Social Care & Safeguarding Self-Assessment

February 2020

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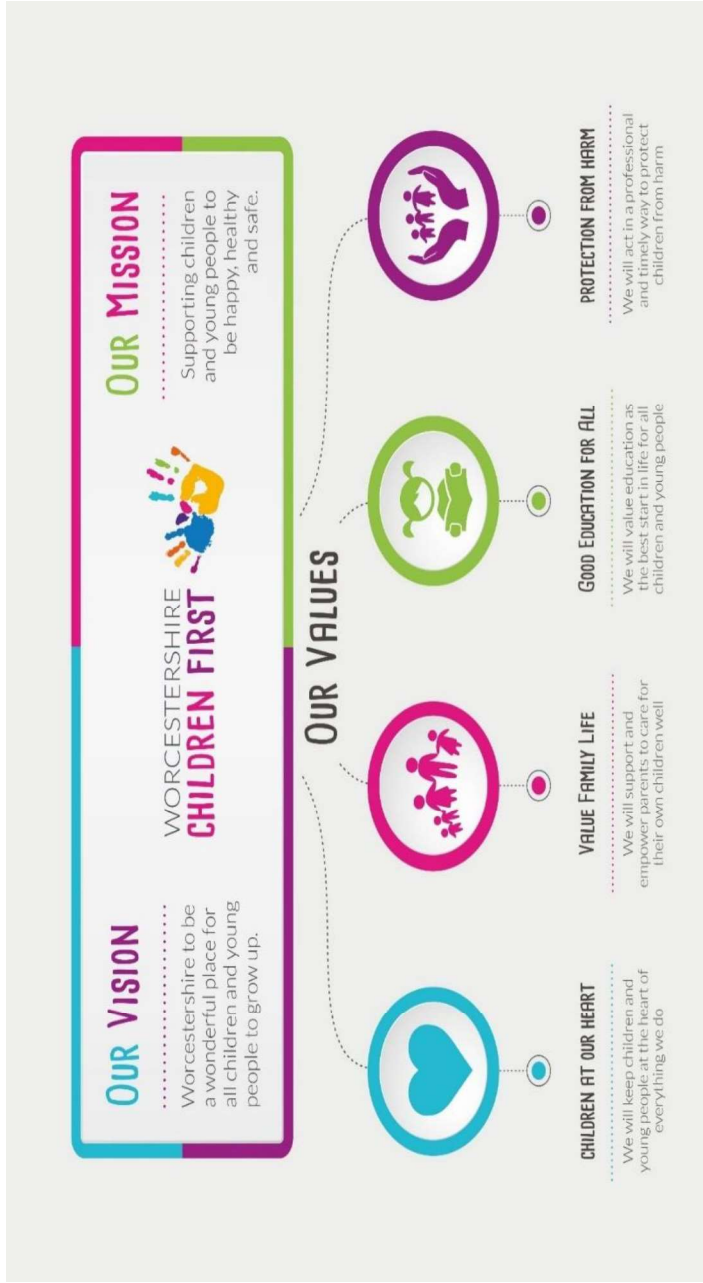
1. Organisational Structure and Governance

1.1 Delivery of Children's Social Care Services

Children's Social Care & safeguarding Services in Worcestershire are delivered by Worcestershire Children First. A wholly owned company of Worcestershire County Council.

The company is responsible for the delivery of Social Care, Education and Early Help services to children, young people and families. Having one company to deliver all of these services enables us to coordinate, integrate, collaborate and, where appropriate, co-locate teams and services in order to provide seamless high-quality services to the children, young people and families of Worcestershire

1.2 Organisational Structure and Leadership

Worcestershire Children First (WCF) is a 'not-for-profit' wholly owned Company of Worcestershire County Council (WCC).

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families has political responsibility for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of the Children's Directorate, as well as being democratically accountable to local communities.   He provides strong, strategic leadership as well as support and challenge to the Director of Children's Services and relevant members of the Directorate Leadership Team.   He is the chair of our Corporate Parenting Board. In addition, he meets on a monthly basis with the Executive Leadership Team of Worcestershire Children First as well as visits to front line staff and Children, Young People and Families through a wide range of participation events.

The Director of Children's Services and Lead Member actively discharge their statutory duties within the context of guidance provided by the DfE.

The Director of Childrens Services is a combined role with the Chief Executive of WCF and as such reports to the Chair of the WCF board and the Chief Executive of the council.

Worcestershire Children First has 11 Board members consisting of Executive and Non-Executive Directors. Executive Directors are those employed by us to lead and manage delivery functions and teams and Non-Executives bring experience, scrutiny and support to the board.

The Executive Leadership Team is made up of key leads with responsibilities for Education & Early Help, Children's Social Care & Safeguarding and Finance & Resources.   These services work together under the guidance of the statutory Director for Children Services.

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Rob Morrison
Chairman

Tina Russell
Director of Social Care and Safeguarding

Cllr Marcus Hart
Non-Executive Director (WCC)

Sally Taylor
Non-Executive Director (Independent)

Catherine Driscoll
Chief Executive

Sarah Wilkins
Director of Education and Early Help

Cllr Karen May
Non-Executive Director (WCC)

Claire Burgess
Non-Executive Director (Independent)

Phil Rook
Director of Resources

Andrew Spice
Non-Executive Director (WCC)

Gareth Moss
Non-Executive Director (Independent)

(Pink denotes Non-Executive Director; dark blue represents Executive Director. The Chairman of the Board is a DfE appointment)

Governance Arrangements:

Worcestershire Children First Board Meetings

Quality Assurance Board

Risk Governance and Audit Board
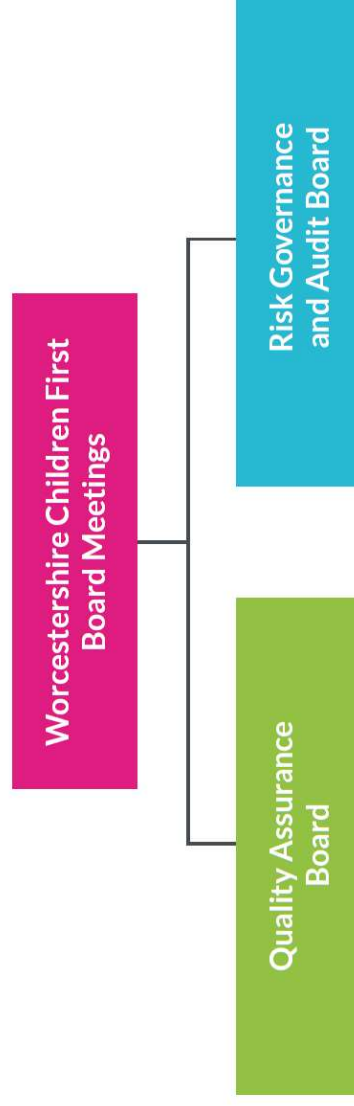
- Risk Governance and Audit Board which meets three times a year and maintains an oversight of our governance, risk management, internal control and value for money framework.
- Quality Assurance Board which meets four times a year and oversees the quality and performance of our front-line services including seeking the views and opinions of children and young people.

- There is an annual general meeting held in public in accordance with our Company's 'Articles of Association'. This is an opportunity to share our annual report and future plans with Members and other interested parties.

2. Worcestershire Children and Young People Local Context

Worcestershire is a largely rural county with a resident population of **588,370.** The total number of those aged 0-17 is estimated at **116,938 (ONS 2017 mid-year estimates)** making up almost a fifth of the population, whilst the 0-24 figure is 160,401, over a quarter of the Worcestershire population. Trend-based projections suggest that the total population in Worcestershire is set to increase by about 5% by 2026 whilst the 0-24 age range is projected to increase at a slower rate of about 1% over this time period, although birth rates are higher in the most deprived areas of the County. Unemployment is low in Worcestershire, with rates below regional and national averages. The county as a whole is relatively less deprived than the national average, as depicted by lighter shading in the map below. However, there are pockets of relative deprivation in the urban areas of Worcester, Kidderminster (Wyre Forest) and Redditch. In addition, there are some deprived rural areas, most notably in the north of Wyre Forest and in Wychavon district, to the north of Evesham.

3588 Children in Need
(National Definition)
(1 in 33 children)
(Statistical Neighbours
1 in 37, England 1 in 30)

632 Children in Need
(Local Definition)
(1 in 186 children)

495 children on a Child
Protection Plan
(1 in 238 children)
(Statistical Neighbours
1 in 296, England 1 in 229)

822 Children Looked After
(1 in 143 children)
(Statistical Neighbours
1 in 203, England 1 in 153)

Legend

Worcestershire District 2011
IMD Score 2015 by 2011 LSOA
National Deciles
0.5 - 5.7
5.8 - 8.4
8.5 - 11.0
11.1 - 13.9
14.0 - 17.4
17.5 - 21.4
21.5 - 26.8
26.9 - 33.9
34.0 - 44.6
44.7 - 92.6

3. Progress since the Inspection

3.1 Our Ofsted Inspection Journey

- **October 2016**: Ofsted: Full Safeguarding Inspection of Children's Services.
- **May 2017** Ofsted: Family Front Door.
- **September 2017** Ofsted: Family Front Door.
- **January 2018**: Ofsted: Family Front Door and Children in Care Proceedings
- **January 2018**: Essex Interim Report on our improvement partner progress.
- **April 2018**: Looked After Children and Permanence.
- **July 2018**: Child Protection and Children In Need.
- **July 2018**: Essex Final Report on our improvement partner progress
- **October 2018**: Children in Care up to the age of 16 and Performance framework.
- **January 2019**: Children and Young People Vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation and who go missing from Home or Care.
- **July 2019**: Inspection of Local Authority Childrens Service

Inspection Local Authority Childrens Services Worcestershire July 2019

The local authority has made considerable progress in improving the quality of services to children and families since 2016.

Essential steps have been taken to meet the goals in the service improvement plan.

Senior Leaders and elected members are ambitious for and committed to, ensuring the well being, safety and outcomes for children in the county.

Senior Leaders have successfully created a strengthened workforce of stable and permanent workers who know their children well.

As a result, outcomes for many children and their families are better, the changes are embedded on core practice and there is evidence of a sustained trajectory of improvement.

A full re-inspection by Ofsted under the new ILACS Framework took place in June 2019. The resulting report was published on 29 July 2019 and the service is now rated as 'Requires Improvement to be Good.'

This is the first time within the UK, that an improvement in grade has been awarded whilst in Alternative Delivery Model (ADM) status and pre the launch of a wholly owned company (WCF). This was a significant achievement and provided a sound platform to build our 20/21 Social Care and Safeguarding business and development plan.

3.2 Service Business Planning 2020/21

Our 19/20 Business Development and Improvement Plan sets out our key areas for further development.

The level 1 plan is presented as a Plan on a Page. The priorities reflect:

- **The areas of focus identified by Ofsted in the ILAC inspection,**
- **Priority area of business development**
- **Area of Innovation within the services**

The Four boxes surrounding these priorities represent the foundation of activity underpinning the plan including
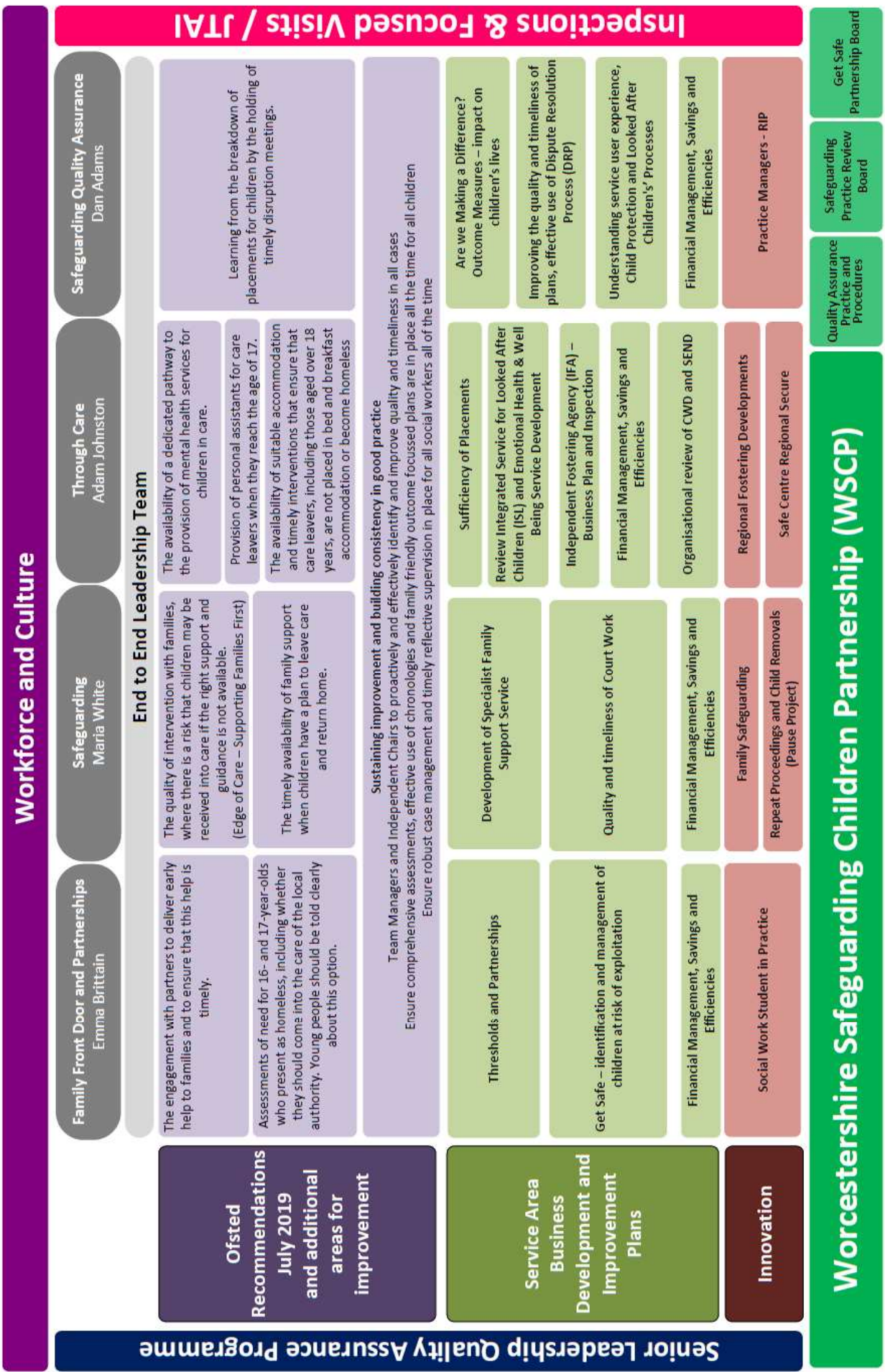
- **Work with the Safeguarding Partnership,**
- **Engagement in external and independent measure of quality,**
- **Workforce and Culture**
- **Quality Assurance programme**

Level 2 plans (outlined below) represent the details of Outcomes to be achieved in child centred language, Rag rated Milestones and Measure of success for each area of service.

The full document can be found as appendix A

WORCESTERSHIRE
CHILDREN FIRST

Social Care and Safeguarding

Workforce and Culture

Inspections & Focused Visits / JTAI

End to End Leadership Team

Family Front Door and Partnerships – Emma Brittain	Safeguarding – Maria White	Through Care – Adam Johnston	Safeguarding Quality Assurance – Dan Adams
The engagement with partners to deliver early help to families and to ensure that this help is timely.	The quality of intervention with families, where there is a risk that children may be received into care if the right support and guidance is not available. (Edge of Care – Supporting Families First)	The availability of a dedicated pathway to the provision of mental health services for children in care.	Learning from the breakdown of placements for children by the holding of timely disruption meetings.
Assessments of need for 16- and 17-year-olds who present as homeless, including whether they should come into the care of the local authority. Young people should be told clearly about this option.	The timely availability of family support when children have a plan to leave care and return home.	Provision of personal assistants for care leavers when they reach the age of 17.	
		The availability of suitable accommodation and timely interventions that ensure that care leavers, including those aged over 18 years, are not placed in bed and breakfast accommodation or become homeless	

Team Managers and Independent Chairs to proactively and effectively identify and improve quality and timeliness in all cases
Ensure comprehensive assessments, effective use of chronologies and family friendly outcome focussed plans are in place all the time for all children

Sustaining improvement and building consistency in good practice
Ensure robust case management and timely reflective supervision in place for all social workers all of the time

Ofsted Recommendations July 2019 and additional areas for improvement

Service Area Business Development and Improvement Plans

Thresholds and Partnerships	Development of Specialist Family Support Service	Sufficiency of Placements	Are we Making a Difference? Outcome Measures – impact on children's lives
		Review Integrated Service for Looked After Children (ISL) and Emotional Health & Well Being Service Development	Improving the quality and timeliness of plans, effective use of Dispute Resolution Process (DRP)
Get Safe – identification and management of children at risk of exploitation	Quality and timeliness of Court Work	Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) – Business Plan and Inspection	Understanding service user experience, Child Protection and Looked After Children's Processes
Financial Management, Savings and Efficiencies	Financial Management, Savings and Efficiencies	Financial Management, Savings and Efficiencies	Financial Management, Savings and Efficiencies

Innovation

Social Work Student in Practice	Family Safeguarding	Organisational review of CWD and SEND	Practice Managers - RIP
	Repeat Proceedings and Child Removals (Pause Project)	Regional Fostering Developments	
		Safe Centre Regional Secure	

Senior Leadership Quality Assurance Programme

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP)

Quality Assurance Practice and Procedures	Safeguarding Practice Review Board	Get Safe Partnership Board

4. Partnership Approach to Improving Social Care

4.1 Whole system approach

Our Children's Social Care Improvement Plan sits within a wider range of Directorate and partnership strategies and business plans. The most significant being:

- Corporate Parenting Strategy
- SEND Strategy and Action plan for improvement
- Education and Skills Strategy 2019-24
- Early Help Strategy for Worcestershire
- West Mercia Prevent Strategy
- Get Safe Action Plan

4.2 Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB)

The new **Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership** (WSCP) arrangements commenced September 2019

Partnership Board and Executive Group

In our new arrangements the three named safeguarding partners; Local Authority, Police and CCG will work together as an Executive Group coming together with the wider group of partners on a six-monthly cycle where the longstanding ethos of scrutiny, challenge and continuous improvement will continue to drive our activity to improve safeguarding arrangements for children and young people.

We are strongly committed to ensuring we have wide representation from the statutory and voluntary sectors across Worcestershire. The wider partner agencies will form the WSCP and in addition each sub group of the partnership will have a strong multi-agency representation accountable for the day to day delivery of the agreed business plan.

The three safeguarding partners, via their delegated representatives, will work together as an Executive Group with overall accountability for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Worcestershire. The Executive Group will also include the Independent Chair, other relevant partners as appropriate and the chairs of the three sub-boards.

This group will determine the Business Plan and Priorities, sharing those with the wider Partnership and retaining responsibility for promoting and delivering the Plan.

The Executive Group will act as a strategic leadership group in overseeing the work of the sub-boards, work with relevant partners and disseminate learning from local and national reviews.

The Executive Group will have responsibility for ensuring that local thresholds and safeguarding procedures are regularly reviewed and circulated for awareness among practitioners. The Quality Assurance Practice and Procedures (QAPP) group will be tasked to undertake an audit programme to identify compliance and best practice with our thresholds and procedures.

The executive group, supported by the independent chair as necessary, will act as the senior group for Escalation and Resolution on any issue of professional challenge between partners.

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership sub groups

Quality Assurance Practice and Procedures (QAPP)

As a partnership we are committed to service development and consider ourselves a "learning partnership". With strong multi-agency representation our QAPP sub group will deliver a multi-agency programme of Quality Assurance through; audits, understanding service user experience and monitoring of Key Performance Indicators. The findings of these activities, along with any identified area of learning from the Safeguarding Practice Review Group will inform the multi-agency programme of learning.

This will include assessing the effectiveness of help, including early help being provided to children and their families.

We will continue to work with other safeguarding partnerships in the West Midlands Region and across the country, sharing learning and best practice so that multi-agency training and working is effective and delivers positive change.

Get Safe – Exploitation of Children and Young People

As a partnership we have identified that Contextual Safeguarding and the exploitation of children and young people as being a key priority area of safeguarding for us all.

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'GET SAFE' is the Worcestershire partnership title for the identification and management of multi-agency support and protection for children and young people at risk of **G**ang-related activity, sexual **E**xploitation, **T**rafficking, modern day **S**lavery, **A**bsent and missing, **F**orced marriage, honour based violence and female genital mutilation, and criminal **E**xploitation.

This sub group will develop and co-ordinate the strategic and tactical action plan to support and protect children and young people at risk of or who are experiencing exploitation. Our action plan sets out a range of activities under the headings of: Prepare Prevent, Protect and Pursue.
This group will be chaired by the Independent Chair of the WSCP and will include representation from across the statutory and voluntary sectors of the partnership.

Get Safe will liaise closely with other key strategic multi-agency forums including SOCJAC and the Community Safety Partnership as well as undertaking a programme of meetings with the other LA's within the West Mercia Police footprint to ensure our work on this agenda is well co-ordinated and that information sharing and cross border partnership working enables us to meet the challenges and vision set out by Government in The Serious Violence Strategy.

Safeguarding Practice Review Board

The Safeguarding Practice Review Board will review and manage local case reviews, including rapid reviews of serious incidents, and will where appropriate recommend the commissioning of Safeguarding Practice Reviews. This group will liaise with Public Health who will assume responsibility for the child death review process (the details of which will be published shortly).

We are committed to working together to safeguard children and young people across the county and recognise that we are stronger working in partnership.

5. Social Care and Safeguarding Workforce

5.1 Signs of Safety – Our Chosen Practice Model

Our practice is centred on the Signs of Safety Practice model. The Signs of Safety approach is a way for everyone involved to talk together about worries and strengths and create good safety plans for children and young people to achieve successful outcomes.

We strive to engage with all children and young people so that they have an opportunity to talk about what they are worried about, what makes them happy, and what they would like to see happen in their family and community to keep them safe – our work is driven by the Child's Voice.

Our aim is to have a skilled workforce who uses a strength-based approach and consistent and common language through assessment, planning and intervention.

This year, we have continued the roll out of Signs of Safety, with a focus on embedding the approach with partners. Since we began our implementation journey (October 2017) we have trained in excess of 600 staff in the use of our new practice model from our Chief Executive to front line practitioners. We originally trained 90 Practice Champions within the business to help to embed the new model in our practice and ensure its use is effective; in November 2019 we trained a further 28 Practice Champions to further embed our approach to this way of working.

The Local Authority have invested in training our partners, we have run 12 courses and have trained 315 partners in the Signs of Safety Model to promote awareness and effective partnership working across agencies.

Ofsted said in our 2019 ILAC;

"The use of a strengths-based system of assessing risk is now embedded and used effectively to help professionals and families discuss risk to children and measure progress in reducing that risk".

In a recent Social Care and Safeguarding Health Check, Managers and Practitioners told us that 98% of staff use Signs of Safety in their practice and overall, 99% of staff said the approach helped them in their work with children and young people.

5.2 Children's Social Care Operating Model and Health Check

The most recent structure, updated in January 2020, cements the new structure and management and leadership arrangements that have transferred into Worcestershire Children First and ensures that, as a service, we continue to have strong front line management and that we have the capacity and ability to flex in response to changes that are inevitable in organisations and yet keep a good level of stability and quality.

Supported by financial investment and through staff feedback and performance review we have been able to design a workforce strategy for Recruitment, Retention, Learning and Development that has made a tangible difference.

Social Care and Safeguarding Structure:

Social Care &
Safeguarding Structu (Appendix B)

Ofsted June 19 said:

Senior managers have taken the essential steps to meet the goals of their social care improvement plan. Combined with the restructure of services, they have ensured that changes to core practice are embedded, and that invested resources focus on delivering better outcomes for children. These improvements are being demonstrated in many areas

In Worcestershire we undertake bi-annual Health Checks, the most recent of these was completed over November and December 2019. The Health Check provides data that evidences our improvement and how we have sustained this over the last year.

- 94% of staff feel listed to and have their worries and concern addressed by managers
- 88% of social work staff have dedicated monthly supervision that is reflective and includes review of performance
- 84 % of social worker say they feel valued at work
- 71% of social worker feel they have a manageable case load
- 95% of staff feel their managers are visible, approachable and responsive
- 78% of social workers report receiving direct feedback on audits of their work
- 90% of staff say they receive regular information on learning from Quality Assurance activity within the service
- 98% of staff feel Signs of Safety are using the Signs of Safety model and 94% feel this is a good tool for working with families

- 94% of social workers say they understand the Vision, Missing and Values of Worcestershire Children First and 91% say they understand how they and their team contribute to these.

Management Stability and Capacity is a fundamental foundation on which to build a stable workforce where staff feel supported, challenged and empowered to do the best thing for children and families.

Health Check Report:

2020-01-20
Safeguarding & Socia (Appendix C)

What Ofsted said about our structure;

"Supervision is regular and is increasingly reflective, using a strengths-based model of intervention to better understand children's lives and areas of vulnerability"
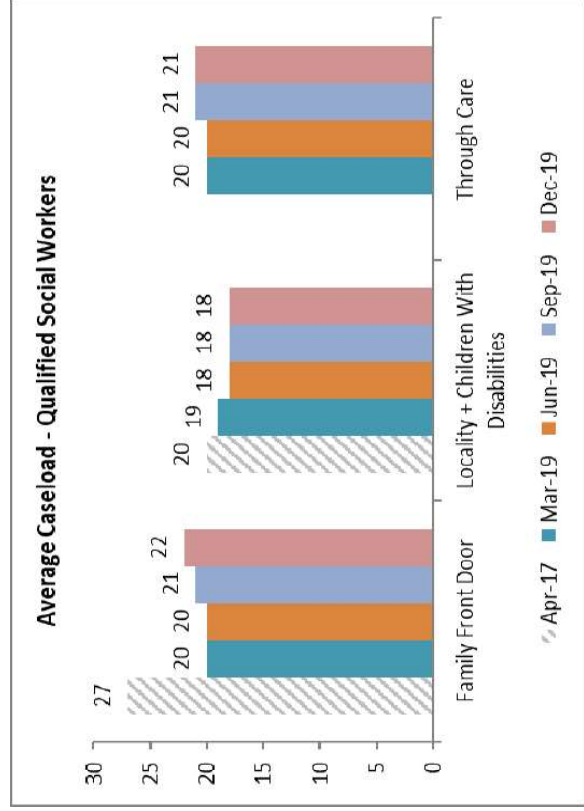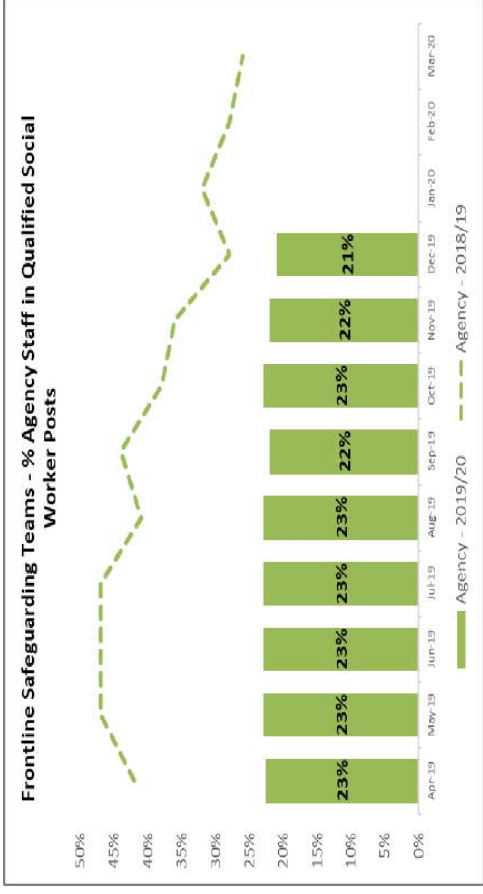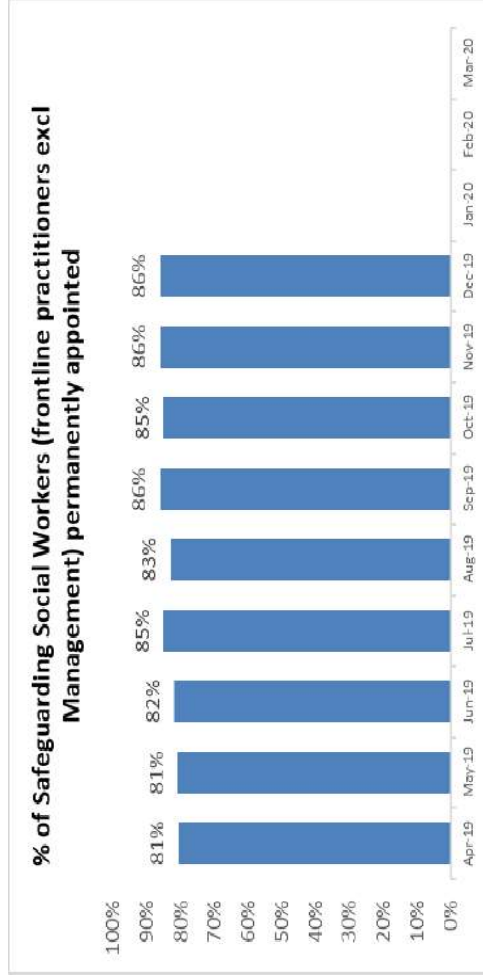
Ofsted said in our 2019 ILACs inspection:

"Effective work has strengthened the workforce. Use of agency staff has reduced and the stability of staff in post has increased. The establishment of a social work academy has meant that there are increased opportunities for the local authority to 'grow' its own staff. The introduction of the role of advanced social work practitioners has strengthened career opportunities and the range of experience within teams. Staff are positive about changes that have been implemented, including that a strengths-based model of social work intervention is in place and embedded"

"Senior leaders have successfully created a more stable and permanent workforce and are ensuring that caseloads for social workers are reducing"

"Investment in our workforce as well as improvements to our pay and conditions for social workers has helped us move towards our vision to be the 'employer of choice"

The overall formal and informal feedback from staff is one of a positive, motivated, supported and child centred workforce committed to our continued service improvement and development.

Stability, Capacity and the Experience of the workforce is a fundamental foundation on which to build good practice. Where staff feel supported, challenged and empowered they are better able to work with confidence in a child centred way. Our data evidence a sustained positive picture on recruitment and retention of social workers, experience of the workforce and caseloads.

Frontline Safeguarding Teams - % Agency Staff in Qualified Social Worker Posts

% of Safeguarding Social Workers (frontline practitioners excl Management) permanently appointed

Average Caseload - Qualified Social Workers

Area/Role	1-3 Years	4-5 Years	6-9 Years	10+ Years
Safeguarding Social Worker	39	15	10	22
Safeguarding Team Manager	-	2	6	10
FFD Social Worker	12	4	12	17
FFD Team Manager	-	1	2	5
Through Care Social Worker	9	3	9	5
Through Care Team Manager	-	-	1	5
Fostering Social Worker	4	4	7	9
Fostering Team Manager	-	-	-	6
CWD Social Worker	4	-	1	11
CWD Team Manager	-	-	-	2
IRO & CP	-	1	3	25
GM & ADs	-	-	-	13
TOTAL	68	39	51	130

5.3 Social Work Academy

A key development in our workforce improvement work is the implementation of Worcestershire County Council's Social Work Academy. The academy has now been in place for just over a year (it was launched to staff in January 2018) and is designed to provide staff with easy to access resources, training and development to enable them to develop the skills and knowledge needed to maintain their CPD.

Aligned to the KSS and PCF the Academy also provides information for staff about how they can develop their social work career in Worcestershire. Development opportunities are provided across the range of social work roles including, for example, Practice Educators as well as newly qualified social workers and students. Development takes a variety of forms including face to face events and courses, e-learning and action learning provision. Importantly the Academy also has the responsibility for ensuring that Worcestershire County Council's social workers are kept up to date, for example with emergent standards such as the Practice Education Professional Standards review and the Social Work England Consultation and works hard to reflect what's required in its provision.
The Academy works with qualified social workers in both Adults and Children's services and is closely involved in the work of the West Midlands Teaching Partnership, and its work to improve academic provision across the region and therefore to deliver improvements in practice.

The Academy works closely with other learning and development teams within Worcestershire including the Apprenticeships and Qualifications team and the leadership and management development function both of which have been working with social workers to develop their skills – the development provided has included a Group Manager development programme as well as more generic leadership and management development opportunities.

Since its establishment, the Academy has played an important role in supporting Worcestershire's social worker recruitment drive and continues to be a key element in our employment offer to future and current employees to aid both recruitment and retention.

5.4 Positive Outcome Project

We have developed our Social Work Academy to be a strong service to support the development of Social Workers through their career pathway. A key element of the Academy is to support Student Social Workers, offering them statutory placements and developing strong Practice Education. The value of Students is held highly in Worcestershire, they bring with them new ideas of practice and a passion and tenacity in their work with children.

We invest in the Students who are on placement with us, offering them a compliment of reflective supervision, mentoring opportunities and a wealth of practice experience to prepare them for practice as they qualify and move into their first year in practice. Students who we invest in

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often develop their commitment and investment in Worcestershire and these key principles develop strong newly qualified Social Workers and go on to work in Worcestershire. This model develops an annual model of "grow your own", building and strengthening our workforce.

The positive outcomes project will deliver in three specific district areas across Worcestershire: Worcester, Wye Forest and Wychavon. The current data available to Worcestershire Children First identifies a specific current need in these areas specifically for level 3 needs and GET SAFE vulnerabilities.
These areas also cut across Worcestershire and link in with both Targeted Family Support and Social Care districts so that we can provide seamless services to children and young people with evidence impact and provide high quality social work student placements.

Future growth and development of this project can be considered following evaluation and evidence of positive outcomes on both young people and student placements. The proposed implementation of this project is April 2020.

Aims of this project:

- Establish Worcestershire Children First as a strong experienced partner to Universities (HOW college and Worcester University). Providing high quality 70- and 100-day student SW placements.
- Increase capacity for direct work with Children and young people across the county at level 3 needs.
- Increase partnership working with schools and other partners who are delivering targeted early help to children and young people in the target groups for case work.
- Establish relationships with student SW on placement in order to influence their employment choices as they qualify. Promoting Worcestershire as the "Employer of Choice"

The business case was agreed December 2019 and work is underway as a priority within the service business plan.

5.5 Areas for focus 20/21Continued focus on recruitment and retention to maximise permanent staffing levels and minimise turnover

- Improving front line joined up services between Children's Social Care and SEND and both with Targeted Family Support and Early Help
- Implementation of phase 2 of our Social Work Academy
- Implementation of our cultural shift plan and continuing focus on ensuring the child is at the heart of everything we do through our business planning
- Consistent application of Signs of Safety through induction and ongoing training for all staff

- Development of our placement offer to Student Social Workers – PoP Project

6. Quality Assurance

6.1 How do we know what the quality and impact of our Social Work Practice is?

Whilst we have been open and proactive in learning from feedback and the experiences of others we know that it is through embedding our own Quality Assurance and Performance (QAP) Framework we will find a true and current understanding of what we are doing, how well we are doing it and what do we need to do differently to ensure we continue to develop and improve our services.

Early on in our improvement work we established a three-dimension Framework for Quality Assurance including:

- Performance data
- Service User Feedback
- Audit activity

We have developed and embedded this framework throughout our services to help us answer the important questions, how our services are being experienced by children, young people and their families and what difference we are making to their lives.
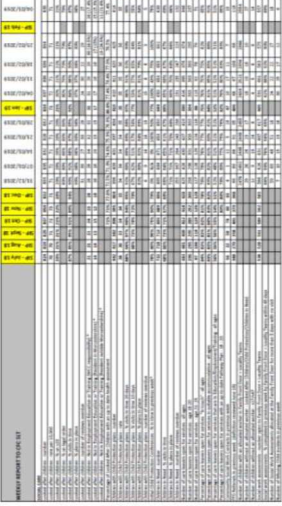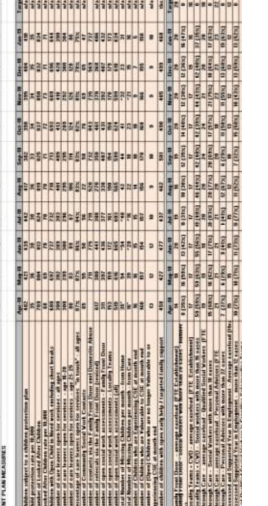
This framework is one of our key strengths and one of the things we are most proud of in our improvement journey to date.

Ofsted said in our 2019 ILACs inspection:

"The local authority has implemented a quality assurance system and has established a range of performance information, allowing senior managers to better understand its practice. Auditing of work is undertaken on a regular basis and is strengthened by a moderation system that gives the local authority a clear understanding of practice compliance"

We have a range of tools to help us monitor data, from live case data used by individuals and front-line managers to weekly, monthly and quarterly performance reports used by managers to analyse service delivery and impact and report to senior leadership and strategic stakeholders. An overview of our performance management framework is provided below:

|	
Team data/dashboards	
– 'Live' data available online to team managers and workers	
– Key operational data	
– Tailored to specific areas	
– Drill down to individual cases	
Weekly Report	
– Internal document for managers	
– Key performance measures	
– Designed to monitor trends and provide opportunity for early intervention if needed	
Monthly Business Management Information	
– Regular progress report for the Business Management Information	
– Key performance indicators linked to specific workstreams	

Monthly Missing and CSE Report
- Regular monitoring report
- Trend and child level data
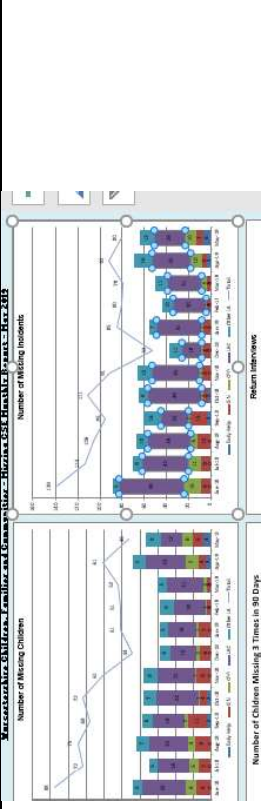
Monthly Vulnerable Learners in Social Care Report
- Sections for Missing Education, Electively Home Educated, EHCP
- Trend and child level data
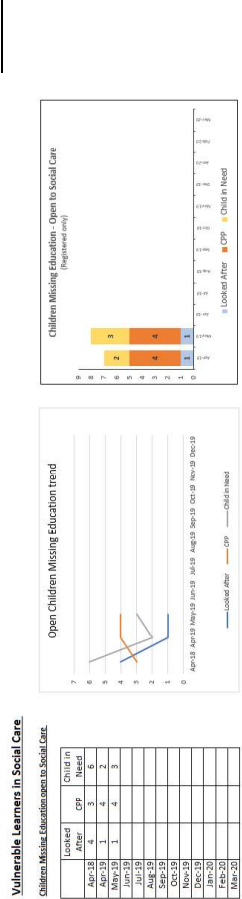
Quarterly Safeguarding Report
- Overview of performance across the service broken down by main operational areas
- Series of quarterly charts plus commentary on each main area
- Used widely within and outside the Council
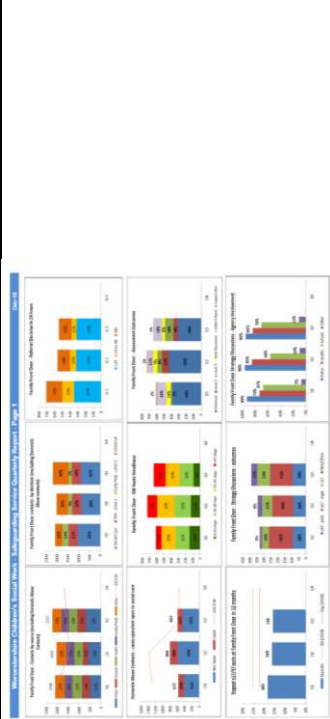
ChAT (Children's Services Analysis Tool)
- National tool with WCC data inserted
- Uses Ofsted's Annex A data lists
- Provides analysis and trend data, including comparison with previous years and benchmarking
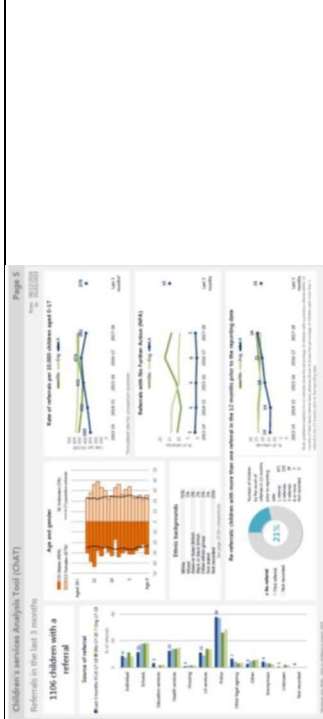
Other
- Detailed data sets covering specific areas e.g. Missing/CSE, Referrals via Portal
- Specifically tailored data sets provided to bodies such as Corporate Parenting Board, Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Worcestershire Children's Safeguarding Board

6.3 Audit Programme

We use a "looped audit" approach to case file auditing where two managers review the same file independently and grade it with an overall and sub grade accordingly. This is then moderated by a senior manager who confirms the final Audit Grade.

The Audit Template and Moderation Form can be viewed here:

Moderated Case File
Audit Template vUpda (Appendix D)

Group Manager
Audit Moderation For (Appendix E)

Targeted audits take place in response to data analysis and service user feedback/complaints.

6.4 Service User Feedback

We have developed a range of opportunities within our core business practice to ensure we stop to ask children, young people and their parents how they have experienced our services. Service User Feedback processes include telephone interviews, face to face meetings and electronic surveys. Data is collated and fed into the QA reporting process. The following is a list of current activities taking place across our services:

✓ Service user feedback opportunities routinely gathered during case audits
✓ Feedback process for parents and carers, as well as partners, at the end of ICPC and RCPCs
✓ Mind of My Own application is in use in the Through Care Service to increase opportunities for children and young people to communicate their views and being piloted as a direct work tool in Targeted Family Support
✓ Mid-way consultation by IRO's with children in care
✓ Quality survey at the end of Assessment and at the point of care closure
✓ Quality of "service experience" questionnaires with care leavers receiving Outreach in Supported Board and Lodging arrangements

6.5 Learning from our Quality Assurance Work

Each area of the business has its own Quality Assurance programme. Regular reports are sent through to the Group Manager for QA and a learning from QA programme and reports are developed.

We recognise that it is essential to 'close the loop' and embed the learning through a variety of activity and channels including staff communication, supervision, management oversight and training. Working alongside the Director for Social Care and Safeguarding and the senior leadership team, including the Principal Social Worker, dissemination of learning takes place across the Service in a range of ways:

- Case audit feedback to the individual Social Worker/Case worker and Manager at the time of audit
- Team Meeting and Staff Supervision
- Quality Assurance Reports
- Principal Social Worker News Letters
- End to End learning presentations - Whole Service Front Line Management meeting chaired by the Director of Social Care and Safeguarding

Our recent Health Check told us:

- 78% of social workers report receiving direct feedback on audits of their work
- 90% of staff say they receive regular information on learning from Quality Assurance activity within the service

As described above, our framework is comprehensive and provides us with a wide range of information to help us to know our services well. Below is an overview of some of the key things we know about the quality of our practice based on our most recent data:

Our latest Quality Assurance Summary Report covering the period April 2019 – September 2019 can be viewed here:

FINAL REPORT
2020-01-21 QA Sumr   (Appendix F) Our latest Service User feedback report for 19/20 can be viewed here:

Service User
Feedback. Qtr 3 Dec 1   (Appendix G)

What's Working Well?	What are we worried about?
Our Health Check told us: • 94% of staff feel listed to and have their worries and concern addressed by managers • 88% of social work staff have dedicated monthly supervision that is reflective and includes review of performance • 84 % of social worker say they feel valued at work • 71% of social worker feel they have a manageable case load • 95% of staff feel their managers are visible, approachable and responsive • 78% of social workers report receiving direct feedback on audits of their work • 90% of staff say they receive regular information on learning from Quality Assurance activity within the service • 98% of staff feel Signs of Safety are using the Signs of Safety model and 94% feel this is a good tool for working with families • 94% of social workers say they understand the Vision, Missing and Values of Worcestershire Children First and 91% say they understand how they and their team contribute to these. *Source – Social Work Health Check (November/December 2019)* **Our Service User Feedback told us:** • In quarter 1 & 2 of 2019/2020 across IRO and CP mid-way Audits, Moderated and Case File Audits and Service User Feedback calls we gained feedback from 217 families • 94% of families asked told us that practitioners spoke with children and gained their wishes and feelings/views – this was 100% in respect of Assessment Team Audits • 93% of families asked told us that practitioner spoke to the right agencies as part of assessments • 92% of families asked told us that they were given opportunities to share their views and opinions – this was 100% for Locality Assessments • 87% of children/young people asked said they were happy with how their CLA Review was chaired/held • 84% of parents told us that they can get hold of their Social Worker when they need to • 86% of families spoken to from Through Care Audits said we made a positive difference to them and their child	**Our Service User Feedback told us:** • 79% of families asked told us they received a copy of their assessment or plan – this was 71% for Through Care Audits and 66% for Locality • Our feedback is telling us this a key area of priority where we need to ensure families receive a copy of the child's assessment and/or plan *Source – QA Report (Q1&Q2 2019/2020)* **Our Audits told us:** • We need to ensure that we consistently complete chronologies and genograms and these are uploaded to the child's record • We need to ensure that we consistently record the manager's footprint on the child's record – our staff are reporting that they receive dedicated supervision on a regular basis, it is important that this is recorded *Source – QA Report (Q1&Q2 2019/2020)* **Our KPIs told us:** • Targeted work is required to ensure our Initial Conferences are held in a timely manner and that conference notifications are made in a timely manner • Ensure Care Plans and Pathway Plans are updated within the child's record • We progress Health Assessments in a timely manner

What's Working Well?	What are we worried about?
  Our Audits told us: ● 82% of audits were graded good or requires improvement in the Assessment Teams for capturing the Voice of the Child ● 100% of audits were graded good or requires improvement in the Through Care Teams for capturing the Voice of the Child ● Audits across Assessment Teams, Through Care and Locality Teams evidenced a strength in seeking and capturing children's views ● Outcome grading in both the Assessment Teams and Through Care Teams are improving ● Audits evidenced a strength in our IRO Footprint on children's case records *Source – QA Report (Q1&Q2 2019/2020)* **Our KPIs told us:** ● Work at the Family Front Door continues to show positive performance against key KPIs and evidence of sustained improvement ● Timeliness of Social Work Assessments remain a positive indicator at 89% ● Timeliness of Looked after Reviews and attendance/participation of children and young people in their reviews has achieved and sustained good performance *Source – WCF – Safeguarding Service Quarterly Report (Quarter 3)*	*Source – WCF – Safeguarding Service Quarterly Report (Quarter 3)*

In 2019, Ofsted said in our ILACs inspection regarding the Quality of Practice:

"A strengthened front door multi-agency response (MASH) and improved children in need and child protection practice identify risk of harm and, in most cases, ensure timely and effective interventions. The local authority understands the risks of exploitation better and has ensured that practice in this area has improved"

"When serious safeguarding concerns are identified, timely strategy meetings, which are well attended by partner agencies, make informed decisions regarding next steps"

"Social workers know the children they work with well"

"Child protection conferences and children in need meetings (CIN), together with core groups, are timely and generally well attended by partner agencies, parents and young people. Scaling tools are used in these meetings and enable the measurement of progress to demonstrate whether and how children's circumstances are improving"

"Work in the disabled children's team demonstrates an understanding of risk and the needs of children, many of whom have significant additional needs and may be non-verbal"

"The recently introduced missing children officers have contributed to a reduction in the number of children who go missing"

"Children are encouraged to participate in their care planning reviews, which are well chaired by independent reviewing officers (IROs)"

Developing consistently good social work practice across the services is a priority of our service business plan. Quality Assurance measure are in place to monitor this from an individual, team, services area perspective to enable us to identify gaps and areas of weakness. The plan on a page level 2 below identifies the nine-key area of practice being monitored as part of this work.

Sustaining Improvement and Building Consistency in Good Practice

Sustaining improvement and building consistency in good practice

Team Managers and Independent Chairs to proactively and effectively identify and improve quality and timeliness in all cases

Ensure comprehensive assessments, effective use of chronologies and family friendly outcome focussed plans are in place all the time for all children.

Ensure robust case management and timely reflective supervision in place for all social workers all of the time

Legend:
- 🟢 On track/No Issues
- 🟡 Possibility of Missing Deadlines/Minor Issues
- 🔴 Missed Deadline/Major Issues
- 🔵 Completed

Child Outcome

We want to make sure that you receive a good quality service, regardless of your individual worker, your team or where you are on your journey through our service.

(Ofsted Project)

Milestone (RAG) – 21/01/20

Visits
Children will be visited regularly in line with their plan. These visits will be purposeful, focused and incorporate the voice of the child with clear outcomes and held in a timely manner.

Plans
Children will have an up to date plan. These plans will be clear and outcome focused.

Service User Feedback
Tracked at case closure
Service user feedback is consistently gathered upon the completion of case work to inform our practice and experience of our service.

Chronologies
All files will have a chronology of their journey through the service at the end of every assessment.

Audits
All Team Managers and Leaders/Group Managers complete monthly audits.

Social Work Assessments
Social work assessments will be of a good quality and completed in a timely manner

Managers Oversight
All children's files will evidence manager oversight.

Case Summary
All children's files will have an up to date case summary on record at 12 weekly intervals.

Supervision
Children's files will evidence case supervision of their workers.

Measure

Monthly KPI

Targeted quality assurance activity
and
Quarterly Assurance report

Service User Feedback

Through Care
Adam Johnston

Safeguarding
Maria White

Family Front Door and Partnerships
Emma Brittain

Safeguarding Quality Assurance
Dan Adams

Milestone (RAG) – 21/01/20

Legend:
- ● On track/No Issues
- ● Possibility of Missing Deadlines/Minor Issues
- ● Missed Deadline/Major Issues
- ● Completed

Child Outcome	Project	Milestone (RAG) – 21/01/20	Measure
If you are a child in our care, we want you to be able to stay in one placement for as long as you need to.	Learning from the breakdown of placements for children by the holding of timely disruption meetings. *(Ofsted Project)*	Task & Finish Group with representation from ASWP, IRO, Fostering & Looked after Child/ren to design a process to gather information understanding and learning about placement breakdowns. Nov 19 / Pilot the process with CYP, Carers, SW Teams and IROS. Jan 20 / Review of the learning, findings through the development of a quarterly report. Implement any learning from this report to develop and make ongoing improvements to the process. / Formal launch of the learning from disruption process at E2E, Apr 20.	Reduction in the number of CYP who have experienced 3 or more placements.
We want to know if the work we do with you and your family is making a positive difference to you feeling happy, healthy and safe.	Are We Making a Difference? Outcome Measures – impact on children's lives.	Agree outcome measure to include Troubled Families, Happy Healthy and Safe within Edge of Care. Dec 19 / Implement manual measures and interim arrangement. Jan – Mar 20 / Undertake evaluation of the outcome reports to evidence individual and service impact. Mar 20 / Develop an approach to using the Outcome Star and how the data captured can be recorded on an individual basis and from a service perspective using analysis within Liquid Logic. Go Live Apr 20	Outcome measure on the impact on the child (to be incorporated into our KPIS)
We want to make sure that you have the right plan, at the right time and there is positive progress against your plan throughout your journey.	Improving the quality and timeliness of plans, effective use of Dispute Resolution Process (DRP)	Development of a DRP dashboard to evidence the use of DRPs by Service Area - based on numbers, trends, categories, IROs/Chairs issuing, TMs responding, service area volume. Scoping Nov 19. Implementation Jan 20 / Reiterate the key message of the use of DRPs with IROs, Chairs and Social Workers. Presentation at E2E Jan 20 / Ensure Practice Standards for SQA are clear around expectations of use of DRP (review of the current guidance/ standards). By Jan 20 / Quarterly audit report of activity of the application of DRPs (linked to SQA QA Programme). Mar 20	Improvement in Audit Grades Judging Plans to be Good or Outstanding (evidenced through our case file audits and QA Reports).
We want you and your parent(s) to be able to understand your meetings and plans, and to make sure we know what you think and how you feel about things happening in your life.	Understanding service user experience, Child Protection and Looked After Children's Processes	Development and launch of service user feedback tools to be completed with parents following Child Protection Conferences. Feb 20 / Development and launch of service user feedback tool to be completed with children & young people/ parents and carers following their review. Feb 20 / Development and launch of service user feedback tools as part of our mid-way audits; individual for children looked after and Child Protection – built into Liquid Logic. Mar 20	Regular completion of service user feedback to hear the experiences of children and parents following conferences and reviews / Improvement in what children and families tell us about their experiences measured through quarterly reporting
We want every child and family to have a good quality service that makes a positive difference.	Practice Managers – RIP *(Innovation Project)*	A cohort of Team Managers and Advanced Practitioners to undertake the RIP professional development programme funded by DfE. / Implement and embed the learning activities from this cohort into practice. / Undertake analysis of the training and it's effectiveness to develop core module that will be implemented in the L&D training across the service.	Capture delegate feedback pre and post training to understand it's impact and relevance. / Conduct further analysis, via delegate feedback, 6mths after the training is completed to evidence where any good practice has been adopted.

7. Early Help and Targeted Family Support

There are strong links to our work as part of the national Troubled Families programme and work will continue over the next year to provide a consistent, partnership-led approach to improving outcomes for families, and ensuring all agencies are working to help families at the earliest opportunity.

We are have worked closely with our colleagues in Level 2 Early Intervention Family support to promote and progress Early Help across the county.

The Early Help strategy has been revised and signed off by Children and Young People's Plan Strategic Partnership.

We have created an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and plan which is a tool that can be used by any professional to provide an Early Help service. Whilst we do not currently expect partners to send EHAs in to us routinely, completed templates provided when requesting Level 3 or Level 4 support via our online referral forms are a great source of information for the teams receiving the referral. They assist in assessing children's needs and providing us with clarity of information to understand and assess levels of need and what has already been in place to support them.

Public Health have re-commissioned the 0-19 prevention and early intervention service bringing together current service delivery of the healthy child programme, parenting programmes and building community capacity. New services will commence April 20.

The Targeted Family Support Team sits within the Children's Social Care service and delivers our Level 3 Targeted Early Help in Worcestershire. Targeted Family Support Level 3 represents children with complex or escalating needs that can only be met by a coordinated multiagency plan which sets out the outcomes to be achieved and the role of each partner agency and the family in meeting these objectives. Professionals working with the child and family identify whether there is a need to engage specialist services.

Areas where we are making the best progress:

- Professionals and Families can now refer directly to Targeted Family Support Services using our online request for service which aids a timelier response and access to support. An associated performance dashboard is now in place enabling us to monitor demand and outcomes.
- Our Early Help Pathway has been reviewed and refreshed this year.
- Outcomes met within the Troubled Families programme are predominantly through EH/TFS
- Service User feedback for Early Help and TFS shows positive returns and progress for qtr1 and 3.

Service User Feedback – TFS Level 3

Question	Q3	Q1
1. Did the worker give you opportunities to share your views and opinions?	98%	95%
2. Did the worker talk to your child and listen to their views?	100%	97%
3. Do you/did you feel included in the assessment / plan for your child?	96%	93%
4. Do you think the worker spoke to all the right people to inform their assessment / plan eg School, GP, Health Visitor, Police	91%	98%
5. Have you received a copy of the worker's assessment / plan?	82%	76%
6. Did you think the assessment / plan reflected your views?	91%	89%
7. Did you find it easy to make contact with your worker when you needed to?	93%	95%
8. Do you think having a worker made a positive difference to you or your child?	82%	88%

Service User Feedback – Early Help Level 2 (Data only available for Q3)

Question	Q3
1. Did the worker give you opportunities to share your views and opinions?	95%
2. Did the worker talk to your child and listen to their views?	95%
3. Do you/did you feel included in the assessment / plan for your child?	100%
4. Do you think the worker spoke to all the right people to inform their…	100%
5. Have you received a copy of the worker's assessment / plan?	85%
6. Did you think the assessment / plan reflected your views?	94%
7. Did you find it easy to make contact with your worker when you needed to?	95%
8. Do you think having a worker made a positive difference to you or your child?	90%

Areas for further development:

- Transition to Liquid Logic Case Management System February 2020.
- Development of Outcomes / KPI and tracking of workload for the EH/TFS services
- WCF have held Early Help events across our districts, promoting services for children and their families to all partners. A further multi agency event is planned for 10th February focusing on the Emotional Well-being and mental health for children young people and their parents and carers. This collaborative working is aimed at promoting a joint understanding and awareness of how services can work together across Worcestershire to meet the needs of children at all levels.

8. Safeguarding and Children in Need of Protection (including Care Proceedings)

8.1 Family Front Door

Partnership working continues to be a key focus throughout our services with a co-located multi agency delivery of services at our Family Front Door (FFD)

In the development of Worcestershire Children First we have moved FFD to a new site and partner agencies have remained committed and see the benefit of the joint working and decision making and have moved with WCF. *Our ILACS Inspection June 2019 states*

> *"a strengthened Front Door Multi Agency Response and improved children in need and child protection practice identify risk of harm and in most cases ensure timely and effective interventions"*
>
> *"when serious safeguarding concerns are identified, timely Strategy meetings, which are well attended by partner agencies make informed decisions regarding next steps. Actions at the end of strategy meetings are appropriate"*

Areas of good progress:

- We have an increase in the overall number of contacts resulting in the need for a Social Work Assessment from 47% qtr.1 up to 50% qtr.3 which is a positive improvement on 18/19 data which averaged 45%.

- Work with Police and Education colleagues on Thresholds (known locally as Levels of Need) shows a positive outcome with police contacts resulting in the need for a Social Work assessment rising from 33% to 36% in year and Education maintaining a high 69% through year. This positive trend evidences an increasing appropriate application against the agreed levels of need.

- Timeliness of Social Work Assessments remains very positive indicator at 89%. This is significantly higher than SN/Eng. averages of 79% and 83% respectively

- Repeat social work assessment at 16% remain lower than SN/Eng. averages of 23% evidencing appropriate intervention at the conclusion of assessments meeting need.

- Multi Agency engagement in strategy discussions from Police, Health and Education has been a sustained positive indicator year to date

- Multi Agency work through the Safeguarding Board Quality Assurance sub group continues and is supported by a multi-agency audit and training programme.

- Quarterly audit activity and reflective practice sessions with our Safeguarding Education lead looking at education sector application of the Levels of Need guidance has led to a consistent improvement and understanding of social cares role in children's lives. The evidence of this is, consistency in education achieving 69% of their contacts resulting in level 4 needs outcome to children's social care.

- WCF are now a panel member on the Youth Justice led joint decision-making panel which started in November 2019. This already demonstrating positive impact for both services in the discussions and services provided to young people and links into Early help offers for children and our GET SAFE agenda.

Areas of development:

- Decisions on contacts in 24hrs has increased following targeted work done with newly appointed managers but remains a focus both in management of incoming work and the quality of referrals on which timely decisions can be made. However, the current performance at 71% is a significant consistent improvement on 18/19 data of 53% averages.

- Outcomes of Social Work assessment identifying a "child in need" is also a continued positive trend through 18/19 into 19/20 rising from 17% in qtr. 1 to 26% qtr. 3. However, we want to see this rise further to ensure we are using the SWA process and qualified SW resource to best value and ensuring children and families are not unnecessarily subject to a Social Work Assessment where an early help assessment and intervention can identify and meet needs.

- Work with police on decisions for joint S47 enquiries has shown sustained improvement since the rise in 18/19 from 24 to 29% which has been sustained now through 19/20. Agency involvement in strategy discussions has shown a slight decline this qtr. and work is being undertaken with new managers in post monitoring the quality of inputting weekly which was an historical issue for previous managers.

8.2 Contextual Safeguarding: Domestic Abuse, Exploitation (Get Safe), Missing Children and Prevent

8.2.1 Domestic Abuse

"Daily Triage meetings about Domestic Abuse are effective and enable Multi – Agency discussions to take place to plan actions to safeguard children where domestic abuse is a factor in their lives".

ILACS Inspection June 19

Children's Social Care continues to be a key partner in Worcestershire Domestic Abuse perpetrator panel, DRIVE which has been further extended following on from the current success we have achieved.

Police data for Year 2 of the pilot showed perpetration of DVA (domestic violence and abuse) offending had reduced by 30%. 211 children/young people have been identified as being associated with a Drive service user and discussed at DRIVE. 19 young people have been referred onto the programme and 10 are receiving support in the form of 1-2-1 or group based.

There are developments of a multi -agency interim risk management process for cases identified as high risk which engages partners at the earliest opportunity and tracks cases through to MARAC and DRIVE so interventions and support to adults and children can happen at the earliest opportunity and be measured. This is scheduled for implementation March 2020.

8.2.2 GET SAFE

The Get Safe strategic group is a formal multi-agency sub group of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board and our action plan sets out a range of activities under the headings of: Prepare Prevent, Protect and Pursue.

As with all the Get Safe areas of exploitation our work focuses on four themes: Prepare, Prevent, Pursue and Protect.

Key Priority 1 – Prepare

Overarching priority: To ensure that there are robust and effective mechanisms to understand the profile of different forms of exploitation in Worcestershire and to "prepare" strategically and Tactically to tackle them, as well as to evaluate the impact of our collective efforts.

Key Priority 2 – Prevent

Overarching priority: To increase the awareness and understanding for children, young people, professionals and the public in the problems, risk and threats that exist in our communities and enable them to take "preventative" action to reduce risk of harm to children and young people by providing information and tools to support the identification of indicators of different forms of exploitation; providing and publishing agreed models of assessment; and agreed protocols for the effective sharing of information across the multi-agency partnership

Key Priority 3 – Protect

Overarching priority: To recognise and respond to children and young people who are vulnerable to and victims of exploitation in any of its forms. The primary goal is to ensure that partner agencies work together to provide support to exploited children so they are helped, protected and listened to and that perpetrators are held to account for their actions.

Key Priority 4 - Pursue

Overarching priority: To ensure we maintain focus on the targeting and pursuit of offenders to bring them to justice. Our primary goal is to manage the threat and risk posed by perpetrators and to secure justice for, and on behalf of, exploited children.

GET SAFE indicators of harm and abuse have been agreed and are in place to identify young people and measure risk and outcomes for children alongside developing our Worcestershire profile.

There is a planned launch of the new Get Safe Multi -Agency Risk Assessment Tool and practitioner guidance in March 2020 which replaces the CSE screening tool.

A new "linked" Assessment focuses on the Get Safe risks and Multi – Agency child's plan for young people open to Youth Justice and or Social Care. The development of the 4 P Plan of **P**rotect, **P**revent, **P**ursue and **P**repare. Which links into the SOCJAG forums of serious and organised crime.

New pathways for responses to children and their families are currently being developed and will be launched in March 2020 with the new GET SAFE risk Assessment Tool.

Multi – Agency Exploitation Training is being rolled out across the County starting March 2020 focusing on the child and adult agenda of criminal exploitation alongside planned public campaigns to raise local and professional awareness.

There is PCC funded diversionary work for young people who are identified as having Contextual Safeguarding concerns are on schedule to be launch in April 2020. this will provide direct work to vulnerable children in our community alongside an Early Help plan.

There is jointly commissioned Get Safe link workers who work with young people identified as being Criminally exploited these are often those hard to reach/difficult to engage young people who need specific targeted work.

Worcestershire Children First has brought together a new Get Safe Social Work Team that works closely with partner agencies in the Family Front Door and across our service. Our Missing Officers and CSE Practice Lead are part of this team. They have a lead role in completing Welfare Return Interviews and sharing this with partners to identify risks and vulnerability.

Our local profiling of Get Safe has highlighted particular areas where we have had active operations in relation to both CSE and County Lines running throughout 2018/19. The GET SAFE agenda has aided partner engagement and developing or local responses and structure around this.

Our Practice Lead completes quarterly voice of the child reports, where we seek the views and learning from young people with whom we have worked with and are no longer vulnerable to or experiencing CSE concerns and this has been embedded in our service developments.

Children have been engaged in the design of materials to engage them and our campaigns to ensure our focus remains on young people.

Contextual Safeguarding and ace awareness have been delivered to all our Worcestershire Children First front-line staff to ensure wider concerns are part of our assessment and practice.

Contextual Safeguarding masterclass being run by Peter Unwin from the University of Worcester is being held June 19 with over 50 front line staff.

"good strategic partnerships have enabled the development of an encompassing exploitation strategy, Get Safe, in recognition of the previous approach being underdeveloped and needing to be strengthened to be effective. Senior leaders and partners understand the impact of county lines on vulnerable children."

ILACS 2019

8.2.3 Missing Children

Children and young people who go missing from home or from care can be among the most vulnerable in our society. There are often links to criminal and sexual exploitation, county lines or complex family issues that are impacting on their safety and wellbeing. Undertaking Welfare Return Home Interviews with children and young people gives an opportunity to really listen to a child and young person and identify any risk or vulnerability

associated with the missing episode. It is therefore important that they are conducted in the best way possible to deliver the best outcome for the child and to enable agencies to safeguard.

As part of our service improvement outlined in the first quarterly report, a number of actions have been undertaken to improve the identification, response and understanding of children and young people who go missing from home and care in Worcestershire. These are now imbedded into our practice.

In June 2019 Ofsted undertook their inspection of Worcestershire Children's Social Care. They reported on the progress that had been made since the last inspection:

8. Appendix H.docx

(Appendix H)

"The recently introduced missing children officers have contributed to a reduction in the number of children who go missing. The number of children who are offered and who take up a timely return home interview has risen significantly from a very low base. Missing intervention meetings, which take place after a child has had three missing episodes, include carers and professionals and result in coordinated interventions with children to help reduce the risk of children going missing."

8.2.4 Prevent Duty

The offices of the Director of Public Health, Director of Children, Families and Communities and Worcestershire Children's Safeguarding Board

(WSCB) work closely together to deliver on the Prevent Duty training across all providers in Worcestershire. There is a Worcestershire Prevent Strategy Group (PSG), and a Channel Panel each led by Public Health staff with responsibility for community safety. Both are consistently attended by representatives from the Specified Authorities and WCC staff from Childrens Social Care, Adult Services, Public Health and Children's Families and Communities (CF&C). The PSG takes a strategic oversight of Prevent and has a collective overview of how the duty is being implemented across the county, while the Channel Panel deals with specific individuals.

The WSCB offer the PREVENT Home Office Training via the WSCB website. Prevent E-learning package and guidance on the local Channel Panel referral process has been adopted and is now included in the induction course for new WCC starters. Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) training has been delivered by the Education Advisor – Safeguarding and the Public Health Practitioner to the Schools Safeguarding Leads, the Youth Justice Service and partners contracted to schools. The Prevent Strategy Group has also published a document as guidance for practitioners in recognising radicalisation and how they should respond – this is available to all the partners and has been shared with schools that have asked for advice.

See below Plan on a page – Level 2 Family Front Door and Partnerships

Family Front Door and Partnerships
Emma Brittain

Legend:
- On track/No Issues
- Possibility of Missing Deadline/Minor Issue
- Missed Deadline/Major Issues
- Completed

Child Outcome	Project	Milestone (RAG) - 21/01/20	Measure
We want to help you and your family to get the right help when you need it.	The engagement with partners to deliver early help to families and to ensure that this help is timely. *(Ofsted Project)*	Practitioners attend three district "Early Help in Your Community" events. 2019. • Promote lead professional role with partner agencies. Apr 20 • Through DSL network WSCP OAPP and multi agency training programme and the forum school newsletters. 19/20 • Working together on the 0-19 early help delivery (Public health and WCF). Apr 20 • Liquid Logic captures lead professional roles by partners on EH assessments and plans. Apr-Jun 20	Attendance records of EH events 2019. • QA activity on contacts referrals evidencing early help support prior to level 4 needs. • Outcomes in 0-19 delivery via early help partnership forum. • Early help led by schools : Education 175 returns Jul 20.
If you are 16 or 17, we want you to know what support you can get if you can't stay at home with your parent(s) and family so you can make informed decisions about your life.	Assessments of need for 16 and 17-year-olds who present as homeless, including whether they should come into the care of the local authority. Young people should be told clearly about this option. *(Ofsted Project)*	Incorporate the dedicated homeless intervention work with the care leavers service promoting joined up working with housing. Jan 20 • Develop young person focused information in multiple formats. Feb 20 • Launch of new promotional materials and information for staff so they are clear on the expectations for the delivery of this service. Feb/Mar 20	Audit activity demonstrates YP have been consulted and provided with information and their views recorded and revisited at critical times in their life.
We want to make sure that all the professionals who work in our services know how to get the right support and protection for you and your family.	Thresholds and Partnerships	Levels of need briefings to HAU Oct/Nov 19. • Whole service representation at Youth Justice Decision Making Panel. By Nov 19 • Implementation of the new portal for police to refer to EH levels 2/3. By Mar 20 • Implementation of the new high risk DA interim risk management meetings across WCF service. By Mar 20	Multiagency attendance at Levels of Need training events. • Percentage of contacts meeting the thresholds for SWA Level 3/4. • Outcome of SWA Meeting level 4 ongoing.
We want to make sure that you are safe in your community and are not at risk from criminal exploitation.	GET SAFE – identification and management of children at risk of exploitation	Development of the multi agency initial risk assessment. By Jan 20 • Development of the multi agency "linked" assessment. By Feb 20 • Development of the multi agency case management process for GET SAFE plans across the levels of need. • Launch of the new GET SAFE pathways. By Mar 20 • Development of the CAP multi agency GET SAFE portal. By Mar 20 • Recruit GET SAFE Link Worker(s) Apr 20 • 2020 multi agency criminal exploitation training across localities and partners. 20/21	CYP Feedback at assessment/case closure. • Multi agency attendance at Get Safe training. 20/21
We want to promote a learning environment for Social Worker in training. And we want to have more people working to support you and your family early on.	Social Work Student in Practice *(Innovation Project)*	ELT to approve the project By Nov 19 • JD/PS to be approved By Nov 19 • Posts to be recruited to early. By Jan 20 • Promotion of the project to staff and stakeholders. By Feb/Mar 20 • Students in placement By Mar 20 • Project evaluation report. Jun 20 & Sep 20	Evidence of number of children who receive a service from Positive Outcome Project. • Outcomes of impact on social work student placements provided. • Stakeholder and Service User feedback.

8.3 Children in Need and Child Protection

Areas where we are making the best progress:

- Our social work approach continues to ensure we offer support and assistance to a family early, through Early Help or our Child In Need interventions, but also to take proactive safeguarding action within Public Law Outline and Pre-Proceedings/Care Proceedings where there is no timely/sustained outcomes for a child, therefore this cohort should always be the lesser representative group.

- Our rise in the number of children and young people subject to child protection plans now put us in line with England averages. The rise in CP is reflective of our work with partners to;

  - Manage risk in the family home and prevent care where it is safe to do so.
  - Have firm and consistent application of threshold in each category of harm.
  - Address both premature closure at first review and long term "monitoring" of families in risk adverse practice.
  - Raise the understanding of the impact of Neglect on children.

- The impact of this work is positively reflected in the reduction in the use of the category of Emotional Abuse. Previously 23% now sits at 8%. The threshold for Emotional Harm in Working Together 2019 clearly states to meet threshold there should be "*The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development*" Previously this has been used to manage professional anxiety when other evidence of significant harm hasn't been present. The launch of our Neglect Strategy and tool during 18/19 has resulted in an increase in our category of Neglect from 67% qtr.1 of 18/19 to the 80% average we see in data year to date.

- Our Data audit has shown a reduction in the number of children coming off a Child Protection plan at 3 months (first review) down to 16% year to date from 20% at 18/19-year end. We can also see a positive rise from 49% up to 57% in the number of children coming off a plan at 9 months in line with development managerial oversight.

- In terms of sustainable outcomes for children, whilst we remain higher than SN/Eng. for repeat plans over 2 years we see a continuing reducing trend in repeat plans in less than 2 years down to 13% well below SN/Eng. averages of 21%. Audit has evidenced repeat plans over two years is reflective of historical (4yrs +) poor decision making, professional over optimism and limited support on step down which has been addressed in our culture of practice improvements and by the use of the signs of safely model.

- Initial Child Protection Conference's resulting in a CP plan is 85%; this is reflecting the value of the multi-agency conversation and Signs of Safety methodology used in conferences to agree the true level of risk. Whilst this is a considerable improvement on data from 17/18 averaging

77% and significant inconsistency) ultimately, we would seek this to be a higher outcome to ensure we are not putting families through the children protection process unnecessarily. This is a multi-agency journey that includes parents and young people to share and agree risks.

- We continue to see an increase in our Child In Need and Child Protection and decrease in Looked After new entrants is part of the scale of interventions and we would want to see this pattern continuing if we are to recognise our of vision of "Valuing Family Life" and ensuring families access early help and Target Family Support early and at the lowest level first.

- Our Outcomes for Children In Need shows a small % resulting in Child Protection and Care which is reflective of an appropriate threshold for social work service being applied.

- Data showing a reducing trend in the length of time children are open to CIN (9mths +) is a positive refection of active work to achieve outcomes early with no drift and delay as was seen historically in this cohort.

- We continue to see a rising number of young people aged 12 years and over attending their conferences and having their views clearly represented at the child protection conference

8.4 Child In Need and Child Protection – Areas for further development

- Our largest cohort of children entering the Child Protection system 79% are under 10 years of age year to date (an increase from 73% 18/19) Our new Family Safeguarding Pilot will focus on this age group who are identified as being at risk of harm and subject to a Child Protection Plan and/or Children subject to Public Law Outline pre-proceedings on CP and in pre-proceedings to try and achieve a positive and sustained outcomes for these children in family care.

- Initial Child Protection conferences in timescales remain a targeted area for consistent improvement and whilst we can see an improvement from 18/19 this need to be sustained.

- Development of Outcome and Impact measures, incorporating Troubled Families

8.5 Legal Care Proceedings

Areas where we are making the best progress:

- We have clear pathways for our PLO Pre & Care Proceedings practice and improved social work practice within formal pre-proceedings and care proceedings.

- We have robust and clear senior management authorisation and oversight on the progression of children's care plans within pre- and care proceedings; This protects children and ensures that timely plans are implemented in order to secure their long-term future when they are exposed to significant harm. We only initiate Care proceedings when they are in a child's best interest.

- We have two Case Progression Officer roles across the service which focuses on driving good practice and quality assurance of pre-proceedings and care proceedings and care planning for children through regular Case Progression Reviews thereby reducing issues of drift and delay.

- Our "duration data" shows that during 18/19, 19% of children achieved permanency within six months of entering care increasing to 25% in 19/20 which is reflective of our timeliness in PLO.

- The number of children in our care under S20 continues to be low at 14%, a reducing trend through this year and last as we support children and young people to remain at home where it is safe to do so.

- We undertake regular Reviews/Audits on all children who are looked after under s.20, placed with parents, and children subject to Placement Orders not placed, to ensure that either the legal status remains the appropriate current legal option and framework for the child, or that it prevents drift in planning for permanence.

- We have a Sibling Assessment Template and Practice Guidance, and we have delivered briefing workshops to staff in respect of undertaking and completing these assessments.

- Our evidence in care proceedings is increasingly robust, with some social workers presenting excellent oral and written evidence. Timeliness of care proceedings has improved, and the vast majority of care proceedings are now completed within 26 weeks. This minimises delay and uncertainty for children and families. This improvement has been achieved due to robust and clear senior management oversight, good-quality legal advice and effective case-tracking systems. Our Social workers are increasingly confident about their work with children and families in legal proceedings and they feel well supported by managers.

- We have reviewed our pre-birth assessment pathway and related practice guidance in respect of pre-proceedings and care proceedings. This will be presented to WCSP Quality Assurance Policy & Procedures Group in February 2020 for sign off.

- We have reviewed existing template of Revocation of Placement and Discharge of Care Order, and work alongside CAFCASS and the Court to 'fast track' the discharge of Care Orders where appropriate. 25 applications to discharge care orders has been made between January to December 2019; 23 of these have now concluded.

- We reviewed Private Law Templates in conjunction with CAFCASS and Herefordshire Children's Services ensuring consistency in approach across the LFJB; this has been well received by the Courts.

Ofsted said of our Legal Proceedings:

> *The Local Authority uses Legal Processes and care proceedings effectively…"*
>
> *"Care Proceedings are only initiated when in the child's best interest"*
>
> *"…Evidence in care proceedings is increasingly robust…"*
>
> *"Timeliness of care proceedings has improved and the vast majority of proceedings are completed within 26 weeks. This minimises delay for children and their families"*
>
> *"Social workers are increasingly confident about their work with children and families in care proceedings"*

Areas for further development:

- We will continue to improve practice in relation to PLO pre-proceedings. As part of this we have reviewed the letters to parents before proceedings to ensure that they are not onerous to read, provide clarity and include clear timescales.

- We will continue to review children who are Placed with Parents (PWP) to ensure robust permanency care planning. We are implementing a Safeguarding Permanency Review Panel chaired by a senior manager which will ensure timeliness and robust permanence planning.

- We have completed a review of Recurrent Care Proceedings within Worcestershire. WCF and Public Health are now working together, funding agreed as an innovation project to implement a Pause Project. This project will be provided by Ripplez, an independent provider and they will deliver a Pause programme for up to 24 women/couples over a period of 18 months (48 over 3 years). The initial set up and partnership event will take place in February 2020. Anticipated outcomes will be a reduction in pregnancies and repeat care proceedings, as well as preparing women/couples for future parenthood. There will be an associated reduction in numbers of looked after children and an improved life trajectory and outcomes for both parents and any future children.

8.7 Edge of Care

In October 2018, Cabinet approved the development of our new Edge of Care Service. This new service went live January 20. The service will work with families on the verge of breakdown, supporting them to find solutions to their issues and ultimately stay together, as long as it is safe to do so.

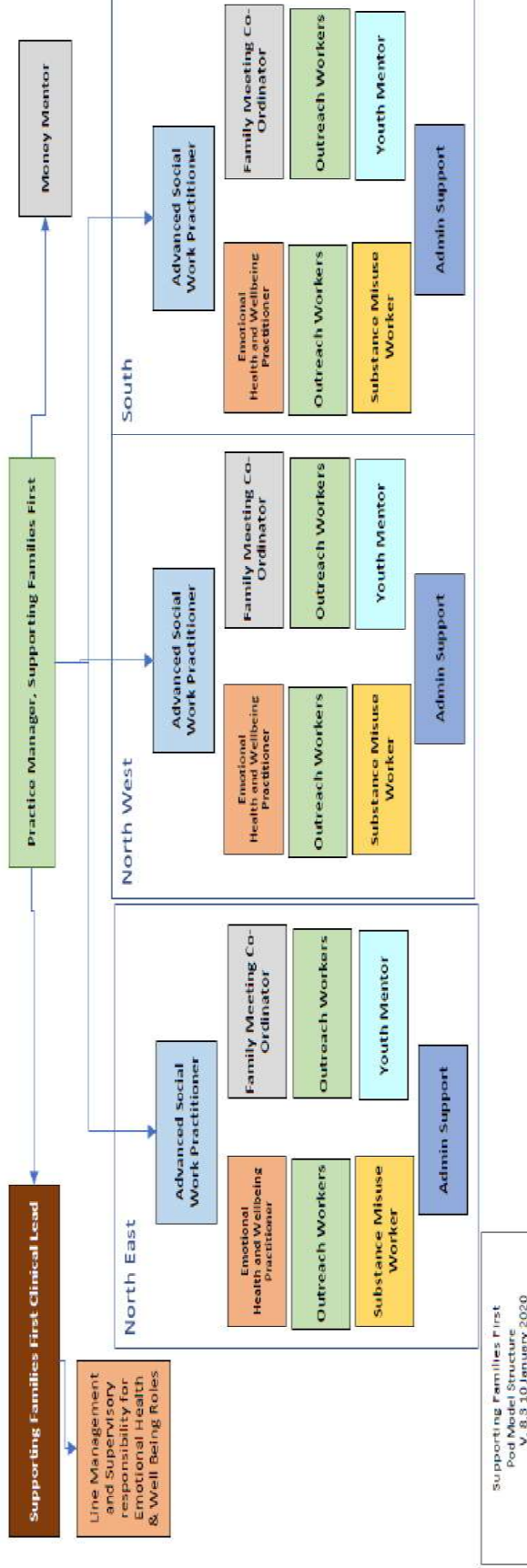The service is Worcestershire is known as Supporting Families First

Approach:

- Strengths based

- Identification and management of risk

- Family Solution focused – utilising the range of skills and experience across the team, to support parents and families to create solutions

- Sustainability – clear exit plans and ongoing strategies for sustained change, good lines of communication

Following a public and professional consultation on "what works to prevent family breakdown" a number of specialist posts to provide support around the type of issues identified by families themselves and the professionals working with them have been created. These new roles will sit within the team to provide a multi-disciplinary approach to supporting families. The specialisms include mental health and well-being, money mentoring, youth work, and substance misuse

Outcome measures have been developed using the Troubled Families outcomes, our own Happy, Health Safe vision and development underway to build theses into our new IT software to enable us to draw out outcome reports not only for the individual child but for evidence of impact of the service. Once piloted in Edge of Care we will roll out across the service.

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Supporting Families First Structure
Pod Model for Supervision

Supporting Families First
Pod Model Structure
V. 8.3 10 January 2020

Money Mentor

Practice Manager, Supporting Families First

Supporting Families First Clinical Lead

Line Management and Supervisory responsibility for Emotional Health & Well Being Roles

North East
- Advanced Social Work Practitioner
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Practitioner
- Family Meeting Co-Ordinator
- Outreach Workers
- Outreach Workers
- Youth Mentor
- Substance Misuse Worker
- Admin Support

North West
- Advanced Social Work Practitioner
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Practitioner
- Family Meeting Co-Ordinator
- Outreach Workers
- Outreach Workers
- Youth Mentor
- Substance Misuse Worker
- Admin Support

South
- Advanced Social Work Practitioner
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Practitioner
- Family Meeting Co-Ordinator
- Outreach Workers
- Outreach Workers
- Youth Mentor
- Substance Misuse Worker
- Admin Support

9. Children with Disabilities

Areas where we are making best progress:

- The vision for a "single plan" for Children with additional needs has been progressed and embedded where the child has both an Early Help and EHCP plan. This review process directly aligns to the child's EHCP review and there are dedicated workers within the CWD service who lead in ensuring all assessments and plans are completed.

- The two residential homes previously managed within CWD are now overseen by the Group Manager for Placements and Sufficiency. This enables all the Registered Managers of our in-house residential homes to be line managed by the same person, attend team meetings together, undertake development and learning activities as a cohesive peer group and re-focus practice expectations more meaningfully.

- The two short breaks units are now well established offering a mixture of day time and night time support so breaks can range from tea time visits for a few hours to overnight stays. This follows the coproduction events held with families where it was clear they wished for this breadth of service. The take up has been very positive.

- CWD engagement and Group Manager workstream lead on the SEND Improvement Board

Areas for further development:

- Progress to develop a "single plan" and improved coordinated way of working between SEND and CWD for children who have both a Child in Need and EHCP plan is our priority for 20/21

- Increased short breaks overnight provision underway. Ofsted variation agreed and recruitment of additional staff is underway after which a re-inspection of the unit will be required.

- Service reviews of the SEND and CWD services begin January 20 with a staff workshop. Structures, systems and practice standards will then be reviewed, leading to full discussion with children and young people and other stakeholders. The plan is to implement the new service by summer 2020

10. Permanency

10.1 Adoption – Regional Adoption Agency

Worcestershire County Council has entered into partnership with Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Local Authorities to create a Regional Adoption Agency, known as Adoption Central England (ACE). ACE went live on 1 February 2018 and is hosted by Warwickshire County Council. The agency uses a 'hub and spoke' model and has offices in Coventry, Warwickshire, Solihull and Worcestershire. The link to the ACE website is: www.aceadoption.com

To meet the requirements of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the Children and Families Act 2014, the overarching aim of ACE is as follows:

ACE provides an innovative service for children, adoptive families and others affected by adoption. This is by offering lifelong support based on up to date practices and interventions and supported by modern technology.

Further ACE will work in partnership with the local authorities and other services to achieve the following objectives and outcomes:

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- To ensure a wider pool of prospective adopters for those children who need a permanent family through adoption,
- To increase the levels of adoption for children waiting to be adopted,
- To reduce the length of time those children wait to be adopted, and to improve post adoption support services to adoptive families.

<u>Areas where we are making the best progress:</u>

Annual performance reporting from ACE shows that, in Worcestershire:

- The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family for children who have been adopted 2015-2018 was 520 days, equal to the England average, with further improvements in recent months – quarter 3 2018/19 data showed an average of 285 days.
- The average time between a Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and the Local Authority decision on a match to an adoptive parent 2014-2017 is 164 days (compared to an England average of 220 days).
- At any given time on average 65% of Worcestershire children are waiting less than 14 months between care and moving with their adoptive family. The most recent published adoption scorecard places this at 60% but the indications are that timeliness has improved further in the past year.
- Within the first year of operation 35% (40) of children placed with ACE adopters were from Worcestershire County Council. Worcestershire has placed 7 children in early permanence – fostering for adoption placements (32%).
- There have been no adoption placement disruptions in the past 12 months.

10.2 Permanency Support Team

The Permanency Support Team was developed to address Adoption work that remained within the Local Authority following implementation of ACE. The wider "permanency" focus of the team supports children with care plans of adoptions, undertakes support and QA for social workers in the Adoption process and oversight of SGO support plans.

<u>Areas where we are making the best progress:</u>

- The team is now well established, and are set up to:

  ○ Complete non-agency adoption referrals and assessments and support families with this.
  ○ Support adopted adults who wish to view their birth records.
  ○ Financially assess new applications and review and financially assess post order financial support (Adoption/Special Guardianship Order/Child Arrangement Order).
  ○ Set up and monitor post order post order financial care packages on Frameworki/Liquid Logic

- o Carry out the post order payment runs

- A consistent and positive link with ACE is in place.

- Worcestershire have a presence at ACE's family finding meetings to discuss early notifications of any children with care plans of adoptions as well as children who are waiting for their forever family. This ensures that potential placements are identified at an earlier stage of the adoption journey as well as have continued oversight on any children who have more specific needs which make finding placements more difficult.

- The team offer a supportive role to Locality Safeguarding Teams with cases of adoption – comprising of assisting with CPR writing, visits to birth parents, and support with cases of relinquished babies.

- The Team Manager attends Legal Planning Meetings/Care Planning Meetings when required to identify any potential plans of adoption and begin early conversations about what is needed for the adoption process leading to ADM decision without delay.

- There is a robust tracking system in place which supports the ADM and Adoption Medical processes.

- Provision of Training opportunities for social workers/team managers that is facilitated by ACE and the PP&ST Team Manager.

- In September 2019, Ace hosted an ACE-Local Authority Regional Challenge Event. The aim of this event was to provide an opportunity for each local authority to consider their adoption performance in comparison with that of local authority partners. This event was received positively by all involved and further enhanced Worcestershire's interface with Ace and our Regional Partners.

Adoption and Permanency – Areas for further development:

- Development of our Permanency Guide for families and young people

- Creating a clear and consistent process for the matching and linking aspect of the adoptive placement

- Strategic and Operational engagement with ACE as our regional Adoption Agency

See below Plan on a Page business plan Children in Need & Child Protection (Locality Safeguarding)

Safeguarding
Maria White

Legend:
- ● On track/No Issues
- ● Possibility of Missing Deadlines/Minor Issues
- ● Missed Deadlines/Major Issues
- ● Completed

Child Outcome	Project	Milestone (RAG) - 21/01/20				Measure
We want to make sure you have the right support and guidance at the right time and be supported to remain in the care of your family wherever possible.	The quality of intervention with families, where there is a risk that children may be received into care if the right support and guidance is not available. (Edge of Care – Supporting Families First) *(Ofsted Project)*	Appointment of team Jan 20	Allocation of cases Jan 20	Post implementation evaluation report Apr 20	Service evaluation report Oct 20	Step down to closure/universal, how many cases escalated (outcomes) to Child Protection. Child prevented from being received into care. Percentage of cases being stepdown/closed - measure of repeated referrals or social work assessments. Quarterly analysis of financial placement spend. Positive End of involvement feedback from children and young people.
If you go back to your parent(s) after some time in our care, we want to make sure it works out permanently.	The timely availability of family support when children have a plan to leave care and return home. *(Ofsted Project)*	Implementation of Edge of Care supporting rehabilitation Jan 20	Develop mechanisms to review best use of resources within workload and workflow of the SFS Team. Agree ToR for this service. Feb 20	Evaluation report against measure identified. Mar 20		Positive End of involvement Service User feedback. Repeat looked after children. Case file audits
We want to make sure that you have a positive relationship with your family and you are supported to share your thoughts, feelings and views with them and the people who help to support you.	Development of Specialist Family Support Service to support children subject to Children in Need and Child Protection plans.	Develop mechanisms to review best use of resources within workload and workflow of the SFS Team. Agree ToR for this service. Feb 20	Develop weekly performance data information. Feb 20	Develop Practice Standards for Specialist SFS interventions. Mar 20		Positive End of involvement feedback from professionals. Average caseload. Number of referrals accepted. Number of cases closed. Waiting lists Staff Health Check
Sometimes we go to court as part of our work with families. If we do we want to make sure this is done well and quickly, so you know as soon as possible what decisions are being made about your long term care.	Quality and Timeliness of Court Work	Implementation of Safeguarding Permanency Review Panel. Feb 20	Development and implementation of Court Skills Training offer to all levels of staff. 20/21	Development of the Court Case Tracker within Liquid Logic Mar 20	Development of Deprivation of Liberty (DOL's) Practice Guidance and LPS code for 16/17 yr. old. 20/21	Reduction in CPP 9mths + Number of Discharge of Care Orders. Number of PLO by outcome. Number of repeat Pre-Proceedings. Target: 100% of court documents to be filed on time. Target: 95% of Care Proceedings will complete within 26 weeks.

Legend:
- ● On track/No Issues
- ● Possibility of Missing Deadlines/Minor Issues
- ● Missed Deadline/Major Issues
- ● Completed

Child Outcome | Project | Milestone (RAG) - 21/01/20 | Measure

Project: Worcestershire Family Safeguarding (Innovation Project)

Child Outcome:
Family Safeguarding is a new way of working for WCF and will help us to improve the way we work with you and your parents.

We will focus our work with your parents to make sure they have the support and access to the services they need to be the best parents they can, and keep you happy, healthy and safe.

Milestones:

- Expression of interest completed — By Nov 19
- Develop Business Case for Business Rate Retention Board — Jan 20
- Recruit and appoint Practice Lead. — Feb 20
- Develop Communication Plan — By Feb 20
- Cohort of cases to be agreed and set up Workshops for Practitioners. — By Mar 20
- Pilot Go Live — 1st Apr 20
- Undertake monitoring and reporting against outcomes and measures to quarterly Strategic Group. — Jul 20 / Oct 20 / Jan 21 / Apr 21
- Year two of pilot complete evaluation of pilot and develop recommendation report — Apr 21 - Oct 22
- Quarterly reporting — Jul 20 / Oct 20 / Jan 21 / Apr 21
- Practice Lead to provide interim year one report to Strategic Group — Oct 21
- Final evaluation Oct 21. Planning for full implementation. — Apr 22

Measure:
- Reduction in care proceedings.
- Reduction in the number of Looked after Children.
- Reduction in repeat proceedings.

Project: Repeat Proceedings and Child Removals (Pause Project) (Innovation Project)

Child Outcome:
We want to help mothers and fathers be better parents so they don't have lots of children taken into care.

Milestones:

- Complete scoping exercise to establish baseline data - of repeat proceedings and children's removals within Worcestershire — By Nov 19
- Presentation by Ripplez on PAUSE Model/Approach and Warwickshire's schedule. — By 25th Nov 19
- Develop Business Case for Business Rate Retention Board — By Dec 19
- Award of contract to Pause for Change Limited subject to final negotiation of contract — Jan 20
- Agree governance structure, evaluation criteria and develop Communication Plan — By Feb 20
- Partnership and stakeholder event. — Feb 20
- Pilot Go Live First Pause Cohort (up to 24 women) — Apr 20
- Undertake monitoring and reporting against outcomes and measures to quarterly Strategic Group. — Jul 20 / Oct 20 / Jan 21 / Apr 21
- First Next Steps (up to 18 months after intervention) — Oct 21 – Mar 23
- Commissioner to provide interim report to Strategic Group — Oct 21
- Second Pause Cohort — Oct 21 – Mar 23
- Evaluation of pilot and develop recommendation report — Apr 22
- Second Next Steps cohort — Apr 23 – Sep 24
- Ongoing quarterly performance reports to Strategic Group — Year on year

Measure:
- Reduction in repeat care proceedings.
- Improved timings of intervention to achieve permanency for children 0–5 years
- Reduced public law outline.

11.   Through Care – looked After Children and Care Leavers

11.1 Looked After Children

Areas where we are making the best progress:

- The amount of children subject to s20 in care has further reduced from 21% last year to 14%

- Placement stability is also improving at just under 70% of placements continuing for 2 years. This is supported with the success of consolidation meetings in seeking to avoid placement breakdown; currently standing at 78% of placements being maintained.

- NEET figures which were of concern in the last year and are now showing a trend (Quarter 2 and 3) of reduction as a result of focussed activity between social care and education colleagues.

- Repeat care episodes are low with only 11 children in the last year.

- Last year 195 of children achieved permanency within 6 months of entering care. This currently stands at 25% for this year which reflects timeliness within the PLO process.

- There has been a reduction in the use of placement with parents, currently at 4.5% which is below the England average. This is a result of targeted work on long term Care Orders and care plans for discharge being pursued as well as good quality court care planning.

- Children experiencing 3 or more placement moves is down to 8% from 11% last year.

11.2 Care Leavers

Areas where we are making the best progress:

- The HIT (Homeless Intervention Team) merged with Care Leavers in January 2020 due to the benefits in sharing skills, knowledge and working relationships with Housing colleagues.

- The Care Leavers participation group continues to organise a variety of activities and events and is focussing hard on trying to engage care leavers who are not in touch. The latest Care Leavers Newsletter can be viewed here:

  NEWSLETTER 4
  POWERPOINT PDF FII (Appendix I)

- A film was recently produced by a care leaver illustrating his own experiences of care and the care leavers service as well as those of a number of other young people. The film was presented to Corporate Parenting Board and a wider staff audience. The film can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/P4EY2fiHM8E

- There is regular liaison and review with the Ministry of Housing – Homelessness Advice and Support Team on progress being made and initiatives to avoid young people experiencing homelessness.

- Two additional PA's have been appointed following DFE funding for homelessness prevention.

- The two Housing panels in the county have been reviewed to re-focus their remit around difficult to place young people and seek joined up solutions and weekly KPI's and data reporting to senior management on the use of B and B are now in place and clear action plans presented to move a young person to suitable accommodation as efficiently as possible.

- Specialist knowledge continues to be developed within the team around presenting issues such as substance misuse, self-harm, UASC and the avoidance of criminalisation.

Care leavers in EET and those in suitable accommodation continues to be higher than the England average and statistical neighbours.

Areas for further development:

- The service has recently experienced some disruption with a team manager leaving and the other team manager being on medium term sick leave. This has impacted in terms of ensuring the necessary scrutiny and quality assurance is in place for key activities, such as the completion of Pathway Plans where performance has dipped. A new manager has recently joined the service and cover managerial support has also been identified to address this issue.

- In touch figures are around 10% below the England and statistical neighbour average so continued efforts to develop drop in surgeries further, the use of social media and the embedding of the 21+ duty service are underway.

- Whilst the number of 17-year olds awaiting a PA has been halved compared to last year, further work is required. This work is within our priority business plan and incudes development of data reporting to track cases and service review of the roles of Outreach workers and Personal Advisors to ensure we are using resources in the most effective and efficient way.

12.   Placements and Sufficiency

12.1 Residential Care

Of our children in care, the largest proportion are consistently between the ages of 11 – 17 years, often with challenging and/or complex needs. Data however also shows us that this group of young people often return home back to parental care. The recent development of our Edge of Care service (Supporting Families First) is in seeking to support young people to remain in parental care, where it is safe to do so we can focus on the parental capacity, family relationship and avoid family breakdown in the interest of the child where possible.

As we have improved social work practice on preventing care and care planning to permeance we have seen a change in the chart of children in residential care. What this has shown is that the skills and confidence of our internal residential care staff are often not meeting the needs of the young people requiring residential care. A review of the management, culture of practice and learning and development impact is part of our priority business planning in 20/21.

As of November 2019, 20% of young people in care were 16 or 17 years of age. By the end of March 2020, 20 young people will be leaving care as 18-year olds. Those young people aged 18 years represent our largest group ceasing care at 38%. Accordingly, two in house semi-independent provisions have been opened this year. There remains a need to utilise external, private provision where quality and location is often a concern. We seek to reduce such concerns with wrap around support packages to our young people via our Outreach Support service.

Our focus going forward is in creating more in-house provision, both physical accommodation and wrap around support staff for young people 16/17 years ready to move on to semi-independent supported living arrangements.

12.2 Fostering and Kinship

Areas where we are making the best progress:

- Worcestershire Children's First Fostering was successfully registered as an IFA and launched on 1 October 2019.

- Agency Decision Makers in terms of approvals, terminations and review; placement under Reg 24; placement under Reg 25; and exemptions – have been widened and now afford greater independence and timeliness in decision making.

- ILAC findings: Assessments of mainstream foster carers are timely, thorough and analytical. Supervising social workers understand the needs of the children placed with foster carers well, and help carers develop the necessary range of skills to meet those needs. However, not all foster carers take up the full range of training opportunities, and this limits some foster carers' skills.

- Foster carer assessments are no longer commissioned out externally which is leading to more consistent quality of assessments.

- There is an improvement in the use of in-house foster placements (up 2% from Quarter 1 and above England averages) and sustained take up of kinship care arrangements.

- During 18/19 we have developed the process for gathering feedback from children and young people on their foster care experience. This includes contribution to Foster Carers annual review, feedback on exit from placements and contributions to consolidation meetings.

- Carer Learning and Development Needs analysis completed. Additional training events taking place to support carers to undertake all mandatory training locally and in a timely way

Areas for further development:

- The quality assurance programme and service user feedback on the lived experience of care needs to be fully embedded. This includes the development of and learning from disruption meeting as identified by Ofsted 2019

- The recruitment strategy for Foster Carers is under review and considering being given to any opportunities for regional developments.

- ILAC findings: The quality of supervision offered to social workers is inconsistent. There are gaps in frequency and recording in some teams and a lack of challenge and reflection, which acts as a barrier to better practice. Although there has been an increasing focus on getting it right, some aspects of social work practice are not yet good.

- The take up of staying put arrangements is subject to review and young people's feedback. This analysis will inform the better promotion and take up of this offer.

- Monitoring and scrutiny of KPI's which are now reported on, such as supervisory visits to carers, to be fully embedded with all managers.

12.3 Unregistered and Unregulated settings

Worcestershire, in line with the National picture, are experiencing challenges with placement sufficiency. As a result, Ofsted, the Childrens Commissioner, Minister for Children and Families, Secretary of State and President of Family Davison have all sought to raise awareness, gain assurances and promote best practice in this area.

Unregulated Provision - An "unregulated" provision means it doesn't have to have Ofsted registered as it doesn't meet the definition of a Children Home. Supported Board and Lodgings and Semi Independently living are types of Unregulated provision. **Unregistered Provision -** An unregistered provision is one that is supposed to be a children's home /meets the definition of a children's home but has not been registered with Ofsted.

The below is our data return to the Children's Commissioner October 19 for the years 2016/17/18

SSDA 903 Category	"HS: Hostels and other supportive residential settings not subject to the children's homes regulations …. Also includes lodgings, flats and bedsits where supervisory staff or advice workers are specifically employed and available to provide advice and support to the residents…"						"P2: Independent living, such as in a flat, lodgings, bedsit, B&B or with friends, with or without formal support Use where the young person is living independently. Visiting support may be included as part of the package."					
Year End	31/03/2018		31/03/2017		31/03/2016		31/03/2018		31/03/2017		31/03/2016	
Accommodation Type	All	<16	All	<16	All	<16	All	<16	All	<16	All	<16
Flat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supported Lodgings/Accommodation	35	0	29	0	34	0	5	0	7	0	12	0
Bedsit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bed and Breakfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
With Friends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YMCA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hostel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foyers	2	0	5	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barge or boats	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caravans or caravan park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	37	0	34	0	40	0	5	0	7	0	12	0

- In Worcestershire we currently provide approx. 62 young people with Semi Independent Living arrangements (also known as SBL) approx. 40 young people in our own in-house provision and 22 in an externally commissioned provision.

- We have no young people under 16yrs in unregulated provision and the data return evidences this is not practice in this LA.

- We currently have no children or young people in an unregistered provision (Jan 20)

- On two occasions in 2018/19 we have developed our own bespoke unregistered care arrangement due to the absence of a Secure provision. For each young person we put in place a comprehensive plan to care and monitor the provision for its temporary period. Both cases were also before the court for monitoring of the Secure Order and care planning for the child.

- Worcestershire are part of the regional West Midlands bid to the DfE to look at potential for a local secure provision for the west midlands. Our bid is currently before the DfE awaiting funding support for any next steps.

- We are unable to meet demand from in house provision, but we do have concerned with regard to the quality of some externally commissioned semi-independent provision. Where this is the case, we use our own in-house Outreach service to add additional wrap around support to young people in externally commissioned semi-independent living arrangements to address any weakness and gaps in quality/service.

12.4 Placement Panel

The provision of all external fostering and residential care placements for children in our care are monitored through a weekly Placement Panel chaired by an Assistant Director.

Panel is attended by managers from Locality Safeguarding, Independent Review Service, Fostering, Placements Commissioning, Virtual Head, SEND.

Our placements service keeps a comprehensive excel spreadsheet with all placements and providers and this is a monitoring tool used by all senior managers and finance.

The tracker is updated at weekly panel and is an effective tool in enabling us to tack and monitoring all children in care and their placements.

Placement%20and%
20Resource%20Panel

Terms of reference for Placement Panel can be viewed here: (Appendix J)

Area for development:

Implementation of Sufficiency Strategy 20/21

Understanding the Child and Young Person's Experience

- Asking our children and young people what it's like in our care
- Monitoring of our data and Key Performance Indicators to know our journey – demands and outcomes
- Continued application /expectation of our consolidation meetings to maintain stability / planned moves for children and young people
- Development of "disruption meeting" as tool for learning *(Ofsted)*
- Review and tracking of our Placement with Parents arrangements

Addressing our challenges

- Resource Panel chaired by AD to monitor and manage all external placements: Best Outcomes and Best Value
- Edge of Care ensuring only the right young people are entering care
- Court work is promoting timely permanency and Family Safeguarding project targeting pre proceedings cases

- Support to Adoptive and Special Guardianship Order carers: Financial, Emotional and Practical
- Reviewing our internal residential provision offer in the context of needs and demand
- Reviewing the Total Reward offer to Foster Carers and Connected Persons

Supporting and Expanding our provision to demand and positive outcomes

- Increasing our Supported and Semi-Independent provision to meet known forthcoming need
- Expansion of our Outreach Services to meet demand and manage quality of external provision to fulfil our duty and accountability for the Outcomes our young people are achieving
- Targeted recruitment for main stream Foster Carers
- West Midlands Regional bid to DfE for a Secure Provision locally
- West Midlands regional commission team for Residential and Fostering providers

Through Care
Adam Johnston

Child Outcome	Project	Milestone (RAG) - 21/01/20	Measure
We want to make sure that, if you need it, you have support for your emotional health and wellbeing. This includes access to local emotional wellbeing support services through to Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services.	The availability of a dedicated pathway to the provision of mental health services for children in care. *(Ofsted Project)*	**Identify key stakeholders for task and finish group including young people and commissioners.** By Jan 20 — **Stakeholder group to establish what mental health services there are county wide and at all tiers.** By Apr 20 — **Develop Liquid Logic to capture all children who have mental health issues in order to be able to identify how many of them are accessing mental health support.*** Mar 20 — **Design a straight forward pathway for CYP and parents to access these mental health services.** By Jun 20 — **Survey Monkey to be designed for young people and care givers to measure ease of access to mental health support and outcomes.** By Oct 20	Targeted audits, post pathway implementation, on young people with mental health issues and their access to and effectiveness of mental health support.
If you have been looked after and it comes the time for you to leave care, we want to make sure that you get the support from a professional to help you prepare for independence, be able to secure an appropriate place to live and can identify and engage in employment opportunities.	Provision of personal assistants for care leavers when they reach the age of 17. *(Ofsted Project)*	**Compliance of transfer process to be overseen by Through Care Group Manager.** By Dec 19 — **Review roles and responsibilities of workers to undertake this task (i.e.: Care Leavers, Outreach, Residential workers).** By Jan 20 — **When complete, this will be communicated to all managers; then relevant workforce, and young people.** By Mar 20 — **Training and programme to be developed for workers (e.g.: undertaking Pathway Plans on a Page; ASDAN approach).** By Apr 20 — **Liquid Logic needs developing to capture when a young person is open to Outreach and Residential worker as primary worker.*** By Apr 20	KPI's on number of children open to Through Care without a Personnel Advisor. — Service user feedback at Pathway Plan Review point around effectiveness of identified key worker. — KPI's on NEET — Backlog on case transfers
We want to make sure that you are living in a safe place and whenever possible it's in a place and location of your choice.	The availability of suitable accommodation and timely interventions that ensure that care leavers, including those aged over 18 years, are not placed in bed and breakfast accommodation or become homeless. *(Ofsted Project)*	**Audit of the 17 over 18 year olds who were in B&B at the time of ILAC inspection to identify causes.** By Oct 19 — **Presentation to Corporate Parenting Board with dedicated focus on care leavers accommodation issues.** 27th Nov 19 — **Under corporate Parenting Board, task and finish group established, inclusive of young people to extend the type of accommodation to 16+** By Feb 2020 — **Review of purpose and effectiveness of County Housing Panels to establish focus on difficult to place young people, avoidance of placement breakdowns and Surrender Policy.** By Apr 2020	KPI and live data on the use of B&B. KPI – Number of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation.
We want to make sure that you are able to maintain your attendance at school, yours social networks and the relationships with your carer(s) making sure you feel safe.	Sufficiency of Placements	**Increase the availability of internal semi-independent accommodation (Hill View and Rivendell).** By Dec 2019 — **Recruitment strategy for foster carers to be designed and implemented (cross reference IFA Business Plan).** From May 20 — **Establish how WCF's staying put data compares to regional neighbours and promote an increased take up of staying put arrangements.** By Apr 20 — **Survey monkey to be developed for carers and young people who left care in the last year between the ages of 17 –18 years to determine why staying put was not explored/ put in place.** By Mar 20 — **Learning and development project and the culture of practice, skill set and confidence of residential staff to meet the needs of young people to be reviewed and implemented.** 20/21 — **Skills set for existing carers to be reviewed and developed.** By Apr 20 — **Focussed recruitment activity for SBL carers.** Summer campaign	KPI data on % of Looked after Children with 3 or more placements in previous 12 months. — KPI data on looked after children placed 20 miles or more away from home. — Targeted audit on performance plan quality and outcomes.

Through Care
Adam Johnston

Child Outcome	Project	Milestone (RAG) – 21/01/20	Measure
If you need to come into care we want to make sure that you know what emotional support is available to you.	Review Integrated Service for Looked After Children (ISL) and Emotional Health and Well Being Service development.	Outcome star methodology to be developed to measure individual and service level outcomes. By Apr 20 / Cross reference with JATI task and finish group. Ongoing / Liquid Logic development to record and report when young people access ISL * / ISL service review with key stakeholders including young people. Focus on working with Looked After Children placed in and out of county and this not being 'carer led'. By Jun 20	Service User feedback.
If you are in a foster placement we want you to feel valued and that the experience you have is of a high standard of care and you have a commitment from your carer(s) all of the time.	Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) – Business Plan and Inspection.	WCF IFA to be Ofsted registered. By Dec 19 / Business Plan for the regulatory compliance and development of the service to be completed. By Dec 19 / Service preparedness for the first Ofsted inspection as an IFA. By Apr 20	KPI % of children placed in foster care. / KPI data on looked after children placed 20 miles or more away from home. / Service user feedback at the end of placement around quality of care received. / KPIs on Consolidation Meeting data re WCF IFA placements to be cross referenced with Placement Disruption Learning. / Quarterly performance reporting to WCF Board on numbers of new fostering households recruited since becoming an IFA.
We want multi agency support and assessments for children with additional needs to be easy to access and understand.	Organisational review of CWD and SEND	Staff visioning Jan 20 / Set out systems, measures, structures, practice standards for new services. Feb 20 / Management change. Mar 20 / Children and young people and stakeholder communication. Mar 20 / Implement new service. Jul 20	Number of children and young people with EHCP/CIN converted to a single plan. / Cross reference with SEND KPIs. / Service User Feedback on new service Dec 20
We will work hard with our partner organisations to increase the availability of good quality foster care provision.	Regional Fostering Developments (Innovation Project)	Join stakeholder groups in determining the viability of any regional fostering and the Pyramid Project. To be reviewed May 20	WCF quarterly Performance Board reporting around availability of new households.
We want to make sure that you are able to access safe, secure and high quality care, without delay, to effectively prevent you from harming yourself or other people and help you to transition to mainstream care as soon as possible.	Safe Centre Regional Secure (Innovation Project)	Bid to be made to the DfE, alongside other Local Authorities, to achieve funding to build a regional secure provision. By Nov 19 / Next steps: Pending decision from DfE.	KPI data on Looked after Children placed 20 miles or more away from home. / Number of children subject to a secure order awaiting a placement / Number of children in secure placement

13. Vulnerable Learners

There is a significant national focus on the attainment and inclusion of Vulnerable Learners. This focuses on the need to close the attainment gap between these pupils and other learners and to ensure that practices associated with 'off-rolling' are understood and robustly challenged.

Worcestershire's Education and Skills Strategy 2019-24 outlines our commitment to improve capacity, skills and knowledge needed to support our vulnerable learners. Implementation of this strategy will improve educational outcomes and positive destinations for vulnerable learners relative to their peers, ensure there is a centralised referral system in place for effective monitoring and tracking, with clear timeframes for intervention and build stronger partnership working across children services, education settings and families in Worcestershire.

Areas where we are making the best progress:

- We have centralised all CME referrals to ensure the Local Authority has better monitoring arrangements in place to identify, track and monitor children who are and at risk of becoming CME. This includes tracking schools who are slow to provide information to WCF regarding pupil attendance and movement.

- We have agreed a new approach to decision making at Fair Access Panels which will minimise delay in finding school places for vulnerable learners and ensure all schools are expected to support this agenda

- We have raised the profile on schools' use of Alternative Provision to ensure that they are aware of the specific intentions of Alternative Provision and to ensure they are monitoring the arrangements.

- We have stronger data collection systems in place to identify trends and evidence-based concerns.

- We have a more consistent approach to challenge and support to individual schools.

- We have recognised that we need to review our approach to exclusions and alternative provision and have a steering group and action plan in place to progress this work.

- We are making changes to our Medical Education Team which provides a service for children missing school because of medical difficulties. This will ensure we take a holistic and effective approach to meeting needs.

- To publish a vulnerable learners' strategy and action plan which indicates how the aspirations in the Education and Skills Strategy (2019-2024) will be achieved
- To ensure guidance for schools regarding children who are unable to attend because of medical difficulties is consistently embedded in practice
- To review, update and implement key policies and protocols identified through the Exclusions and Alternative Provision review in relation to Vulnerable Learners
- To use vulnerable learners' data effectively at an area level to target both individual schools and groups of schools where inclusive practices and/or outcomes are poor.
- To ensure effective and sustainable provision is available to those children who for whatever reason are unable to attend school. This will be part of a continuum of provision which includes strong preventative work and reintegration back into settings as quickly as possible.

13.1 Children Missing Education

In Worcestershire we recognise that vulnerable young people are often the most mobile across the education system. The number of CME investigations year on year are increasing, particularly since 2016/17. This is due to increasing numbers as well as better methods of tracking and identification. In 2018/19, there were a total of 1555 new CME referrals. Between September 2019 and January 2020, a total of 956 CME cases have been referred to the Local Authority and 706 cases have been closed. 297 remain open with 222 under enquiry and 75 children registered as missing education (including carry over from 2018/19).

Areas where we are making the best progress:

- In June 2018 we established a multi-agency group, the Missing Monday Panel, which meets on a weekly basis to discuss complex cases, identify trends for children missing education, review policy and procedures, and challenge practice across the county that is preventing pupils from accessing appropriate education. The Panel has already identified key areas for the development of a data driven evidence base, to inform policy changes as well as a more robust and coordinated approach to challenges where necessary.

- Case studies from the Missing Monday Panel have already highlighted examples of good inclusive practice as well as barriers to education that exist. Some of our early findings have been shared with HMI and Ofsted to demonstrate our joint commitment to improving outcomes and safeguarding our most Vulnerable Learners and we have received positive feedback. We will continue to develop our practice in this area and report impact.

- Our Education partner Babcock Prime's NEET team in conjunction with the CME and Post 16 team within Worcestershire Children First have continued to successfully identify NEET young people quickly and work with them or partners to minimise their time in the NEET cohort. This has meant the NEET percentage is the lowest it has ever been for Worcestershire. This improvement has been driven through changing the focus of our teams and focused effort on supporting those most vulnerable.

- Over the last fifteen months, there has been a consistent focus on identifying/supporting children who are NEET. This has seen the NEET percentage figures drop to their recorded lowest figure of 2.4% by June 2019 – at the same point last year, it was 2.8%. This renewed focus has included focused efforts on the most vulnerable within these groups, focused on young people with Special Educational Needs and within care settings.

- Young people known to West Mercia Youth Justice Service (WMYJS), who are currently out of employment, but seeking employment, are referred to the in-house Education Training and Employment (ETE) officer. The ETE officer supports the young person with job searches, attendance at the job centre, CV writing and interview skills. Where young people are on Court orders and also working we ensure appointments are set at times which would not interfere with their employment commitments. Regular reports are sent to the WMYJS Management Board in relation to young people's ETE status in order that the board have oversight and any patterns/concerns /can be further analysed.

- Care leavers team – within the Local Authority we work with Human Resources to provide work experience to our young people. Opportunities can be provided in teams within the Council. We also access Modern Apprenticeships within the district. We work with DWP projects including Seek & Reach and Skills Max who work with individuals in the community to prepare our young people for work readiness, completing CV's and work experience. We post job details on our Care Leavers Facebook page, provide interview support and travel costs for our young people.

- The work above is allowing the opportunity to analyse the reasons for individuals becoming NEET (especially vulnerable groups) and identify the best support for them. Unfortunately, there is not always the provision to do this and the above analysis will hopefully identify areas where new provision could be created.

- There is a Child in Entertainment and Employment Officer who investigates premises that employ children of compulsory school age to ensure they are compliant with regulations and issues permits upon satisfactory assessments.

- The team working with NEETs, regularly analyses key characteristics of our young people and where possible we work with local providers to address them. The challenge in Worcestershire is that with low NEET numbers, often provision is bespoke or means working with low cohort sizes which means finding providers that work for young people can be incredibly challenging. Worcestershire County Council meets with mainstream Further Education providers on a regular basis to challenge provision availability and report trends as well as economic needs to ensure young people, once attending provision, continue into sustainable employment.

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- The number of children referred as a Child Missing Education or who are being Electively Home Education that are known to social care, is consistently low. Whilst this seems a positive result, we need to be assured that this figure effectively reports children that do not require social care intervention rather than children who have not received services because they are outside the education system.

Areas for further development:

- Continue to embed a shared understanding about the role of services within the Local Authority and the collective responsibility with education providers to ensure every child, regardless of their circumstances, has access to a suitable and efficient education.
- Once identified ensure robust systems in place to support children who are at risk of missing education.
- Keep up to date the Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education Policies.
- Trends in non-school attendance (including Fixed term exclusions and Permanent Exclusions) are effectively evaluated to inform targeted resourcing.
- Every School complies with their duty to notify the Local Authority any deletion/admission from their register.
- Every School complies with their duty to notify the Local Authority of Every in-Year Application.
- Alternative providers are effectively reviewed and monitored alongside schools who commission them.
- Every professional working with children and their families receive appropriate training on Children Missing Education.
- To conclude the review of Medical Education Team and Alternative Provision reviews.
- To ensure all schools are completing their statutory returns to the Local Authority.
- To ensure the Local Authority continues to raise awareness of CME through policy, procedure, practice and training.
- Review and update the CME Education Strategy 2018-2020.

13.2 Elective Home Education

The number of children being elective home educated in Worcestershire has increased significantly since 2005; however, 2016/17 had a significant increase of new referrals compared to the previous academic year. As of 23rd January 2020, there are 760 recorded EHE children / young people in Worcestershire, 206 of these have become EHE since September 2019 and 182 children have left EHE since September 2019.

Whilst many parents who elect to home educate do so successfully there is evidence both locally and nationally that suggests that there are an increasing number of parents choosing to do this because they are dissatisfied with schools.

Areas where we are making the best progress:

- The EHE Service collates the data of children who are home educated, and this is reported on a local and national level.

- Our processes have been changed to ensure tighter time scales are in place. We have an EHE Exit Interview form for schools to use prior to a child being de-registered and becoming EHE. Within 2 weeks of receiving a referral, the EHE triage officer makes telephone contact with parents in order to confirm that EHE was the decision they wanted to make, and also the exact reasons for the parent deciding to EHE. This will allow us to analyse the reasons for parents opting to EHE in more depth and allow us to see the reasons as to why parents are dissatisfied with school, and to analyse if there is a pattern to this in relation to particular schools. At 10 weeks after referral the EHE triage officer will make a further telephone contact with parents to offer a home visit and this will be booked for the EHE officer to attend. All of these processes will provide us with a much more robust monitoring and tracking system.

Areas for further development:

- There are reported incidences of parents being 'coerced' into home education, but the Local Authority currently has no documented evidence. Ongoing action will be to ensure that schools, professionals and parents have easy access to impartial information, advice and guidance on EHE to ensure parents do not feel coerced into home educating their child.
- Provide a clear framework for monitoring performance and challenging underperformance.
- Ensure there are clearly defined thresholds for additional funding requests.
- Ensure highly skilled services are available for parents to access information, advice and guidance on educational options available to them.
- Ensure the new in year admissions process (from May 2020) is used to further improve data monitoring and analysis of trends in the local area regarding EHE.

14. Conclusion

June 10 Ofsted said:

> "Effective work by senior management and staff, together with commitment and investment by political leaders, has led too improved responses to the needs of children and their families. As a result, outcomes for many children and their families are better, and there is evidence of a sustained trajectory of Improvement"

We have evidenced improvements and sustained progress in the key areas of businesses including; Workforce, Quality Assurance and Social Work practice, these, alongside our whole system approach to leadership and service design and delivery means we have solid foundations in place as our building blocks for future development and long-term sustainability.

Catherine Driscoll
Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
Worcestershire Children First

Paul Robinson
Chief Executive
Worcestershire County Council

Andy Roberts
Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families
Worcestershire County Council