

## SCRUTINY OF THE INTEGRATED PLAN PROPOSALS 2016/17 – 2019/20

### PORTFOLIO: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

#### INTRODUCTION

The department is responsible for ensuring publicly-funded early years services are provided across Hertfordshire. Early help and support is provided across the age range, together with support and education-related services for children with disabilities and special educational needs. The department undertakes safeguarding activities on behalf of the council, along with a range of services for children in need (including disabled children); children looked after and care leavers.

#### 5 key issues/pressures

The dominant issue for the portfolio is providing better outcomes across the range of our services, and at the same time reducing costs. Our specific issues all relate to this, and are:

1. To respond to changes in the nature and pattern of demand for services for children with disabilities and special educational needs, within limited resources and following the Special Educational Needs (SEND) reform legislation requirements. We are doing this through our 0-25 integration programme.
2. To reduce the numbers of children looked after, so as to reduce costs and improve outcomes for those children. We are doing this through our Early Help Families First transformation programme (including delivery of phase 2 of the Troubled Families initiative) and our Family Safeguarding Programme.
3. To continue to increase the number of children looked after in local in house foster placements and encourage independent placement providers to deliver services within Hertfordshire. We use our regional block contract with one residential provider and a programme of scrutinising placements costs to drive efficiencies in quality and costs.
4. To change the way in which child protection services are delivered, to ensure the highest risk children and families are provided with a clear programme of support to change and to move more quickly to care proceedings where parents decline to engage in help offered and their children remain at risk of significant harm. We are doing this through the Family Safeguarding Programme.
5. To improve the way we work with our partners, particularly in the health sector through developing opportunities to streamline commissioning and capitalise on the opportunities for efficiencies and improved outcomes presented by the transfer of public health commissioning responsibilities to the County Council.

## **KEY THEMES AND QUESTIONS**

### **STRATEGY AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT**

#### **How do the future service plan priorities contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

Hertfordshire County Council's [Corporate Plan](#) 2013-17 identifies the main ambitions and commitments that provide the foundations for the county council's activities between now and 2017. Corporate priorities were reviewed in 2013 and revised to 'Opportunity to Prosper, Opportunity to Thrive, Opportunity to be Healthy and Safe, and Opportunity to Take Part'. The recently published Children's Services Strategic Plan for 2015 – 2018, 'Shaping The Future', whilst contributing to the other priorities, primarily focuses on the 'Opportunity to Thrive'. Specifically, Children's Services strategic direction is aimed at achieving the following priorities:



### How are you managing your service to make it more efficient?

During a gradual re-allocation of resources, all commissioning activity in the Children's Services (CS) is being consolidated into separate teams covering Children Looked After/Safeguarding, 0-25 SEND and Early Years/Early Help, with the existing Performance and Improvement Team being expanded to have a strategic oversight of commissioning processes and activity, to ensure consistency. This will have the effect of raising the profile of commissioning activity so that senior management have a high level view of all work. These changes have been cost neutral.

In practice, this will lead to less duplication of activity, refined processes to ensure value for money and better long-term planning of commissioning so that new services are evidence based, strategic and outcome focussed, rather than reactive and recurring as has been the case. This approach also includes the continued integration of commissioning activity with Clinical Commissioning Group, Health and Community Services and Public Health, where joint

contracts and pooled budgets will lead to a reduction in management costs where there are shared providers, along with better integrated management focused on outcomes and improving transitions.

The 0-25 years (children and young people 0-25 with additional needs) workstream will ensure children's social care, adults' social care, education and the health services work more effectively together to better support families with children and young people that have additional needs. This will result in savings from removal of duplication, smarter commissioning and improved delivery as well as non-financial benefits such as:

- Increased community capacity and resilience
- Improved satisfaction with SEND families
- Clearer processes
- Improved partnership working
- Reduction in the number of children with SEND who are not in employment, education or training
- Greater independence of those entering adult life and reduction on HCS budget as a result
- More jointly commissioned services
- Improved quality of commissioned services

To achieve this we have been working on improving both the commissioning and delivery of services as well as reviewing what information if available for families in Hertfordshire and how they can access it.

An integrated commissioning strategy has been developed for children and young people with SEND in Hertfordshire. We have worked with children, young people and families as well as our partners in health and in different county council departments to develop this. It sets out our joint ambition for developing SEND services in the county. We recognise the importance of working with services users not just in the development of this plan but in its delivery. That is why we have been running a young commissioners course along with our partners in Oakland's and North Hertfordshire colleges to support children and young people with SEND to develop their skills and to enable them to take an active role in the commissioning of services.

Whilst plans to develop a multi-agency team for children and young people with SEND continue to be developed we have put our attention on the way we work. A professional charter combining the values and behaviours across all of Hertfordshire County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) that outlines the way that Children & Young People (CYP) with SEND and their families can expect professionals from across the partnership to work with them. This will be published on the Local Offer and we are now beginning to explore how we can use the charter in our staff training.

Finally, we have worked with young people and families to review our information and advice offer. A set of proposals to streamline our SEND information services are being developed.

The 0-25 Integration workstream is detailed as one of the three key projects/programmes within the CS portfolio of the 2016/17 – 2019/20 IP Pack; Part B – Service Direction and Financial Consequences – Children’s Services p.33

The **Families First** workstream is establishing a stronger Early Help ‘offer’ that is making a difference with staff and partners understanding their role in delivering it.

Anticipated benefits include:

A reduction in reported domestic violence in families

An increase in the number of referrals to Early Help services and consequential reduction in safeguarding referrals

A reduction in the number of young people at risk of harmful behaviours including those at risk of child sexual exploitation.

More effective information sharing and collaboration, leading to more effective partnership case management

Greater confidence in the early help ‘system’ amongst parents and practitioners.

The Families First workstream is detailed as one of the three key projects/programmes within the CS portfolio of the 2016/17 – 2019/20 IP Pack; Part B – Service Direction and Financial Consequences – Children’s Services p.34

The innovative Family Safeguarding service has been successfully implemented at all three of the county council bases with multi-disciplinary teams in place. The Family Safeguarding teams consist of Social Workers, Children’s Practitioners, Domestic Abuse specialists, Mental Health practitioners and Drug and Alcohol specialists. By working in partnership with these specialists, the protection and life chances for our highest risk children and families will be improved.

This approach to working reduces the risk to children and young people and ensures that families receive the appropriate support from the social care system.

By improving the outcomes for families at an early stage, it is anticipated that the draw on resources at later stages will reduce, resulting in savings.

This will be achieved by:

- Maintaining multi-disciplinary Family Safeguarding Teams with the full range of skills necessary to address the factors which pose the highest risk to children.
- Embedding core skills set with motivational interviewing at its heart.
- Implementing a structured workbook approach to assessing parents’ capacity for change.
- Embedding an outcome based performance framework.

The Family Safeguarding workstream is detailed as one of the three key projects/programmes within the CS portfolio of the 2016/17 – 2019/20 IP Pack; Part B – Service Direction and Financial Consequences – Children’s Services p.35

In June 2015 it was agreed that the Home-Start home visiting contracts would not be renewed from September 2015 onwards. The majority of needs covered through these contracts are now available through the expanded children's centres programme, the extension of free nursery care and Health Visiting services run by the CCG. £200,000 of the savings in 2015/16 has been set aside for transitional support to Home-Start providers with savings of £390,000 expected from 2016/17 onwards.

This saving is shown within the Key Budget Movements section of the CS portfolio 2016/17 – 2019/20 IP Pack; Part B – Service Direction and Financial Consequences – Children's Services p.41 (Saving Reference - EEI030)

### **How are you developing and delivering partnership approaches to make best use of the Hertfordshire pound and improve outcomes for our citizens?**

The critical issue is the further integration of health and social care provision within and outside of the Council. There are major initiatives in hand in terms of structure and co-ordination.

The [Health and Wellbeing Board](#) was formally constituted from 1 April 2013 and the Health & Wellbeing Strategy has been launched with nine priorities (including tackling obesity, helping all families to thrive, reducing the harm caused by alcohol and fulfilling lives for people with disabilities). Underpinned by our [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#), the multi-agency [Children and Young People Strategic Commissioning Executive Group](#) have identified three priorities going forward; Early Years Strategy, 0 – 25 Integrated Programme and Child and Adolescent Mental Health services(CAMHS) whole pathway review.

Children's Services recognises that we can achieve far better outcomes for our children and families at highest risk and save money for public services, if we work closely with partners. Building on our previous experience of setting up award winning multi agency teams such as Targeted Advice Service, Joint Police/Social Work Child Protection Investigation team, 2015 has seen the set-up of two new fully integrated safeguarding services.

#### **Family Safeguarding**

As a result of a successful bid to the DfE for funding to transform child protection services, the 22 Family Safeguarding teams in children's services now have adult mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse specialists imbedded within all of the teams. From January 2016, clinical psychologists will also join the Family Safeguarding service. By working in this way, it is anticipated that more parents will engage with support to tackle their behaviours that put their children at risk. This will reduce police attendance at domestic abuse incidents, reduce attendance at A&E, improve the mental health of parents and their children and ensure more parents complete treatment courses to address their substance misuse problems, first time round. This will also enable more children to stay at home safely in their families rather than being brought up in care.

## **MASH**

In August 2015, Probation, Police, Health and Children's Services set up a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team to share information and risk assess safeguarding referrals for children across Hertfordshire. By being part of the same team and having access to all the major agency databases, the MASH team can gain a swift understanding of each agency's history of involvement with children and their families and ensure those children at risk of abuse and neglect get the most appropriate help swiftly. When the team is fully functioning, their work will save time and resources across all agencies and help protect those children at highest risk get the right help as quickly as possible and save time across all agencies in respect of gathering and sharing information.

## **Children's Centres**

The current contract specification for all children's centre groups includes a clear expectation that the lead agencies will proactively develop integrated working with a range of health services in the group area. A specific pilot in the Hertsmere area has been developing and testing a model for delivering integrated two year old reviews, providing support for breastfeeding and working in partnership with health service to support women with post-natal depression. The contract for the Hertsmere East group of children's centres has been let for a two year period 2016-18 with a specific focus on developing and testing further models of integrated working between children's centres and the health visiting service. This will inform future commissioning of both the children's centre and health visiting services.

## **How have you prioritised capital investment and what opportunities have you considered that might mitigate or reduce future capital and/or revenue costs?**

Although the service is not generally capital-intensive, we continue to look for opportunities to access external capital funding and third-party contributions, for example to support the further development of Liquid Care System (LCS) as part of the jointly funded Child Project. We continue to invest in technology such as iPads for Social Workers reducing the need to type up case notes following visits to families/young people thus facilitating a better use of resources.

The Children's Services Capital Programme is detailed within the CS portfolio of the 2016/17 – 2019/20 IP Pack; Part B – Service Direction and Financial Consequences – Children's Services

- Proposed Capital Programme 2016/17 – 2018/19– p.45

Our main priority is to look to further to reduce organisational costs through buildings rationalisation. This includes looking at ways to reduce the cost of the PFI funding provision of Childrens homes and ancillary buildings.

## **Have you considered any other investment approaches to reduce future costs to the authority?**

During the last year we have investigated the possibility of obtaining finance through the use of a Social Impact Bond, whereby external funders provide funding and deliver early intervention or preventative services up front and are paid by savings in down-stream costs in later years. We have not pursued this because it has not proved possible to develop a workable model. This is largely due to the difficulty in identifying and linking specific future savings to actions undertaken by the bond provider, in circumstances where there is some degree of incentive on the provider to identify cases for intervention where positive outcomes are guaranteed – i.e. where a positive outcome might well have happened anyway regardless of the specific additional intervention – or where positive outcomes were not linked to activity being undertaken and funded separately.

Work supporting families through early help services and to improve the outcomes of our children looked after will have a positive future impact on public services.

## **ENGAGEMENT**

### **How have the proposals been informed by staff/public/partner engagement?**

We want Children and Young People to play an active role at all levels to influence our service, feedback how well we meet their needs and share their views about what improvements can be made. The opportunity for the **‘Voice of the Child’** to be heard and influence services varies throughout Children’s Services - we are currently developing a ‘Voice of the Child’ programme to ensure the views of children and young people are an integral part of developing and improving service provision.

Each year we work with Young People to develop a Youth Manifesto. This highlights the key priorities in service development from young people’s perspective. The Manifesto is used to create a continuing dialogue with senior officers about service priorities.

Children and young people who are looked after are engaged and involved in developing and reviewing services through Hertfordshire’s Children in Care Council & Care Leavers Group. Meetings are held regularly between the Council ‘Deputies’, senior officers and executive members, to discuss planned changes and explore the young people’s ideas, issues and concerns.

Services for disabled children are being developed in partnership with the Hertfordshire Parent-Carer Involvement and meetings are ongoing with parental involvement and co-production at the centre of our 0-25 integration programme. We are also actively looking at how children and young people can be involved in shaping our work in this area.

Youth Connexions has a range of methods to engage young people in planned changes to services, for example through youth participation groups, youth councils and forums, and Channel Mogo. Each local youth work team engages annually with young people (both users and non-users of services) as part of the evaluation and planning cycle. This results in local provision that is directly responsive to local needs. It also facilitates a number of youth participation groups, youth councils and forums across Hertfordshire. These groups provide young people with the



opportunity to consult on relevant issues with their peers contribute to improving the lives of other young people within their communities and engage with decision-makers.

In Hertfordshire the election of Members of the Youth Parliament (MYP) takes place annually in January, with young people aged 11-17 being given the opportunity to stand to represent their peers in each of the ten districts. The role of the MYP is to consult with young people to ensure that they effectively represent the voice of young people in Herts at local, regional and national levels.

Children's Services continue to work closely with partners to plan and deliver change and improvement. Much is being taken forward by groups under Hertfordshire's Health & Wellbeing Board and Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. They also offer opportunities to achieve economies of scale and better use of resources through joint commissioning.

Children's Services use a variety of mechanisms to ensure that there is an ongoing loop of information giving, engagement and feedback across the department. . These mechanisms are used to ensure that all staff members are kept up to date with key changes and developments, getting their thoughts and showing them how their feedback has been taken into account and helped to shape the way services are delivered.

Communicating and engaging with staff is a key priority for the county council. Our staff are our best asset and it's important that we engage and involve them continually. That's why we have a dedicated internal communications strategy which focusses on engaging, enabling and ensuring the wellbeing of our workforce. In addition, there are a number of specific internal campaigns which have staff at the heart of them and are designed to encourage their involvement and contribution to change programmes.

There are a number of mechanisms which have been used in the past and which are currently in place. These range from annual staff surveys to dedicated events relating to a specific project or programme. Organised events can be targeted to meet a specific need or to reach the staff within Children's Services more generally. Events are attended by staff and stakeholders depending on the subject area.

### **How do your proposals support engagement with or delivery to local communities including the enhancement of the role and visibility of Members?**

Children's Services continue to take measures to enhance the role and visibility of Members, particularly in 'corporate parenting' for children who are looked after. Reporting to the Children's Services Cabinet Panel on the work and impact of services for children looked after has been strengthened, and members meet on a regular basis with the 'Deputies' of Hertfordshire Children in Care Council.

Members are regularly communicated with by local Youth Connexions (YC) teams; through termly district / borough specific reports on the work of the team, briefings and attendance by the local team manager at Members Panels (as requested) and one to one meetings as required. Members have been supportive

of specific events and activities, both locally and countywide Members are encouraged to access details on the work of the Service on the YC website, on the MIS and via social media. Local teams have secured Members financial support for a range of opportunities and projects for young people over the last year. Cabinet Members continue to be highly supportive of county events.

Every group of children's centres is required to have an Advisory Board comprising of local services users, partners, county and district councillors and local authority representatives. The role of the Advisory Board is to monitor and challenge performance of KPIs, review data and contribute to service development plans to ensure that the children's centre programme meets local need and delivers effective, targeted early intervention services. The majority of Children's Centres currently have a County Councillor on their Advisory Board. In addition, new initiatives are launched by the Executive Member – i.e. promotion of the two year old free place scheme; development of 'My Teen Brain' parenting support

**To what extent do your proposals encourage self reliance e.g. volunteering, accessing services on line etc. enabling people and communities to help themselves?**

One of the major activities of the service is helping people to help themselves –to help equip parents to look after their children successfully without reliance on Hertfordshire County Council services. This is woven through all early years and early intervention activities.

- The Troubled Families initiative (now in phase 2) encourages parents to prepare for work through volunteering.
- Youth Connexions delivers the National Citizen Service (NCS) for 16 year olds in all ten Districts of the county. Each NCS team programme includes a project with a focus on improving a community based initiative or facility. Many participants continue to volunteer after completing the programme.
- Children's centres support and develop volunteers, offering opportunities for volunteers to undertake training or qualifications to gain the skills needed to work within the early year's sector. In addition, part of the governance is through the Advisory Board which consists of local professionals and volunteers who provide monitoring and challenge. In the recommissioning process, all applicants had to include their plans for developing the volunteer strategy further to engage the local community in understanding and supporting families with young children.
- The KIDS HUBS support families to help themselves through their online directory which has details of inclusive clubs and activities and other groups such as parent support groups. Parents and carers are able to use this directory to find out what services are available in their local area and to make contact with the organisations that are running these services. This directory is updated on a regular basis and is available through The KIDS website (<http://www.kids.org.uk/hub>) which has approximately 8,000 visitors a year.

Early years services have undergone a channel shift and all services can now be applied for online. The Local offer, Families First portal, parenting directory, childcare directory and breast feeding support group directory are online, parents and professionals are encouraged to self-serve. In addition, providers can update elements of their online profile themselves.

Children's centres provide opportunities for vulnerable families to access online services such as nursery admissions and free places for 2 year olds and to search for childcare provision, seek advice about benefits and other services. The recommissioning of children's centres included the requirement to develop further opportunities for volunteering and the recent satisfaction survey generated over 2000 contacts interested in volunteering at their local centre.

## **PERFORMANCE, STANDARDS & TARGETS**

### **What contribution are you making to the broader partnership working both within Hertfordshire County Council and outside?**

The Family Safeguarding service is working with partner agencies to deliver a new service for safeguarding children and young people. A number of different service areas within the county council are working with colleagues in Public Health, Community Protection, NHS CCGs, Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust (HPFT), the Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Community Rehabilitation Company LTD (BeNCH), Hertfordshire Police, and Spectrum Crime Reduction Initiative (Spectrum CRI).

All partners are working together to deliver the service and assist with the evaluation of its effectiveness.

Hertfordshire is host to and one of 18 members in the Children's Cross Regional Arrangement Group (CCRAG). The partnership maintains the CCRAG Providers' Database, which supports the sourcing, contracting, monitoring and annual fee negotiations for children's placements. The database is best seen as a facilitated market place for children's residential care, Independent Fostering Agencies and residential schools with registered children's homes as their means of providing accommodation

In line with the DfE policy for the regionalisation of adoption, Hertfordshire has begun a scoping exercise with 4 other LA partners in the region ( Essex, Southend-on-Sea, Suffolk and Luton) and a voluntary adoption agency Adoptionplus with a view to delivering services together as a regional adoption agency ( RAA). The outline plan is to deliver a single adoption service with regard to the following functions; recruitment, assessment, matching and support service. A programme board will be established in January 2016, to drive forward this initiative and consider what governance arrangements would work best. The partnership will receive a grant from the DfE £100 k to support this scoping exercise up to March 2016.

### **What contribution is your service making towards the efficiency savings HCC needs to make?**

All savings are detailed in:

Part B – Service Direction and Financial Consequences – Children's Services

- Key Budget Movements 2016/17 – 2019/20 p.39 - 41

Savings of £100k (16/17) are anticipated to be achieved by Youth Connexions through increased trading of services, and reductions in Youth Justice will save a further £88k in 16/17. (Ref. EEI018)

The department is also realising decreases in the Children's Centres contracts of £942k (16/17) and savings via recommissioning of Public Health of £1,000k (16/17). (Ref. EEI006 & EEI029)

£350k savings will be made due following a review of family assessment teams (16/17), with a further £200k from Project Protector (16/17). (Ref. SSS022 & SSS021).

£392k will be saved following a review of the Home Visiting Service (16/17). Service changes including a review of training & development - £125k, Commissioning Savings - £170k and restructures within the CS Directorate - £95k, will also be delivered in 16/17. (Ref. EEI030, SSS026, SSS020 & SSS019).

**What is your services contribution to the IP cross-cutting themes and how are these impacting on your proposals?**

All savings are detailed in:

Part B – Service Direction and Financial Consequences – Children's Services  
Key Budget Movements 2016/17 – 2019/20 p.39 - 41

Children's Services is the lead for one theme; Family Focused Working. We are working closely with Health & Community Services (HCS), Health and Public Health colleagues to seek to ensure complementary and integration of social care and health services.

Children's Services as a Department is committed to delivering efficiency savings of £750k (all years) by reviewing staffing and generation of internal efficiencies – this is spread over the Children's Services, and Education, Enterprise and Skills Portfolios. (Ref. EEI032 & SSS023)

Further savings of £250k (all years) are to be generated by development of the SmartWorking agenda, creating efficiencies via to better use of IT, better connectivity, and developing working practices. (Ref. EEI035 & SSS026)

CS is working with partners to deliver savings against the 0-25 Integration workstream, with savings of £75k (17/18) rising to £200k (18/19). (Ref. EEI019 & SSS013)

Contributions are being made to authority wide cross cutting savings in printing costs of £38k (16/17) rising to £86k (18/19), (Ref. EEI034 & SSS024).

**How are you continuing to drive service improvement and how do you compare against the top performers in your area?**

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) data shows that Hertfordshire remains in the top quintile for both children achieving a 'good level of development' at age 5 with 69% compared to the national average of 66.3%. Children's Centres are performing well at Ofsted inspections, with an increase of 5.1 percentage points between March 2014 and March 2015 with 75.4% of Centres achieving good/outstanding grades, compared to the year and against a national average of 66%. No Hertfordshire children's centres have received an 'inadequate' grade.

Children's Services continues to perform well. In social care, performance on completion of the Child & Family Single Assessment shows that 89.1% of all assessments in Hertfordshire were completed within 45 days in 2014/15 compared a statistical neighbour average of 84.8% and national average of 80.7%. There was a considerable reduction in referrals to social care between 2013/14 and 2014/15 which has continued into the current financial year. Hertfordshire has the lowest rate per 10,000 amongst its statistical neighbours. This is a result of an increased Early Help offer, supporting families earlier and appropriately reducing the need of social care intervention. After a rise in 2013/14 the number of children subject to a child protection plan reduced from 44.1 per 10,000 in March 2014 to 37.3 in March 2015 and has continued to reduce during 2015/16. This compares to our statistical neighbour average of 37.7.

Key indicators and performance measures relating to cost drivers and quality of safeguarding and specialist services are monitored closely and regularly. Hertfordshire is the regional data lead for the Eastern Region with regards to benchmarking and analysis of data relating to Children's Services. As part of this we:

- Collate and co-ordinate the collection of Children's Services performance data across the region.
- Producing analysis and intelligence to be shared with the group and directors across the region
- Lead on several workstreams relating to improving performance and sharing best practice across the region.
- Produce bespoke products to share information in innovative formats.

The number of children looked after has continued to decrease year on year despite a continuing national picture of rising numbers and is now 19<sup>th</sup> lowest rate per 10,000 out of 152 local authorities per 10,000 population up from 23<sup>rd</sup> in 2014.

Hertfordshire is a member of the CIPFA Children Looked After (CLA) Benchmarking Club which compares average spends across 73 participating authorities. It shows;

- the estimated cost per child looked after in Hertfordshire for 2015/16 was £893 per week compared with the average of £916 per week.
- in-House foster care placement costs are in line with the average (£493 per week compared with £467 per week) while internal residential care is more expensive than the average (£3,365 pw compared with £2,980 pw).
- external residential care is higher (£3,528 pw compared to £3,400 pw).
- Hertfordshire had 64% of placements with in-house foster carers (the lowest cost type of placement) compared with 59% average across the rest of the benchmarking club.

Hertfordshire's young people benefit from a secure path into adulthood. The percentage of 16-18 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) was at a record low of 3.8% at the end of October 2015, (a 9.5% reduction on 12 months previous). The latest available benchmarking as at October 2015 shows that Hertfordshire has the third lowest percentage of young people aged 16-18 who are NEET in the Eastern Region against a regional average of 4.4% and England average of 4.2%.

## **SUSTAINABILITY, DELIVERABILITY & IMPLEMENTATION**

### **How is your service supporting economic growth and prosperity?**

Children's Services contributes towards supporting economic growth by having one of the lowest rates of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the country.

The service is a major purchaser of supplies and services, and where possible – without prejudice to value for money – seeks to make sure local small and medium sized enterprises have the opportunity to compete and to supply these services. Children's Services continues to promote and support apprenticeships both within the County Council but also within the private sector with additional support offered for Care Leavers.

### **What effect is the change in the economy and society having on your services? e.g. levels of demand, inflation, changing income etc. and how are these impacts being managed or mitigated?**

The level of demand for safeguarding services can be closely linked to economic wellbeing. Local authorities with higher levels of deprivation tend to have higher numbers of children in need, children subject to child protection plans and children looked after, and are funded accordingly. Within Hertfordshire, we know for

example that there is a strong correlation between the level of deprivation in a ward and the number of children from that ward who become looked after. This is also reflected in the increasing complexity of cases.

The increase in under five year olds has increased demand on services, and there are more families needing targeted interventions and with Children in Need plans. Children's centres now have a charging policy and make differentiated charges for universal services, although targeted interventions are free of charge. The recommissioning of children's centres reduced the contract value by £1.5m and by grouping the centres the management layer has reduced and the number of lower grade intervention workers has increased. Services are now offered on rolling programmes across the group, and are targeted to local need.

**What are the major risks to delivery of your proposals and how are you proposing to manage these? e.g. capacity, time, budget in regard to these proposals.**

### **Families First**

- Insufficient partnership buy-in due to resource pressures.
- Further financial pressures limit the opportunities to invest in early help

### **0-25 Integration**

- Maintaining stakeholder engagement as we move along the process when it comes down to making difficult decisions. We need to keep momentum going and to ensure that high level stakeholder engagement across all agencies is kept up. Regular individual contact with all key stakeholders is a measure to mitigate this.
- Competing priorities for staff cause tasks to not be completed within timescales. To mitigate this Ensure that workforce are communicated with in an appropriate manner so they are not 'drowned in information'

### **Family Safeguarding**

The major risks to the Family Safeguarding service are that the specialist posts are hard-to-fill, the arrival of some adult workers has been later than anticipated, timescales for the evaluation are pre-set and may not allow sufficient time for the innovation projects to deliver and embed the required changes before evaluating impact. Information sharing was raised as an issue which has been resolved with specific sharing arrangements. There are also issues around the potential for insufficient join up between the Family Safeguarding and other service areas.

Mitigation measures have been explored and/or put in place to manage these risks. For example;  
Specific recruitment drives and agency staff used to backfill hard to fill posts. Implementation manuals are being drafted and redrafted as a result of learning from recent implementation. Evaluations are being undertaken as soon as possible with families who have provided consent. More resources have been diverted to the evaluation team to undertake the baseline evaluation.

Information sharing agreements and consent mechanisms have been put in place and the potential for cross over and opportunities with other service areas will continue to be explored.

### **Specialist and Early Help within Children' Services**

Children's Services continues to strengthen Hertfordshire's early intervention support, and therefore control and reduce the escalation of need and demand for higher-cost services. However, there will always be risks that the level of demand increases as a result of factors over which the service has limited control. These might include, for example, a national safeguarding scandal or new legal rulings and benefit changes or the recent increases in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children arriving in the authority. Key indicators and performance measures relating to demand and cost drivers are monitored closely, so that any changes can be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

### **What is the basis of your demographic predictions? What effect is demographic change having on your service? How flexible is your budget to demographic changes?**

Demographic projections by ONS indicate a rising child population, in particular in the age groups 5-9 and 10-14 both projecting increases of over 20% in the ten year period 2012 to 2022. Overall an 11.5% increase is projected for the population aged 0-19

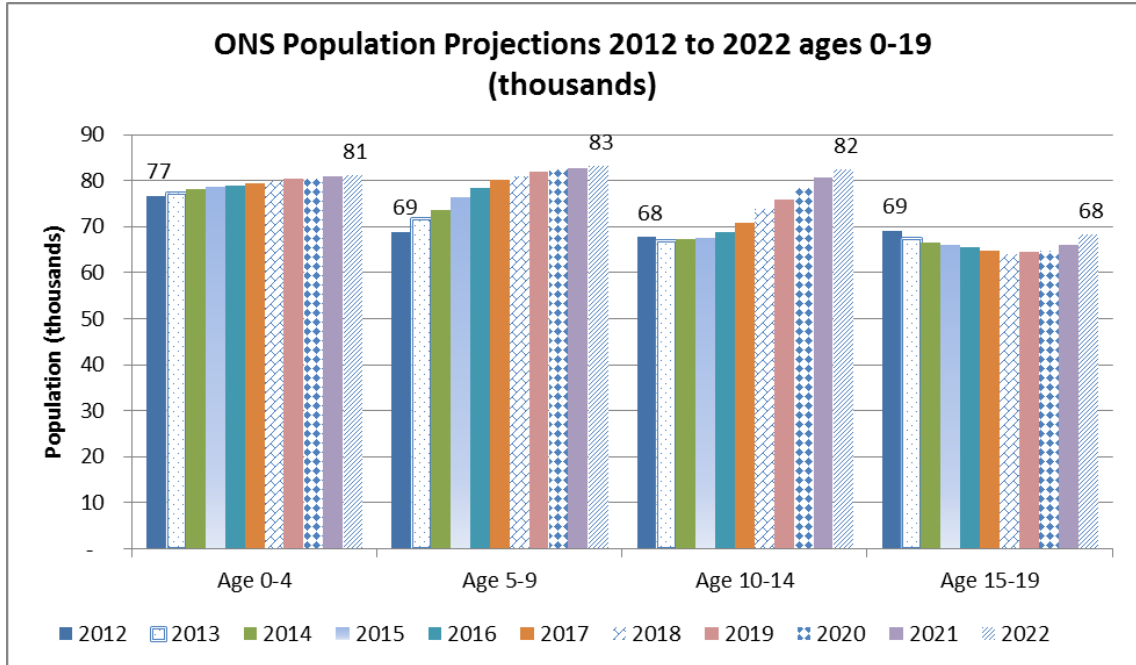
Demographic pressures for Children Looked After (CLA) and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC) are included in the Integrated Plan proposals. These are detailed within the CS portfolio of the 2016/17 – 2019/20 IP Pack; Part B – Service Direction and Financial Consequences – Children's Services p.39 – 40 (Ref. D01 & D02)

The demographic estimates for CLA are based on a predicted increasing child population in Hertfordshire and maintaining numbers of CLA as a specified rate per 10,000. CLA savings being developed assume a decreasing rate per 10,000 from 39 to 34 but do not factor in the impact of an increasing population. Increases in the CLA population puts pressure on placement and social work team budgets. The demographic pressure only includes the placement pressure. The number of CLA has remained stable during the current year however, with plans to reduce the number (to contain and reduce costs) it is estimated that this pressure will be required to maintain support for CLA placements in the short to medium term.

There has been a substantial increase in the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) in the first half of the current year. It is estimated that this pressure will continue in 2016/17. The demographic pressure for UASC estimated based on the increase in numbers experienced in the first half of 2015/16 and assumes that this level of increase continues at half that rate until the end of 2015/16 and is based on the funding gap between cost of placement and Government grant received. If the numbers continue to rise in future years then further pressures will be experienced.



The demographic increases in the CLA population are also having an effect on the number of supported care leavers who are accessing further or higher education services via Corporate Parenting. Whilst this represents an ultimately positive trend for Hertfordshire in the attainment and achievement of individuals who have been in care there is a pressure due to the financial support offered to this increasing number of individuals.



Demographic pressures are currently felt particularly in services for under 5's, and this has been taken account of in discussions round the development of the IP.

