executive Board oversees effective implementation of the Business Improvement Plan and associated Work Programmes.	March 2020 Executive Board reviewed progress on year 1 of work programme. Published BSCP Annual Report 2019/20	😊
2. That the BSCP Independent Chair and strategic leaders from the 'Safeguarding Partners' are core members of the Birmingham Children's Partnership tasked with making the city's ambition a reality.	Independent Chair BSCP is member of the Birmingham Children's Partnership.	😊
3. The BSCP Executive Board maximise the opportunity to learn and improve partnership practice through its workforce development programme, quality assurance framework and the findings of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs).	The Partnership published learning from LCSPRs and audits which informs the development of Multi-Agency Safeguarding practice, procedures and training.	😊
4. Extend public awareness campaign ' <i>Keeping Children Safe is everybody's business</i> ' Focused on preventing child abuse and neglect in 2019-21.	Original campaign being developed to incorporate 'Who's in charge' on the impact of drugs and alcohol on parenting capacity.	😊

Priority 2 - Continuous Improvement of Child Protection Practice across the system and in all agencies		
What we set out to achieve	Progress End of Year 1	
1. The BSCP to host an Annual Safeguarding Practitioners on 'Adolescent Neglect' on the 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2019, to launch the new strategy and awareness campaign.	'Tackling childhood Neglect in Birmingham' – Conference 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2019 – Villa Park	
2. BSCP invite the nominated Senior Responsible Officer for implementation of the Neglect Strategy to provide a six-month report on progress.	Assistant Director of Safeguarding Chairs a Neglect Operational Group to oversee effective implementation of the strategy.	
3. Learning & Development Sub-Group to provide a comprehensive programme of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training to deliver high quality of face to face training, e-learning and seminars. To include application of Neglect Assessment Tools (Graded Care Profile 2 and Outcome Star).	Implementation of the BSCP Multi-Agency Training Offer 2020/21 is overseen by Learning & Development Sub-Group. During the Covid-19 pandemic virtual training and webinars have replaced face-to-face training to enable the workforce to access training whilst working from home.	
4. Learning & Development and Quality Impact & Outcomes Sub-Groups to collaborate with the Birmingham Early Help Partnership to deliver bespoke training for and evaluate the impact of the 'Lead Practitioners' role in supporting 'Our Family Plans'.	The development of the locality based Early Help and Support model has provided new opportunities and challenges around workforce development. Training Needs Analysis is being undertaken to target safeguarding training for Lead Professionals.	

Priority 3 - Developing an effective multi-agency response to Contextual and Safeguarding, recognising exploitation of young people in all its forms		
What we set out to achieve	Progress End of Year 1	
1. BSCP Executive Board to support the Contextual Safeguarding Board in developing the city's Contextual Safeguarding Strategy and Action Plan 2020-22.	In year two of the plan the BSCP will support the Birmingham Children's Partnership in developing a citywide Contextual Safeguarding Strategy, building on the success of the Empower-U Contextual Safeguarding Hub.	
2. Learning & Development Sub-Group to work in collaboration with the Contextual Safeguarding Board to develop bespoke training to enhance partnership practice in responding to contextual safeguarding.	Multi-agency training offer 2020/21 endorsed by Executive Board 12 <sup>th</sup> February 2020.	
3. The BSCP to host an Annual Safeguarding Practitioners Conference on 'Contextual Safeguarding' in June 2020.	Planning for Practitioners Conference on 'Contextual Safeguarding' scheduled for June 2020 has been postponed until 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2021 due to Covid-19. However, a virtual Contextual Safeguarding Conference is planned for November 2020.	

Priority 4 - Evidencing the impact of the new Safeguarding Children Partnership		
What we set out to achieve	Progress End of Year	
1. BSCP Executive Board to undertake a 12-month review of the effectiveness of the new governance and accountability arrangements to identify areas for improvement	A review of the Governance Arrangements was presented to Executive Board on 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	😊
2. The Learning and Development Sub-Group to provide the Executive Board with an annual evaluation of the quality and impact of multi-agency safeguarding training delivered	An evaluation of multi-agency training was presented to Executive Board on 12 <sup>th</sup> February 2020.	😊
3. The BSCP Executive Board to publish on its website an Annual Report providing evidence of impact on the priorities set out in the Business Improvement Plan.	The Annual Report to be published in September 2020. The Independent Chair to present the findings to the Birmingham Children's Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board and Education & Children Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	😊
4. The BSCP Executive Board will notify and send a copy of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews to the National Panel and Secretary of State for Education	In compliance with national guidance the BSCP have undertaken 7 Rapid Reviews and published one Serious Case Review.	😊



## Part 3 – Governance and Accountability Arrangements

This section examines the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Birmingham, which have been designed to support and enable agencies to work together in a system where:

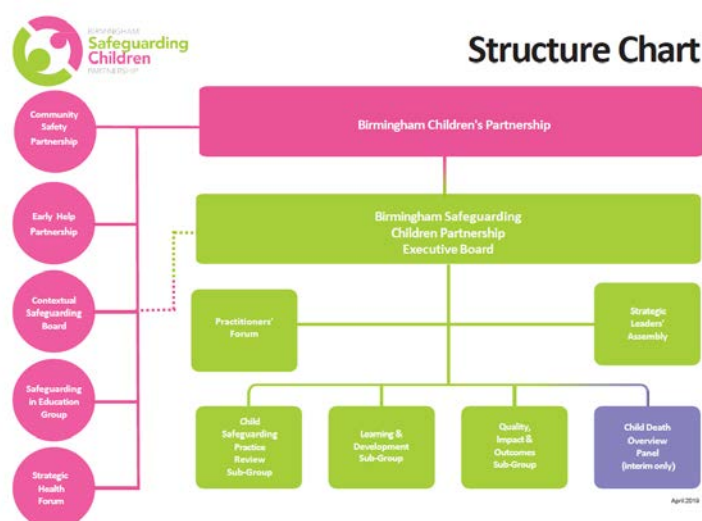
- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted;
- Partnerships and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children;
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively;
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats;
- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice;
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

### Executive Board

The Executive Board provides independent oversight of the city's safeguarding arrangements, creating an environment where support and challenge are the norm, targeting strategic intervention where improvement is required. Throughout this first year, the focus has been on workforce development, cascading learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Audits aimed at enhancing safeguarding practice.

Since the launch of the BSCP on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 the Partnership Executive Board has focused on forging closer links with the Birmingham Children's Partnership, Birmingham Community Safety Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board and the Birmingham Adult Safeguarding Board enhancing system leadership and partnership collaboration across the city. The Executive Board and Sub-Group structure and the key relationship with statutory partnerships is detailed in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3: Safeguarding Structure**

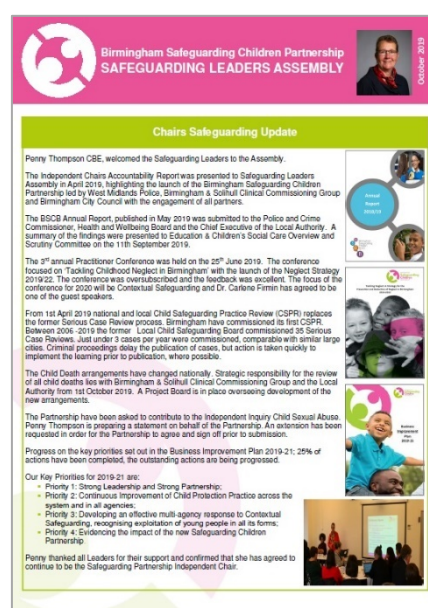


## Safeguarding Leaders' Assembly

The Safeguarding Leaders' Assembly meets twice-yearly bringing together Chief Executives, Chief Officers and Strategic Safeguarding Leaders from Safeguarding Partners and all 'relevant agencies' to share good practice, discuss emerging safeguarding challenges and agree a collective way forward and importantly to evaluate progress on implementation of the shared priorities set out in the Business Improvement Plan.

This year the assembly invited Dr Carlene Firmin MBE, Principal Research Fellow, University of Bedfordshire to discuss the development of a contextual safeguarding approach and implications for policy and practice for Birmingham. Following each assembly, a bulletin is produced to capture and disseminate the key decisions. (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Safeguarding Leaders Assembly Bulletin**



## Strategic Health Forum

The Strategic Health Forum (SHF) is hosted by Birmingham and Solihull CCG (BSOL CCG) and membership comprises Chief Nurses from acute and community provider trusts across Birmingham and Solihull, and Directors of Public Health. The SHF was established in July 2019 with an aim to ensure that there are clear governance processes in place for leadership and communication for safeguarding children and adults across the health economy for Birmingham and Solihull.

Members concur that the SHF provides a welcome opportunity to discuss and debate key challenges and prospects in terms of the safeguarding children and adults' agendas, which in turn serves to inform and shape discussions within Child Safeguarding Partnerships and Adult Safeguarding Boards. This reflects two key objectives of the SHF: to assist in piloting the strategic direction of adult and child safeguarding across Birmingham and Solihull and to ensure that the voices of children and vulnerable adults are heard.



The operational functions of the SHF are discharged by the Health Safeguarding Forum: a network also hosted by Birmingham and Solihull CCG, incorporating Safeguarding Leads, Named and Designated Professionals from acute and community provider trusts across Birmingham and Solihull.

Throughout 2019/20, the SHF received escalations of concern from the Health Safeguarding Forum; endorsed plans to address these areas of concern and sought system-wide assurance around the safeguarding agenda. This included requests for evidence that learning from statutory safeguarding reviews, including Serious Case Reviews, had been entrenched and subsequent action plans executed. SHF members are encouraged to note that since the forum was reinstated, in addition to the Health Safeguarding Forum, a number of robust systems and operational groups have been developed across the health network in collaboration with safeguarding partners across a range of agencies. The SHF will continue to convene throughout 2020/21 to sustain this collaborative working and to continue to develop and promote the development of effective assurance frameworks for Birmingham and Solihull.

### Education Safeguarding Group

The Education Safeguarding group has been hallmarked by significant changes to membership. The churn in membership reflects the changes to Local Authority leadership for the Director, Assistant Director and Head of Service for Education Safeguarding. Head Teacher representation has remained constant and has enabled the group to continue and deliver continued improvement outcomes for safeguarding in education as detailed below:

- **S175 development** - the group have designed and reformatted the annual Safeguarding in Education Self-Assessment (S175) which has been well received by schools. The S175 audit return for 2019/20 identified a gap in safeguarding training provision for school governors. This gap mirrored the wider concerns around the safeguarding governor role evidenced through Education Safeguarding team school audits. To support this development a manager from Education Safeguarding has joined the School and Governor support service to enable a strengthening of safeguarding governance in schools.
- **Early Help** – The Education Safeguarding Group worked closely with BCT and schools to deliver 10 workshops for schools across the city. Representatives from 240 schools attended. Sessions focused on Right Help, Right Time (RHRT), Children’s Advice and Support Service (CASS), Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Early Help processes. Following these sessions 99 schools extended a setting-based invitation to the new BCT Early Help team. Early Help processes were reviewed, and schools were supported to complete Early Help Assessments (EHA). Following this intervention BCT report a significant and sustained increase in EHA’s initiated by schools.
- **Contextual safeguarding** - The Education Safeguarding Group has provided opportunity for the Local Authority and schools to share concerns and best practice in the development of an Educational response to criminal exploitation. Education Safeguarding and the Education and Skills Post 16 team have placed managers into the Empower-U hub to attend daily briefings, disruption meetings and map educational histories and relationships. These actions have enabled better attendance and more effective intervention for young people in their school setting. The team are working across the directorate to secure alternative education placements for the Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) cohort and ensure that SEND needs of young people are addressed.

## Sub-Group Structure

The Executive Board is supported by four Sub-Groups which discharge the statutory functions:

- Identifying and embedding learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews;
- Providing a comprehensive multi-agency training offer that enhances partnership safeguarding practice;
- Constantly seeking to improve the child protection system, through a robust assurance framework that enables challenge and evaluation of performance;
- Systematically reviewing the death of children, to learn what happened and why, and prevent future child deaths.

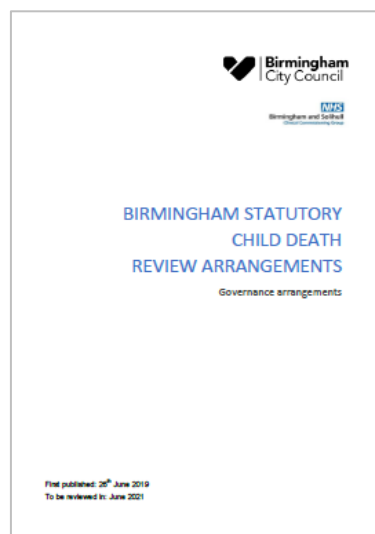
The Independent Chair, Executive Board, Sub-Group Chairs and the Business Manager are collectively focused on priorities set out in the Business Improvement Plan 2019-21.

## Learning from Child Deaths – New Child Death Arrangements

From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 statutory responsibility for the review of child deaths transferred from the BSCP to BSOL CCG and BCC. The BSCP have worked with the two lead agencies to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements, brought about by Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Details of the new arrangements (Figure 5) are available through the council and CCG websites. A separate analysis of learning from child deaths will be published annually.

**Figure 5: Child Death Review Arrangements**



### Quality, Impact and Outcomes Sub-Group

The Quality, Impact and Outcome (QIO) Sub-Group have developed a Quality Assurance Framework (Figure 6) to triangulate qualitative, quantitative and experiential data to help evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding children and families across the city.

**Figure 6: Triangulation of Data**



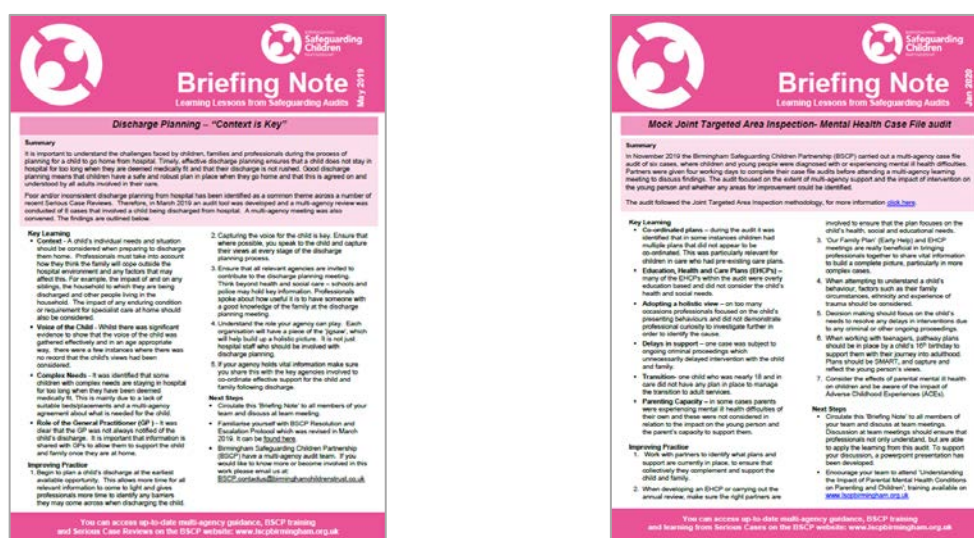
The Sub-Group examines outstanding practice both regionally and nationally to identify transferable learning that can be shared across the Partnership. This work incorporates the review of findings from inspections of statutory partners in Birmingham to identify trends and themes and seek assurance from strategic leaders that the learning has been taken forward.

The QIO Sub-Group analyses safeguarding data and identifies trends in performance that help inform the audit programme for the year. The dataset has been expanded to include quality and timeliness of discharge planning from hospital in cases where there have been child safeguarding concerns, contextual safeguarding data particularly children known to be at risk of exploitation including child sexual exploitation (CSE), children out of education (such as exclusions) and the outcome of police child protection investigations. The audit programme has focused on children's discharge planning, children's mental health services, resolution and escalation policy and CSE. The group also coordinated two safeguarding self-assessments of education settings and statutory partners, hosting a peer review of safeguarding practice to moderate the findings and cascade sector lead learning.

**Discharge Planning:** Several Serious Case Reviews have highlighted inconsistency in the quality of discharge planning. An audit was commissioned and the outcome led to the development of a city-wide discharge planning process for children in Birmingham Hospitals. A briefing note was published in May 2019 to cascade the learning to frontline practitioners (Figure 7).

**Behavioural issues:** Analysis of data identified potential delay in the discharge of children with behavioural rather than mental health problems and a gap in service provision for this cohort of children. An audit of mental health utilising the Ofsted Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) methodology for children and families with mental health concerns was undertaken. The work from these audits has been shared with Mental Health Commissioners to influence the new 0-25 Mental Health Services being developed for the city and concerns around Education, Health Care Plans have been raised with the SEND project group which is one of the priorities of the Birmingham Children Partnership. An audit briefing note was also issued for frontline practitioners in January 2020. (Figure 8)

**Figures 7 & 8: Audit Briefing Notes**



**Resolution and Escalation:** At the BSCP conference in June 2019 a survey of 123 frontline practitioners' was carried out in relation to the application and understanding of the Resolution and Escalation Protocol. It is important that professionals can understand and challenge other professionals' decisions and the Resolution and Escalation Protocol provides a process to be followed. The survey identified that 60% of respondents were aware of the Protocol. Of those that were aware nearly half had used the Protocol, and of those 83% had successfully resolved their concerns. Work has been undertaken to further promote the 'Resolution and Escalation' Protocol through social media and partners internal communications.

**Child Sexual Exploitation:** Recent trends identified a significant decrease in the number of CSE cases being reported. An audit was undertaken which identified concerns around the use of screening tools and the need for greater professional curiosity from partners. The findings were shared with the Contextual Safeguarding Hub helping to refine screening tools and guidance for professionals on completing requests for support for any children who are at risk of exploitation.

**Primary School Exclusions:** Primary exclusions are higher than comparable cities. An audit scheduled for spring of 2020, to aid understanding of the reasons behind the rate of exclusions, has had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Analysis of the increase in the number of children subject of child protection was a positive indication of improvements in the child protection system in Birmingham where children are safer. Similarly, the numbers of Children in Care (CIC) has increased in line with the national trend, this should hopefully stabilise in the next 18 months.

**Section 11 Self-Assessment:** Statutory partners complete a safeguarding self-assessment bi-annually. The results of the last years self-assessment were moderated, and quality assured at a multi-agency peer review event, which also looks to share good practice across the system. Two training needs were identified one to raise professional awareness of process around allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers; the other good practice around Safer Recruitment/DBS Checks. As a result, two morning training sessions were arranged for partner organisations, both courses were well received.

**Education Safeguarding Self-Assessment (section 175):** Every year education settings are required to complete an Education Safeguarding self-assessment tool known as the Section 175. The self-assessment has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and school closures and will not be completed until the start of the new academic year.

### **Learning & Development Sub-Group**

During 2019/2020, 192 multi-agency safeguarding training events were planned. Due to Covid-19, 11 courses were cancelled reducing the total to 181. These were delivered to 3,066 delegates across the children's workforce. A Practitioners conference – 'Tackling Childhood Neglect in Birmingham' which included 8 workshops was also delivered to 230 delegates.

Learning & Development (L&D) Sub-Group oversee an ongoing annual programme of reviewing all training courses to ensure that they remain up-to-date, relevant and focused on improving safeguarding practice.

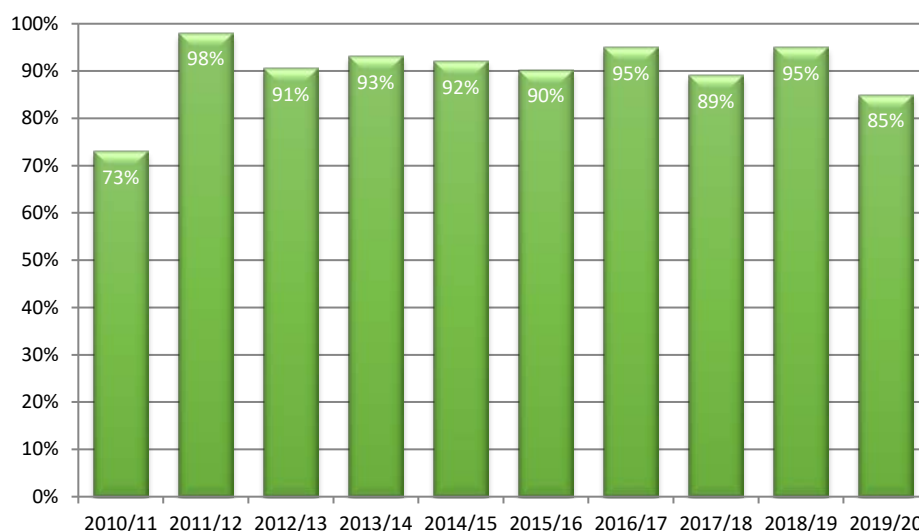
This year the Sub-Group have focused on:

- Revising and refreshing the multi-agency training offer to ensure all safeguarding training incorporates Contextual Safeguarding, Practice Standards around the voice and lived experience of the child.
- The delivery of the multi-agency Training Programme 2019/2020.
- Developing new core modules on Domestic Abuse: Advanced, Coercive Control, Attachment Theory and Brain Development and Right-Wing Extremism & The Far Right.
- The Delivery of a Practitioners Conference on improving child safeguarding practice.
- Developing and embedding a new on-line evaluation tool.
- Further developing the 'train the trainers' concept and Trainers Network to deliver core modules around Early Help.
- Developing and launching an e-learning version of Right Help, Right Time' threshold guidance'.
- Preparing the safeguarding workforce for the introduction of Neglect – Graded Care Profile 2
- Observing and evaluating training courses delivered during 2019/2020.

During 2019/20 – 3,540 training places were offered of which 3066 delegates attended equating to a course utilisation rate of 85% (Figure 9).



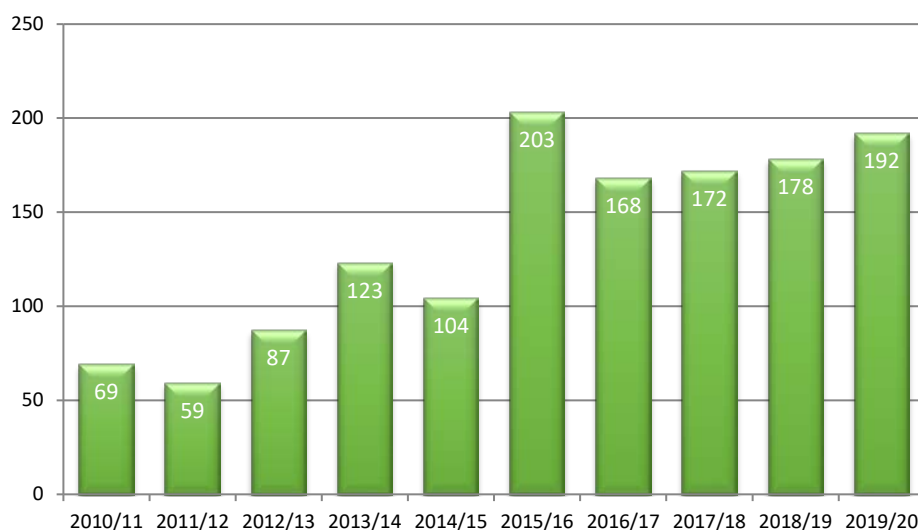
**Figure 9: Course Utilisation**



There was a slight increase in the number of training events commissioned during 2019/20 up from 178 to 192 due to an increase in demand for specific courses, such as Domestic Abuse, Coercive Control and Right-Wing Extremism & The Far Right (Figure 10).

Action to improve course utilisation is being overseen by the L&D Sub-Group to maximise take up rates for this important training. This includes; rigorous enforcement of the Charging Policy: Non-Attendance at Multi-Agency Training, use of targeted advertising for specific staff groups, the use of Trainers Network to promote new and existing courses and the constant review of courses material to ensure that it remains relevant and up to date.

**Figure 10: Training Events Commissioned**



**Priorities for the Forthcoming Year:** The Training Offer for 2020/21 is structured around four key objectives set out in the Business Improvement Plan, each area is supported by a Task and Finish Group:

- Continue to develop the 'Contextual Safeguarding' multi-agency training offer.
- Review, revise and evaluate existing training courses and use intelligence to inform future commissioning intentions.
- Develop, design and deliver a programme of 'safeguarding master classes'
- Expansion of e-learning programme to include: Early Help and Support and Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Review and revise safeguarding training modules, 'target group' to improve attendance by statutory partners.

### Serious Cases Sub-Group

Serious Cases Sub-Group oversees the commissioning of independent reviews when a child dies or is seriously injured, and child abuse is suspected to be a contributing factor. Whenever these cases come to our attention, a Rapid Review will be immediately undertaken to maximise learning and ascertain if there are any national implications or whether a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) should be commissioned to identify and cascade learning to front-line practitioners. The Sub-Group is also responsible for ensuring agencies can demonstrate how learning has been implemented and what difference it has made to improving partnership practice. Please see Part 4 – Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

**Ensuring lessons are learnt:** - The Partnership closely monitors the effective implementation of and compliance with the key recommendations and learning points from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs), LCSPRs and alternate reviews commissioned. Serious Cases Sub-Group have established a 'Learning to Action' Group who meet on a bi-monthly basis to review progress on any outstanding recommendations and learning points. Quarterly reports continue to provide the Executive Board with reassurance of how learning is being embedded into front-line practice.

### Communications and Public Engagement

The BSCB campaign 'Keeping children safe is everybody's business' focusing on child abuse and neglect has been extended. The key aim was to raise community awareness of '*What to do if you are worried about a child*' and most importantly to encourage members of the public to telephone the Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS) to report their concerns. (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Keeping Children Safe is everybody's business**



## Regional and National Collaboration

The BSCP have been actively engaged in helping to shape and influence both national and regional initiatives during the year. The Partnership contributed to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse providing evidence to investigation of Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings and lead a Department for Education Early Adopter Project for the development of a regional framework and practice guidance to support the introduction of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Both the Independent Chair and Business Manager play an active role in leading and participating in cross border initiatives through the West Midlands MASA Network, commissioning on-line safeguarding procedure and practice guidance, cascading learning from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and streamlining and improving Safeguarding Self-Assessments across the wider West Midlands region.

## Finance

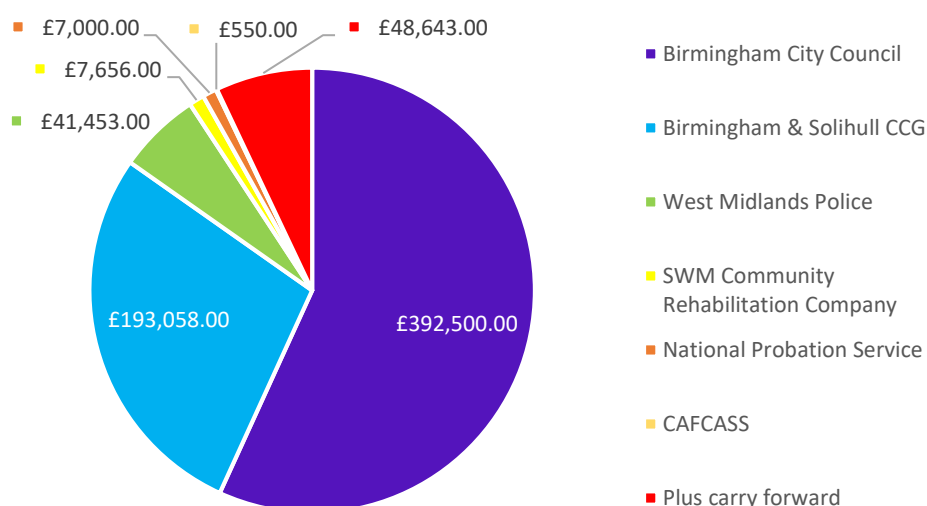
The total contributions by individual agencies for the financial year 2019/20 amounted to £642,217 and there was a carry forward from 2018/19 of £48,643, this included £12,835 from the Early Adopters Programme grant. Therefore, the BSCP overall budget was £690,860.

Figure 12 provides a breakdown of the budget and details individual agencies contributions. Figure 13 provides details of expenditure during 2019/20 which concentrated on five core business areas.

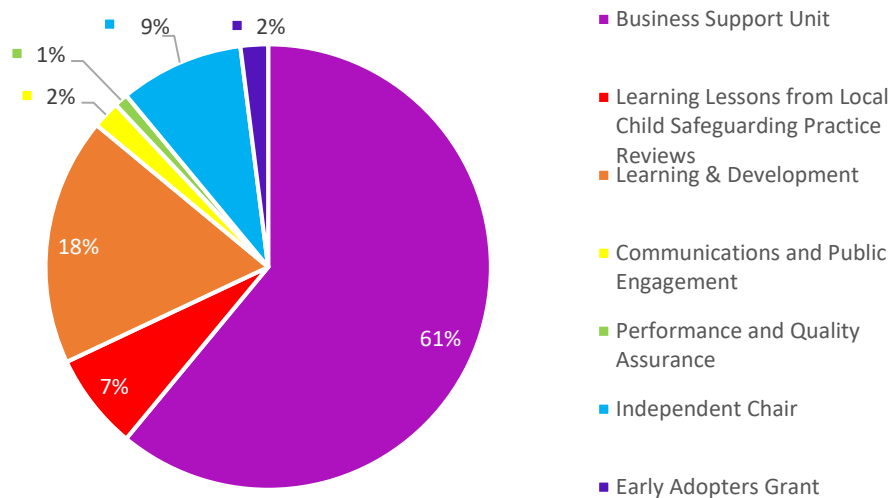
At the end of the financial year the BSCP raised invoices for non-attendance at training amounting to £5,400, which is included in the carry forward to the 2020/21 budget.

BCC and BCT also continued to make a significant contribution in kind, by the provision of office accommodation, IT, Legal, Financial and HR support for the BSCP Business Support Unit.

**Figure 12: Breakdown of the budget and individual agencies contributions**



**Figure 13: Expenditure during 2019/20**



## Part 4 – Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

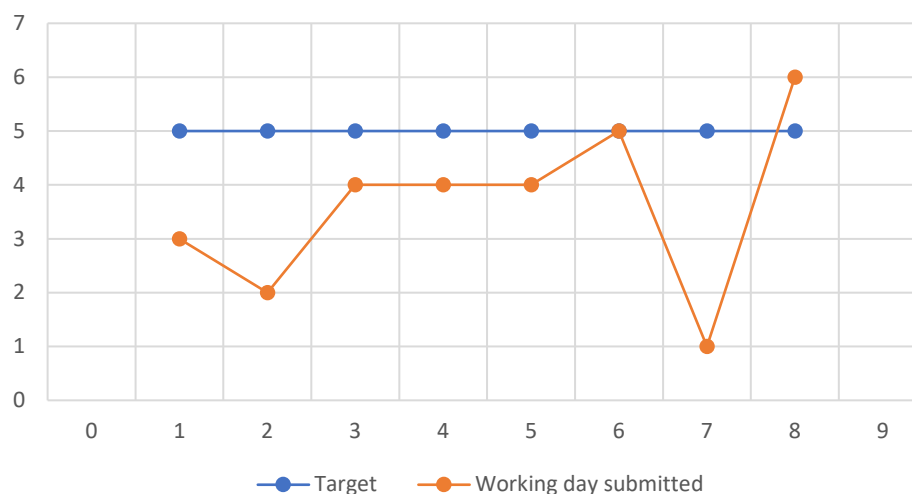
From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 the new LCSPRs replaced SCRs. At this point Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) formally handed over six SCRs to the new Safeguarding Partnership arrangements to oversee completion and publication. Additionally, during 2019/20 the Partnership has commissioned two Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

### Rapid Reviews -Timeliness and Quality of Decision Making

The National Panel has prescribed specific timescales for Local Authority notifications of serious childcare incidents and completion of Rapid Reviews.

**Timeliness of submission of the notification by the Local Authority** - Local Authorities are required to notify the National Panel within five working days of being made aware that a child has died or has been seriously harmed, and abuse or neglect is suspected. BCT has made eight notifications since November 2018 which have triggered the Rapid Review process. Figure 14 provides a breakdown of timeliness, only one notification was outside the five day submission target.

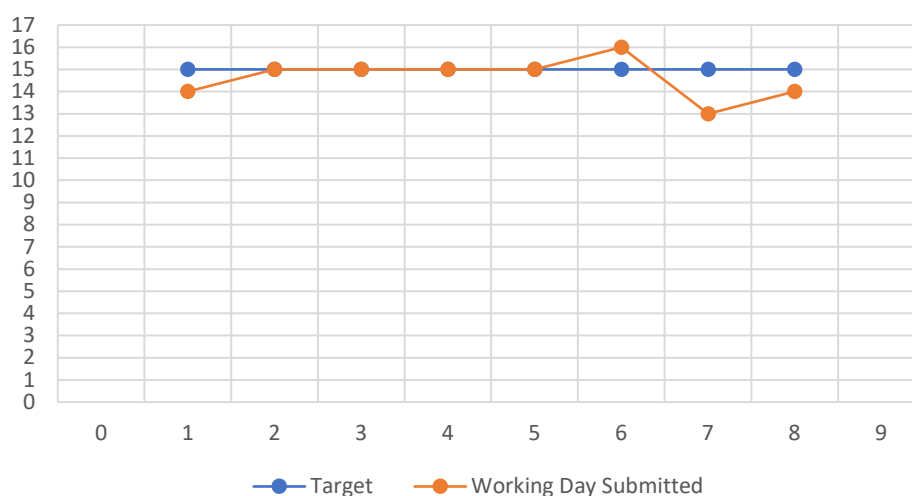
**Figure 14 – Timeliness of submission of the notification by the Local Authority**



**Timeliness of submission of the Rapid Review decision to the National Panel** – Figure 15 provides a breakdown of the timeliness of Rapid Reviews against the national submission target of 15-working-days. The BSCP consistently meet the submission target. Nationally only 51% of Rapid Reviews are submitted on time, with almost half taking more than four times the expected time to be submitted.

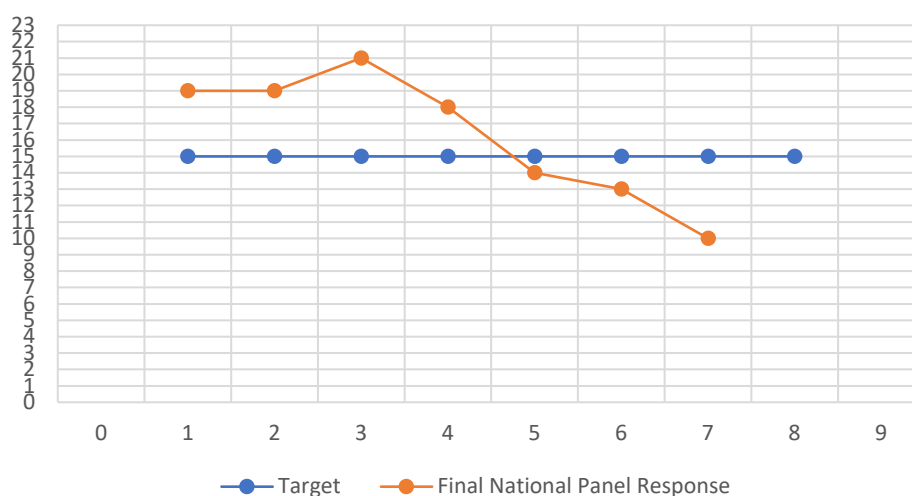


**Figure 15: Timeliness of submission of Rapid Review decision to National Panel**



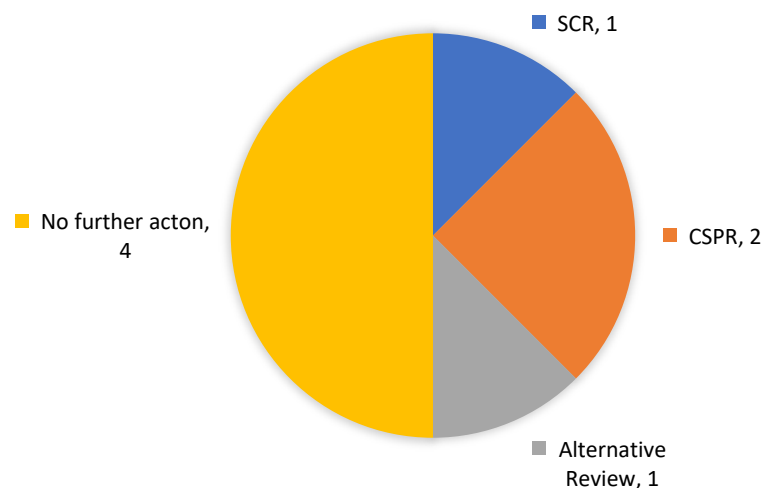
**Timeliness of response by National Panel to Rapid Review decision** - The National Panel is required to respond to the Safeguarding Partnership within 15 working days. The National Panel has only achieved this target on three occasions. (Figure 16)

**Figure 16: Timeliness of National Panel response to Rapid Review decision**



**Effectiveness of Decision Making** – Figure 17 provides a breakdown of Rapid Reviews by outcome for Birmingham. The National Panel has endorsed the rational and decision of every Rapid Review submitted by Birmingham. This compares very favourably with national performance where the National Panel have only agreed with 67% of Rapid Review recommendations.

**Figure 17: Rapid Review outcomes**



**Development of Regional Framework and Practice Guidance** - Birmingham led an 'Early Adopter' project funded by the Department for Education to develop a Regional Framework and Practice Guidance for commissioning new LCSPRs and dissemination of key learning. The new Regional Framework and Practice Guidance, which evidences the region's commitment to be an improving and learning system, was published in May 2019 and has received recognition nationally as good practice. (Figure 18)

**Figure 18: Regional Framework and Practice Guidance**



## Publication and Dissemination of Learning

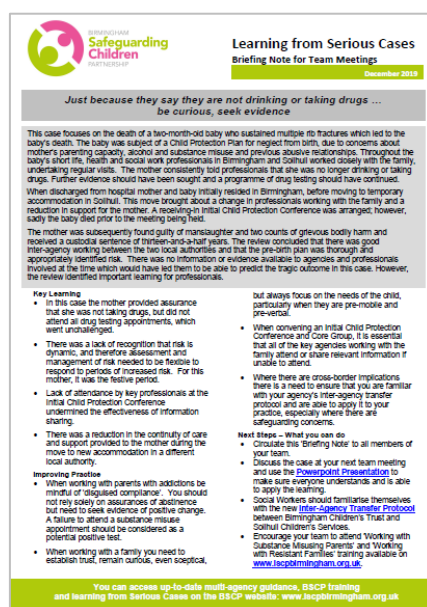
- **Serious Case Review** - In December 2019 the findings from a Serious Case Review were published. The case focused on the death of a two-month-old baby who sustained multiple rib fractures which led to their death. The baby was subject of a Child Protection Plan for neglect from birth, due to concerns about mother's parenting capacity, alcohol and substance misuse and previous abusive relationships. The full report is available through the BSCP [website](#).
- **Deep Dive Review** – During the year the Partnership, in conjunction with the Birmingham Guns, Gangs and Organised Criminality Partnership, published the findings from a Deep Dive Review into two cases involving County Lines and the distribution of Class A drugs. The review considered all aspects of agencies' involvement over the lives of the two boys and their immediate family. The purpose was to develop an understanding of their behaviour and lifestyles and the impact of agency intervention to divert the young people away from criminality. A copy of the Briefing Note is available through the BSCP [website](#).
- **Discharge Planning – Babies born prematurely with Complex Health Needs** - A common theme identified from a number of safeguarding reviews relates to the lack of robust discharge planning from acute hospital settings around babies who have either been born prematurely and/or present with complex health needs, requiring long-term follow up for chronic health conditions in the community, often with a variety of health specialities and providers involved. Research identifies that premature babies, babies with low birth weights or babies requiring initial special care baby unit nursing, potentially pose challenges to their parent(s) over and above the considerable demands of any new baby. A Briefing Note on this theme developed by BSOL CCG (in conjunction with the BSCP) is available through the BSCP [website](#).

## Maximising from Serious Cases

The key learning from SCRs, LCSPRs and alternate review processes inform policy development, training delivery, communication and public engagement, and audit activity to evidence that learning has been effectively implemented.

During 2019/20 the Partnership published three 'one page' briefing notes to support the dissemination of learning from serious cases (Figure 19). The briefing notes provide a summary of the review, identified key learning and highlighted areas for practice improvement. In addition, to support team meeting discussions, a PowerPoint presentation for each briefing note is developed and made available through the Partnership's website.

**Figure 19: Learning from Serious Cases Briefing Note**



The key messages for frontline practitioners and managers work with and supporting children and families:

#### **Attendance and participation at multi-agency meetings:**

- When a child from Birmingham is found in a different part of the UK and there are concerns, an urgent joint strategy discussion should be undertaken to ensure risks are identified and appropriate interventions are in place. The strategy discussion must include relevant agencies from Birmingham and the Local Authority and Police Force where the child was found.
- When convening an Initial Child Protection Conference and Core Group, it is essential that all the key agencies working with the family attend or share relevant information if unable to attend.

#### **Cross border working:**

- Where there are cross-border implications there is a need to ensure that professionals are familiar with their agency's inter-agency protocol and can apply it to their practice, especially where there are safeguarding concerns.

#### **Disguised compliance:**

- When working with parents with addictions there is a need to be mindful of 'disguised compliance'. Professionals should not rely solely on assurances of abstinence but need to seek evidence of positive change. A failure to attend a substance misuse appointment should be considered as a potential positive test.

#### **Taking a holistic view:**

- When working with a child and their family there is a need to consider historical concerns and the impact any previous support had when determining safeguarding measures and interventions. Failure to do so could result in not achieving the desired 'lifestyle' change.

- Assessments should be a dynamic and holistic process which analyses and responds to the changing nature and level of risk faced by the child from both within and outside the family. The Assessment Framework (Working Together 2018, p.27) should be utilised to ensure professionals focus on the needs and views of the child.

#### **Information sharing:**

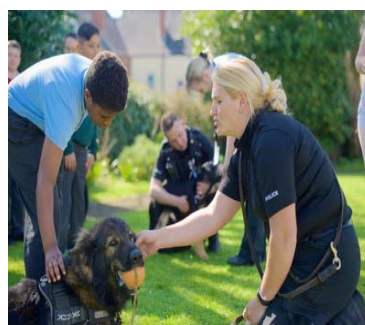
- Robust information sharing and effective work with colleagues and other agencies is vital – there must be good liaison between hospital and community teams and primary care.

#### **Discharge planning:**

- It is important to identify a lead health professional for the period after discharge in complex cases, where the child will require follow up.
- The lead professional should support the co-ordination of the health response to a child's complex needs and ensure communication between hospital trusts.

#### **Practitioners' responsibility:**

- Where there is a known history of criminal activity amongst family members, practitioners need to be curious, ask the right questions and try to explore and understand the relationships and influences that these may have on the young person.
- There is a need for practitioners' to be more persistent in their approach to engage families and build trust. This may require them adopting a more flexible approach and if appropriate using extended family members, friends or other professionals working with the family to act as advocates.
- When working with a family practitioners' need to establish trust, remain curious, even sceptical, but always focus on the needs of the child, particularly when they are pre-mobile and pre-verbal.
- Support should be offered to parents to manage various appointments – a timetable of appointments and home visits could be planned out with the family to avoid clashes.
- When working with a family it is good practice to complete a chronology to capture the family's history. This can support practitioners' understanding of the family history, current context, and identifying emerging patterns of behaviour.
- To fully understand both household composition and significant others outside of the home (partners, grandparents, extended family) it is good practice to complete a genogram.





## Part 5 – Conclusions and Looking Forward

In this first year of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements the 'Safeguarding Partners' have concentrated channeling partnership endeavor on delivering on our shared safeguarding priorities set out in the Business Improvement Plan 2019-21. The 'Safeguarding Partners' have also sought independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the transition and impact of the new arrangements, through the statutory inspections, analysis of data, audit findings and the work of Independent Chair, who published a separate 'Accountability Report' in March 2019.

The Department for Education have commissioned Sir Alan Wood, the architect of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements to undertake a review of the impact of the new arrangements nationally. The 'Safeguarding Partners' had invited Sir Alan to join the Safeguarding Leaders' Assembly on 22nd April 2020; however due to Covid-19 this has been postponed until later in the year.

### Independent Chair's Accountability Report

The Independent Chair has published her Accountability Report for 2019/20 (Figure 20). This is her fourth Accountability Report and is a personal reflection on progress that the Safeguarding Partnership is making in achieving its Ambition, Purpose and Priorities. The Independent Chair's assessment is that it is too early to tell if the streamlined structure is making the requisite impact on improving safeguarding practice. There has been a welcoming widening of the partnership system with the introduction of the Children's Partnership, with particular emphasis on Early Help, locality working and partnership with the community and voluntary sector.

This is enabling the BSCP to focus on its specific safeguarding purpose, emphasising leadership, partnership, practice, learning and communication. There is clear evidence of action and progress on all these fronts. Birmingham's approach to Rapid Reviews has been recognised as valuable well beyond our borders, with the emphasis on quickly identifying learning and taking positive action.

However, as a system there is still need for improvement. Early Help, SEND, and Mental Health offers for children, young people and their families require rapid and fundamental development, there is commitment and plans are in place to make the necessary improvements. The 'Accountability Report' is available on the BSCP website.

**Figure 20: Chair's Accountability Report**



## Review of the Governance and Accountability arrangements

The 'Safeguarding Partners' conducted a review of the governance arrangements reflecting on the first year of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements to identify areas for further improvement. The findings were presented to the Executive Board on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and seven proposals to enhance the current arrangements were endorsed for implementation during 2020.

1. BCC to identify an Assistant Director/Head of Service to Co-Chair the L&D Sub-Group.
2. Strategic Safeguarding Leaders from WMP, BSOL CCG, BCC and BCT to undertake the Vice Chair role on an annual rotational basis.
3. Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive Officer, BCT to Vice Chair from 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
4. Scheduled succession changes to the Co-Chairing of the L&D and QIO Sub-Groups to commence from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.
5. The L&D Sub-Group model of working to be adopted by all Sub-Groups.
6. The Governance Arrangements will continue to be subject of an annual review and refresh.
7. Disestablishment of the two posts within the Business Support Unit associated with the creation of the new Child Death Review Team.

The review also highlighted the need for closer collaboration between the Birmingham Children's Partnership, Community Safety Partnership in developing a strategic response to the challenge of Contextual Safeguarding, County Lines and Knife Crime. The revised Governance Arrangements are available to download from the partnership website (Figure 21).

**Figure 21: Governance Arrangements**



## Looking ahead - Safeguarding Priorities 2020-21

In March 2020, Covid-19 brought about a virtual lock-down, the city's response has demonstrated effective leadership and robust collaborative working in the endeavour to save lives, whilst remaining focused on identifying and supporting those most vulnerable and at risk of significant harm. The partnership's mantra has been to support agencies and the reduce bureaucracy wherever possible during these truly unprecedented times.

The Partnership will continue to focus on ensuring effective implementation of the four key Safeguarding Priorities set out in Business Improvement Plan (Figure 22). But will also examine the impact of pandemic to help inform the continuous development of services for children and families in Birmingham.

### Our Ambition:

***'Birmingham is a family city where children will flourish, feel safe, listened to, learn and grow up, able to actively contribute to society'.***

The key priorities are:

- Priority 1:** Strong Leadership and Strong Partnership;
- Priority 2:** Continuous Improvement of Child Protection Practice across the system and in all agencies;
- Priority 3:** Developing an effective multi-agency response to Contextual Safeguarding, recognising exploitation of young people in all its forms;
- Priority 4:** Evidencing the impact of the new Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The golden thread that links these priorities is ensuring that the voice and lived experience of children and young people informs and influences the continuous improvement in partnership working across the city.

**Figure 22: Business Improvement Plan 2019-21**



**The Independent Chair and ‘Safeguarding Partners’  
want to express their gratitude to the  
whole of the children’s workforce  
for their outstanding contribution and  
continued commitment to  
safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of  
children and young people in Birmingham.**



## Glossary

BASB	Birmingham Adult Safeguarding Board
BCC	Birmingham City Council
BCSP	Birmingham Community Safety Partnership
BCT	Birmingham Children's Trust
BSCP	Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership
BSOL CCG	Birmingham & Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group
CASS	Children's Advice and Support Service
CIC	Children in Care
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
EHA	Early Help Assessment
JTAI	Joint Targeted Area Inspections
L&D	Learning and Development
LCSPR	Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review
MASA	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
QIO	Quality Impact and Outcomes
RHRT	Right Help, Right Time
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SHF	Strategic Health Forum
WMP	West Midlands Police





BIRMINGHAM

**Safeguarding  
Children**

PARTNERSHIP

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership  
PO Box 17340  
Birmingham  
B2 2DR

Date of Publication: October 2020





## Education and Children's Social Care O&S Committee: Work Programme 2020–2021

<b>Chair:</b>	Cllr Kath Scott
<b>Deputy Chair:</b>	Cllr Safia Akhtar
<b>Committee Members:</b>	<p>Cllrs: Mohammed Aikhlaq, Barbara Dring, Charlotte Hodivala, Kerry Jenkins, Chauhdry Rashid, and Alex Yip</p> <p>Education Representatives: Omar Hanif, Parent Governor; Adam Hardy, Roman Catholic Diocese; Rabia Shami, Parent Governor and Sarah Smith, Church of England Diocese</p>
<b>Officer Support:</b>	<p>Acting Group O&amp;S Manager: Ceri Saunders (303 2786)</p> <p>Scrutiny Officer: Amanda Simcox: (675 8444)</p> <p>Committee Manager: Mandeep Marwaha (303 5950)</p>

## 1 Terms of Reference

- 1.1 To fulfil the functions of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning schools and education, the Children's Trust, vulnerable children, corporate parenting and other child social care and safeguarding functions of the council.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee dealing with education matters shall include in its membership the following voting representatives:
  - a) Church of England diocese representative (one);
  - b) Roman Catholic diocese representative (one); and
  - c) Parent Governor representatives (two).

## 2 Meeting Schedule

Date & Start	Items	Officers / Attendees
18 June 2020 at 2pm (Online)	Informal Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair's Update on recent activities and current issues</li> <li>Discussion re: date for and focus of next formal meeting</li> </ul>	



17 July 2020 (Online – start at 11.00)	SEND Home to School Transport Update	Cllr Kate Booth, Cabinet Member Children's Wellbeing Nichola Jones, AD, Inclusion and SEND Mark Hudson, Interim SEND Transport Manager Mark Hanson, Manager Operations, Commissioning and Contracts, SEND and Inclusion Jennifer Lucas, SEND Transport Consultant Paul Robson, SEND Transport Manager
16 September 2020 @ 10am  Deadline: 7 Sep 2020	Covid-19 Impact on Schools and Preparations for Return to School in September 2020	Lisa Fraser, AD Education and Early Years and Jaswinder Didially, Head of Service, Education and Skills
	SEND Response to Covid	Nichola Jones, AD Inclusion and SEND and Kate Squires, SEND Locality, Education and Skills
16 October 2020 @ 10am	Informal Meeting: Home to School Transport	
28 October 2020 @ 10am  Deadline: 19 Oct 2020	SEND Written Statement of Action (WSOA) Update  (Last attended / discussed 11 March 2020)	Cllr Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing, Dr Tim O'Neill, AD, Education and Skills, Rachel O'Connor, Assistant Chief Executive, Birmingham and Solihull CCG and Nichola Jones, AD for Inclusion and SEND (Marie M Dobinson, Project Manager Partnerships)
	Youth Services	Ilgun Yusuf, Acting AD, Skills and Employability, Soulla Yiasouma, Joint Head of Youth Service, Darnish Amraz, Youth Worker and Becky Crampton, Youth Worker
9 December 2020 @ 10am  Deadline: 30 Nov 2020	Children's Trust Update	Andrew Christie, Chair and Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive, Children's Trust
	Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (Last attended on 11 September 2019)	Penny Thompson, Independent Chair, BSCP and Simon Cross, Business Manager
20 January 2021 @ 10am  Deadline: 11 Jan 21	Transition to Adulthood  Impact of Integrated Services and its outcomes update/progress from September 2020 launch.  Also attending the Health and Social Care O&S Committee on the 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2021.	Dionne McAndrews, AD, Children's Trust and John Williams, AD, Adult Social Care (Linda Harper)



	<p>Absences and Exclusions</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children with SEND.</li> <li>- Managed moves and the cohort of those exclusions.</li> <li>- Legal framework.</li> <li>- Illegal exclusions including the reduced timetables and reasons.</li> <li>- The interplay between the different teams.</li> </ul>	<p>Lisa Fraser, AD Education and Early Years and Alan Michell, Head of Service, Schools Admissions and Fair Access</p>
<p>03 March 2021 @ 10am</p> <p>Deadline: 22 Feb 21</p>	<p>Home to School Transport (TBC)</p>	<p>Cllr Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing (Suman McCartney, CSO)</p> <p>Witnesses for the Inquiry to also be invited.</p>
	<p>Early Help</p>	<p>Nigel Harvey-Whitten, AD, Children's Services (Commissioning) &amp; Richard Selwyn, Birmingham Children's Partnership</p>
<p>14 April 2021 @ 10am</p> <p>Deadline: 1 Apr 21</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>TBC</p>

### 3 Items to be Programmed

- 3.1 School Admissions.
- 3.2 Waiting Times for Therapies and the remedial action plan - Birmingham Community Healthcare (BCHC) to also be invited.
- 3.3 The Youth Service to be invited back in the Spring.
- 3.4 The Community Safety Partnership to be invited to the Committee (Cllr Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities). The Community Safety Partnerships annual report was presented to the Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

### 4 Other Meetings

- Call in Meetings: None scheduled
- Petitions: None scheduled
- Petitions: None scheduled
- Councillor Call for Action Requests: None scheduled





## 5 Report to City Council / Pieces of Work

5.1 The Home to School Transport report was debated at City Council on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and the following motion was agreed:

That the Executive provide an assessment of progress against the outcomes set out above, and the key areas listed in Section 7 in this report, to the Education & Children's Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March 2021.

That the Chief Executive at Birmingham City Council:

- a) Take steps to ensure that immediate changes will be made to the most pressing issues within the Travel Assist service, including [but not limited to] safeguarding of children, cancelled routes, guide changes, bus lateness, and telephone lines going unanswered;
- b) Commission an external and independent inquiry into the Full Travel Assist Service that fully addresses the concerns laid out by Parents, Carers, Schools and other users of the service as listed in section 7 and listed in paragraph number a.) above, by providing clear recommendations, lines of accountability together with an open and transparent timetable for sustainable improvement;
- c) Commission an external and independent investigation into the assurances that have been given to Members about the safety of the service and the status of improvements at meetings of Overview and Scrutiny, City Council and Audit Committee since January 2020

The investigations referred to in paragraphs b) & c) will report by 1 November 2020.

## 6 Forward Plan for Cabinet Decisions

6.1 The following decisions, extracted from the Cabinet Office Forward Plan of Decisions, are likely to be relevant to the Education and Children's Social Care O&S Committee's remit.

Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing			
ID Number	Title	Proposed Date	Date of Decision
007921/2020	Regional Adoption Agency	15 Dec 20	
008115/2020	Birmingham Children's Trust – Accommodation & Contact Centres	10 Nov 20	10 Nov 20

Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture			
ID Number	Title	Proposed Date	Date of Decision
007494/2020	Mayfield School Conversion from Community School to Academy Status	19 Jan 21	
007702/2020	Ark St. Albans Academy Full Business Case and Contract Award	28 Jul 20	
007918/2020	Erdington Academy School Full Business Case and Contract Award	08 Sep 20	08 Sep 20
007919/2020	Selly Park Girls' School Full Business Case and Contract Award	10 Nov 20	10 Nov 20
007966/2020	Priority School Building Programme for the Relocation of Oscott Manor School to an Alternative Site.	15 Dec 20	