

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN, FAMILIES & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, High Street North, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1LF on Tuesday, 3 November 2009

### PRESENT

Cllr J Street (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs D B Gurney (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: P A Blaine  
D Bowater  
N B Costin  
I Dalgarno  
R Egan  
P Hollick  
A Shadbolt

Parental Co-optee: D Landman

Church of England  
Diocese Co-optee: J Reynolds

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs H Chapman  
F Image  
K Janes  
S F Male  
B Sear

Members in Attendance: Cllrs J G Jamieson  
Mrs A M Lewis  
Mrs C Turner

Officers in Attendance: Mrs S Hobbs Democratic Services Officer  
Ms K Peddie Head of Policy & Strategy - Children,  
Families & Learning  
Miss C Powell Overview and Scrutiny Officer  
Mr M Pratt Deputy Director Children Families  
and Learning and Assistant Director  
Specialist Services

CFL/09/36 **Minutes**

### **RESOLVED**

***that the Minutes of the meeting of the Childrens, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6 October 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.***

Minute No. CFL/09/32 – Members were advised that the Committee's comments had been passed to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Executive Board. These comments would be taken on board, as they were in the process of designing the governance process.

Minute No. CFL/09/34 – The recommendations to the Executive on the Strategic Commissioning Framework had been incorporated into the Framework. The Commissioning Executive had held their first meeting on 2 November 2009. They had agreed to set up a reference group, which would include independent expert advisors to advise the Commissioning Executive. Members requested that details on the reference group be provided at a future meeting.

Minute No. CFL/09/35 - Members received an update on Youth Provision Task Force whereby seven names had been received to serve on this Task Force and the Chairman would be finalising these with the Overview and Scrutiny Officer by Friday 6 November 2009.

CFL/09/37 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

Councillor Costin declared he had a personal interest as he was the Chairman of Barnfield College.

Councillor Dr Egan declared she had a personal interest as she was a Governor at Thomas Whitehead Church of England Lower School.

(b) **Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-**

None.

(c) **Any Political Whip in relation to items on the agenda:-**

None.

CFL/09/38 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman advised Members that the first Cultural Strategy Task Force meeting had taken place and they had scheduled the following meetings:

- 23 November 2009
- 16 December 2009
- 12 January 2010
- 25 February 2010.

CFL/09/39 **Petitions**

The Chairman announced that no petitions had been referred to this meeting.

CFL/09/40 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

There were no applications from members of the public to speak under the Public Participation Procedure allowed for under Part A4 of the Constitution.

CFL/09/41 **Call-In**

No matters were referred to the Committee for consideration at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

CFL/09/42 **Requested Items**

No items were referred to the Committee for consideration at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

CFL/09/43 **Local Safeguarding Children Board**

Members received a presentation taking Members through the following:

- safeguarding and accountability;
- introduction to safeguarding children;
- policy and legislation;
- performance and scrutiny;
- Public Service Agreement 13;
- data on the number of looked after children, children subject to Child Protection Plan and children in need;
- partnerships and plans;
- Local Safeguarding Children Board; and
- children's performance matrix relationships

A copy of the presentation can be found at appendix A.

Members noted that the comparative data used for children in need was from the 2005 Children in Need census. Members were advised that this was the last census taken, but the Eastern Region had been sharing data and this was due to be published early in 2010. Members commented that due to the economic climate this data was likely to have changed over the last year due to families being made homeless and the increase in family stresses. Members were advised that Children in Need were defined in Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Children were defined as being in need when their vulnerability was such that they were unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development or their health and development would be significantly impaired without the provision of services.

Members were advised that individual cases would not be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. If there was a major incident within Central Bedfordshire the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Portfolio Holder and the Chairman of Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CFLOSC) would be notified. It would then be the responsibility of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to investigate the case and produce an Executive summary which would then be considered by the CFLOSC. The LSCB membership was made up of statutory partners including the Police, Probation Service, Housing Authorities, the NHS and additional volunteers from the voluntary sector. The LSCB would produce an annual report for the Council which CFLOSC would have the opportunity to scrutinise and the independent Chairman could be invited to attend the meeting. Further details on the LSCB could be found on their web site <http://www.bedfordshirescb.org.uk/>. Officers agreed to request that the minutes from the LSCB meetings be circulated to the CFLOSC.

Officers could not guarantee that a child would not be harmed but to minimise the risk of this happening the correct procedures were in place including monitoring performance data, talking with Officers and Social Workers, auditing files. A recent mystery shopping exercise was carried out with a member of the Policy and Strategy team telephoning the Council at different times of the day with different situations to test how Customer Services handled the calls. Officers were pleased to report back that Customer Services acted correctly each time. There was also a link on Central Bedfordshire Council's home page of the web site to Safeguarding Adults and Children that would direct members of the public with concerns.

Members were advised that the average caseload for a Social Worker was 18 cases. The turnover of Social Workers was relatively high. The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Mrs Anita Lewis, was Chairing a conference with Social Workers on Monday 9 November. Members were welcomed to attend as observers.

The Council had responsibility for children seeking asylum who had been abandoned within Central Bedfordshire. Officers had to make judgement about a child's age as they had no documentation on them and they usually spoke very little English. The age range of the children varied between 13 - 17. The Council made a claim once a year to the Home Office and were reimbursed for any cost incurred looking after these children. Members noted that the Local Government Association were in discussions with the Home Office over how costs would be reimbursed next year, as the Home Office were considering capping the amount each local authority would receive.

Members were advised that Officers were developing a glossary containing all the acronyms used within Children, Families and Learning Directorate, which would be circulated to Members and co-optees.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1) that Officers confirm whether or not Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee would receive the minutes from the Local Safeguarding Children Board meetings**
- 2) Members receive further details on the costs incurred by children seeking asylum.**

CFL/09/44

### **Central Bedfordshire Council Response to the Recommendations Arising from the Laming Report**

Members considered a report setting out the actions being taken by Central Bedfordshire Council in response to Lord Laming's Report March 2009 following the death of baby Peter. The Children Families and Learning Directorate had worked closely with internal and external partners to produce a detailed action plan that sets out those actions which were being undertaken to ensure that local safeguarding practice and multi-agency working was effective and produced improved outcomes.

Members discussed the caseloads of Social Workers and were advised that the Department for Children, Schools and Families Social Work Task Force were due to publish their report on the review of the profession and to advise on the shape and content of a comprehensive reform programme for social work. The national average caseload for a Social Worker was 13 cases, Central Bedfordshire average was 18 cases per Social Worker. Members were advised that there was an issue of recruiting and retaining Social Workers and agency staff were being used. Central Bedfordshire was advertising at national recruiting events setting out what Central Bedfordshire could offer as an employer. The framework for newly qualified Social Workers had not been implemented in Central Bedfordshire, but was likely to be in place by September 2010.

Members discussed the sharing of data between other organisations such as the Police and were advised that there was clear guidance for sharing information where there was concern that a child might be at risk. If the Police had attended an incident around domestic violence, drugs or drink the situation would be assessed to see if there was a child resident at the property. Members felt that wide spread advertising should be used to highlight the importance of protecting children. Members were advised that there were three key areas that the Local Safeguarding Children Board was looking at where a child was suffering and or likely to suffer harm:

- parents using alcohol and drugs;
- parents with mental health problems; and
- domestic violence.

Members were advised that the Executive were due to receive the action plan for adoption at their meeting on 10 November 2009.

**NOTED the progress to date in responding to Lord Laming's recommendations.**

**RESOLVED that the Central Bedfordshire Action Plan be endorsed.**

**CFL/09/45 The Development of a Single Children's Workforce in Central Bedfordshire**

Members received a report proposing that:

- a fully integrated local children's workforce was the most efficient way of meeting the five Every Child Matters outcomes for our children and young people;
- the current local workforce did not yet meet the definitions of a fully integrated workforce; and
- the draft Children's Workforce Strategy would be the means of achieving improved outcomes.

Members commented on the language used in the Strategy and requested that clear English be used in particular where it sets out the theme statements from an imaginary child. Members were advised that these statements had been taken from the '2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy' that was published in December 2008 by the Department of Children, Schools and Families. Also Members queried the meaning of 'voice the vision' and requested that this was put into plain English.

Members agreed that young people being praised in the newspapers and the media would make them feel valued and that they were making a positive contribution. Members requested further details on the membership of the Children Workforce Strategy Group.

Members were advised that the draft Children's Workforce Development Strategy would be considered by the Executive in January 2010.

**RESOLVED**

- 1) that the language in the Children's Workforce Development Strategy be made clearer and in plain English**
- 2) that further details on the membership of the Children Workforce Strategy Group be circulated to the Members of Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

**CFL/09/46 Work Programme 2009-2010**

Members considered the 2009/10 work programme for the Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CFLOSC).

Members were advised that the Executive would be considering the Child in Need Policy on 6 April 2010. This would need to be included in the CFLOSC work programme before this date to enable the Committee to scrutinise the Policy before being approved by the Executive.

Members requested that a short interim report on children in care be included in the work programme. Members were advised that the Corporate Parenting Panel was due to be established within the next few weeks and feedback from this could be reported to the Committee. Members were advised that if Social Workers did report a severe case then the Chief Executive, Leader, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and the Chairman of the CFLOSC would be notified.

Members highlighted the importance of the Youth Provision Task Force and that it needed to commence as soon as possible.

Members queried who would be scrutinising children's health and were advised that this might already be programmed into the Social Care, Health & Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme, but CFLOSC were also entitled to look at this as well.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1) to include in the CFLOSC work programme the Child in Need Policy before the Executive considers it on 6 April 2010
- 2) to include a short interim report on Children in Care to the work programme.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.22 p.m.)

This page is intentionally left blank





# Children, families & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2009

Safeguarding Children & Young People

Martin Pratt

Deputy Director Children, Families & Learning

# Safeguarding & accountability

- “The single most important change in the future must be the drawing of a clear line of accountability, from top to bottom, without doubt or ambiguity about who is responsible at every level for the wellbeing of vulnerable children.” – Laming Inquiry, January 2003.

# Introduction to Safeguarding Children

- Policy & Legislation
- Performance & Scrutiny
- Partnerships & Plans



# Policy & legislation

- Duty to safeguard & promote the Welfare of Children (Children Act 1989)
- Duty to establish and maintain a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) (Children Act (2004)
- Recent policy & regulatory changes following the death of baby Peter
- Inspection regime
  - Unannounced I&A
  - Announced Safeguarding & Corporate Parenting



# Performance and Scrutiny

- Role of DCS & Lead Member
- Clear performance information
- NIS Quarterly performance data
- Won't tell the whole story – Quality & Quantity
- Importance of appropriate Overview & Scrutiny

## PSA 13

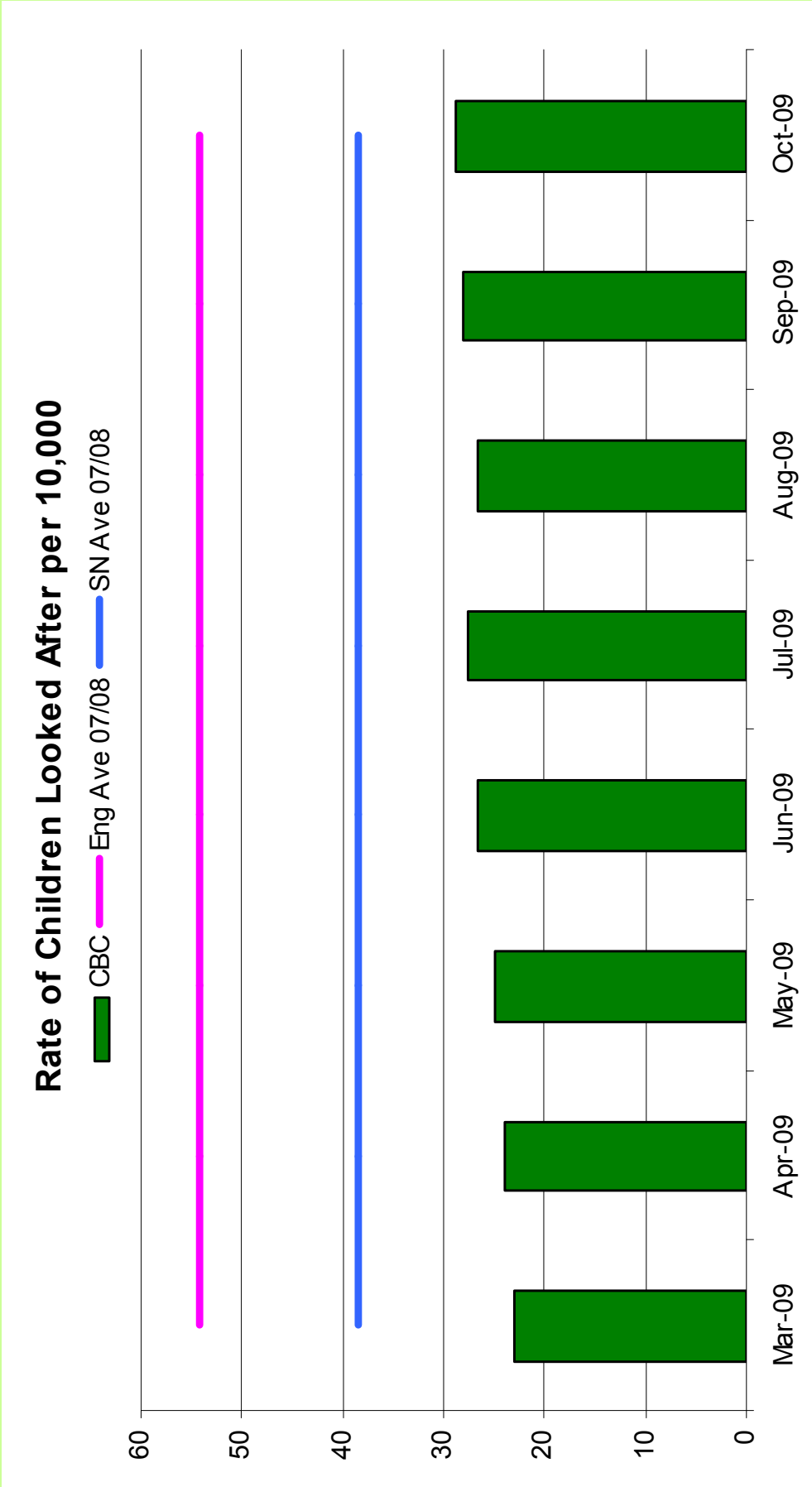
- Percentage of children who have experienced **bullying**
- Percentage of children referred to children's social care who received an **initial assessment** within 7 working days
- Hospital admissions caused by **unintentional and deliberate injuries** to children
- **Preventable child deaths** (as recorded through child death review processes)

Indicat or Ref.	Title	England Average 07/08	Group Average 07/08	CBC 31/03/2009	CBC 31/10/2009
CD08	Children looked after per 10,000 population aged under 18	54.1	38.4	24	29
Local	Children looked after - actual number	307	218	136	165

Comparative data for 08/09 for looked after children is not yet available.

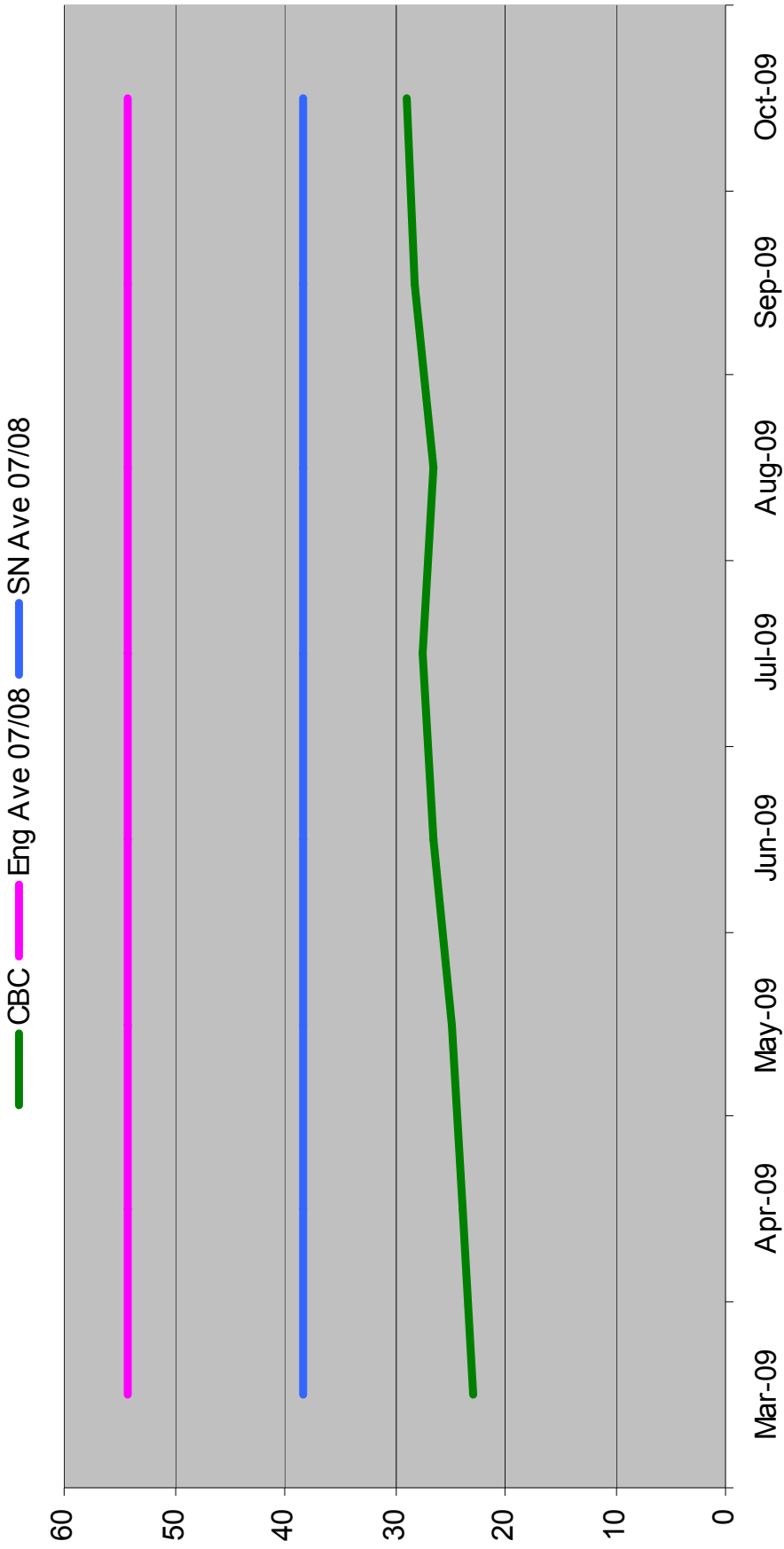
The "actual number" for England and Statistical Neighbour averages is based on the respective Rate per 10,000 calculated to reflect Central Bedfordshire's under 18 population.

The indicator reference CD08 is the new Ofsted designation for the former APA reference 2042SC.

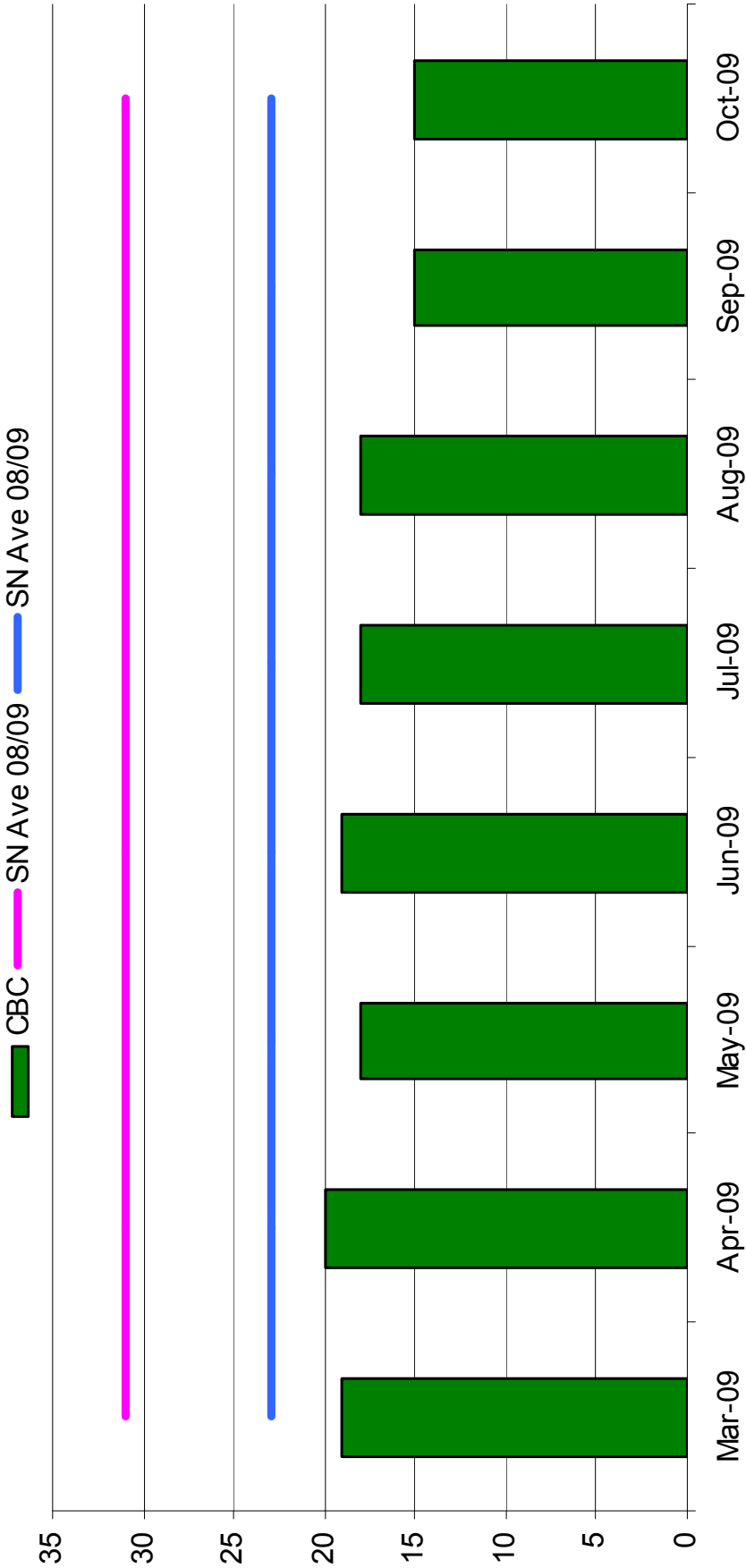




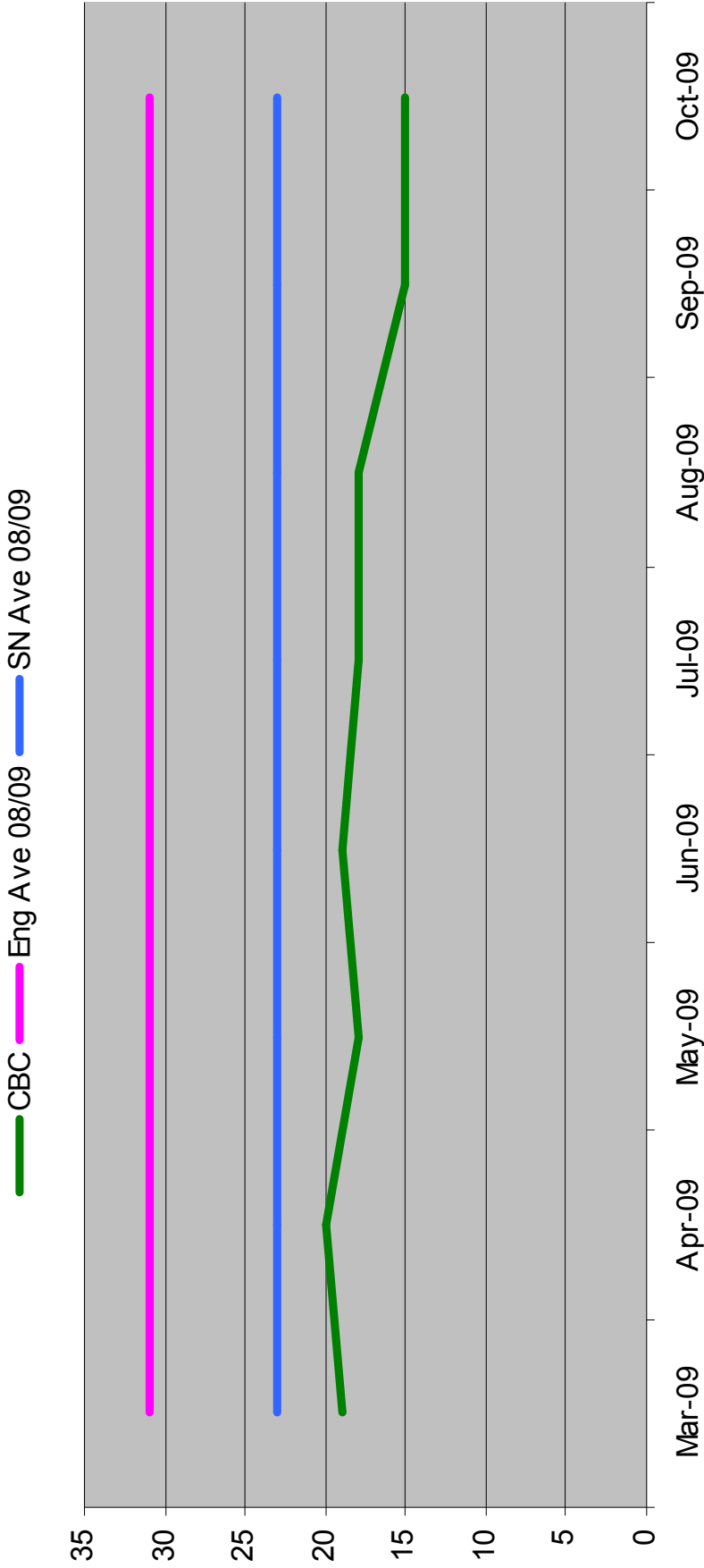
### Rate of Children Looked After per 10,000



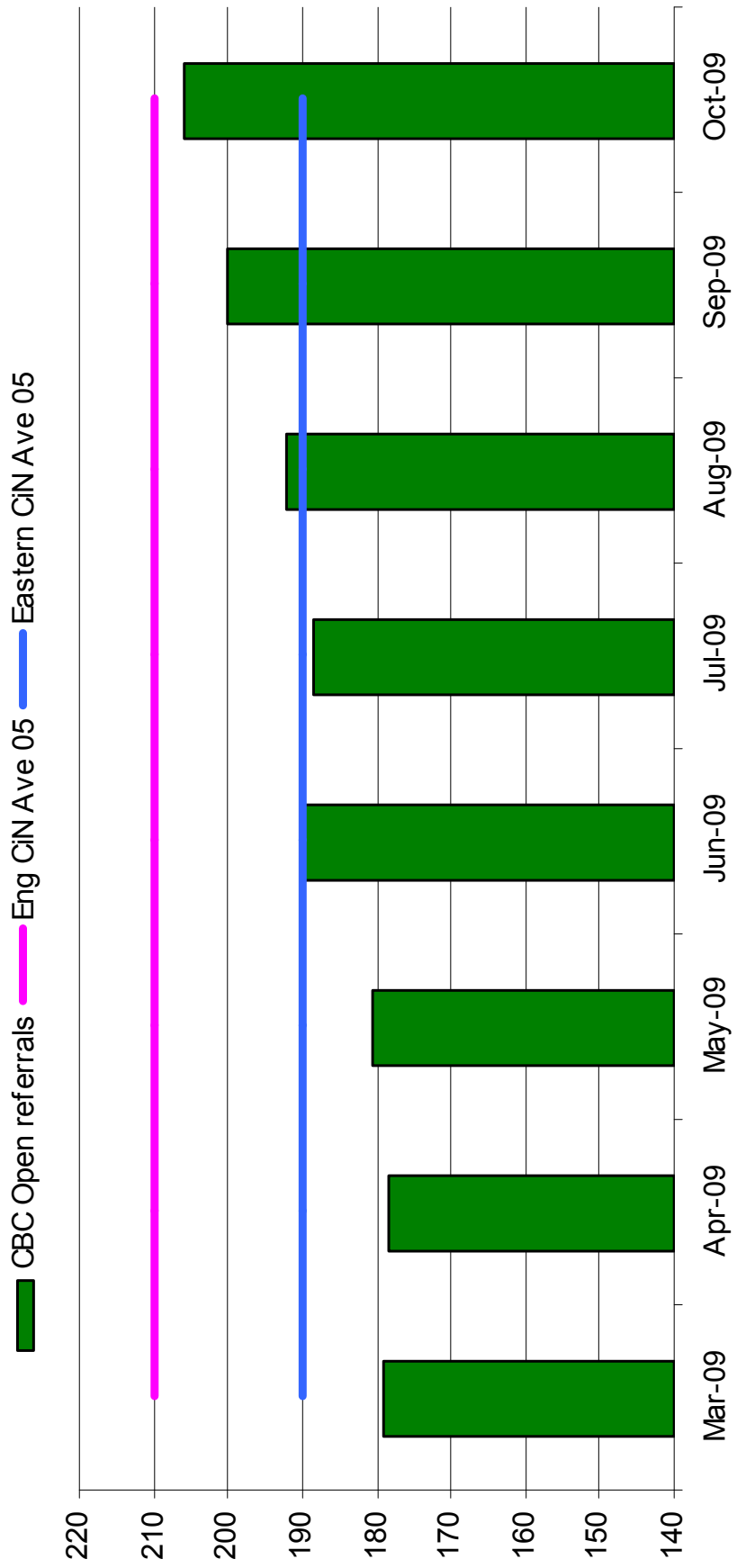
### Rate of children subject to a Child Protection Plan per 10,000



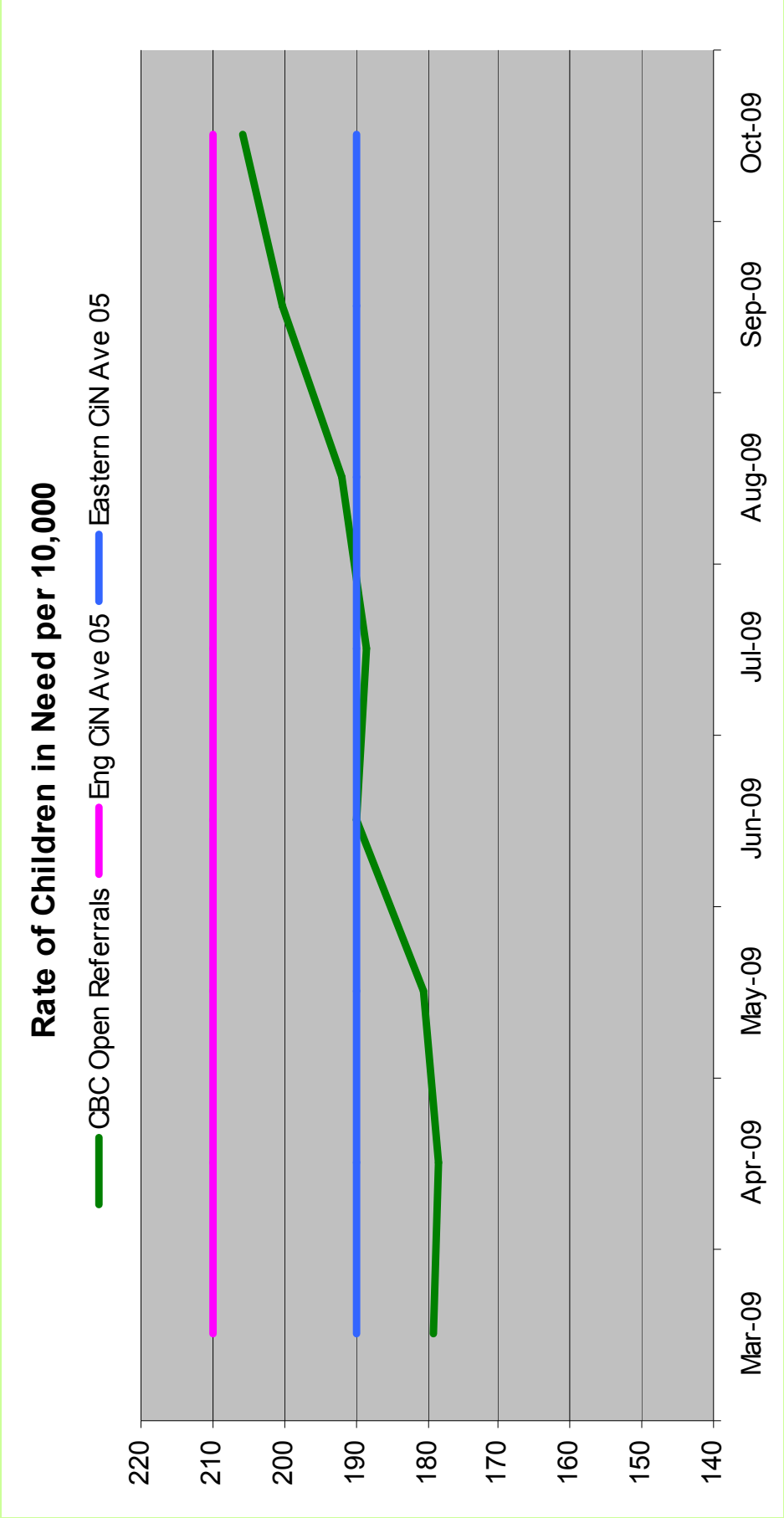
### Rate of children subject to a Child Protection Plan per 10,000



### Rate of Children in Need per 10,000



The England and Eastern Average figures are based on the 2005 CiN census which is the latest available information.  
Criteria for inclusion in the 2005 Children in Need census is subtly different from current open referrals.  
The definition of the 2009/10 census should be consistent with Open referrals.



The England and Eastern Average figures are based on the 2005 CiN census which is the latest available information.  
Criteria for inclusion in the 2005 Children in Need census is subtly different from current open referrals.  
The definition of the 2009/10 census should be consistent with Open referrals.

# Partnerships & Plans

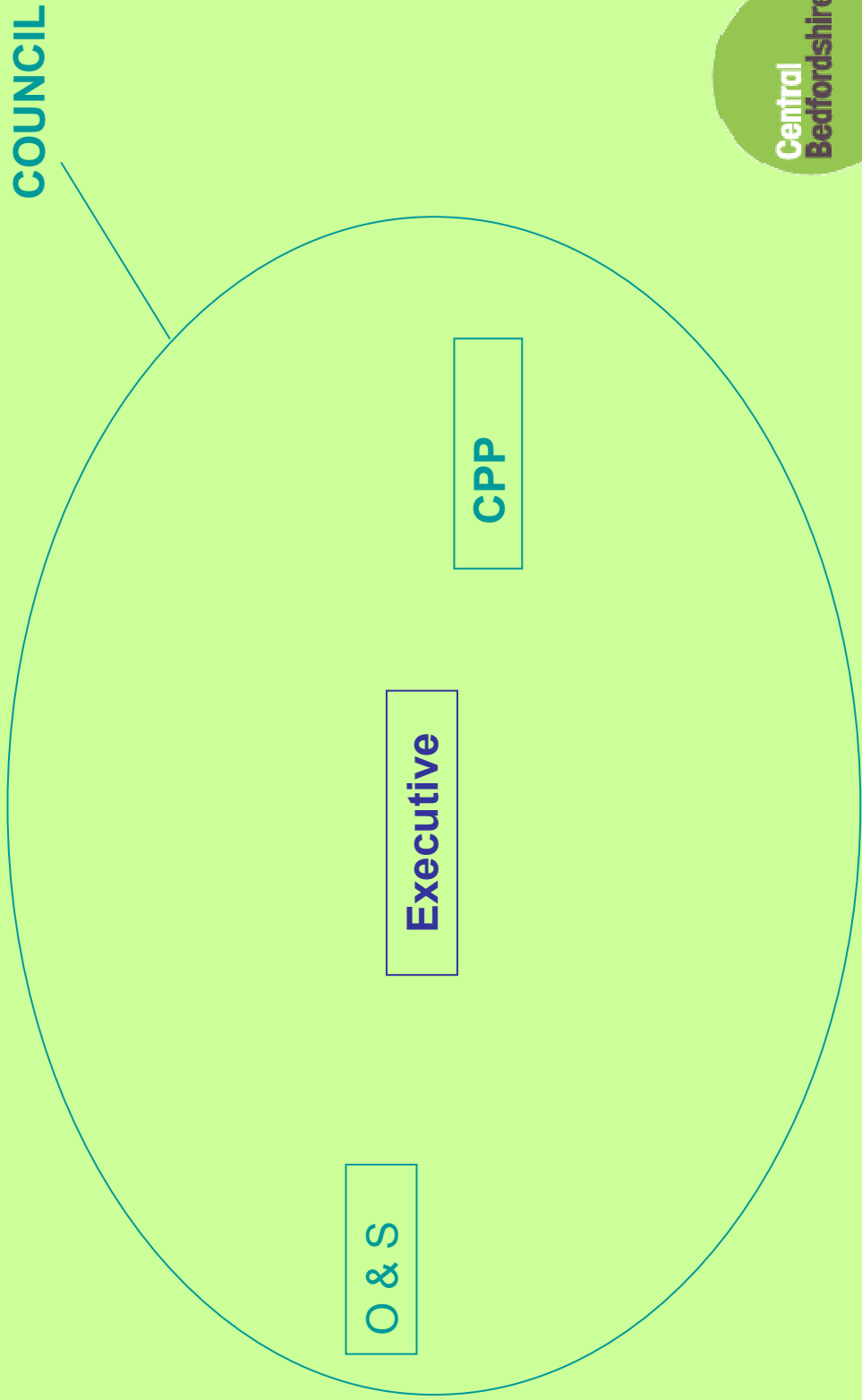
- **Children's Trust** – statutory partnership to develop local strategy, focus on priorities ensure effective joint working & commissioning
- **CYPP** – joint strategy setting out what Children's Trust partners will do to improve children's well-being in their area.
- **JSNA** – Assessment of demographic and other needs related information to inform local planning and commissioning

# Local Safeguarding Children Board

“The LSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.”

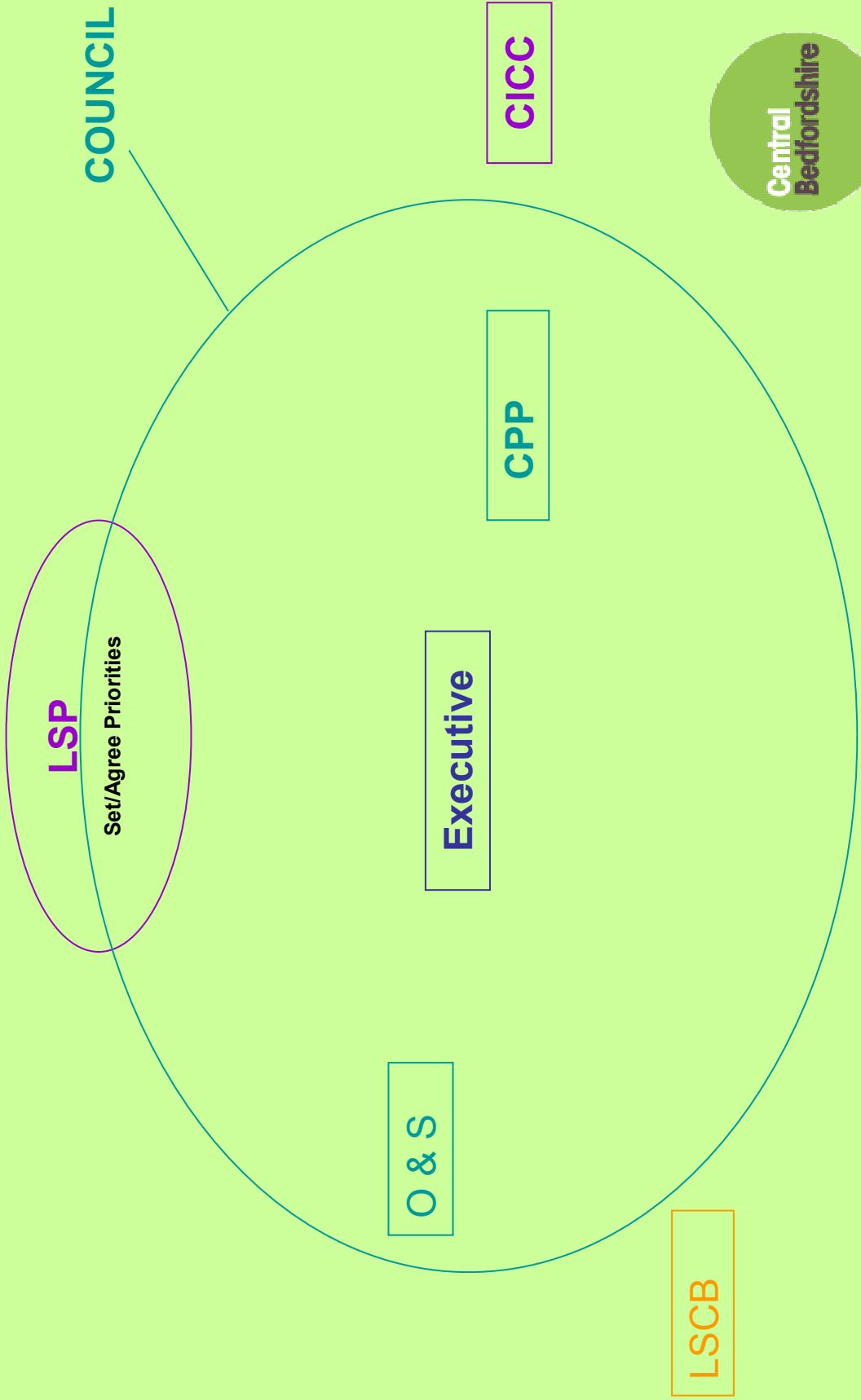
**Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006)**

# Children's Performance Matrix Relationships

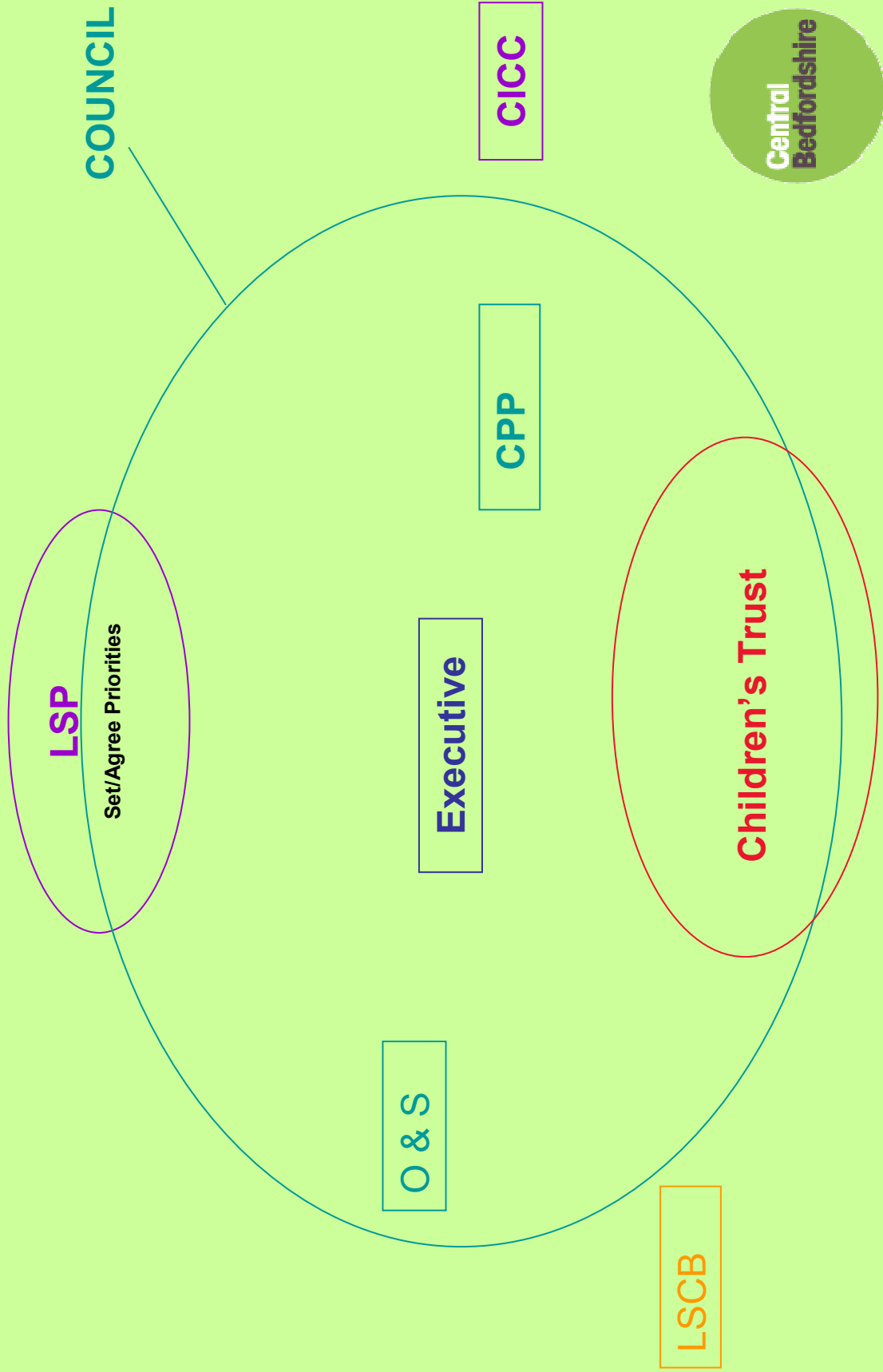




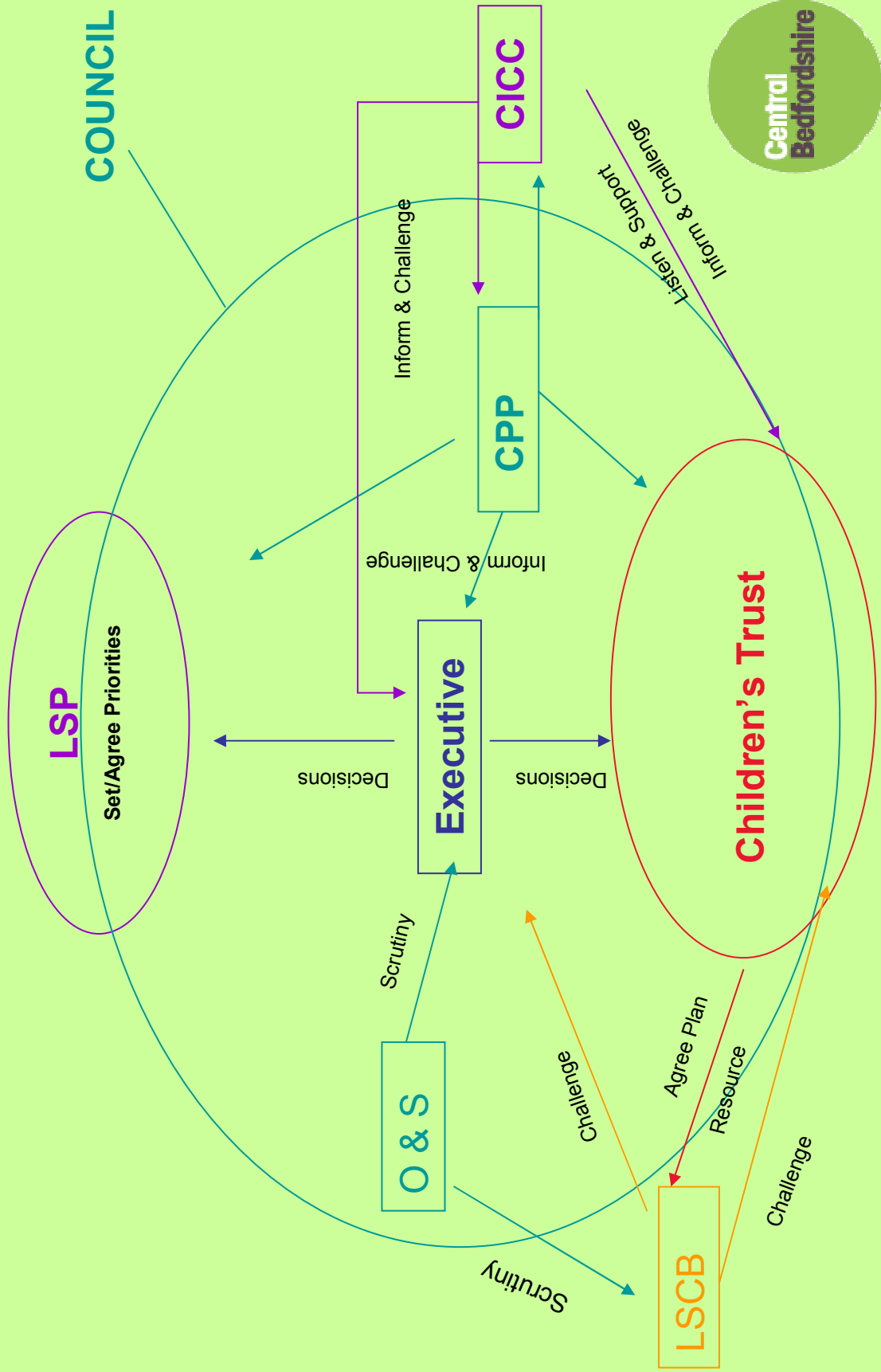
# Children's Performance Matrix Relationships



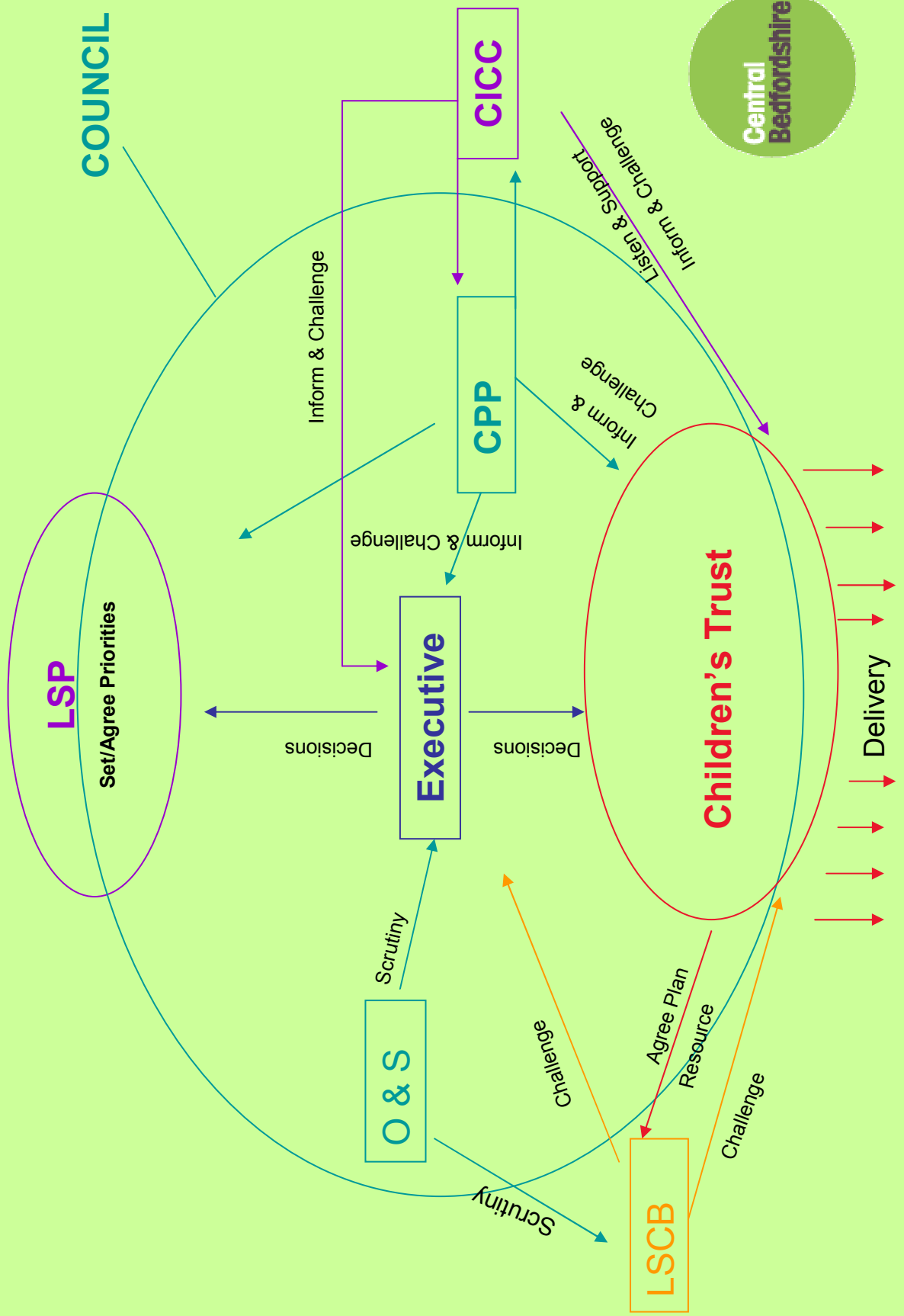
# Children's Performance Matrix Relationships



# Children's Performance Matrix Relationships



# Children's Performance Matrix Relationships



Having said all that.....



This page is intentionally left blank