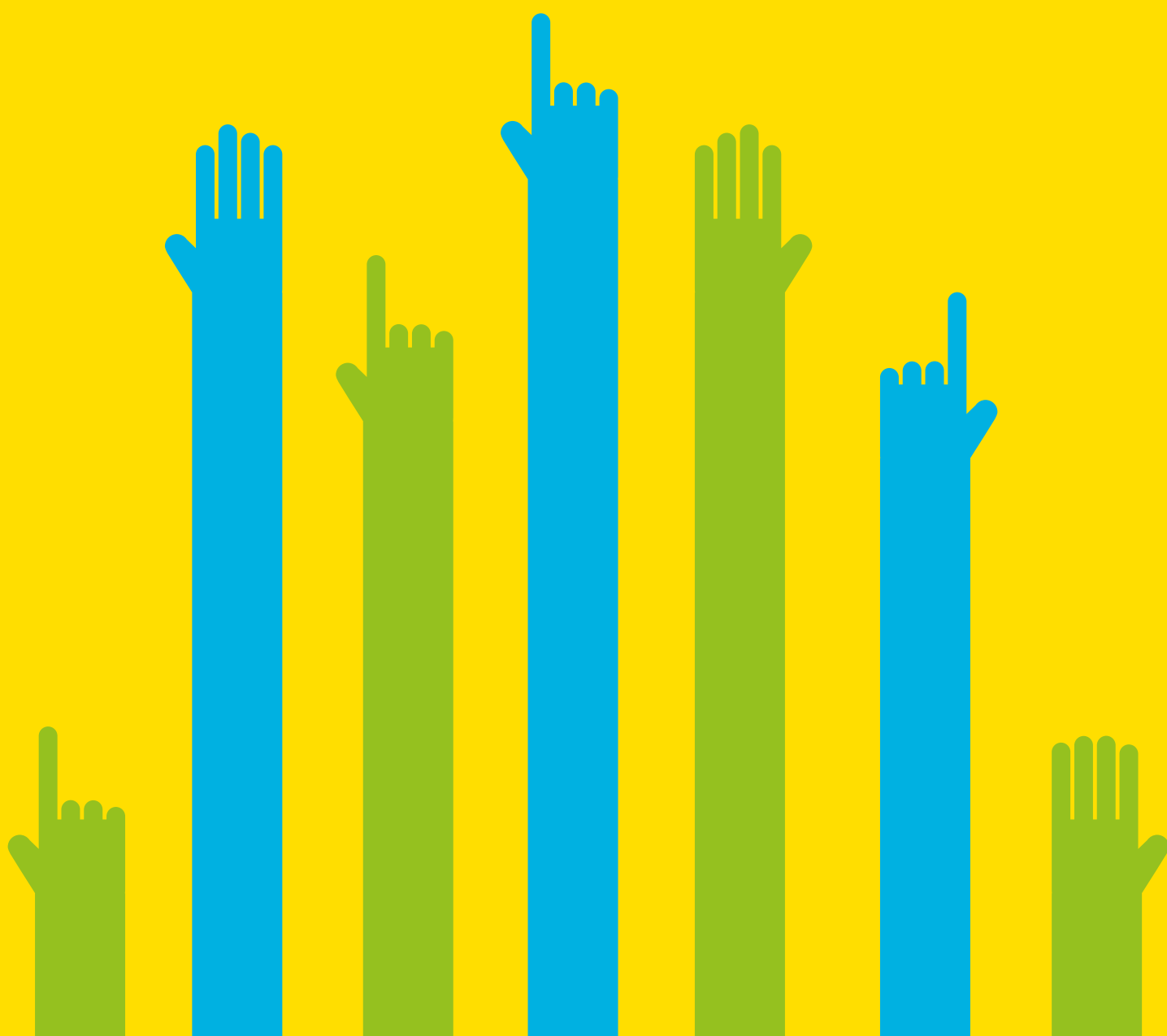


Children and Family Services Plan 2017–2020



Forward Together



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Purpose of the Plan

We know that West Berkshire is a great place for children to grow up. Generally West Berkshire's children and young people do well. Our aim is for those children to be safe and healthy, achieve high educational standards through attending good schools, and move on into higher education or employment and a secure and prosperous future.

Children and Family Services in West Berkshire take responsibility for delivering good quality services for the children and young people across the district identified as being amongst some of the most vulnerable in our communities.

The Service made the decision to develop this Plan to cover the period 2017-2020 to grow a strong, sustainable and high performing service that is ambitious for its children and young people and be judged on the difference it makes to their lives.

Founded on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, this plan is framed around the 'Getting It Right for Every Child' approach. It supports the principles of targeted intervention and prevention, which promotes the wellbeing and safeguarding of children and improves corporate parenting for our children in care and those leaving care.

Children and Family Services are embedded in strong partnership and collaborative approaches which focuses on communities and families, as well as individual children and young people to improve the delivery of services.

We collaborate with partners through innovation and reconfiguration of services allowing us to focus on communities, families, individual children and young people to allow access to quality interventions important for their health and wellbeing.

We recognise that parents, carers, and families have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that their children's needs are met, but we will work with them where there is an assessed level of need, to ensure their children get the best start in life.

Early identification of children, young people and families in need of support or assistance is done through universal services, such as, nurseries, schools, health visitors and third sector organisations working in communities. We in West Berkshire, along with our partners, recognise this as a joint responsibility.

As Corporate Parents we have responsibilities for all children in care, from birth and frequently beyond the point when they cease to be looked after. Whether they are in: foster care; residential care; secure care; in kinship care or looked after at home or children and young people who have a disability for whom we provide short breaks. Our Corporate Parenting responsibilities extend to those leaving care who are looked after for a number of weeks prior to their 16th birthday and can be extended up to age 25 years.

OUR VISION

“Our vision is for our most vulnerable children, including those that are Looked After by the local authority, to achieve outcomes that are every bit as good as their peers across all areas of their lives.”

We understand children in the context of their families and communities and we prioritise supporting vulnerable families and working with communities so that our children can do well and be safe within their own family whenever possible.

Where children or young people cannot remain with their birth or extended families, despite high quality support, and are Looked After by the local authority, we want them to know that we are ambitious, driven and committed “Corporate Parents”, striving to help them reach their full potential. For these children and young people we prioritise finding the best permanent home for them, so that they can have a stable base from which to build a secure future. We support them whilst in our care, to be safe, stay healthy, achieve academically and fulfil their potential.

The vision for Children and Family Services in West Berkshire is of a service that is, at the very least, “good”, if not outstanding. To achieve this we will build on existing strengths and on the principles already established in our Brilliant West Berkshire programme focused on building communities together.

KEY PRINCIPLES ON HOW WE DELIVER OUR VISION

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children will always be at the centre of our work including delivering our corporate parenting responsibilities. The child’s needs are paramount and the needs and wishes of each child known to the service, be they an infant or older child, will be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before any challenges they face escalate to a level of concern.

What we do is often as important as how we do it and to this end we have identified the following standards that will run through our practice:

- We will promote and drive lasting outcomes for children in West Berkshire so that they will see quicker and fairer decisions about where they will live, who will care for them and, have the opportunity to achieve at school and in the community.
- Children and young people will feel safe in their homes and communities and supported in their journey by trusted adults who they can rely on to provide an unerring focus on their needs.
- We will encourage participation and engagement so that children will know that their wishes, feelings and experiences are heard and acted upon in their welfare.
- We will raise the standards in our practice so that children and young people are confident that their Social Workers are always striving to achieve the best possible outcomes for them.
- We are committed to professional development and the promotion of a strong value base so that our children and families will experience professionals who are:



Interested
Measured
Purposeful
Accountable
Curious
Tenacious

West Berkshire Children and Family Services

Our vision is for our most vulnerable children, including those that are Looked After by the local authority to achieve outcomes that are every bit as good as their peers across all areas of their lives.

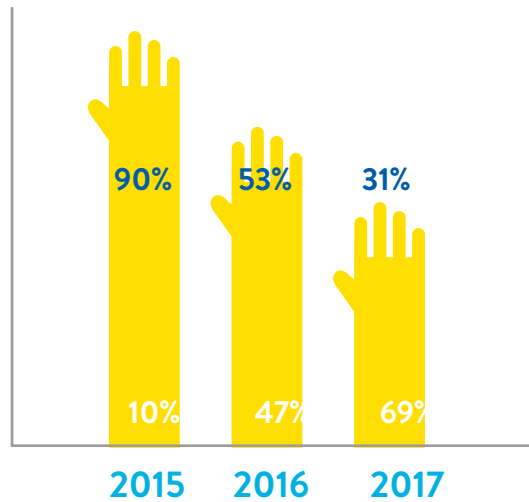
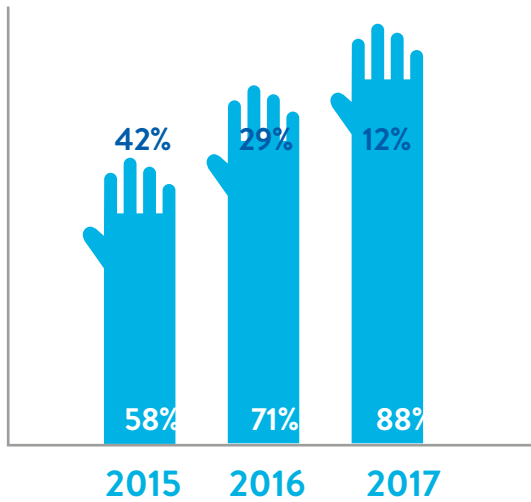


272 sq miles, 160,000 population, 38,000 0-18 year olds in 2015*

*Census links: info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=43040&p=0
info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=29354

Children and Family Services

(CAAS) front door team

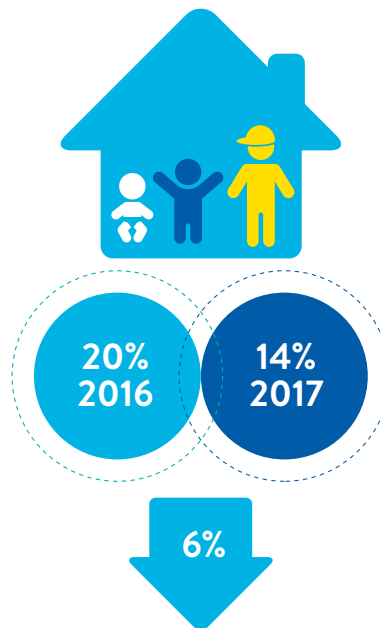
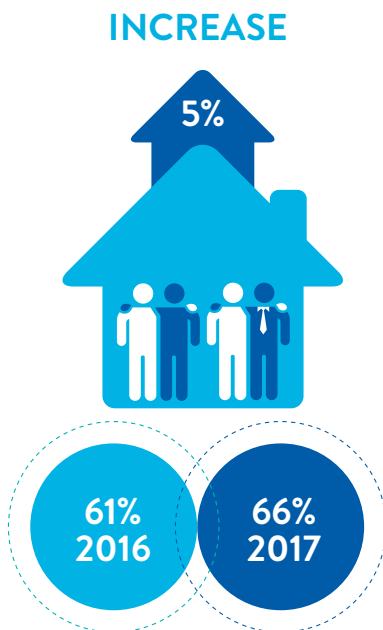


An increase in permanent staff year on year. Agency Social Workers represented in yellow and permanent Social Workers in blue.

10% permanent workers in 2015 compared with an increase to 69% permanent Social Work force in 2017

In-house Foster Carers

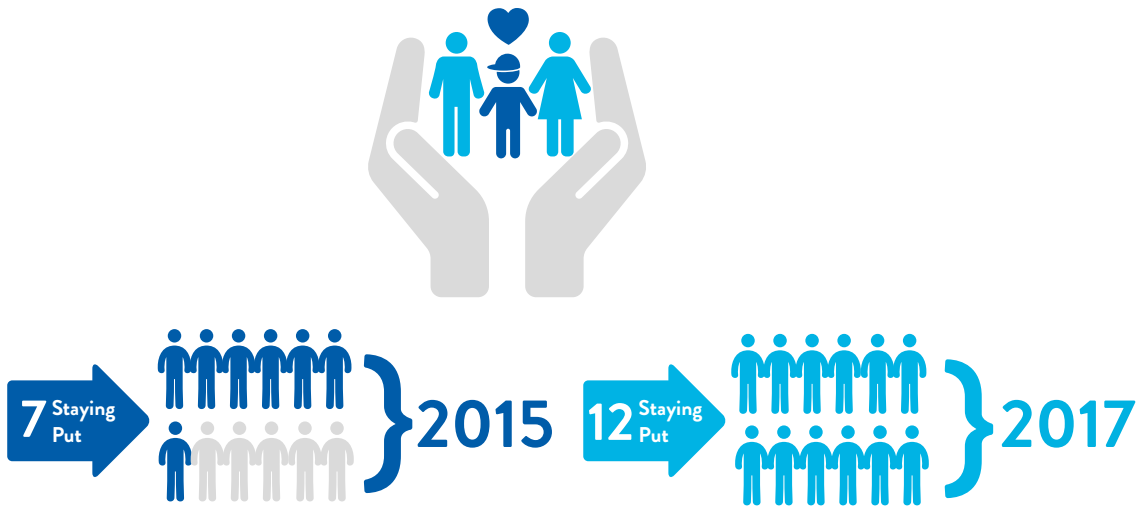
Young people in independent fostering placements (IFA's)



Increase in placements with in-house foster carers (including friends and family) from 61% in 2016 to 66% in 2017

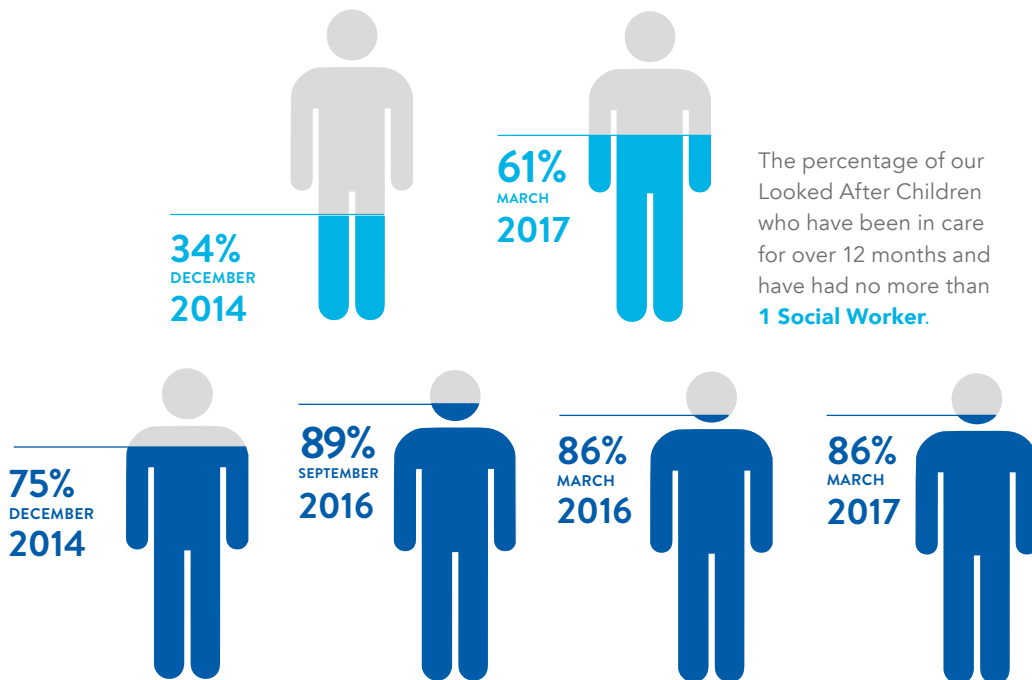
A decrease in placing young people in Independent Fostering Agency Placements (IFA's) from 20% in 2016 to 14 % in 2017.

'Staying put' after age 18



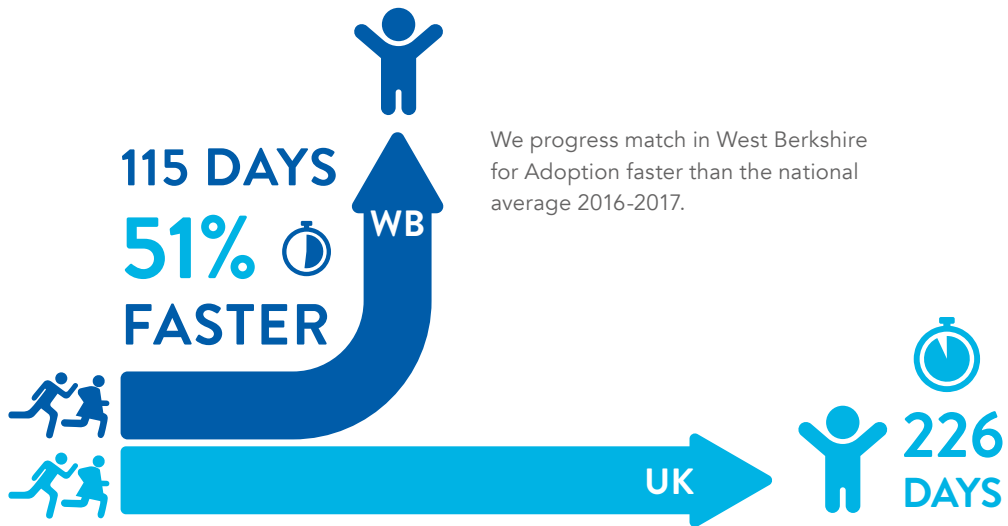
An increased number of young people have been able to stay with their foster families between 2015 and 2017.

Social Worker Consistency

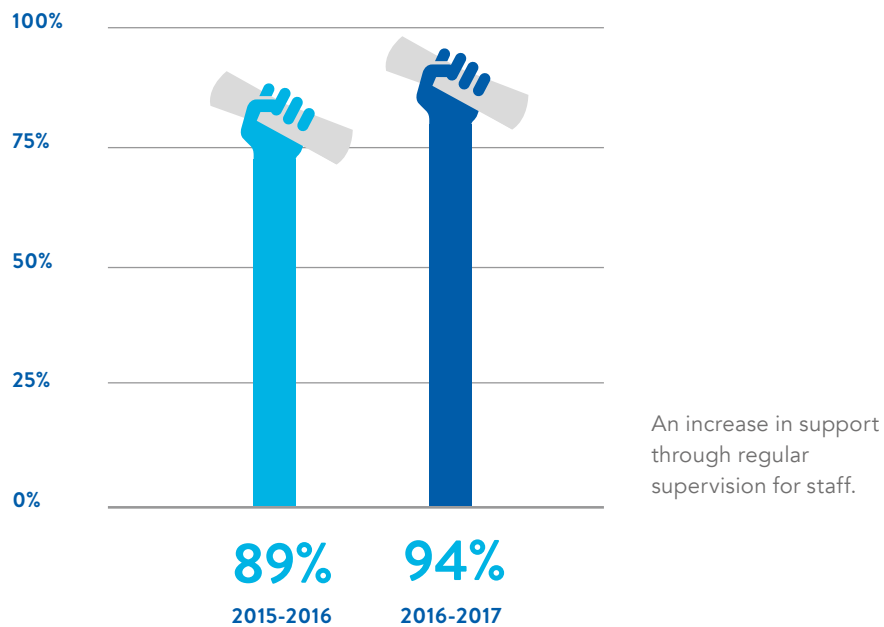


The percentage of our Looked After Children who have been in care for over 12 months and have had no more than **2 Social Workers**.

West Berkshire matching processes for adoption are faster than the national average

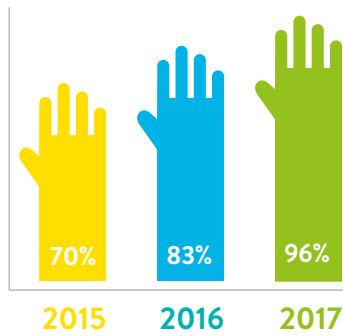


Leadership and Governance – Staff Supervision

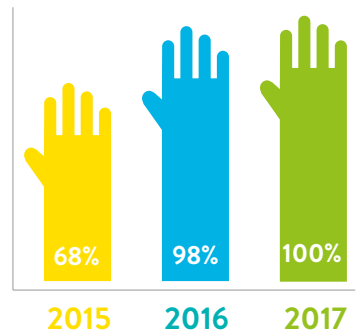


Timeliness

Single assessments completed in timescales

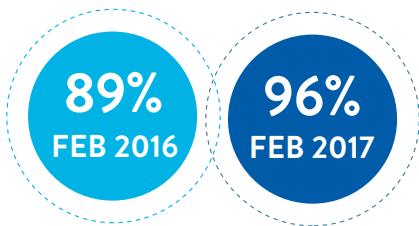


LAC health assessments completed



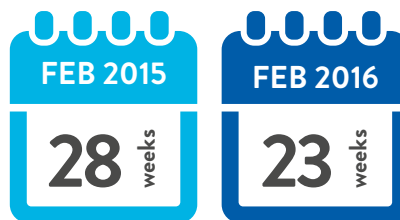
Timeliness

Child Protection Visits



Percentage completed within the 10 day timescale

Care Proceedings



Completed Quicker

Start

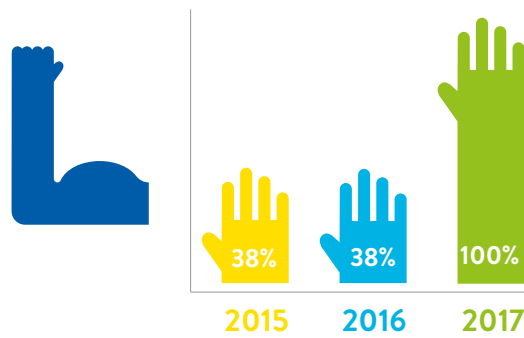
Timeliness

These graphs show that there has been an improvement in performance across services areas.

YEAR
2

Timeliness

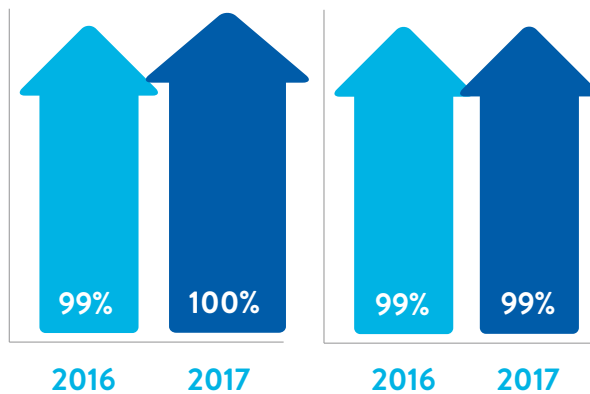
SDQS – Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires



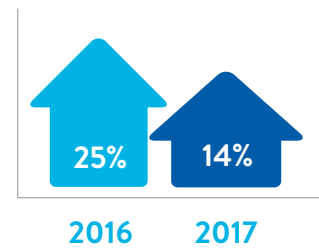
Timeliness

Child protection and looked after reviews

- Child Protection Conferences
- Looked After reviews



Less children accommodated of our total children in care population (0-18yrs) under section 20



YEAR
3

Timeliness

Review



Forward Together 2017–2020

1

Contact,
Advice and
Assessment
Service

2

Locality
Safeguarding
Service

3

Looked After
Children
Service

4

Targeted
Intervention
Service

5

Workforce
Development

6

Partnerships
Working

Our vision for the most vulnerable children, including those that are Looked After by the local authority, is to achieve outcomes that are every bit as good as their peers across all areas of their lives.

Our commitment to practice is to ensure we have the skills, knowledge and understanding of our children's origins to enable culturally competent conversations and decisions that support their identity and promote and celebrate their differences. We need to be able to listen to, advocate for, empower and engage those with whom we work to help our children and young people fulfil their potential.

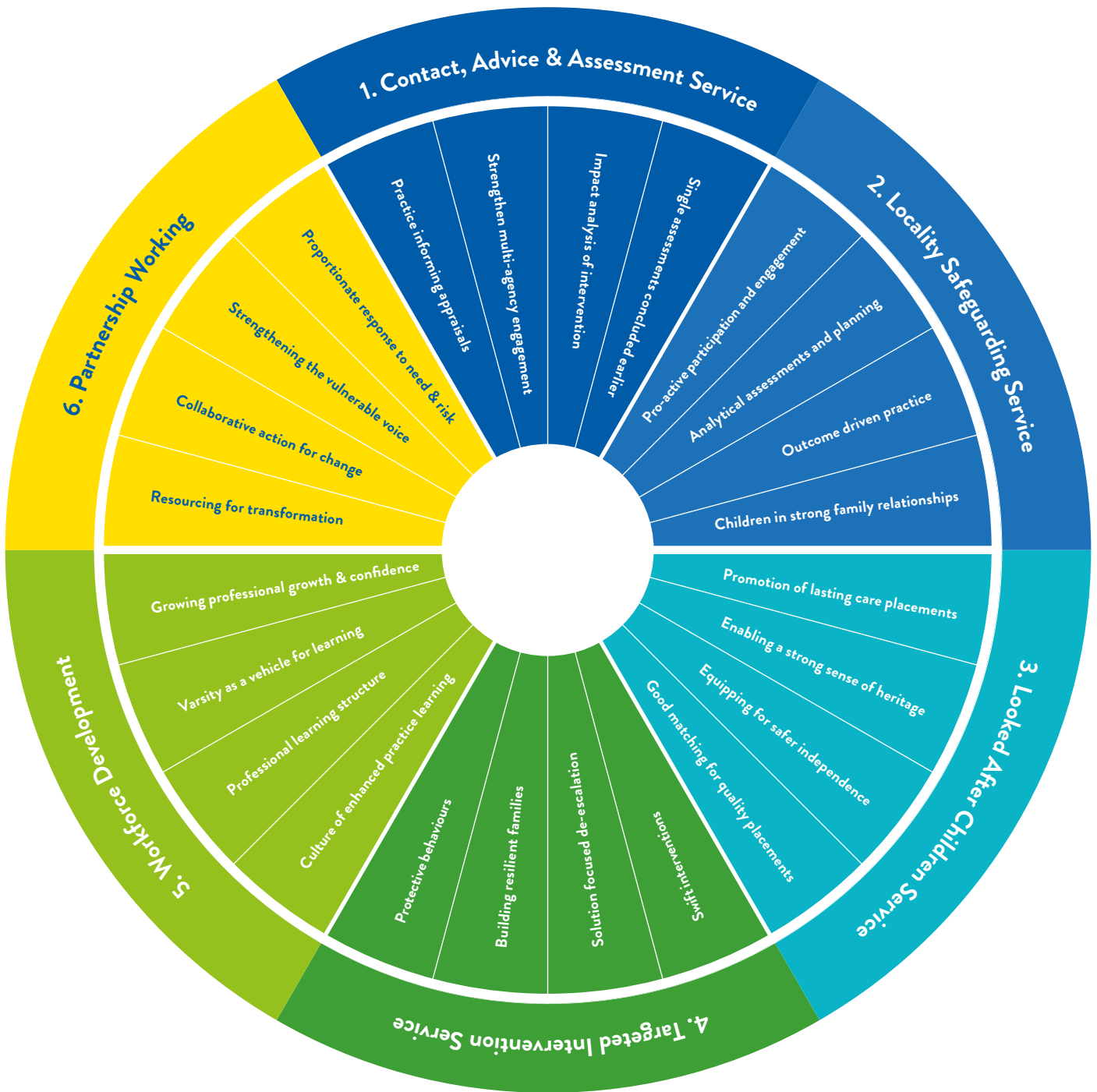
We are emotionally strong and capable practitioners and have practice qualities that reflect genuineness, empathy and warmth with a personal commitment to address discrimination and disadvantage, and a willingness to work with children and families and workers from different backgrounds. We operate within services that are value based and managed with integrity and ambition.

We continue to develop knowledge about the services within our communities, creating and enabling meaningful connections with these resources and how best to utilise them to the advantage of our children and families.

Whatever the challenge we will make sure we work restoratively with our children and families and our colleagues and partners with an unerring focus on improving outcomes and making a positive difference.

We as a service are committed to getting things right the first time and we will focus on this through our service, team and individual development plans to ensure that the children and families we work with see this in our practice at every level of the organisation.

Our Service Priorities



1

Contact, Advice and Assessment Service (CAAS)

Our Contribution to the Children and Family Services Vision

As the CAAS, our contribution to the vision is to ensure that children are safe and protected through the early identification of risk and need. We provide timely intervention with appropriate services to help them and their families achieve their potential and make a positive difference

We believe in the ethos:



We have improved communication with partner agencies

CAAS offers a Consultation and Advice service to our partners, providing a helpful opportunity to discuss concerns and receive clear guidance and support. Partners consistently receive outcome letters which have been revised and improved to be informative, helpful and provide an audit trail for decision making leading to greater accountability and transparency.

FORWARD TOGETHER

Moving forward we aspire to develop even closer working relationships with our colleagues in Police, Health and Education, which includes developing reciprocal arrangements for induction and training, ensuring good awareness of consistent thresholds and an understanding of the different services available to support children and their families.

We believe that a collaborative, well informed decision making process is the best way to improve the outcomes for our children, young people and their families.

We are developing direct links with Key Partners in Schools, Hospitals, Probation, Police, Child and Adult Mental Health services and Drug and Substance Misuse Services to ensure a well informed response from CAAS

OUR FOCUS

The Domestic Abuse Risk (DAR) meetings take place within CAAS which includes attendance of Drug and Substance Misuse Services and Mental Health Services. CAAS staff regularly present to Education and Health forums whilst Police and Health colleagues are co-located in our MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub). Through this approach, partner agencies report that they are informed and included. Closer links have provided good information exchange and earlier identification of risk and need leading to timely conclusion of assessments and child protection enquiries. MASH has enabled the exchange of 'rich' information which informs prompt decision making for children and their families.

OFSTED say 'effective arrangements in CAAS mean that decisions about contacts and referrals are made promptly, are overseen by a manager and are, in the large majority, appropriate'. (December 2016)

FORWARD TOGETHER

We plan to have additional partners co-located within MASH and extend the offer of presentation and training to include wider community partners. We will also extend the remit of DAR to include children and young people at the risk of Honour Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation.

Continuous improvement in the quality of assessments will see us requiring managers to review each assessment within 10 days to maintain the timeliness of our assessments, a consistency of approach and a good quality content and analysis

OUR FOCUS

We have secured a stable, professionally qualified and sustainable workforce that is supported by an effective management team. Case supervision is consistent, reflective and complemented by regular peer supervision. Audit outcomes show a positive impact on the quality and timeliness of assessments. Reports for Initial Child Protection Conferences are shared with families in a timely way to enable them to be active participants in decisions about their children.

FORWARD TOGETHER

All assessments will be reviewed by managers on, or within, 10 days with the aim of reducing the overall timeliness for completion of Single Assessments to ensure families receive proportionate and timely help and intervention.

Build and maintain a stable workforce in CAAS

OUR FOCUS

CAAS have progressed from a position of 10% permanent Social Workers to 69% (Data Zone 2016-2017). Our conversion to a permanent workforce is a success story that we are proud of and has resulted in a confident, passionate and committed staff group who are able to specialise in the 'Front Door' offer. This brings confidence to partners and service users because of a significant improvement in the quality of assessments. This results in timely interventions with consistent professionals, higher partner agency satisfaction and an improved ability to share information across agencies, which in turn provides a holistic picture of a child's world.

FORWARD TOGETHER

We are striving for a 100% permanent workforce with an aim to develop specialist skills such as Motivational Interviewing and to further develop the role of Senior Social Workers. We will systematically use service user feedback to improve and develop services at the front door.

With our partners we aim to create an environment where referrals to Children's Social Care are appropriate in terms of agreed eligibility criteria and reach an agreed quality standard. Professionals are confident to be the lead and to challenge and share information where appropriate.

Strengthen Multi Agency Working

Strengthen overall Multi Agency/Partnership working and further develop the Domestic Abuse Risk meetings within the MASH process to focus on specific risk issues as part of MASH.

Enhance Safeguarding Wisdom

Support Social Workers and Managers in the development and application of emotional, social and analytical thinking to promote an ethos of 'safeguarding wisdom' and develop professional curiosity and enhance practice.

Input resulting in impact on outcomes

Develop processes to capture qualitative outcome information and utilise feedback from children, families, staff and partner agencies to inform and improve practice.



**“Make a positive
difference to
children’s lives”**

Locality Safeguarding Service

Our Contribution to the Children and Family Services Vision

As the Locality Safeguarding Service our contribution to the vision is to build positive relationships with children and families whilst ensuring that the voice of children and young people is heard and acted upon. We aim to empower and promote sustainable change within families but when this is not possible, ensure children have more timely and improved outcomes in relation to their placements and overall wellbeing.

We work hard to engage children and families

Alongside our partners we work hard to address need and risk through planning approaches that are purposeful and realistic. We take account of the views of the children and families with whom we work and review in a timely way to avoid drift and delay.

OUR FOCUS

All of our children have plans that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable Realistic and Timely). Our plans are reviewed regularly to make sure they are relevant and we do not remain involved in the lives of children and families any more than is necessary for them.

We achieve 99% of our conferences and a 100% of our Looked After Children reviews on time.

- We see the children we work with on their own and undertake direct work to make sure we understand their wishes and feelings, as well as their behaviours through careful consideration of the information we have, and act in their best interests.



We make sure we are knowledgeable about the services within our communities and region and enable families to make meaningful connections which enhance their resilience and empower them to find their own solutions.

We are committed to narrowing the gap and improving educational outcomes for all our children which we know will further enhance their opportunities to succeed and fulfil their potential.

If there is any delay in what is delivered we challenge ourselves, our colleagues and professional partners to make sure any gaps are dealt with swiftly. Our response to disputes are timely and we encourage comments, compliments and complaints to help shape and improve our practice.

Where children cannot remain within their immediate birth families, we make every attempt to find solutions with their extended families and connected persons. If this is not possible we make timely and evidence based decisions to promote permanent outcomes outside of the birth family, whether that is Foster Care, Adoption or Special Guardianship arrangements.

We are committed and focussed on building and maintaining a stable workforce through the provision of regular reflective supervision in a safe and protected environment. We nurture and support staff in their continuous professional development by ensuring they have a range of developmental opportunities including formal training, regular appraisals and opportunities to 'act up' into different roles. Our staff are involved in the design of service delivery and their ideas are utilised to improve how we deliver services to children and young people.

FORWARD TOGETHER

We are committed to ensuring social work reports for Child Protection conferences and Looked after Children's Reviews are shared with families five days before the meeting.

We will make sure that all Care Proceedings are issued within a maximum of three weeks from the time the decision is made.

We will ensure that legal proceedings not concluded within 26 weeks are not due to any lack of planning from Children and Family Services

OUR FOCUS

We will robustly challenge where we ourselves consider other processes or professionals are contributing to delay in a child's plan.

Social Workers will complete parenting assessments for the families they work with by the second review Child Protection Conference. We consider this is important in order for our work to be informed and to limit the number of professionals children need to tell their story to, alongside preventing delay if a legal route becomes necessary.

FORWARD TOGETHER

We will improve how we seek feedback from children and their families in a more systematic way so that we can improve the design and delivery of our service including compliments, comments and complaints. We recognise there are different opportunities and tools to help us with this and will work closely with our children and young people to ensure the best approach.

We aim to have 100% permanent staff by continuing to seek permanent recruitment particularly in our management arrangements

We will only recruit professionals who share our vision and values not just simply to fulfil a function or role.

We have a pledge for the service. This will be given to every family with whom we work, to help give clarity about what to expect and to promote reciprocal relationships.

Looked After Children Service

Our Contribution to the Children and Family Services Vision

As a Looked After Children Service our contribution to the vision is to provide our Looked After Children and young people with the right placement, in the right place, at the right time.

We work hard to ensure our children and young people grow into confident, connected and content adults

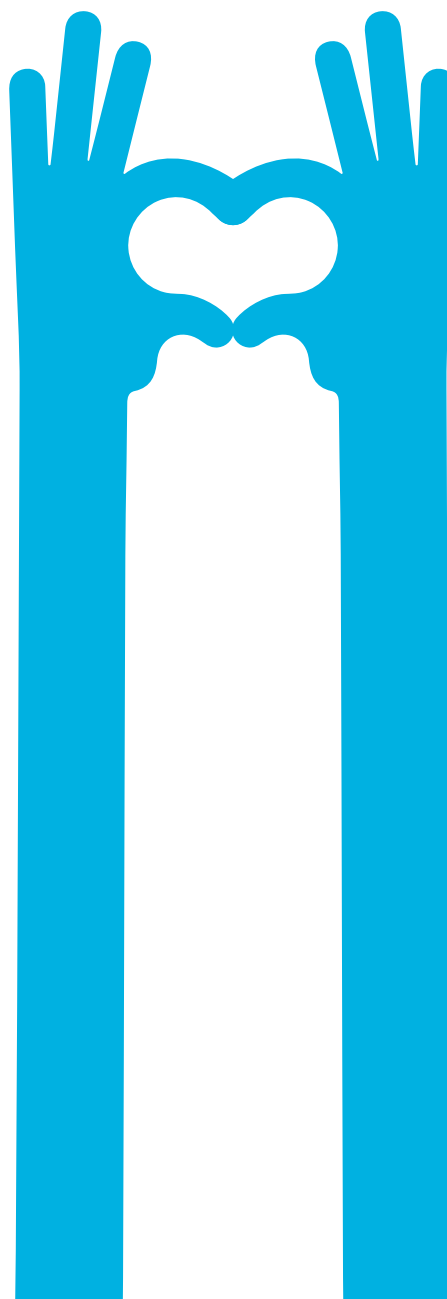
OUR FOCUS

Continuing to engage and utilise a range of traditional media including radio, newspaper and events, to recruit the number and range of carers and accommodation we need for our children and young people.

Redesigning our Foster Carer website to make it more appealing and a place where carers can also seek support and advice above and beyond their supervising Social Worker.

Promoting 'Staying Put' arrangements where the young person and carer are happy to provide continuous support after the age of 18 years.

Providing supported housing for young people who need additional help to prepare for independence and increase stability.



Using the Restorative Practice approach to help young people learn how to resolve differences in productive and positive ways.

Collaborating with Citizens Advice and the Benefits Agency to make sure young people do not get into debt and are able to manage their finances, receive correct benefits where appropriate and feel confident into independence.

Bringing back children and young people placed out of area where it is their best interests to do so to help promote their sense of belonging and identity.

FORWARD TOGETHER

Work further with carers to devise support packages to ensure permanency.

Work with the national charity 'Home for Good' to increase placements for unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Explore with the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) and the regional Adoption consortium, the use of Activity Days for Fostering as a new concept building on the success of Adoption Activity Days.

Provide a bridge from family life to independence by increasing our capacity through Supported Lodgings placements.

Work with our partners to ensure timely processing of housing support for care leavers to increase security and give our young people a good platform towards independence.

Develop with our Housing partners at least one multiple occupancy dwelling with support for our care leavers alongside our ambition to increase the range of accommodation options for our young people.

We are committed to delivering value for money and only working with quality services and providers by:

Placing children with our own foster carers where possible, but where not, seek good quality placements that meet the individual needs of our children and are value for money.

Consistently implementing Placement Agreements to make sure we are clear what we have agreed will be provided as part of the core contract to ensure there are no hidden costs.

Ensuring proportionate and cost effective solutions through the scrutiny of the Children & Family Services Accommodation and Resources Panel.

Continuing as members of the South East Consortium so that we are able to get the best value possible on a large number of independent foster agency places and further extend to residential units.

FORWARD TOGETHER

Review the support we give to our carers, including in-house carers, connected persons, adopters, special guardians and those with Child Arrangement Orders.

Ensure that payments are fair and equitable alongside training, support, respite and expectations being proportionate and clear.

Increasing stability through improving skills and achieving good outcomes

Our aim is that all those who provide a service to our children in care have an understanding of the impact of trauma and attachment; how to parent effectively using P.A.C.E (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) and commit to Restorative Practice (Doing 'With'; not 'To' or 'For'). To this end we are committed to delivering a high quality service and achieving good outcomes.

OUR FOCUS

Improving communication and engagement by involving foster carers in task and finish groups to review the carers' handbook, allowances, recruitment, support and training.

Identifying children with emotional and behavioural difficulties early by using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) pathway and undertaking monthly multi-agency screening meetings.

Focusing not only on ensuring good matches but endorsing at Fostering Panel for children and carers to feel fully part of a family.

Continuing to monitor the progress of each child's

plan at the Permanence Tracking Meeting.

Meeting the needs of older children with the new Children in Care Team so that all children will have a more settled experience of care before approaching adolescence with consistent Social Workers.

Skilling up our carers to cope with increasingly complex children by understanding the impact of trauma and loss on the developing child.

Provide training to carers and workers so that they are able to provide support that may include a '5 Ways to Wellbeing Plan' forming part of a wider approach to ensuring the child's voice is central in our planning.

FORWARD TOGETHER

We recognise that a well qualified and confident workforce will be best placed to deliver good services to our children. We are therefore committed to:

All social workers and carers accessing training to understand the impact of trauma and brain

development.

Train a number of foster carers in nurturing attachments so that they will be able to care for traumatised children therapeutically.

Enable timely and cost effective interventions by training staff in 'Play Therapy' and 'Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (Level 2).

Increase placement stability by working across the service to ensure contact venues are child friendly and risk assessments are reviewed in line with the child's needs.

Continue to focus on Life Journey work which will help children understand their journey in care and settle in their placement.

Invest in Motivational Interviewing across our services to engage change and drive towards improved outcomes.



**“Right placement,
in the right place,
at the right time”**

4

Targeted Intervention Service (TIS)

Our Contribution to the Children and Family Services Vision

As the Targeted Intervention Service we target support to children and young people and their families in a sustainable way, providing effective, evidence based interventions.

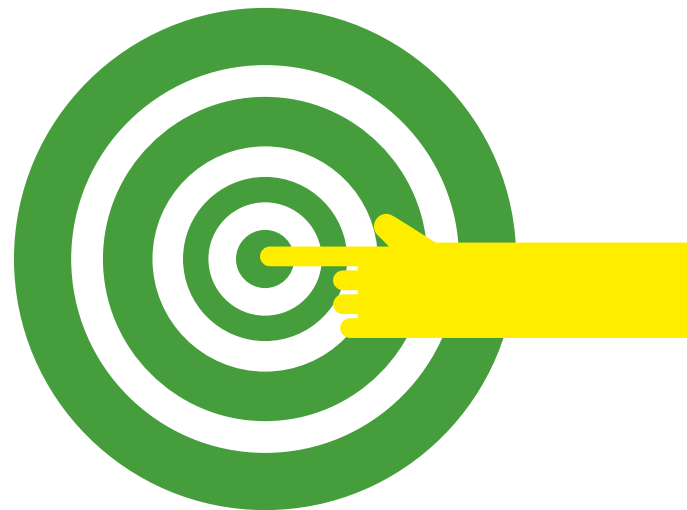
Our approach is rooted in the belief that targeting the right support at an earlier stage is likely to be more effective, less resource intensive and help avoid circumstances escalating to a point of crisis

OUR FOCUS

We work with families where there is a risk of Placement/Family Breakdown because of domestic abuse, parental mental health issues and/or parental substance misuse. We also work with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), cases of children and young people who are missing and young carers

Our approaches include the use of:

- Behaviour management techniques
- Couple conflict work
- Relationship work
- Parenting support
- Protective behaviours/Keep safe work
- Positive activities
- Creating change work
- Family focus work
- Restorative practice



We work on Participation & Engagement activities to hear the child/or young person's voice by providing:

- Advocacy
- Positive activities
- Peer support
- Mentoring
- Group work

Where children are at risk of Missing, CSE or at risk of Offending, we do direct work including SHIP (Sexual Harm Intervention Programme) alongside delivering support in collaboration with our Youth Offending Service and statutory Social Work services.

Through our Young Carers project we support children and young people who have caring responsibilities for an adult or child, for example a sibling, and are committed to delivering a range of events to support this vulnerable group.

FORWARD TOGETHER

We will continue to build our service to make sure our interventions are targeted, timely and impact on outcomes for children and their families. We believe there is the opportunity to target our intervention and thereby reduce demand on children and adult social care services and have a positive impact in building resilience in families, children and young people.

We are committed to advising, sign-posting and assisting both Early Help and Statutory Services, to progress improved ways of delivering services through targeted, specialist and acute levels of need and risk.

We are responsive, creative and focussed on targeting the right support to those who without it are likely to require Statutory involvement and can both lead and support on offering a range of time limited interventions.

“Positive impact in building resilience in families”



5

Workforce Development

Our Contribution to the Children and Family Services Vision

We are fully committed to the vision set out in the Government's 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy, which states that everyone who works with children and young people should be:



Ambitious for every child and young person.



Excellent in their practice.



Committed to partnership and integrated working.



Respected and valued as professionals.

OUR FOCUS

We believe our workforce is undoubtedly our most valuable resource in achieving positive outcomes for the children and families with whom we work. We have been successful in securing suitably qualified staff in over 88% of our permanent social work posts and are confident of continued improvement.

The key to our success is our commitment to ensuring that continuing professional development is the central focus to delivering high quality services. To that end we have already started to map out the internal endorsement pathways which will lead to the accreditation of the Child and Family Social Workers, Practice Supervisors and Practice Leaders and are ambitious in delivering high quality, proactive training through a range of platforms.

FORWARD TOGETHER

Our aim is to offer the children's workforce a clearly defined, challenging and professionally guided Workforce Development Programme which combines mandatory training with aspirational and innovative opportunities. These in turn build confidence and support continuous professional development, ultimately leading to better outcomes for children and families.

This vision for continuing professional development will be realised through the formation of the West Berkshire Social Care Varsity. This will be key in developing a solution focused culture that respects, challenges and supports individuals and groups as well as our whole organisation. The Varsity will be structured in schools of learning which are:

School of Formal Learning - theory and practice (ASYE, consolidation, endorsement and accreditation).

School of Leadership, Management and Governance (for aspirant managers and leaders).

School of Specialist Awards – Continuing Professional Development (CPD), bespoke short courses, PAMS assessors, DOLs assessors, ABE training, certified courses on attachment).

School of National Learning (for wider professional networks and developments).

Our focus is to link all of our professional development not only to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) but to the Key Knowledge and Skills Statements for Child and Family Social Work, which are underpinning the current social work reform towards endorsement and accreditation by 2020.

Underpinning all of these schools will be reflective learning and practice (to cover theory, morals, ethics, value base and different models of intervention).

West Berkshire will continue to work in partnership with Higher Education Institutions and other organisations such Research in Practice (RIP) to ensure we are able to offer the very best, up to date learning opportunities so we can develop expertise to serve the most vulnerable children and families.

We believe that through ‘Schools of Learning’ over the next three years we will be able to establish an innovative and comprehensive professionally routed learning structure, that will bring learning beyond 2020 and beyond our geographical borders.

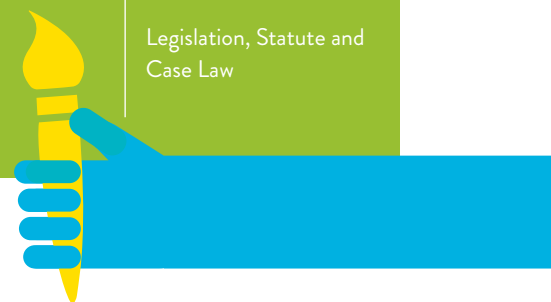


“We are able to offer the very best, up to date learning opportunities”

Schools of learning



School of Formal Learning Theory & Practice	School of Leadership Management & Governance	School of Specialist Awards Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	School of National Learning
Motivational Interviewing (Family Safeguarding Model)	Training for Aspirant Leaders (Association of Directors of Children's Services Training - ADCS)	Social Work Academy ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment) Consolidation	Learning from Centres of Excellence
Systemic Practice	Systemic Leadership	Endorsement, Assessment & Accreditation	Scholarly Articles and Journals
Signs of Safety	Mentoring/Coaching	Multi-Disciplinary Professional Development	Policy & Guidance from Central Government
PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) and Theraplay Training	Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)	Achieving Best Evidence	Innovation, Evaluation and Implementation
Dyadic Development Approach (DDA)	Ethics in Leadership	Parenting Assessment Manual (PAM's) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS)	Serious Case Reviews – Lessons Learnt
Social Pedagogy	Peer Reviews and Quality Assurance	Practice Education (PE)	Learning and Guidance from Regulatory Bodies and Inspections
Restorative Practice	Resource Management (People, Places and Finance)	Prince 2	Legislation, Statute and Case Law



Partnership Working

We acknowledge that we will not fully realise our vision without working collaboratively with a range of partners who share in our passion for our children and families and are able to bring a range of knowledge and skills beyond our service.

Youth Offending Team (YOT)

West Berkshire Youth Offending Team (YOT) work with young people (10 -18 years of age) with the aim of preventing them from offending, or re-offending and help them engage in activities to fulfil their potential.

The Service is made up of Social Workers, Education Workers, a Police Officer, Health Worker, Probation, Restorative Justice and Youth Workers. The team involves people from these different agencies to help access the services young people need to help turn them away from crime and through close multi-agency and partnerships working is committed to keeping crime low and diverting young people away from the Criminal Justice System.



THE YOT

- Works with young people who have received an out of court disposal from police, or who have been to court for an offence, and the court has ordered them to work with the YOT.
- Provides reports for the court to advise on what services are available, to assist in decisions about sentencing for young people.
- Provides services to parents to help them to respond to any difficulties their children have.
- Work with victims of youth crime, offering advice and information, and an opportunity for the effect of the offence on them to be made known to the young person, either directly or indirectly.

The key indicators we focus on are: reducing the number of young people entering the youth justice system, reducing reoffending of young people and reducing the number of young people sentenced to custody.

FORWARD TOGETHER

- Reducing the criminalisation of Looked After Young People
- Addressing the impact of County Lines in the area
- Addressing reoffending amongst young people
- Establishing a Liaison and Diversion Service

Working under the Governance of the Chair of the Safer Community Partnership, yet being within Children and Family Services, gives the YOT a strong and unique position to promote those children and young people who are often the most vulnerable in our communities.

The Edge is West Berkshire's specialist Drug and Alcohol Service for young people, their families and carers. In addition, The Edge provides a transitional service for young people between the ages of 18 to 23, in partnership with our adult service provider. Young people can refer themselves directly or be referred from Children and Family Services, Education, YOT, Police, GPs/Health Providers, parents and others. The Edge is a community, non-prescribing service, which enables young people with drug and/or alcohol issues to overcome them and live healthy and crime free lives, through the provision of a range of physically, psychologically and culturally accessible services.

The Edge offers all young people an individual specialist assessment using a comprehensive assessment tool. This is followed by an accessible, flexible and non-judgemental service for all young people in West Berkshire requiring sexual health or substance misuse interventions by way of home visits, drop-in and outreach services. The Edge offers a range of psychosocial, family and pharmacological interventions including early intervention targeted provision and complimentary therapies. Young people have a care plan, which is holistic in approach and which embraces care/treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare. All young people are provided harm minimisation, drug education and sexual health interventions in order that they are safer when leaving service provision.

“Through collaborative working practices there is an opportunity to build stronger Children & Families”



FORWARD TOGETHER

- Develop wider access to drug information through the use of social media.
- Renew the suite of information leaflets available to young people and the general public on drug information.
- Increase the skill and confidence of the workforce in West Berkshire through training, refreshers and inductions on substance misuse.

We recognise through the support from Public Health there is opportunity to build support together through high quality interventions led by motivational interviewing and other approaches

We believe that children with disabilities are children first and we work with our partners to make sure that we provide a preventative approach in response to their vulnerability.

We will ensure that children with disabilities are embedded within local safeguarding activities as a key risk group so that they receive good opportunities, are kept safe from harm and able to reach their potential.

OUR FOCUS

- Support children and their families to access health and education services through Education and Health Care Plans which enable children to reach their potential, optimise their independence and in turn their ability to lead a high quality life.
- Make sure disabilities are promptly identified, taking into account the ecological system in which our children are living and how we can optimise the strengths of parents and enhance their parenting capacity and resilience.
- Support the active involvement of disabled children and their families in all aspects of their education and health care so that their voices are heard and acted upon.
- We identify risk and need and act promptly to ensure we mobilise the systems at our disposal through child in need, child protection and Looked After Children's procedures to bring about change where necessary.

- Where children cannot live within their birth or extended families we make sure we find permanent solutions promptly.

FORWARD TOGETHER

- We aim to have a permanent team of highly skilled Social Workers to support consistency for our children and families.
- We will focus on doing the basics right to ensure our assessments are up to date and our plans are Specific, Measurable, Achievable Realistic and Timely (SMART) so that we get the best possible outcomes for the children with whom we work.

We believe that through our roles as Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs we will oversee planning for our most vulnerable children by upholding the following standards:

Promote and drive lasting outcomes for Children in West Berkshire

Children will see quicker and fairer decisions about where they will live, who will care for them and an opportunity to achieve at school and in the community.

For children subject to Child Protection Plans

Children and young people will feel safe in their homes and communities and be supported in their journey by trusted adults who they can rely on to provide an unerring focus on their needs.

Encourage participation and engagement

Children will know that their wishes, feelings and experiences are heard and acted upon in their welfare.

Challenge practice to raise standards through informal and formal challenges to the operational teams so that:

Children and young people are confident that their Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) are always striving to achieve the best possible outcomes for them.

Build on the strengths of our multi-agency partnerships to promote resilience in our communities

Children and young people are confident that all the professionals in their lives are working together to achieve the best for them and their families.

Finance and Commissioning

At its simplest, commissioning is the process of finding out and assessing:

- Why some people achieve good outcomes and others do not, or some have good experiences and life chances and others do not;
- Understanding what factors support the achievement of outcomes and what are the symptoms of poor outcomes;
- Identifying what financial resources can be used to improve outcomes;
- Designing services that address those needs, and developing a commissioning intentions plan (what we intend to provide and buy);
- Procuring – or buying – the services;
- Continuously monitoring quality and impact of those services to improve outcomes.

In finding out what the root causes of poor outcomes are commissioners should work with service users and the wider community to review performance and understand the story behind the poor experiences and outcomes. We should then design the services together, deliver the services together and evaluate the services together.

The lessons we learn from what makes a difference should be shared with communities, service users and service providers so that we can gain a better understanding and change our future experiences.

If we take a local area, which could be a council ward, we can use the information gained from outcome performance data to indicate what is working well and not so well. We can also identify how much financial investment is going into an area by which public service organisation. By combining the two sets of information we can see if the investment is making a difference.

The local needs identified and the local offer to support an improvement in outcomes for children, young people and families must make sense to the local community and be commissioned with them.

Whole place commissioning is where we bring those services together, put resources together into one funding pot and agree one commissioning intentions plan that is jointly funded by the public services and commissioned with local communities.

FORWARD TOGETHER

This plan focuses on the strategic delivery of a joined up service so that children, young people and their families only have to tell their story once and receive the right support at the right time and in the right place.

“ We believe that West Berkshire’s children and young people are our greatest asset. This plan is designed to positively impact those with whom we have involvement, to help create a better future and help them reach their potential.”

Glossary

BAAF	British Association for Adoption and Fostering
CAAS	Contact Advice & Assessment Service
CIN	Child in Need
CP	Child Protection
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
DAR	Domestic Abuse Risk
GP	General Practitioner
HA	Health Assessment
IFA	Independent Fostering Agency
LAC	Looked After Child
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
PACE	Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy
PCF	Professional Capabilities Framework
QAAS	Quality Assurance and Safeguarding
RIP	Research in Practice
S47	Section 47 (Children Act 1989)
SDQ	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
SHIP	Sexual Harm Intervention Programme
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
YOT	Youth Offending Team



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