

Central Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ



please ask for Bernard Carter

direct line 0300 300 4175

date 25 August 2011

NOTICE OF MEETING

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date & Time

Tuesday, 6 September 2011 10.00 a.m.

Venue at

Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford

Richard Carr
Chief Executive

To: The Chairman and Members of the CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

Cllrs Mrs D B Gurney (Chairman), N B Costin (Vice-Chairman), P N Aldis, Mrs S Clark, A L Dodwell, P Hollick, K Janes, D Jones, I A MacKilligan, R B Pepworth and A Shadbolt

[Named Substitutes:

D Bowater, P A Duckett, Mrs S A Goodchild, Ms C Maudlin and N J Sheppard]

Co-optees: Mrs Beattie (Parent Governor), Ms Copley (Parent Governor), Ms Image (Roman Catholic Diocese), Mr Landman (Parent Governor) and Mr Reynolds (Church of England Diocese)

All other Members of the Council - on request

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS MEETING

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence and notification of substitute members

2. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 26 July 2011 and to note actions taken since that meeting.

3. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members any declarations and the nature thereof in relation to:-

- (a) personal interests in any agenda item
- (b) personal and prejudicial interests in any agenda item
- (c) any political whip in relation to any agenda item.

4. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

To receive any announcements from the Chairman and any matters of communication.

5. **Petitions**

To receive petitions from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 2 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

6. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

To receive any questions, statements or deputations from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of part A4 of the Constitution.

7. **Call-In**

To consider any decision of the Executive referred to this Committee for review in accordance with Procedure Rule 10.10 of Part D2.

8. **Requested Items**

To consider any items referred to the Committee at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

Reports

Item	Subject	Page Nos.
9	<p>Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2010/11</p> <p>To consider the 2010/11 Annual Report from the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.</p>	* 11 - 60
10	<p>Review of Disabled Children's Services</p> <p>To consider a review of disabled children's services in Central Bedfordshire.</p>	* 61 - 70
11	<p>Allowances for Foster Parents</p> <p>To consider an options paper regarding the payment of allowances to foster parents.</p>	* 71 - 86
12	<p>Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers</p> <p>To consider a report on the transition to adulthood for care leavers.</p>	* 87 - 98
13	<p>Annual Report for the Adoption Service, Fostering Service and Private Fostering Provision</p> <p>To consider the annual reports for the Adoption Service, Fostering Service and Private Fostering Provision.</p>	* 99 - 158
14	<p>Revenue Budget Management Report Quarter ended 30 June 2011</p> <p>To consider the directorate's revenue budget management report for the first quarter of 2011/12.</p>	* 159 - 174
15	<p>Capital Budget Management Report Quarter ended 30 June 2011</p> <p>To consider the directorate's capital budget management report for the first quarter of 2011/12.</p>	* 175 - 186
16	<p>Work Programme 2011 - 2012 & Executive Forward Plan</p> <p>The report provides Members with details of the currently drafted Committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.</p>	* 187 - 206

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CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 26 July 2011

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs D B Gurney (Chairman)
Cllr N B Costin (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:	P N Aldis A L Dodwell P Hollick	Councillors:	K Janes I A MacKilligan R B Pepworth
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Parental Co-optees: S Beattie
H Copley

Church of England
Co-optee:
Roman Catholic
Co-optee:

Apologies for Absence:	Cllr	Mrs S Clark Mrs F Image D Landman J Reynolds
	Cllr	A Shadbolt

Substitutes: Cllrs D Bowater (In place of A Shadbolt)
N J Sheppard (In place of Mrs S Clark)

Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	D Jones	
		M A G Versallion	Executive Member for Children's Services

Officers in Attendance:	Mrs E Grant	Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services
	Mr P Storey	Committee Services Officer

Others in Attendance:	Mrs J Chipperton	Chairman of SACRE
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CS/11/22 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 June 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CS/11/23 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

None.

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

Councillor N Costin declared a personal, prejudicial interest in agenda item 10 – Quarter Four Performance report 2010/11 (minute 30 below refers) when reference was made to Barnfield College as he was the Chairman of the Governing Body. He left the room during discussion on that part of the item.

(c) **Any political whip in relation to any agenda item:-**

None.

CS/11/24 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

CS/11/25 **Petitions**

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part D2 of the Constitution.

CS/11/26 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

The Chairman confirmed that no questions, statements or deputations from members of the public had been received in accordance with Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

CS/11/27 **Call-In**

Members were advised that no decisions of the Executive had been referred to the Committee under the Call-in Procedures set out in Appendix "A" to Rule No. S18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

CS/11/28 **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.

CS/11/29 **Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)**

The Chairman of SACRE, Mrs Jane Chipperton, gave a presentation on SACRE, which was a statutory body advising the local authority on matters related to religious education (RE) and collective worship in community and voluntary controlled schools. There had only been a SACRE in Central Bedfordshire for approximately twelve months and it was one of only two SACREs in the country to work collaboratively with several local authorities.

Issues raised during the presentation were:

- RE had not been included as a core subject in the English Baccalaureate and there would be time pressures in trying to teach subjects which had not been included;
- SACRE would be writing to schools to remind them that RE was still a required subject and had to be taught in schools;
- 862 schools had failed to sit anyone for RE at GCSE level in 2011. The National Association of SACREs and RE teachers were trying to build up a national picture of the teaching of RE in schools;
- SACRE ensured that comparative religion was taught in community and voluntary controlled schools;
- SACRE considered that the agreed syllabus for schools was very good but that there was a need to stress the importance of RE in schools;
- RE had to be taught in academies in accordance with the funding programme.

In answer to a question, Mrs Chipperton stated that the number of core subjects in the English Baccalaureate had been limited in an attempt to drive up standards by reducing the number of subjects studied.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the presentation be noted.

CS/11/30 **Quarter Four Performance Report 2010/11**

The Executive Member for Children's Services presented his report, drawing attention to the financial pressures and changes in systems in Children's Services.

Issues raised following the report were:

- The marking of this year's Key Stage 2. The Director of Children's Services stated that this was a national issue. As yet, Key Stage 2 results were unvalidated and could not be published until November 2011;
- Academies could chose not to take Key Stage 2 and one in Central Bedfordshire had chosen not to do so, which would impact on the local authority's overall results;
- The school improvement strategy was now only to work with schools with amber and red ratings and action plans had been drawn up where required. Two schools were expected to be under close scrutiny;
- The Secretary of State would be raising the floor of the basic minimum level of achievement from the current 30% to 50% at GCSE by 2018 in an attempt to improve standards. It was stated, however, that educational attainment was only part of the service delivery of schools and that there were other skills taught in school, such as life skills;
- The Council's statistical neighbours were not considered directly comparable as they did not have areas of mass deprivation as in Dunstable and Houghton and were two tier rather than three tier, both of which skewed the comparators. It was considered, however, that some useful information might be obtained from statistical neighbours on how they addressed particular issues;
- The Council could now engage with local communities to help them develop the configuration of schools they wanted in their areas;

The Committee congratulated schools where performances had improved and noted that none of the schools judged by Ofsted to be outstanding during the year had suffered any slippage. The Director of Children's Services undertook to check and confirm this.

The Director of Children's Services also undertook to send Members a list of the Council's statistical neighbours for information and a copy of the letter written to parents of children in Dunstable and Houghton Regis schools by Councillor Versallion.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report and the quarter four performance be noted.

CS/11/31

Children's Services: The Future Role of the Council

The Executive Member for Children's Services introduced this item and the Director of Children's Services gave a presentation on the broad principles of the Government's Structural reforms for 5-18 Schools. This would allow schools to reconfigure themselves in the way most appropriate to their local community and would necessitate changes in the way schools ran themselves. The Government would be consulting on a national funding formula for schools.

Issues raised from the presentation were:

- Academies would be allowed to change their admissions under the proposals. Local authorities could take their own decisions to change school age ranges;
- One application had been received for a free school in Central Bedfordshire and the Council is able to broker with the school for the provision of services;
- It was hoped that some schools in Central Bedfordshire could be validated as teaching schools. One strong bid had not been validated but officers would work with the school to take this further in the next round of bids;
- It was very probable that many more schools would become academies over the next few years and the Council could broker deals to provide services for them and all types of school at varying charges.

It was noted that meetings were held between officers and head teachers three times a year plus meetings with school governing bodies.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

CS/11/32

Work Programme 2011 - 2012 & Executive Forward Plan

The Committee considered its current Work Programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan and made the following changes to the Work Programme:

- 18 October 2011 – Director’s briefing updating on school structures;
- 29 November 2011 – Quarter 1 2011/12 Performance Information and validated upper school results

Members would receive a scope for the review of disability provision at the meeting on 6 September 2011 and might wish to receive a report to a future meeting. The Deputy Executive Member for Children’s Services would be leading on this issue and would welcome input from Committee Members.

The Executive Member for Children’s Services requested Members to consider moving the meeting of the Committee later in the year, from 20 December to the afternoon of 15 December 2011. The Chairman asked that Committee Members be consulted on this request outside the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **That the Children’s Services OSC Work Programme be noted.**
2. **That Committee members be consulted on the request to move a meeting of the Committee from 20 December to 15 December 2011.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.50 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated

Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 6 September 2011
Subject: Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2010/2011

Report of: Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services

Summary: The Annual Report of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board sets out the activity and interventions carried out by the Council and its partners to secure children's safety and manage their circumstances in a safe and effective manner where they are deemed to be at risk of, or likely risk of, harm.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards are required to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child protection in their local area. The Report is considered by the Children's Trust. The Report recognises achievements and the progress that has been made against the Business Plan for the Board and demonstrates the extent to which the functions of the LSCB as set out in national guidance "Working Together 2010" are being effectively discharged.

Contact Officer: Catherine Parry, Interim Assistant Director Children's Services Operations
Public/Exempt: Public
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The Annual Report supports Priority 2 of Central Bedfordshire's Strategic Plan 2009-2011, Educating, Protecting and Providing Opportunities for Children and Young People. The report also supports the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan Priority 2, Protecting children and keeping them safe.

Financial:

The provision of services is funded through core budgets by individual partner agencies. Key statutory agencies contribute towards an annual budget to facilitate the work of a business support team for the Central Bedfordshire and the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Boards.

Legal:

The Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board to co-ordinate and monitor safeguarding and child protection activity in their area.

Risk Management:

There are no new risk management implications arising from the Annual Report. Reputational and child protection and safeguarding risks would arise if Central Bedfordshire Council, in conjunction with partner agencies, did not ensure that robust arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of harm and that the effectiveness of multi agency arrangements was not appropriately monitored, reviewed and responded to by the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None.

Equalities/Human Rights:

Adherence to Human Rights and Equality issues is maintained.

Community Safety:

There are no new community safety issues arising from the Report.

Sustainability:

There are no new sustainability implications arising from the Report.

RECOMMENDATION:

that the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the Annual Report 2010/2011 of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (Appendix 1)

Background Information

1. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children requires effective co-ordination. The Children Act 2004 requires each Council to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) as a statutory mechanism for agreeing how relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. The core functions of the LSCB are set out in regulation and are informed by guidance known as "Working Together 2010".
2. The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 introduced a requirement for Local Safeguarding Children Boards to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child protection in their local area.
3. Currently the Report goes to the Children's Trust. Recent recommendations from Professor Munro to the Government, which have not yet been implemented, suggest that in future, the Report will be submitted to named individuals, e.g. Chief Constable of the Police, the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council etc.

Outcomes

4. The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board works to ensure that children's protection remains a high priority for the council and its partners. The Annual Report 2010/2011 outlines the activity and interventions carried out by the Council and its partners to secure children's safety and manage their circumstances in a safe and effective manner.
5. Performance in relation to child protection key indicators has remained good throughout the year and is reviewed regularly by the Board.
6. The four strategic priorities of the Board for the last year have been achieved. The work of the Board has led to the identification of revised priorities for 2011/12 which have been agreed by the Board and are set out in the Business Plan of the Board for the year ahead.

Conclusions and Next Steps

7. The Committee is requested to comment on the Annual Report.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2010/2011

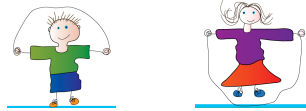
Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands

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Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2010 - 2011

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

Working together to safeguard children



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Preface

The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 introduced a requirement for Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child protection in the local area. The report should provide an assessment of the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, set against a comprehensive analysis of the local area child protection context. It should recognise achievements and the progress that has been made in the local authority area, as well as providing a realistic assessment of the challenges that still remain. (Working Together 2010, para 3.34)

The report should demonstrate the extent to which the functions of the LSCB as set out in Working Together are being effectively discharged. This should include assessments of policies and procedures to keep children safe, including:

- The policies and procedures for the safe recruitment of frontline staff.
- An assessment of single and interagency training on child protection and promoting the welfare of children to meet the local needs;
- Lessons learnt about the prevention of future child deaths which have been identified by the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)
- Progress on priority areas (e.g. child trafficking, sexual exploitation and domestic violence).

Annual reports should also include a clear account of progress that has been made in implementing action from Serious Case Reviews (SCR) completed during the year in question and plans to evaluate the impact of these actions and to monitor how these improvements are sustained over time. Where SCRs have been commissioned but not completed the annual report should note action already taken to learn lessons arising from the relevant cases. Common themes and recurring recommendations may be addressed together but the report must be clear on action taken in response to individual SCRs. The Child J SCR referred to in this report came to the attention of the Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board because of concerns relating to Child J up until the middle of 2009. The SCR was completed in April 2010 and discussed in the Board's 2009/10 Annual Review. Some parts of the action plan from that SCR continued to be implemented in the 2010-11 year and this is why it also features in this review. All recommendations from the SCR have now been addressed.

The report should provide robust challenge to the work of the Children's Trust Board in driving improvements in the child protection of children and young people and in promoting their welfare.

The Central Bedfordshire Children Board has been working hard to ensure that children's protection has remained a high priority for the council and its partners. This annual report outlines the activity and interventions carried out by the Council and its partners to secure children's safety and manage their circumstances in a safe and effective manner.

Introduction

In May 2011 the independent review of the child protection system in England concluded. While Government has yet to respond to Munro's 15 recommendations, Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (CBSCB) has already put in place a number of measures during the last year to strengthen the scrutiny aspect of its statutory function. The focus of the board is to deliver continuous improvement for the most vulnerable children and young people at risk.

Our four strategic priorities for the last year have been achieved and new systems across the partnership in Central Bedfordshire have focused on identifying and supporting children at risk of abuse or neglect. This has included a critical review of our multi agency referral arrangements, ensuring that every child has the right response at the right time and ensuring swift learning from our first Serious Case Review (CSR), Child J.

Our other objectives during the year included embedding our performance framework, focusing on outcomes for children and young people, exploring collaborative arrangements with other Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)'s, developing anti bullying strategies and developing a better understanding of the impact of domestic abuse.

All agencies are committed to making a difference to the lives of children and young people in Central Bedfordshire and will continue to build upon our foundations and achievements to date.

The CBSCB Annual Report emphasises the importance of the scrutiny role of LSCB's strengthened in recent recommendations from the independent Munro Review at national level.

The next year will require visible leadership and challenge from all members of the Board. I am grateful for the continued commitment from statutory and voluntary sector partners in Central Bedfordshire in their commitment to child protection improvements. We will report on progress again in September 2012.

Maggie Blyth, Independent Chair
Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

Living in Central Bedfordshire

Central Bedfordshire is home to approximately 252,900 people. Around 130,200 people (51.5% of the population) live in the larger towns with 37,000 in Leighton Linlade, 35,120 in Dunstable, 16,670 in Houghton Regis, 16,420 in Biggleswade, 13,370 in Flitwick and 11,620 in Sandy (figures based on Bedfordshire population model forecasts for 2009).

Around 62,000 children and young people between the ages of 0-19 live in Central Bedfordshire and by 2021 it is forecast that there will be about 2,000 more children aged under 16. The number of births in Central Bedfordshire has been around 3,000 for the last three years but has shown an increase between 2003 and 2008 in line with the national trend.

Age range of children and young people population in Central Bedfordshire, 2009

0 – 4	15,800
5 – 9	15,200
10 – 14	15,600
15 - 19	15,500

*ONS – estimates June 2009

Central Bedfordshire is generally an affluent area and many children and young people in the area enjoy a very good quality of life and have good prospects in relation to both their own future happiness and their contribution to their communities. National performance measures show almost all outcomes are in line with or above the averages for England or similar areas (Annual Children's Services Assessment 2010).

The health of these children and young people compares well with the East of England, and England as a whole. Improvements have been made to the provision of mental health services and more young people report that they have good relationships with friends and family than found nationally. The emotional and behavioural health of children in care is good. More children say they enjoy access to parks and play areas than is the case elsewhere. Levels of obesity among 5 and 11 year olds are low; however local data show that obesity rates are rising for the older group. The number of young women under the age of 18 who become pregnant is falling at a faster rate than nationally, although locally agreed targets for the last year were not met. Fewer 16 year olds reported that they had recently been drunk or taken drugs in 2010 than in 2009 (Annual Children's Services Assessment 2010).

Arrangements for keeping children and young people safe are almost always good and Ofsted inspections of childminders, schools, colleges and children's homes confirm this. The unannounced inspection of frontline child protection services in May 2010 identified a number of strengths in the arrangements for supporting families whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. Fewer young people report feeling bullied than elsewhere. The youth offending service performs well against the national indicators relating to first time offenders and re-offending rates.

Almost all child carers and nursery, primary and special schools are good at helping children and young people to do well and enjoy learning. However our upper schools and colleges are not as good, with a third judged to be only adequate. Children achieve the standard expected of them by the time they start school. However, whilst at lower school, fewer children make progress at the expected rate and results in national tests are not as good as those in similar areas. Examination results for 16 year olds are similar to the national picture but not as good as those in similar areas, with far fewer obtaining two or more high grades in science than elsewhere.

Those from low income families make good progress in upper schools, and by the age of 16 the gap between achievement and their peers is not as wide as elsewhere. However young people with special educational needs do not do as well in upper schools as similar groups nationally. Behaviour is usually good in upper schools and the number of pupils who are often absent from school is well below the national average.

Most young people receive good support in schools and colleges to gain the skills and qualifications needed for future jobs. The number achieving good qualifications at 19 years of age is in line with national figures although below similar areas, which means that not all young people of this age are doing as well as they could be. Not as many 19 year olds from low-income families in Central Bedfordshire gain the higher level 3 qualifications as those from similar areas, but there is good progress in the number gaining level 2 qualifications (Annual Children's Services Assessment 2010).

Although it is clear that most children and young people in Central Bedfordshire do well, we know that there is a significant minority of children and young people for whom outcomes are much worse than those of the rest.

In terms of overall deprivation, in 2007 none of the areas in Central Bedfordshire were in the top 20% most deprived in England. However, for some individual aspects of deprivation (such as education, crime and income) communities in Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Sandy do fall into the worst 10% nationally.

Central Bedfordshire has 12.1% of its children living in poverty. This statistic is based on the most up to date figures available from Her Majesty's Customs and Revenue (HMRC) and relates to the year 2008-2009. This figure masks some high levels of poverty within particular areas and the five areas with the highest levels of poverty are:

•Tithe Farm	31.4%
•Parkside	27.1%
•Manshead	25.6%
•Northfields	24.8%
•Houghton Hall	22.9%

There are smaller local areas which for statistical purposes are called local super output areas (LSOA). Those with the highest IDACI score (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index) are in the wards of Manshead, Tithe Farm, Houghton Hall, and Parkside and these are in the highest 10% of LSOAs in the East England and within the worst 20% in England.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a basket of indicators including employment levels, health and disability, education skills and training, housing issues, crime and disorder and the living environment. The most recent IMD shows that the highest levels of deprivation based on these indicators are in Parkside, Manshead, Tithe Farm, and Northfields.

Whilst there is clearly a concentration of poverty and deprivation across the areas within Dunstable and Houghton Regis there is no ward in Central Bedfordshire which does not have some child poverty and levels of deprivation. The isolating effect of being a child in poverty in an area of relative affluence should not be underestimated. Furthermore areas within Flitwick, Sandy and Leighton Buzzard also have pockets of deprivation and poverty.

Head teachers in Central Bedfordshire tell us that

"There is a clear impact on the emotional development of children who are living in a "stressful" environment e.g. a household with debt problems"

"Education is often a low priority at home for households in poverty"

"It can be very isolating to be poor in an area of relative affluence"

"Some children will not be accessing the full curriculum e.g, school trips, cost of transport to swimming pools, because parents cannot afford this and do not wish to draw attention to this, so children are kept off school "

"Poor children will often have lower self-esteem"

“Some children will be unable to participate in after school activities”

“Some poor children will have poor attendance due to health problems “

1. The Strategic Priorities for 2010 - 2011

The Strategic Priorities for Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board in 2010 -2011 were :

1. Domestic Violence. *To ensure that children and young people in contact with adults who perpetrate domestic abuse are protected*

The key areas of progress/achievements in relation to these priorities with evidence of improved outcomes are;

- Funding was made available by Government Office East towards a re-launch of the Safe and Sound Education packs. The Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership successfully launched its Safe and Sound Education packs at an event on the 9th March 2011. The pack is available in the form of a CD Rom and it can be used by Lower, Middle and Upper Schools to educate children and young people about healthy relationships.
- CBSCB has delivered three 1 day 'Impact of Domestic Abuse on the Child' courses in 2010/2011.
- CBSCB also promotes and assists with the applications for the MARAC training and the Domestic Abuse training via the Domestic Abuse Partnership.
- The Independent Chair will report annually to the Central Bedfordshire Children's Trust on the work of the CBSCB.

2. Sexual Abuse. *To ensure that children and young people are protected from sexual abuse and that agencies are able to recognise the dangers and risks presented by sexual perpetrators through an understanding of risk assessment procedures.*

The key areas of progress/achievements in relation to these priorities with evidence of improved outcomes are;

- Messages from the Child J SCR have been disseminated via all courses and specific seminars/workshops available to practitioners.
- A Jargon Busting tool has been developed and disseminated across the 3 LSCB's in Bedfordshire.
- The Protocol and Guidance "Working with Sexually Active Young People" has been revised and signed off by the CBSCB.
- The Protocol and Guidance "Working with Sexually Active Young People" has been adopted by Luton LSCB.
- An escalation procedure was developed and signed off by CBSCB in response to the findings in the Child J SCR that practitioners were slow to challenge each other's practice and decision making when child protection and the welfare of the children in the family were being considered.
- Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services Commissioning Team have completed a review of the processes used in cases where there is an adult sex offender and have introduced a revised system which ensures that all providers of risk assessments of these offenders are checked against the quality standards and checks set out in their Commissioning Procedures checklist. This includes relevant inspection reports, Professional registration, References and CRB/Form F/Insurance and liability. Additionally mandatory guidance is issued to Independent Psychologists conducting assessments on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council. The guidance sets out the required procedures and format for assessments undertaken on behalf of the council. As a result of this SCR the Department for Education have issued new guidance to all Directors of Children's Services.

3. E Safety and Anti Bullying. *To ensure that children and young people consider themselves safe and the risk of harm in relation to bullying is reduced. To empower children and young people to responsibly use communication and Information technologies and to equip parents, carers and organisations with information to fulfil their child protection responsibilities.*

The key areas of progress/achievements in relation to these priorities with evidence of improved outcomes are;

- Central Bedfordshire Council's Anti Bullying Strategy has been agreed and adopted by Stay Safe delivery group in July 2010.
- The strategy was published in 2010.
- Central Bedfordshire Council have conducted an e-Safety briefing where every school apart from 3 attended.
- Central Bedfordshire Council has provided schools with "e-Safeguarding: Creating Working Procedures in Schools" document available as an online activity on the National Education Network (NEN) website. This document is a result of work created by the e-Learning team and further developed by colleagues from the National Education Network. The flash activity will remember where you are in the process and give you helpful pointers to extra resources you might want or need to use in ensuring your school has e-Safety implemented.
- E-Safeguarding materials developed include model Acceptable Use Policies for schools to develop/implement, now adopted and developed by National Education Network (NEN) as an online tool to advise and assist schools in implementing e-Safety/e-Security policies.
- All but three schools attended briefing sessions (as above) to keep e-Safeguarding a high priority and to refer schools to the National Education Network.
- Central Bedfordshire Council have launched e-Safety working procedures and have developed and promoted e-Safety materials via NEN/ Acceptable Use Policies.
- Cyber mentoring successfully launched and implemented in eight Central Bedfordshire schools from Middle and Upper covering the four Central Bedfordshire areas. Approximately 200 students trained as Cyber Mentors. Funding is available for four more schools to take part in the Cyber Mentor programme. A Mini Mentor programme will start in January/February which will include KS1 and 2.

4. Creation of Effective LSCB. *To ensure that arrangements are in place to create a new co-ordinated and effective LSCB.*

The key areas of progress/achievements in relation to these priorities with evidence of improved outcomes are;

- CBSCB members agreed and signed of a constitution in June 2010.
- CBSCB members signed off the Business Plan in June 2010.
- Development and ongoing maintenance of a dedicated LSCB website.
- Members of the Central Bedfordshire Children's Trust Board have been provided with a copy of the Annual Report of the previous Bedfordshire LSCB for information.
- The first recommendation from the Child J SCR was that the Central Bedfordshire Council should engage with schools in a review of how it enables and supports head teachers to ensure that there is appropriate representation at all Section 17 (Child in Need) and Section 47 (Child in Need of Protection) meetings. Central Bedfordshire Council has included this issue in half day courses for Designated Persons and through twilight training sessions.
- The second recommendation involves Central Bedfordshire Council placing an expectation on head teachers that if, due to unforeseen and exceptional circumstances, a school is unable to attend a Section 17 or Section 47 meeting, it should make a written submission. Again, this issue is being included in half day courses for Designated Persons and through twilight training sessions. Many schools already ensure that they attend all Child in Need/Child in Need of Protection meetings and if due to unforeseen and exceptional reasons they are unable to do so, make a written submission. Further discussions will be initiated to ensure that school representation at meetings is maintained during school holiday periods. The above will be part of a briefing for all Head teachers at meetings in October.

The 7 objectives set out below support the implementation of the four core priorities :

1. To promote child protection for children in Central Bedfordshire

- All agencies completed their s11 self evaluation in Nov 2009.
- All those agencies that self assessed as being less effective in any of the Section 11 standards presented their updated Action Plans in March 2011.

2. To continue to develop the CBSCB functions and arrangements in line with the LSCB's extended role

- The Lay Member recruitment process is being discussed at Strategic Board level.

3. To ensure that a comprehensive, set of multi-agency policies, practice and guidance is available to all staff working with children across Central Bedfordshire.

- The Interagency child protection procedures have been reviewed & amended to reflect the updated Working Together 2010 guidance - http://www.proceduresonline.com/bedford_scb/
- The Interagency child protection procedures have been revised in partnership with Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire LSCB's to enable consistent child protection procedures across LA boundaries for practitioners.
- All the following documents have been agreed and signed off by CBSCB in 2010/2011:
 - Bedford Borough & Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's Protocol and Guidance: Working with sexually active young people.
 - Bedford Borough & Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's Procedures for managing allegations and concerns regarding staff, carers and volunteers working with children and young people.
 - Bedford Borough & Central Bedfordshire Private fostering procedure revised.
 - Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton Safeguarding Children Board's, Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership & Luton Community Safety Partnership Information Sharing Protocol.
 - Resolution of professional disagreements relating to the child protection of children & the escalation of professional concerns.
 - Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire & Luton Safeguarding Children Boards Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation.
 - Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton Safeguarding Children Board's Jargon Buster – Sexual Abuse of Children and Young People.
 - Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton Safeguarding Children Board's Multi-agency Protocol on Forced Marriage.
 - East of England Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Safeguarding Protocol.
 - Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton Safeguarding Children Board's protocol for working with vulnerable families where one or both parents have mental health problems.
 - Bedford Borough & Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's Safeguarding Children abused through Domestic Abuse.

- Existing local protocols in key practice and procedure areas are under review to adopt single protocols across three LSCB areas.
- Local protocols have been developed on all key issues of concern as specified (*WT Para 3.14*).
- All approved protocols are disseminated across local distribution networks.

4. To further develop the agreed performance framework to measure and report on safeguarding improvement.

- Performance Management Information and a framework have been agreed with partners and are in place.
- A comprehensive annual audit programme is in place with excellent engagement from partners.
- Audits have been undertaken in respect of the following recommendations from the Child J SCR ;
 - a) The LSCBs should, conduct a multi agency audit of the decision making process and current threshold for convening Child Protection Conferences, using senior personnel from the key statutory agencies. A sample of recent decisions should be examined and a threshold which is acceptable to all agencies should be agreed.
 - b) The LSCBs should conduct a multi-agency audit to establish the extent to which written agreements with parents or carers are being used and whether the agreements are adequately contributing to keeping children safe. The audit should consider whether the agreements are workable, clearly expressed, are being adequately monitored and whether the limitation of such agreements and their enforceability are understood by all involved.
 - c) There is evidence that Strategy Discussions under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 have been inappropriately held over the telephone rather than this being the exception, that they often lack key agency representation and that they frequently fail to involve managers from each agency. The LSCBs should write to constituent agencies and stress the importance of these meetings and/or discussions being conducted in accordance with “Working Together to Safeguard Children” and the recommendations in the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report. A multi-agency audit should be conducted six months from the publication of this report to monitor compliance.

5. To ensure the effectiveness and quality of the multi agency child protection training in order to improve outcomes for children.

- Dissemination of ‘CASPER’ alerts from the NSPCC via LSCB networks.
- An up to date Training Pathway is available on the Safeguarding Children Board Website and has been reviewed in light of the changes to Working Together 2010.
- Regular reports are presented to the Training Commissioning Group and the Training Development and Implementation Group which analyses evidence gained from training evaluation forms.
- A process exists to identify and respond to training needs identified by any of the CBSCB sub groups and this is a regular agenda item for the Training Commissioning Group.
- The Validation Panel has continued through the year and acts as a means of quality assurance for all child protection training. This is an ongoing process and is monitored by the SCB Training and Development Commissioning Manager and Training and Development officer.

6. To ensure that Serious Case Reviews are initiated appropriately and are timely, of good quality, and deliver maximum learning for all agencies.

- The SCR re Child J received a Good evaluation from Ofsted and there have been no new SCR's since October 2009.
- An SCR briefing event was held on the 21 September 2010 to over 300 staff. This was accompanied by written case summaries being made available to all agencies to disseminate to their staff. Lessons learnt locally and nationally are woven into all the training delivered by the LSCB's where appropriate.
- The LSCB Training team have been working on impactful training resources.
- IMR Authors Training was delivered in November 2010 to assist authors in learning the lessons from SCR's here in Bedfordshire and Luton.

7. To ensure safer recruitment practices across all agencies working with children in Central Bedfordshire

- Central Bedfordshire Children's Workforce Development Strategy 2010–2013 was launched in February 2010. The Strategy was presented to the Joint Steering Group in March.
- Progress against the objectives has been considered at the Joint Steering Group and movement has been made in most areas, although some further work will be required in the area of training as this is reviewed during 2011/12. A greater integration between Luton and Bedford Borough training functions with Central Bedfordshire is under development.
- Board members received progress reports at every Strategic Board and a final review of the Business Plan 2010/11 has informed decisions around priorities for 2011/12. The objectives themselves will continue to be significant features of child protection activity and will continue to be picked up in audits and management reviews.

Remaining challenges and issues for the CBSCB to address in 2011/12.

- To ensure a comprehensive dissemination of newly approved local protocols, procedures and practice guidance across Central Bedfordshire where collaboration with neighbouring authorities is required as new legislation and guidance is produced.
- To continue to ensure that the impact of child protection training is effective across the partnership.
- To develop a suite of training materials following the Child J SCR.
- To continue to secure and enhance the engagement of all partner agencies in the allegations management procedures.
- To continue to align local protocols to reflect locality practice.
- To develop the involvement of families, children and young people in the work of the CBSCB.
- To ensure relevant issues are addressed in relation to unannounced inspection of the frontline child protection and assessment services and the pending announced inspection.
- To address any implications for the CBSCB and its partners following the Government's response to the recommendations of the Munro report.
- To secure the Recruitment of a new Independent Chair following the resignation of the current chair, Maggie Blyth, on 9 June 2011.

2. Governance and accountability arrangements

2.1 In June 2010 the Strategic Board agreed and signed off the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's Constitution which covers the function, governance, accountability and membership of the Board.

2.2 The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board is the decision making body for multi agency child protection activities within Central Bedfordshire. The work of the CBSCB fits within the wider context of all Children's Trust aims to improve the wellbeing of children in Central Bedfordshire in respect of the Every Child Matters Outcomes 2010/11.

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Wellbeing

2.3 The functions of the CBSCB are to generate more effective arrangements throughout Central Bedfordshire in:

- Protecting children and young people from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's and young people's health or development;
- Ensuring that children and young people are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Enabling children and young people to have optimum life chances on entering adulthood successfully, particularly in terms of staying safe; and
- Ensuring that lessons are learned from episodes including when a child or young person dies, or suffers serious harm, where maltreatment is considered to have been a contributory factor.
- Undertaking that role to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

2.4 The CBSCB carried out its functions this year by continuing to develop policies and procedures for child protection and promoting the welfare of children in the authority. This included considering the need for other local protocols for child protection and promoting the welfare of children in Central Bedfordshire in accordance with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2010) paragraph 3.26, and policies and procedures in relation to the following:

- The action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;
- Training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
- Recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;
- Investigation of allegations concerning persons working with children;
- Safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered; and
- Co-operation with neighbouring children's services authorities and their Board partners.

2.5 CBSCB communicated throughout 2010/2011 to persons and bodies in Central Bedfordshire the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done, and encouraging them to do so through training and providing literature and guidance.

2.6 The CBSCB was formally consulted as part of the development and review of the Children and Young People's Plan for 2011-2014.

2.7 The CBSCB is chaired by Maggie Blyth, Independent Chair, who is accountable to the Children's Services Authority via the Director of Children's Services for the effectiveness of the work of the Safeguarding Children Board. The Performance of the Independent Chair has been reviewed by the Director of Children Services for Central Bedfordshire Council. The Independent Chair is a member of

Central Bedfordshire's Children's Trust Board.

2.8 Each agency has designated particular named people as their CBSCB Strategic Board member(s) to ensure consistency and continuity in the membership of CBSCB Strategic Board. Members of CBSCB Strategic Board and named deputies have a strategic role within their agency in relation to child protection and promoting the welfare of children. They have the authority and experience within their agency to enable them to provide resources, commit their agency on matters of policy and practice, and hold their agency to account.

2.9 During 2010/11 the Independent Chair met with the Chief Executive for Central Bedfordshire Council, the Director of Children's Services for Central Bedfordshire Council and the Lead Member for Children Services in Central Bedfordshire Council to provide an independent perspective on child protection across the partnership. She also provided input into a session for members on the child protection system in January 2011.

2.10 The Director of Children's Services for Central Bedfordshire Council and the Lead Member for Children Services in Central Bedfordshire Council are both members of the CBSCB Strategic Board and are fully engaged on the Board and its work.

2.11 The CBSCB is funded by the following agencies;

Bedford Borough Council	Central Bedfordshire Council	NHS Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire Police	Bedfordshire Probation	CAFCASS	Total
25.09% £55000	25.09% £55000	33.55% £73,549	12.15% £26,634	3.82% £8,378	0.30% £550	£219,111

3. Monitoring and evaluation/quality assurance activity

3.1 The **Strategic Board** in carrying out its functions has over the last year :-

- Has overseen the governance arrangements of CBSCB;
- Set the strategic direction for CBSCB, taking account of developments in national policy, practice and legislation through the Department for Education;
- Ratified and adopted the Annual Business Plan;
- Ratified the Annual Performance targets for the Joint Steering Group and Sub Groups;
- Set the Annual Budget;
- Ratified the Business Plan and ensured its performance;
- Overseen the work of the Executive Serious Case Review Standing Panel and Child Death Overview Panel;
- Ensured that the planning and commissioning arrangements for all partner agencies takes into account child protection and the promotion of children's welfare;
- Ratified any amendments to the CBSCB Interagency Child Protection Procedures;
- Maintained links with relevant local partnerships in order to embed child protection procedures and principles within their constitution, policies and delivery plans;
- Reported to the Central Bedfordshire Children's Trust Board in relation to its performance.

3.2 The **Joint Steering Group** in carrying out its functions has over the last year :-

- Prepared, monitored and reviewed the annual budget and business plan for consideration by the Strategic Board;
- Prepared the Annual Report for consideration by the Strategic Board;
- Commissioned ad hoc task and finish groups to advance the objectives of the CBSCB Business Plan and to appoint Chairs for such groups and determine their terms of reference and timescales;
- Requested and received reports from sub groups;

- Approved policies and procedures;
- Responded to Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) Consultations.
- Developed a schedule of reports in respect of the child protection activity of partner agencies during 2011. To date the following agencies have presented their reports;
 - Bedfordshire Community Health Service
 - SEPT
 - Elective Home Education from Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council
 - Private Fostering (shared service)
 - Bedfordshire Youth Offending Service (shared service)

3.3 The **Joint Performance Management and Audit Group** in carrying out its functions has over the last year :-

- Developed and implemented an audit plan;
- Responded to the recommendations from the Child J SCR;
- Agreed a Performance Information Framework;
- Worked towards populating and analysing performance information reporting;
- Undertaken Case File Audits;
- Developed the lessons learnt from the case file audits.

3.4 The **Joint Executive Serious Case Review Panel** in carrying out its functions has over the last year:

- Made available on the LSCB's website the Executive Summary setting out the key findings of the Child J SCR;
- Closely monitored the action plan arising from the findings of the review so that the CBSCB is able to demonstrate that all of the recommendations have been implemented by April 2011.
- Ensured that member agencies can show that the implementation of recommendations has made services more effective and improved outcomes for children.
- Demonstrated through Single and Multi-agency audits that action plans have been implemented. However, these will be reviewed by the Board during 2011 to consider their effectiveness and to evaluate whether these action plans have made a difference.
- Shared a recommendation with the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit, set up by the previous Government. Their work plan has now been absorbed by the Department for Education.

3.5 The **Joint Policy and Procedures Group** in carrying out its functions has over the last year :-

- Revised or developed all documents this year taking into account legislative requirements and guidance concerning child protection.
- Incorporated into policy and guidance all lessons learned from SCRs.
- Ensured that CBSCB is working closely with Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board and Luton Safeguarding Children Board in developing specific cross agency/border processes.
- Continued to be responsible for identifying when policies require renewing and ensuring policies and procedures are kept up to date.
- Signed off policies, disseminated them via the Joint Steering Group and shared with the Strategic Board.

Please see section 1.5 above for further information about the work this group has achieved this year.

3.6 The **Joint Training Commissioning Group** in carrying out its functions has over the last year:

- Redrafted the Training Strategy to address the priorities of the CBSCB.
- Implemented and planning further relevant training in light of SCR and CDOP.
- Monitored the quality and robustness of systems to ensure consistent quality training via reports

from the Training Commissioning Manager.

- Ensured that the LSCB programme can evidence through the evaluation process that all agencies attending the courses and who work with children and young people are made fully aware of their child protection requirements.
- Continued to raise the profile of child protection across Central Bedfordshire through the courses and programmes.
- Ensured through the Training Commissioning Manager, who works closely with the Central Bedfordshire Workforce Development Group, that the workforce receives adequate training to enable all to be pro-active with regard to child protection.
- Ensured agencies contribute to the LSCB training fund according to individual need.
- Received reports from the Training and Development Commissioning Manager on the development, delivery and quality of the LSCB training programme.
- Commissioned training based on need and evidence of its effectiveness.
- Ensured national and local developments are incorporated into the training remit.
- Reported back to CBSCB on spend and outcomes achieved.

3.7 The **Joint Training & Development and Implementation Group** in carrying out its functions has over the last year:

- Developed and delivered a training programme in partnership with the Training Commissioning Group based on national requirements and local needs, including findings from Serious Case Reviews, internal reviews, local audits, new policies and any complaints that may inform the programme
- Continued to link the LSCB training provision with single agency child protection/safeguarding training provision and identified any opportunities for increasing interagency training.
- Ensured the provision of high quality multi-agency training and staff development opportunities.
- Included national and local statistics in the training programme.
- Continued to identify and support members who join/remain in the training pool.
- Received reports from the Training Officer and Training Commissioning Manager at each meeting about the development and delivery of the new programme.
- Monitored the quality of training provision working in partnership with the Training Delivery Officer and Training Commissioning Manager at the Validation panels.
- Regularly reported to the Training Commissioning Group on training needs, provision and quality via the Training Commissioning Manager.
- Developed and supported a pool of facilitators in the delivery of the local inter-agency practice groups.
- Obtained regular updates from pool trainer members.

3.8 The **Child Death Overview Panel**.

- The statutory Child Death Overview Process (CDOP) is now well established. The aim of this process is to review all child deaths between 0-18 years with a particular focus on unexpected child deaths. The process aims to identify themes and public health messages to prevent similar deaths in the future and to ensure that there are no child protection issues and that the case does not fit the criteria for a Serious Case review. The panel meets on a regular basis with meetings being very well attended by a range of professionals from all agencies, including health, social care, public health and the police.
- The Rapid Response/Information Sharing meeting that is required to take place following the unexpected death of a child has become embedded in the process and usually takes place within 48 hours of the death being notified to CDOP. The manager for CDOP coordinates this meeting ensuring that all practitioners involved with the child and family attend.
- The purpose of the meeting is to share information about what led to the child's death, to ensure there are no child protection concerns for other children in the family and to establish who will support the family following the death.

- During the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011 a total of 63 child deaths were reported to the Bedfordshire and Luton Child Death Overview Panel. This is a decrease of just over 11% on the previous year's figures. 14 of the deaths were of children living in Central Bedfordshire. This represents a decrease of 12.5% on last year's figures. Further detailed analysis of the data will be available in the Annual Report for 2010-2011.
- The Bedfordshire and Luton Child Death Overview Panel have met seven times in the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011. On each occasion the panel has been quorate. In addition there have been 2 further meetings with the neonatal and midwifery teams at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital to discuss the large number of neonatal deaths reported.
- In total the CDOP panel have reviewed and closed 69 cases, some of which are from the previous year's cases. Six of the fourteen cases reported in Central Bedfordshire during 2010-2011 have been reviewed and closed, as well as six outstanding cases from 2009-2010 and one case from 2008-2009.
- The panel has to consider if they have identified any factors which may have contributed to the death of the child and which, by means of locally or nationally achievable interventions, could be modified to reduce the risk of future child deaths. Some identifiable factors have included maternal smoking, raised maternal BMI, drug misuse and consanguinity. Further detailed analysis will be available in the annual report.
- The CDOP Terms of Reference and Procedures have been reviewed and are available on the Safeguarding Children Board's website. Funding has been agreed across the county from local authorities and NHS Commissioners to fund the CDOP process for 2011-2012. The annual report will be presented to Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board during the latter part of 2011.

4. Priorities for 2011 – 2012

The following have been identified as the priorities for the CBSCB for 2011 – 2012

4.1 The Impact of the Munro Review on LSCB's role and function:

- The seven Core Business Objectives are likely to remain relevant; however a sharper focus on child protection activity is required following on from the findings of the final Munro review of May 2011.

4.2 The impact of the Local Government Finance Settlement on the provision of early intervention services

- *'I recommend proper co-ordination of the machinery of government to put Early Intervention at the heart of departmental strategies, including those seeking to raise educational achievement and employability, improve social mobility, reduce crime, support parents and improve mental and physical health.'* Graham Allan, January 2011 Report on Early Intervention.
- Any focus on improvements to the child protection system in Central Bedfordshire should be aligned to continued investment in early intervention services where financial settlements can allow.

4.3 The rise in the number of children subject to child protection plans

- Nationally the ADCS has noted a 33% rise in children subject of Child Protection Plans across respondent authorities equivalent to an all England increase of approximately 9,200 children. The impact on those professionals involved in child protection functions in attending statutory child protection meetings alone equates to additional hours per case, without accounting for the

necessary travel time, writing reports or completing casework recording or child protection work with the child and family.

- Locally in Central Bedfordshire there has been a significant increase in the number of child protection plans, showing an increase in the past year of 58.4%.

4.4 The impact of Educational Reforms outlined in the *The Importance of Teaching: Schools White Paper 2010*.

- The movement towards academies as the main delivery mechanism for schools will have clear implications for the way in which the CBSCB relates to the schools sector and there will be a vital role in maintaining a focus on, and accountability for, child protection in partnership with schools.

4.5 The impact of the NHS White Paper, *Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS*

- Nationally LSCB's have had common issues concerning:
 - The development of SARC's for the improved handling of sexual abuse allegation.
 - Succession planning and provision of Child Protection Medicals.
 - The maintenance of children's child protection services within the changing NHS structures.
 - The impact of future arrangements on child protection systems and the future of designated staffing and duties.

4.6 The Impact of the Changes within the Youth Justice System

- The full implication for changes to the Youth Justice Board are still to be understood completely, but along with the overall changes in the justice system: *Breaking the cycle: effective punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing of offenders Green Paper 2010* and changes to the care planning regulations for children in care and the ongoing impact of the Southwark Judgment, there will be a continuing need to consider the child protection of older adolescents. This will require close co-operation with Bedfordshire Police and Bedfordshire Probation.

4.7 Proposed areas of focus for 2011 -2012:

- To improve the effectiveness of Child Protection interventions, analysing carefully the reasons why increasing numbers of children have become subject to child protection plans and looking at ways to prevent this.
- To develop stronger relationships between the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and local schools.
- To review the requirements for child protection in Health and make clear recommendations for the maintenance of child protection during a period of transition.
- To promote the child protection of older adolescents who may be vulnerable to crime, homelessness or sexual exploitation.
- To incorporate the lessons from SCR Child J, namely the identification of sexual offending and liaison between adult criminal justice services and children' social care in relation to work with sex offenders. With the extension of Sarah's Law in Bedfordshire since August 2010 and the outcome of the current pilot on Domestic Violence Prevention Orders in other police areas, CBSCB should ensure that strategic links between adult and child protection are strengthened

4.8 Links with the Central Bedfordshire Children's Trust:

- Central Bedfordshire Children's Trust has identified CBSCB as the lead for the following priority and objectives which will be added to the CBSCB Business plan for 2011–2012:

Protecting children and keeping them safe:

- Protect children and young people from harm by providing a co-ordinated and effective child protection process.
- Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people.

Central Bedfordshire Council – Children’s Social Care

In April 2010 a single Safeguarding Children Board was established in Central Bedfordshire, with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of multi- agency child protection work. The new arrangements create a clear relationship between the Strategic Board, the Children’s Trust and the Council, leading to local accountability and leadership.

The Business Support Team arrangements hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council provide an infrastructure for both the Safeguarding Boards of Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire and have promoted consistency of practice and work to ensure efficient use of the resources of all partners. In addition, greater collaboration with Luton Safeguarding Children Board has been developed throughout the year. In particular there has been an increase in shared training events and an options appraisal of the potential for amalgamating the training functions of the three LSCB’s during 2011/12.

Through the Stay Safe Delivery Group of the Children’s Trust overseen by the Safeguarding Board, work to address the priorities within the Central Bedfordshire Children’s Plan 2009/10 has been progressed. These have included:

- a review and implementation of a revised CAF process development and Social Care referral form;
- implementation of an anti-bullying strategy;
- developing good practice in relation to the children’s workforce in relation to anti-bullying;
- alignment between the anti-bullying strategy and other associated strategies;
- development of LSCB training in relation to domestic abuse;
- publication of revised LSCB domestic abuse procedures and information sharing protocols;
- the launch of a revised education pack for delivery in schools in respect of domestic abuse;
- embedding MARAC processes across agencies;

Children’s Services Operations

Appendix 2 sets out the outturns for child protection for the period 01/04/09 to 31/03/11 in Central Bedfordshire. Alongside this data are the latest available national and statistical neighbour comparisons for the period ending 31/03/10.

Percentage figures for Central Bedfordshire for the period 01/04/10 to 31/03/11 identify:

- 35.4% increase in the number of contacts to social care
- 18.7% increase in the conversion rate: contacts to referrals
- 60.7% increase in the number of referrals to social care
- 27.5% increase in Section 47 enquiries started
- 32.3% increase in initial assessments undertaken
- 26.7% increase in core assessments undertaken
- 35.0% increase in children who were the subject of a child protection conference
- 0.5% increase in children subject to a child protection plan at period ends (31/03/10 & 31/03/11)
- 7.4% increase in the numbers of looked after children at period ends (31/03/10 & 31/03/11)
- 17.5% decrease in the number of children starting to be looked after.

In many areas of statutory activity in relation to Children in Need and Children in Need of Protection there has been a marked increase in activity and hence demand on service provision within Children’s Services Operations and their partner agencies.

There has been a rise in the number of contacts to Children’s Services Operations during the year and since April 2010 there continues to be an upward shift in the conversion rate of contacts to referrals, which is a result of the application of revised thresholds indicative of improved working practices.

However the rate of increase has stabilised in certain areas during the year since April 2010 as revised thresholds have become embedded and understood by practitioners and managers. For example, the number of children subject to a child protection plans has reached a plateau. This would be anticipated following a period of adjustment in thresholds for child protection conferences. As a result the number of children becoming looked after, following an initial rise in activity, is also stabilising.

Table 1 sets out the increase changes nationally in child protection work.

Table 1 National Change in Activity	Increase Year Ending 31/03/08 to 31/03/09	Increase Year Ending 31/03/08 to 31/03/10	Increase between Two Years Ending 31/03/08 and 31/03/10
Referrals	1.6%	10.4%	12.1%
Section 47 enquiries	9.5%	4.3%	14.2%
Initial Assessments	9.1%	13.3%	23.6%
Initial Child Protection Conferences	1.0%	5.9%	6.9%
Child Protection Plans	16.8%	14.7%	33.9%
Children Looked After	1.6%	4.5%	6.2%

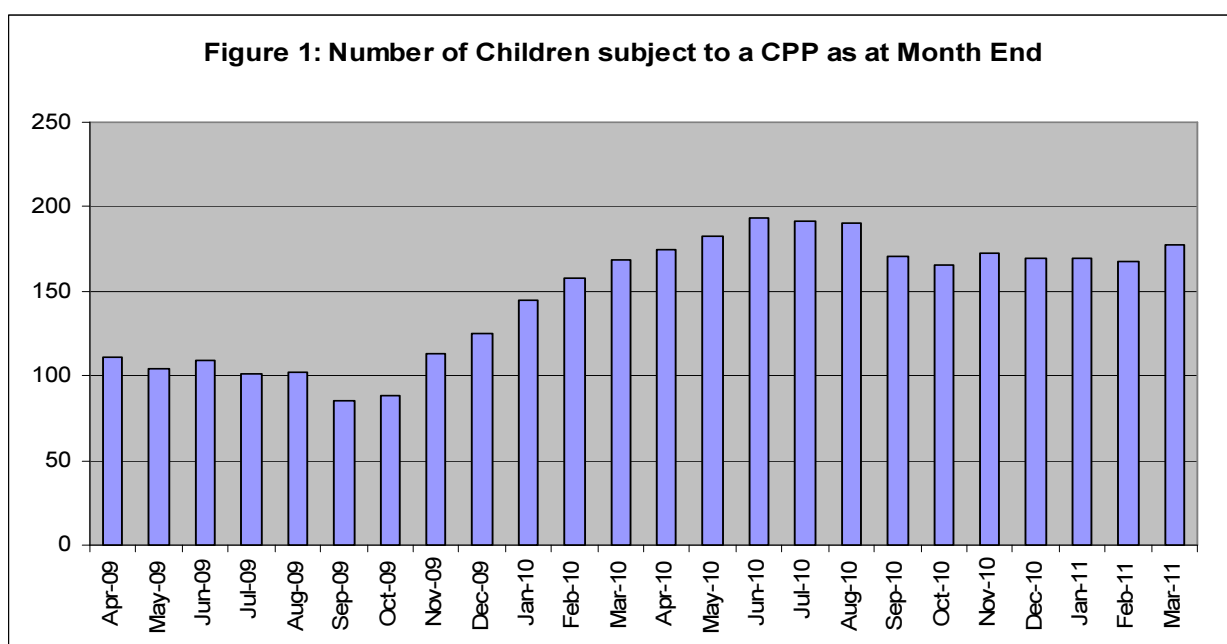
Source: DFE Statistical Publications (Children in Need / CPR3)

Child Protection Activity

The number of children subject to child protection plans at the end of March 2011 in Central Bedfordshire was 178 children (31 per 10,000 of the population under 18); these figures peaked at 191 in July 2010. This compares with the national average for 2009/10 of 32 children per 10,000 (latest figures available) and our statistical neighbour average of 27 per 10,000.

During 2009/10 159 children were made the subject of a child protection plan compared to 208 children during 2010/2011.

Figure 1 illustrates the change month on month of children subject to a child protection plan. Figure 2 illustrates the category of child protection plan for children subject to a child protection plan at the end of March 2011.



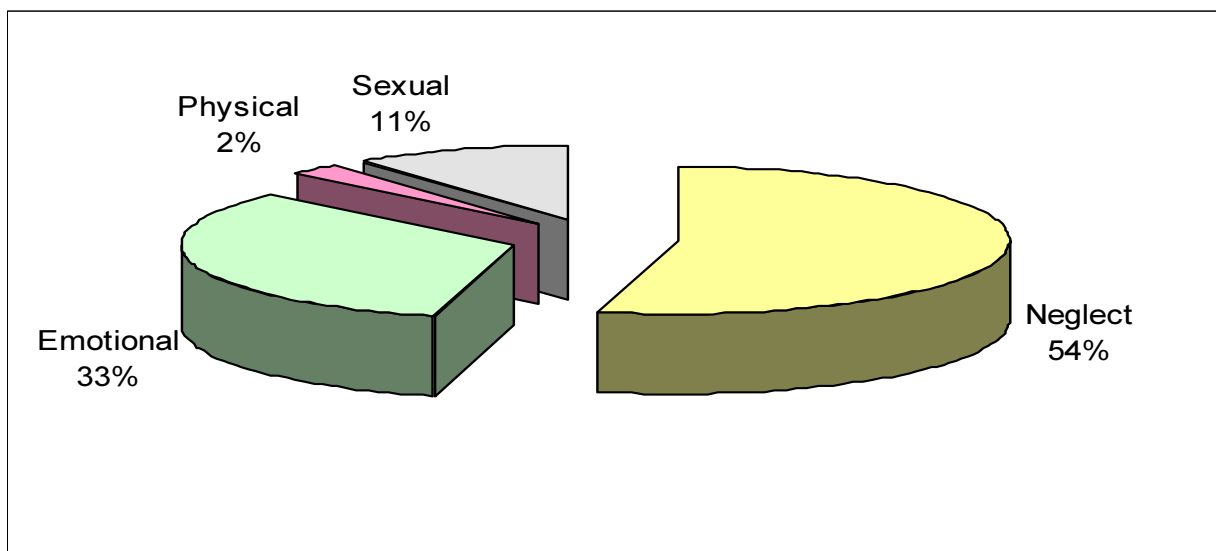


Figure 2: Percentage of children subject to a CPP at 31/03/11 by category of abuse

Overall figures for the number of children subject to a child protection plan and those becoming the subject of a plan indicate that the rise experienced during the first year of the new Council has begun to stabilise and reflect the revision of thresholds for child protection cases which has evolved over the last two years. However this has been a challenge, requiring significant additional resources both within the Council and for partner agencies.

All children subject to a child protection plan have had their reviews held within timescale since 01/04/10. All children subject to a child protection plan have a qualified social worker allocated to their case.

Child Protective Activities - Developments in response to the Unannounced Inspection 2010

The annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements in March 2010 resulted in areas of good practice being highlighted. No priority actions were required but some areas for development were identified. For Children's Services Operations, requirements to improve recording and record management practices are being actively pursued. A review of the children's recording system ICS is currently underway and a project plan is in place to implement electronic social care records.

For the authority, in conjunction with its partners, improvements in the use of the Common Assessment Framework to promote better outcomes for children and work to improve consistency in the quality of referrals were identified. The Common Assessment Framework and its delivery have been refreshed with good engagement from partner agencies significantly impacting upon the information received by Children's Services Operations as a referral, and the de-escalation of cases back to the community.

A revised Social Care Referral form was launched in September 2011 and has been well received by partners.

A further unannounced inspection took place in March 2011, the results of which are awaited at the time of writing this report.

Significant monitoring of activity and performance in relation to referrals, section 47 enquiries and child protection conferences is undertaken within Children's Services Operations in order to ensure compliance and quality monitoring of child protection work. These include:

- Regular case supervision by managers. This has been a focus of qualitative audits within the service over the last six months along with monitoring the use of chronologies, genograms and recording the voice of the child. Improvements in practice have been noted in these four areas.

- Quality Assurance processes including monthly meetings between Review Managers who chair child protection conferences and team managers
- Monitoring forms completed by Review Managers following every child protection conference to identify specific case issues, concerns and good practice to social workers and their managers.
- Bi monthly audit of cases by all managers from the Director of Children's Services to Team Managers.
- Qualitative audits undertaken by a dedicated Audit Manager.
- Transfer and Closure audits undertaken on all open case files by frontline managers, supervisors and the receiving team.

A refreshed Quality Assurance Strategy for Children's Services Operations was adopted in April 2011.

A wide range of additional child protection activities are undertaken by practitioners and managers within Children's Services Operations which include:

- Representation at multi agency Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences for victims of domestic abuse, meetings on a monthly basis to co-ordinate responses and interventions across agencies in relation to victims of domestic abuse and their children;
- Attendance at Operational and Strategic Multi Agency Public Protection meetings;
- Multi agency interventions in relation to those children and young people who are persistently missing from home and /or care.
- Arrangement to safeguard the needs of children who are privately fostered.
- Attendance at Child Death Overview Panels.

LSCB Training

The LSCB Training Function has delivered over 60 days of face to face multi agency training to over 900 delegates from CBSCB partner agencies and voluntary organisations in the last year.

The LSCB Training Function is the sole provider of multi agency child protection training in Central Bedfordshire. The Training function has recently begun to conduct Follow Up telephone evaluation with delegates at 6-8 weeks after attending a 1 day 'Domestic Violence and the Impact on the Child' LSCB training course and early indications are that this course has a positive impact on worker knowledge and skills and indirectly the children and young people they are working with.

Comments at 6 weeks after course date included a sustained and improved awareness of:

young people's offending behaviour
the need to offer improved support in school
Help to identify areas for support to children

Comments made at the end of the course by delegates attending this course and our other courses regularly highlight the ways in which our training has helped them to develop their child protection knowledge. This method of Evaluation will be rolled out across all courses over the coming two years.

Child protection policy and priorities in the CYPP – Tri-annual MARAC Multi Agency Awareness Briefings for all staff and volunteers co-ordinated and hosted by the CBSCB and to continue into 2011-12. CBSCB delivered four multi agency 1 day 'Domestic Violence and the Impact on the Child' courses, to continue into 2011-12. CBSCB hosted and co-ordinated two ½ day multi agency Briefing events as part of learning the lessons from the Serious Case Review of Child J; two further ½ day Briefings planned for June 2011 (Grooming of professionals and Offender management themes).

Child protection in schools - Whole school training package for delivery to CBC schools validated by CBSCB in February 2011; Designated Personnel training package used with CBC school staff validated by CBSCB in February 2011.

Safer workforce - CBSCB delivered three multi agency 1 day 'Safer Recruitment for Managers' courses to continue into 2011-12.

Domestic Abuse/Adult Mental Health/Learning Difficulties & Disabilities/Drugs & Alcohol - CBSCB has delivered three 1 day 'Impact of Domestic Abuse on the Child' courses. CBSCB will be delivering four 2 day 'Impact of Parental Illness on Parenting Capacity' courses during 2011-12. CBSCB has a ½ day awareness course on Parental Substance misuse in **development** for 2011-12. CBSCB has a one day course 'Safeguarding Children with Disabilities' **course** in development.

Private fostering - Awareness materials and resources are presented by the Fostering Manager on all two day Safeguarding Children and Inter Agency Working courses.

Engagement of the wider community in child protection, e.g. VCS, faith groups - 157 days of training have been delivered to the Voluntary and Faith sector at no charge. Some delegates have attended more than one course. This involvement is set to continue for 2011-12.

Planning is at an early stage to consider the ways in which Looked After Children who are care leavers and parents/carers of children with disabilities may become involved in course planning, development and delivery.

Bedfordshire Probation

In 2009, Bedfordshire Probation Trust was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. Some areas for improvement were identified in relation to child protection as a result of which actions were included in an improvement plan implemented during 2010/11. All relevant actions have now been completed. These included having named child protection leads within each of our Local Delivery Units - the Bedford/Central Bedfordshire Local Delivery Unit lead represents the Trust on the LSCB steering group, acts as a link back to the LDU and is the first point of contact if there are child protection issues that require escalation.

The Trust also produced a 'Core Brief' for Probation staff on 7 Key Principles in child protection. These are:

1. Share information
2. Escalate concerns
3. Take responsibility
4. Think child
5. Make accurate records
6. Consult
7. Use guidance.

The brief makes specific reference to the importance of Probation staff considering the impact of parental behaviour such as substance misuse and domestic abuse on children. The key principles will frame our auditing of child protection practices going forward. Bedfordshire Probation Trust has continued to ensure that staff receive an appropriate level of child protection training, including refresher training.

Bedfordshire Police

During the past year, Bedfordshire Police have appointed Assistant Chief Constable Andrew Richer as lead for Safeguarding. Mr Richer now chairs a Force Child and Young People's Strategic Group that is responsible for coordinating and providing strategic direction for all services provided by Bedfordshire Police to Children and Young People.

A Children and Young People Tactical Group chaired by Detective Superintendent Nigel Stone is responsible for the implementation of decisions made at the Strategic Group.

The success of this group has been to coordinate the work carried out by Safer Neighbourhood Policing Teams and the work carried out by the Public Protection Unit.

2010/11 SUCCESSES

A business case was approved by both the Chief Constable and the Police Authority for an increase in fourteen staff for the Public Protection Unit. These additional staff included four Sergeants. The additional staff have been placed in the child and domestic abuse teams, the sex offender management team, rape investigation and two Constables have formed a new team targeting Honour Based Abuse.

The sex offender management team workloads have now come down to the national average, the rape investigation team has been restructured and aligned to the Safeguarding Teams and the service provided to victims of HBA is seen as Best practice Nationally. Bedfordshire Police have taken out more Forced Marriage Protection Orders than any other Force, even more than the large Metropolitan Forces.

One case was heard by Sir Nicholas Wall (President of the Family court) at the Royal Courts of Justice in London. He commended the approach taken by Bedfordshire Police and stated that the case should be seen as a model for others to follow.

During the summer of 2010 a business plan was approved by the Force Executive for the expansion of the Missing Person Team. The team has now grown from two police constables to a Sergeant and six police constables (in addition to the extra fourteen officers). This has bolstered our ability to deal in a timely fashion with all children and young people who go missing. The team has reduced the number of children and young people going missing by over 30%.

WORK FOR 2011/12

The major issue to be dealt with by Bedfordshire Police is to maintain or improve services over the next four years whilst reducing the budget by 20%. The Force is currently in the process of restructuring.

The Public Protection Unit will lose 25 officers. However, twenty posts will be civilianised, resulting in a loss of five posts. The main area of work affected by this loss of staff numbers is in Domestic Abuse. There will a change of process for Domestic Abuse where work traditionally undertaken by the Public Protection Unit will be undertaken by First Response Officers and Safer Neighbourhood Policing Officers. This means that Bedfordshire Police will see a reduction of 20% in our budget but the work of the Public Protection unit will remain largely untouched. The loss of officers and the introduction of civilian support staff will in fact provide the Public Protection Unit with the opportunity to further professionalise and enhance the services provided.

Appendix 5

Bedfordshire Community Health Service

Bedfordshire Community Health Service (BCHS) provides a range of community health services. These include adult and children's community nursing; intermediate care; therapies; dentistry; drug and alcohol services; nursing services within HMP Bedford and community bedded units in Biggleswade and Bedford. These services are provided to the populations of the unitary authorities of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) & Bedford Borough Council (BBC). Some of the service provision also includes Luton.

The year April 2010-2011 has been an extremely active period with focus on organisational change and national targets. This has resulted in a number of competing priorities. BCHS has continued to place a high priority on child protection and it is embedded throughout the organisation at all levels via a robust governance structure, reporting and audit. This will continue during the period of transition to our new acquirer.

BCHS has refreshed its public declaration of its commitment to child protection, giving BCHS Board assurance that it has robust systems in place to protect and promote the welfare of children. (Compliance with David Nicholson letter June 2009).

BCHS Safeguarding Children Policy and Guidance has been reviewed following publication of revised Working Together 2010.

BCHS Safeguarding Training Strategy and Training Matrix reflects BCHS mandatory training requirements, in line with Inter Collegiate Document 2010. Work is currently being undertaken to assess and monitor appropriate level of competencies as indicated in the former document.

Current training data reflects that;

97% of staff completed level 1
58% of staff completed level 2
72% of staff completed level 3/4

BCHS has a clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on child protection. BCHS has a designated team of safeguarding professionals, including a designated Looked after Children's Nurse. BCHS safeguarding children and vulnerable adult professionals work alongside each other at an operational level, with leadership from Head of Service, reporting to the Lead Nurse and BCHS Committee via a combined governance group. This governance structure affords sharing of good practice and lessons learnt to inform and influence daily practice.

BCHS works in collaboration with the local authorities in management of pathways to facilitate access to appropriate health care and statutory health assessments for Looked After Children. This service is currently under review as part of a multi agency forum to ensure compliance with statutory guidance, Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked after Children 2009.

Last year's Intensive Support Visit from the SHA highlighted a concern with respect to a lack of information in place for LAC, resulting in a recommendation to check compliance with statutory guidance.

The recent review has identified a number of issues which need to be addressed to ensure full compliance with the statutory recommendations and this service has been given high priority and is being managed through the implementation of a multi agency action plan.

BCHS 0-19 Team service is now fully aligned to geographical areas, affording increased partnership working across disciplines and agencies via Children's Centres. This service has a focus of early

intervention and prevention, with the provision providing universal services and progressive intervention, by taking the lead on implementing the Healthy Child Programme.

Locality Managers and Team Leads are now established posts, which have firmed up monitoring of child protection activities, support and development of frontline professionals. Professionals from this service are required to have a higher knowledge and competence based skills with respect to child protection.

BCHS continues to participate in multi agency child protection forums/conferences, including Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) with respect to management of high risk domestic abuse incidents. BCHS uses information provided by Bedfordshire's Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) to influence practice. For example, this year BCHS has supported CDOP action with respect to identified risk of babies/young children's sleeping positions in car seats, by ensuring that all new parents are made aware of the potential risk and steps they should take to mitigate this risk.

During the course of the year BCHS has acknowledged that areas of development are required with respect to quality of referrals and reports as part of child protection processes. Work in progress is training on the use of chronologies to identify needs/risk and inform referrals and reports.

As a result of internal audit and serious case review recommendations, BCHS has implemented a new safeguarding supervision model. This model challenges 'fixed thinking' using the principles of a 'fresh pair of eyes' and 'playing devil's advocate'. The model has been implemented within the 0-19 Team Service, as a pilot, to be audited with a plan to role out to other BCHS children's service teams.

The BCHS audit programme has included audits with respect to growth monitoring and 0-19 Team support staff process/documentation. These audits have resulted in firming up the process and recording of work undertaken by support staff within these teams, ensuring that they are better informed about the families that they are working with. A review of the policy/guidance on growth monitoring is currently being undertaken to support staff to ensure accurate recording and analysis to inform referrals and reports. These practice based issues are important elements to inform child protection processes and focus on outcomes for children.

Conclusion

The above report gives a brief account of BCHS commitment and activities to ensure that the focus of promoting the welfare and protection of children remains high on the agenda and reflects that BCHS continues to provide a quality of service which strives to improve outcomes for children & young people.

The Voluntary Organisations for Children, young people & families

VOCyfp has a good relationship with the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. The sector benefits from free of charge training which has continued again in 2010–2011 indicating the commitment of Central Bedfordshire and their statutory partners in supporting the sector to fully engage in the child protection agenda and sustain the high level of professionalism in the sector. This has been heralded as a model of good practice in the region and the sector would like to formally thank partners for their support.

The sector has been actively promoting the E learning package. This package is suitable for the wide range of organisations that make up the voluntary sector, from the faith and community groups who need a basic introduction to child protection through to the larger commissioned agencies who use it as part of their induction process.

This year the VOCyfp Officer has attended a number of the LSCB sub groups, sat on the Training Validation Panel and promoted all the LSCB training opportunities and protocols through the website.

Case study - This year VOCyfp joined forces with Community Voluntary Service Mid and North Beds to run a **Fit 4 Safeguarding** pilot. These taster sessions were aimed at grassroots and faith groups who work with children and young people and/or vulnerable adults. Participants had to complete the LSCB E learning foundation module as an entry requirement and worked through the Safe Network (Children England and NSPCC) resource pack during the sessions, highlighting practical ways of making sure child protection policy and procedure are understood by all in their project.

The **Fit 4 Safeguarding** sessions were attended by 31 groups from across Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire, 26 of them working with children and young people. The evaluations were positive and constructive. Many of the groups already have a policy and a named person, but struggle to find a way to make this easily accessible to staff, volunteers and others. In addition, seven groups attended a further taster session for black and minority ethnic groups.

In 2011, the VOCyfp plans to promote the Safe Network national safeguarding standards to groups across Bedfordshire. The VOCyfp Officer has taken on the role of Safe Network Champion for Bedfordshire.

NHS Bedfordshire

NHS Bedfordshire commissions a range of health services from a range of providers, and has the responsibility for ensuring that the health contribution to child protection and promoting the welfare of children is discharged effectively across the whole local economy through its commissioning arrangements. Clinical governance arrangements are in place to monitor child protection arrangements with provider organisations. This is led by the Executive Nurse Director and the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children & Young People.

2010/12 has been a very busy time for NHS Bedfordshire, with a particular focus on a number of changes both nationally and locally. However, during this period of significant change, the core purpose remains the delivery of improved quality for patients by improving safety, effectiveness and patient experience.

It is anticipated that 2011/12 will be an equally demanding year for the NHS as it takes on the challenge of continuing to deliver high quality care for patients, while beginning in earnest the transition to the new system envisaged in *Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS*. The over-arching goal in this period is to build strong foundations at local level for the new system by maintaining and improving quality, by keeping tight financial control and delivering on the quality and productivity challenge and by creating energy and momentum for transition and reform.

The NHS Operating Framework sets out the national priorities for 2011/12 which will continue to develop in anticipation of the new role of the NHS Commissioning Board in driving quality improvement across the system.

It is critical that, as commissioners, NHS Bedfordshire maintains clear accountability arrangements during 2011/12, even as parts of the new system come into place in shadow form. In order to secure the capacity and flexibility needed for the transition period, NHS Bedfordshire and NHS Luton have formed a cluster PCT. This offers capacity to the emerging GP consortia and addresses the broader drive to reduce running costs across the region. The development of a shadow GP consortium for Bedfordshire is continuing to progress.

Intensive Support Team visits from the Strategic Health Authority.

In the Annual Review 2009/10, NHS Bedfordshire reported a two day intensive support visit from the SHA and reported a positive verbal feedback whilst waiting for the written detailed report.

The report was received in August 2010, and included eight advisory recommendations for NHS Bedfordshire and partner organisations. There are two outstanding recommendations which are currently being addressed. The action plan has been shared with the LSCB's. NHS Bedfordshire has undertaken a review of Looked After Children (LAC) Services and arrangements with partner agencies. NHS Bedfordshire is also reviewing provision of services across Bedfordshire and Luton for children who have been subjected to sexual abuse.

Conclusion

To this end, this NHS Operating Framework sets out how the NHS will maintain tight financial control during 2011/12. These measures will no doubt create real challenges in some parts of the system, but they are critical to ensuring maintaining a strong financial position to get the new system on the right footing from the outset.

South Essex Partnership Trust (SEPT)

Governance Arrangements - Trust Safeguarding Team

The Trust has recently expanded the Safeguarding Team with the appointment of an Associate Director of Safeguarding, demonstrating the Trusts continued commitment to the Safeguarding agenda as seen below in Table 1. The Trust Safeguarding Team reports to

- Safeguarding Group Monthly
- Clinical Governance Committee Quarterly
- Executive Team Monthly
- Trust Board Annually
- Trust Board Serious Case Review Annually

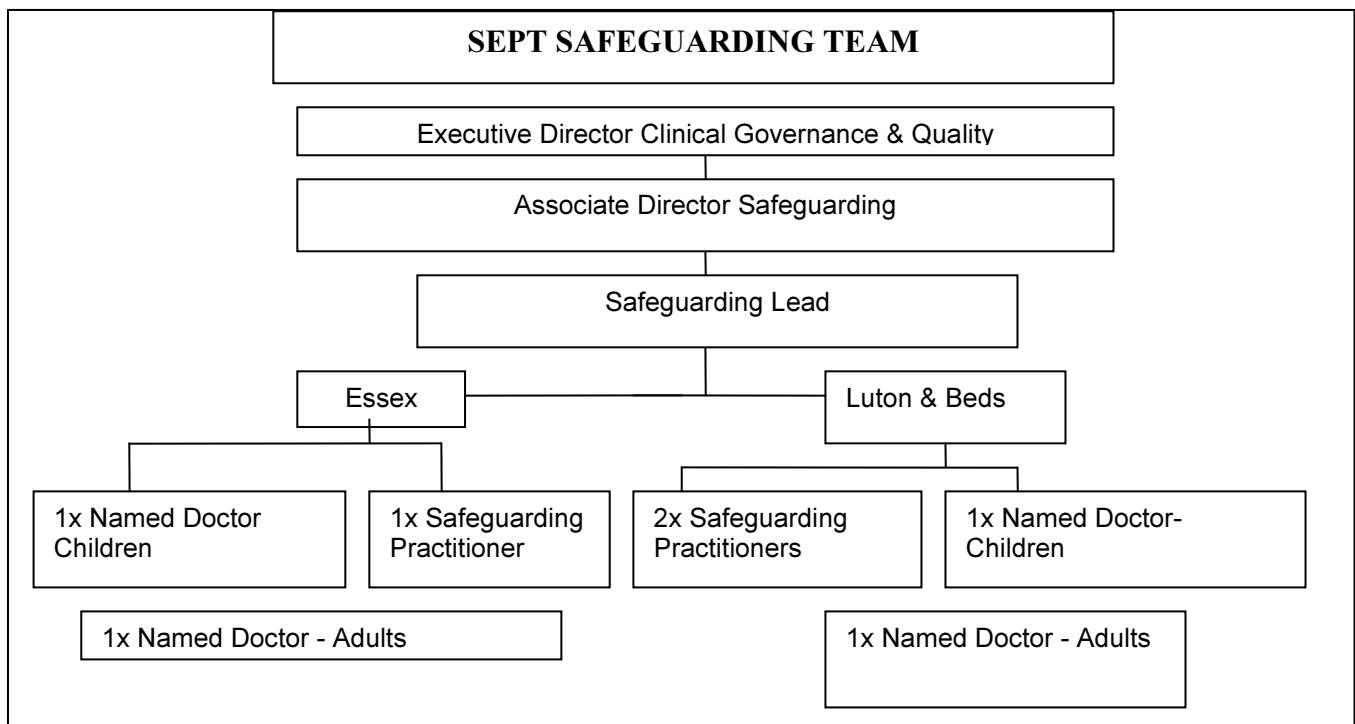
A number of ad hoc reports are provided on request.

Safeguarding Group

The Trust Safeguarding Group is chaired by the Executive Director of Clinical Governance and Quality. Membership has increased this year to include Associate Directors, Doctors and senior staff representing all Trust clinical services. The group have increased the frequency of meetings which are now held monthly in order to address the growing requirements of the Safeguarding agenda.

All reports, policies and protocols are tabled at meetings before being presented to the Trust Executive Team or Board. An action plan containing national, local and Trust directives is reviewed at each meeting to ensure compliance.

The Central Bedfordshire LSCB reports are a routine agenda item and discussed at these meetings.



Policy & Procedures

The Trust has integrated Safeguarding policies for Children and this has been ratified by the Trust Board. The Policies reflect national and local guidance and contain a number of new requirements that comply with Working Together 2010, National Patient Safety (NPSA), and National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) advice and reporting pathways with the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Safeguarding Training

A training strategy has been completed which outlines training levels underpinned by Agenda for Change Knowledge and Skills framework (KSF) Core Dimension 3 which focuses on maintaining and promoting health, safety and security of all those who come into contact with Trust services.

The Virtual Learning Zone (VLZ) Programme has been updated to comply with Luton and Bedfordshire Safeguarding processes. Training Levels 1 & 2 for Luton & Bedfordshire is now at 100% compliant. Training compliance is a standard agenda item at the Safeguarding group.

Additional training regularly takes place for example:-

- Common Assessment Framework for Children (CAF) has been given to staff in Luton and Bedfordshire to raise awareness of issues for children of adult clients.
- Awareness raising sessions on request or where need identified

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

The number of referrals to Children's Social Care is reported regularly to the Trust Board, and the outcome of these referrals is monitored.

Pathways- HR/Incident/Complaints/PALS

Safeguarding is an inherent part of many Trust services. Pathways have been established with the above departments to ensure that safeguarding is considered and responded to in a timely and effective way. The Safeguarding team have recently been involved in the development of the Datix reporting system which will ensure consistent processes and responses throughout the Trust.

Strategic Framework 2010-2013

A Strategic Framework for the Safeguarding service has been developed and agreed by the Executive Team. The Framework aims to establish the vision for the Trust Safeguarding service for the period 2010-2013. The strategic framework builds on existing achievements and demonstrates the Trust's continued commitment toward ensuring clients are safeguarded, families are supported and staff are skilled in recognising and responding to Safeguarding issues. The Framework includes a number of key priorities including:

- Structure & Reporting Arrangements
- Clinical Governance
- Partnership Working
- Serious Case Reviews
- Strengthening Learning
- Equality & Diversity
- Human Resources

Key objectives for 2011 are placed on the Trust Safeguarding Action plan to ensure compliance. The Trust annual plan and Integrated Governance plan emphasise the importance of Safeguarding and place it as a high priority within future plans.

Partnership Working - Local Safeguarding Children Boards

The Trust is actively represented on 5 LSCB's. This representation is an important part of developing and influencing services for Trust clients. The Trust is able to offer expertise to Boards on Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol and Learning Disability issues.

Safeguarding Activity

In the year 2010/2011 staff from SEPT in Bedfordshire and Luton have made a total of 85 referrals to Local Authorities, both in the form of child protection/child in need referrals and CAF assessments. Since July 2010 the outcomes of referrals have been recorded and monitored and this information will be incorporated into the reporting framework.

Safeguarding Developments - Safeguarding Leads

There are currently seven Safeguarding Children Leads within the Central Bedfordshire area of the Trust and an additional eight leads who work across the county as a whole. The Leads are an active group who champion the safeguarding agenda within their respective teams by cascading information and advising colleagues. The safeguarding children leads meet with the Named Professional for Safeguarding Children and Head of Safeguarding six times a year. This meeting gives an opportunity to share information with practitioners and provides a forum for group supervision around safeguarding children cases. Minutes from these meetings are fed into the Safeguarding group meetings.

Trust Intranet – Safeguarding Site

The Safeguarding link on the Trust Intranet now contains all processes, policies and referral forms regarding Safeguarding across the Trust. A weekly NSPCC bulletin is available in addition to safeguarding research and training flyers etc. 'Lessons learnt' is produced following the completion of a serious case review. Staff now routinely access the site for referral forms etc.

The latest Safeguarding news update, details the guidance for '*Children who go missing or run away from home*' this emphasises the importance for SEPT staff to follow the protocol for children who fail to attend appointments as this may be associated with those who go missing. The safeguarding site currently contains a summary of the lessons learnt from the Child J Serious Case Review conducted by the Central Bedfordshire LSCB.

IST Outcomes

The Panel concluded that SEPT had effective Safeguarding processes in place and praised the commitment of the Named Professional for Luton & Bedfordshire and the high priority the Trust gives to the Safeguarding agenda.

The Panel members spent a morning on Poplar Unit in Essex, including the school rooms. The Chair of the Panel stated that Poplar unit was '*Indicative of a Partnership Trust at its best*' and particular praise was given to the structure of the Crisis Team, the Contract form that family/Child/Young Person completes on admission, the structured routine and activities offered and the enthusiasm of staff.

Poplar Adolescent Unit

Poplar Unit is an 11 bed unit for children and adolescents with Mental Health problems in Essex, Luton and Bedfordshire. Poplar Unit has two Safeguarding Leads and the Safeguarding Team meets with the Manager, Leads and School staff on a monthly basis. A Safeguarding form was developed in 2009 for all concerns regarding Poplar clients. These forms are now regularly used and copied to the Safeguarding Team. The Crisis team now also routinely use these forms and works effectively with the Safeguarding Team.

Audit Programme - Safeguarding Children Audit Programme

A number of Audits for the Safeguarding Children service have taken place in 2010. The Audit of Safeguarding Awareness amongst practitioners throughout the Trust was completed in June 2010 and demonstrated continued improvements in the level of awareness of key safeguarding information amongst staff.

In June 2010 the Audit of Referral Standards was also completed and demonstrated that referrals sent by SEPT staff in Bedfordshire and Luton to Local Authority children's social care teams were of an acceptable standard; however some areas for development were identified. An action plan was developed and has been monitored through the Safeguarding Group, with outstanding actions incorporated into the Group's action plan.

In January 2011 an audit of adherence to the requirements of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMH) operational policy with regard missed appointments was undertaken and the findings of this audit largely demonstrated that appropriate actions are being taken when initial and follow-up appointments are missed by service users.

Serious Case Reviews (SCR) Audit

The Trust has completed a number of audits following the recommendations from SCR's. All audits have been submitted and accepted by the LSCB's and include:-

- Evidence that practice has improved following training
- Safeguarding Supervision
- Record Keeping and storage
- Process of feedback to staff and teams involved in a SCR
- Process for those children who DNA appointments

In October 2010 External auditors on behalf of one LSCB, audited the Trust response and action plans following a SCR on a baby. The auditors concluded that 'SEPT has effective arrangements in place to address the issues arising from SCR's'.

NICE recommendations Child Maltreatment (979) Audit

NICE issued guidance in 2009 to improve child protection by promoting early recognition of suspected maltreatment within the NHS. The aim of the guidance was to raise awareness of the clinical features associated with maltreatment and the possibility of it. As a result the Trust became a NICE Stakeholder.

Child Protection Referrals Audit

An audit was undertaken within CAMHS teams in Essex to explore Child Protection Referrals to Children's Social Care and their outcomes. The results of this audit were reported to the Safeguarding Group meeting in January 2011. Five recommendations have been made from this audit to ensure that staff in CAMH are adhering to the requirements of the SEPT Safeguarding Children Policy and multi-agency guidance.

Serious Case Reviews (SCR)

An annual report on SCR was submitted to the Trust Executive Team in June 2010 and gave a detailed overview of SCR, the impact on SEPT and the actions taken. In March 2010 the Department for Children Schools & Families (DCSF) published the updated process for SCR in the *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010* Document. Until June 2010 LSCB were expected to publish an Executive Summary of each SCR on their website. However the new Government in office has issued revised guidance and from June 2010 all new SCR will publish the Full Overview Report on their websites. To date there have been no new SCR tabled within the Trust area for Trust clients. Ofsted maintains the responsibility for evaluating the LSCB Overview Report, Executive Summary and

agency's Individual Management Reviews (IMR). Ofsted measures reports against a set of grade descriptors as either, *Outstanding, Good, Adequate, or Inadequate* (Table 3).

In 2009/10 there were 11 new SCR within the LSCB areas for Bedfordshire, Luton, Southend, Essex and Thurrock; 5 cases which occurred prior to 2009 continued to be active in 2009/10 as per Table 3.

Table 3: SCR 2010/11

Area	Total no. SCR	Trust IMR required	Ofsted Grading for SEPT IMR
Southend	2	1	Good
Essex	8	1	Good
Thurrock	3	1	Pending
Luton	2	0	N/A
Bedford	0	0	N/A
Central Beds	1	0	N/A

The Trust is expected to raise awareness of the learning identified in every SCR regardless of Trust involvement. As a result, the Safeguarding Intranet site regularly contains a 'Lessons Learned' section involving a SCR.

Forward Plans

The Trust Safeguarding service will continue to develop and improve services for clients. The forward plan focuses on key areas which will be integrated into the Safeguarding Group action plan and monitored monthly for compliance. The plan includes:

- Completing all domains outlined in the Safeguarding Service Strategic Plan for 2011
- Implementing a single Safeguarding Database across the Trust
- Update the Training programme in accordance with National & Local protocols
- Continue to improve the percentage of staff accessing training
- Ensure there are robust Safeguarding links within the Datix system.

Conclusion

This annual report seeks to inform the LSCB about the Trust's continued commitment to strengthening arrangements for Safeguarding Children.

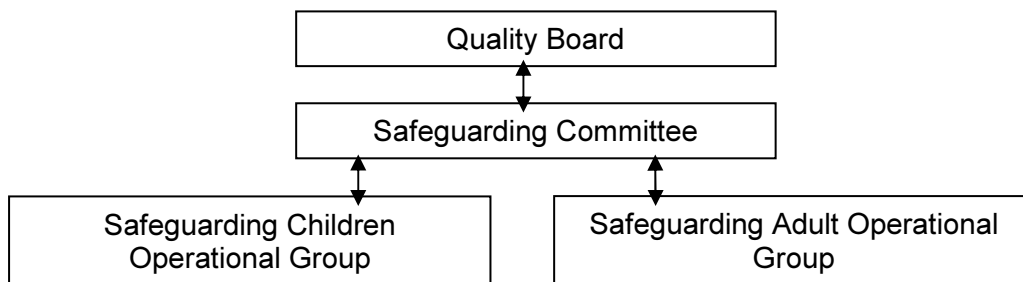
Bedford Hospital

1. ANNUAL REPORT SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

This is the first report covering both Safeguarding Children and Young People with Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults. The report reviews progress, compliance and gaps in the last financial year of both groups and details the activity in Q4.

1.1 CHANGES IN GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES:

Robust governance arrangements for safeguarding children and young people will inform both the continuation of those governance structures and sharing of experiences to enhance the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults agenda across the trust. There is now an established Trust wide Safeguarding Committee chaired by the executive lead for safeguarding. Reporting to this Committee are two operational groups: Safeguarding Children Operational Group and the Safeguarding Adult Operational Group. Terms of reference are agreed.



1.2 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ANNUAL REPORT- May 2011
Progress and activity overview 2010/11

Policy and processes

- Renewed Safeguarding Children Policy in line with ‘Working Together 2010’ to include procedural guidelines for Paediatrics, A&E, Maternity and Adult Services.
- Training Strategy updated in line with ‘Working Together 2010’
- Developed, implemented and audited the flow chart for children who miss appointments.
- Local Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) policy and accompanying resource pack.
- Information sharing agreement with Local Authorities supporting the ‘flagging’ process (Laming 2009). Updated annually and reviewed quarterly via multi-agency quality monitoring.
- Increase in number of referrals to Safeguarding Children Team as a result of raised awareness through attendance at training.

Staffing

- Developed and embedded Paediatric Safeguarding Liaison Post (PSLN). Pump prime money finished, post re-evaluated as effective so continues within Paediatric Staffing establishment.
- Deputy Named Nurse now a substantive post 0.6WTE.

A&E systems

- Successful development of the relationship between PSLN and 0-19 teams.

Governance

- Continue to have robust governance arrangements through the Trust Wide Safeguarding Committee and the Safeguarding Children Operational Group.

Audits

- Several Audits completed in line with ‘Working Together 2010’.

Training

Implemented Training Strategy based on NICE guidance and Scenarios. Impact on outcomes measured by increase of appropriate referrals and expressed increase in staff knowledge and confidence (evidenced in evaluation).

2. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE Q4 REPORT

2.1 Introduction

The following are the key performance indicators derived from the latest government reports and guidance. The Trust has approved systems and processes in place to safeguard children that come into contact with the hospital. Trust staff work well within a multiagency context to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. To ensure that these systems and processes are embedded and working there will now be a focus on auditing their effectiveness. This will provide the assurance that systems and processes are effective and safe.

2.1.1 Key performance Indicators:

- Quality Assurance
- Training
- Clinical supervision
- Audits

2.2 Quality Assurance

Operational processes to meet Laming recommendations (2009), CQC (2009) and Working Together (2010)

The **outstanding** issues from the above report and guidance are contained within the following table:

Issue	Update	Timescale	By Whom	Outcome
The flag for Child protection plan in place can be missed by reception staff in A&E due to the background colour being the same as the flag.	Flag is recorded on iPMS. Not able to be printed out on CAS card to be given to the clinicians On the risk register and IT have been asked to address these issues. The lack of iPMS 'talking to' extramed has been upward reported by Information Governance Committee	July 11	IT/iPMS manager	As yet unresolved
Record child's school on print out of the CAS card from PiMS	On the risk register and IT have been asked to address these issues. The lack of iPMS 'talking to' extramed has been upward reported by Information Governance Committee			
Feedback from Social Care following a referral.	Referring health professional/Named Nurses chasing social care Safeguarding liaison nurse supports this process	Reviewed quarterly	Named Nurse and Deputy	Reported on at Quarterly meetings with LA's
Automatic referral in special circumstances	Policies in place, referral made when there are known drug and/or alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, mental illness that may impact on children in the home	September 2011	All	Audit to be planned

All patients asked about dependants on admission	Space on the admission forms to record this, training to be reviewed and practice to be audited.	Sep 2011	All	Audit planned by Safeguarding adult team
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2.3 Training

2.3.1 Numbers of staff with up to date training

Attendance at training is recorded on a rolling year plan. Additional efforts have been focused on increasing attendance in groups 2 and 1, whilst maintaining vigilance with staff in groups 3, 4, 6 who work directly with children.

Staff groups in Working Together (2010)	% in date with their training
4 Those who have particular specialist child protection responsibilities	100%
6. Operational Managers of services for children, young people and/or parents/carers	100%
3. Those who work predominantly with children, young people and/or parents/carers	79%
7. Senior managers responsible for strategic management of services for children, young people and/or parents/carers	100%
2. Those in regular contact or have a period of intensive but irregular contact with children, young people and/or parents/carers	61%
1. Those who have infrequent/occasional contact :	76%

Particular focus is on the Group 2 medical staff to increase their attendance at training.

2.4 Safeguarding Supervision Internal and external systems in place

External supervision is accessed by the Named professionals within the Trust, currently from the designated office in NHS Bedfordshire and the named Doctor is seeking external supervision.

Internal supervision, consisting of support and challenge, is offered by the Named professionals for all staff in the Trust involved in any child or young person about whom there is a safeguarding concern. This has been accessed by some staff and happens informally. Training for the named professionals has occurred this year.

2.5 Audits

2.5.1 Internal Clinical Audit plan

Completed audits:

- Schools to include documentation of home educated children
- Flags identified by A&E
- Feedback received by hospital from Social care

Planned audits:

- Record keeping, to include personalised care plans agreed with parents documented in the notes and completeness of the Information Sharing Forms
- No child about whom there is a concern not to be discharged without consultant approval
- DNA follow up (CQC Ch 3)
- Recording of all in-patient's dependants on admission

To be planned audits:

- **Automatic referral** where domestic violence or drug or alcohol abuse or mental ill health may put a child at risk of abuse or neglect (**Laming 2009, 4.4, recommendation 20**)

Resulting action plans from audits to complete the activity: For each audit there will be actions that will be incorporated into the Trust's Safeguarding Children work plan, monitored at the operational group, reported to The Trust Wide Safeguarding Committee, Business Unit Quality Boards and in the Quarterly updates to the Trust Board

2.5.2 External Audits/Inspections

Prepare for external audit/inspection by CQC/Ofsted

- CQC will carry out a number of unannounced inspection visits.
- Evidence for imminent announced inspection of Safeguarding Children with a 'Looked After Children' focus submitted March 2011. Date of inspection is awaited. Interview candidates and focus groups prepared.

2.6 KEY ISSUES for Children and Young People agenda taken forward into 2011/12 are:

2.6.1 Quality Assurance:

- Audit is required to ensure that the systems and processes developed over the last year are working and embedded into everyone's practice.
- Monitor the capacity to attend increased meetings of the Quality and Audit sub group of the LSCB.
- Prepared for upcoming external inspections including Looked After Children CQC/Ofsted.

2.6.2 Training:

- Expand pool of scenarios to be used in training.
- Audit staff Safeguarding Children competencies in order to evaluate training effectiveness.
- Capturing Group 2 medical staff

2.6.3 Internal Audits to be carried out this year identified, report recommendations at audit or Business Unit Quality boards and ensure action plans are monitored until completed.

Appendix 10: Safeguarding Outturns April 09 – March 2010

	National Average year end 31/03/10	Statistical Neighbours year end 31/03/10	CBC year end 31/03/09	CBC year end 31/03/10	% change - year on year 31/03/09 to 31/03/10	CBC Provisional Outturn 31/03/11	% change periods ending 31/03/10 to 31/03/11
No of contacts	N/A	N/A	5230	5835	+ 11.5%	7898	+ 35.4%
No of Referrals	3080	2450	1290	1744	+ 35.2%	2802	+ 60.7%
Conversion Rate Contact to Referral	N/A	N/A	24.7%	29.9%	+21.1%	35.5%	+ 18.7%
No of s 47 enquiries	448	N/A	284	397	+ 39.8%	506	+ 27.5%
No of initial assessments	1994	1427	1074	1190	+ 10.8%	1574	+ 32.3%
No of core assessments	722	575	635	738	+ 16.2%	935	+ 26.7%
No subject to cp plans	182	151	108	169	+ 56.5%	178	+ 0.5%
No of children subject to an ICPC	220	N/A	154	182	+ 18.2%	217	+ 35.0%
Children Looked after	329	258	134	163	+ 21.6%	175	+ 7.4%
Children starting to be Looked after	142	110	54	97	+ 79.6%	80	- 17.5%
<p>Note: National and Statistical Neighbour averages are adjusted to represent Central Bedfordshire's 0-18 size. Contacts are not reported nationally, a recent study conducted by ADCS estimated a national increase of 10.4% between Q3 08/09 and 09/10.</p>							

Appendix 11: Partner member's attendance at Strategic Board meeting 2010 - 2011

Membership

Independent Chair
 Central Bedfordshire Council Children Social Care
 NHS Bedfordshire
 Bedfordshire Police
 Bedfordshire Police Authority
 Bedfordshire Probation Trust
 CAFCASS
 Central Bedfordshire Council Adult Social Care
 Lead Member for Children's Services
 Voluntary sector

Partner member attendance at CBSCB Strategic Board meetings

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Strategic Board 3 meetings April 2010 - March 2011

Name	AGENCY/ ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF MTGS	NUMBER PRESENT	NUMBER ABSENT	APOLOGIES	COMMENT
Alison Harding	Bedfordshire Probation	3	3			
Andrew Morgan	NHS Bedfordshire	3	1			Left NHS Bedfordshire in September 2010
Andrew Richer	Bedfordshire Police	3	1	1	1	In post from July 2010
Angela McNab	NHS Bedfordshire	3	0			In post from November 2011 & represented once
Anne Murray	NHS Bedfordshire	3	1			Represented twice
Catherine Parry	Central Bedfordshire Council	3	1			In post from March 2011
Cllr Anita Lewis	Central Bedfordshire Council	3	2	1	1	

Ed Thompson	Central Bedfordshire Council	3	1	2	2	Represented once
Edwina Grant	Central Bedfordshire Council	3	3			
Emily White	Central Bedfordshire Council	3	1	1	1	Deputy for Ed Thompson
Helena Hughes	NHS Bedfordshire	3	1			Deputy for Angela McNab & Anne Murray
John Fletcher	Bedfordshire Police	3	1			In post until July 2010
John Williams	Police Authority	3	1			In post from November 2010
Linda Bulled	VOCypf	3	3			
Maggie Blyth	Independent Chair	3	3			
Mark Southwood	VOCypf	3	0			Deputy for Linda Bulled
Mark Wheeler	Central Bedfordshire Council	3	2			In post from July 2011
Martin Pratt	Central Bedfordshire Council	3	1	N/A	N/A	In post until June 2010
Nigel Stone	Bedfordshire Police	3	2	N/A	N/A	Deputy for Andrew Richer
Sally Stocker	CBSCB Business Team	3	3			
Sue Ioannou	Central Bedfordshire Council	3	1			Nominated to attend in 2011

Appendix 12: Income for 2010/2011

AGENCY	CONTRIBUTION (£'S)
Bedford Borough Council	£55,000
Central Bedfordshire Council	£55,000
Bedfordshire Police	£26,634
Bedfordshire Probation	£8,378
NHS Bedfordshire	£73,549
CAFCASS	£550
Under spend from 2009/10	£7,361
Grand total	£226,272

Appendix 13: Protocol agreement between Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Trust Board and Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

Central Bedfordshire Children's Trust Board

The Trust Board is a statutory strategy development body, which promotes strong joint planning and effective commissioning of services. It is responsible for developing and promoting a child and family-centred, outcome-led vision for all children and young people via the Children and Young People's Plan. The plan identifies the Trust's priorities for children and young people, clearly informed by their views and those of their parents/carers and a comprehensive needs analysis. The Trust Board monitors performance on its priorities at a high level and is responsible for putting in place robust arrangements for inter-agency governance.

The Children's Trust Board will:

- Consult the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (CBSCB) on issues, which affect how children are protected and their welfare promoted.
- Take note of recommendations and identified areas for improvement made by the CBSCB and report back to the CBSCB on subsequent progress
- Ensure the CBSCB is formally consulted during the development of the Children and Young People's Plan
- Invite the Chair of the CBSCB to attend the Children's Trust Board meetings
- Ensure that messages and information provided by the CBSCB are appropriately disseminated within Trust Board member organisations
- Receive and respond to the CBSCB's annual report to the Children's Trust Board
- Take an overview of the CBSCB's activities as part of its monitoring arrangements, as the work of the CBSCB falls within the framework of the Children & Young People's Plan.

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

The role of CBSCB is to co-ordinate the safeguarding activities of its partner agencies and to evaluate the effectiveness of what they do. Its functions are strategic and not operational. However it would expect to initiate activities which investigate and improve practice in child protection. It has the authority to call any agency represented on the Trust to account for its safeguarding activity.

The CBSCB and its activities are part of the wider context of children's trust arrangements. It contributes to the wider goals of improving the well being of all children whilst being primarily focused on the 'staying safe' element of the five Every Child Matters outcomes. Within the wider governance

arrangements its role is to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements made by individual agencies and the wider partnership to protect and promote the welfare of children.

The CBSCB will:

- Take responsibility for monitoring actions to improve child protection, including action plans arising from Serious Case Reviews feeding back learning and undertaking audits to ensure that lessons have been learned.
- Feed back results from the above activities to the Children's Trust Board, advising on ways to improve and highlight areas of underperformance
- Ensure through regular evaluation that partner agencies comply with the duty to discharge their functions having regard to the need to protect and promote the welfare of children (Children Act 2004, s.11).
- Hold the Children's Trust Board to account on matters of child protection in all its activities, providing appropriate challenge on performance and results of performance indicators
- Initiate the development, regular review and active dissemination to all partner agencies of good practice Protocols to inform and assist multi-agency working
- Highlight gaps in service for the Children's Trust to consider as part of its joint commissioning process
- Provide six monthly reports on its findings from its scrutiny activity to the Children's Trust Board, including the annual report.
- Invite the Lead Member to attend the CBSCB Executive as a participant observer.

Both organisations will

- Have an ongoing and direct relationship, communicating regularly.
- Work together to ensure action taken by one body does not duplicate that taken by another.
- Ensure they are committed to working together to ensure there are no unhelpful strategic or operational gaps in policies, protocols, services or practice.

Appendix 14 - Glossary of Terms

CBSCB	Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board
BBSCB	Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board
LSCB	Luton Safeguarding Children Board
CDOP	Child Death Overview Panel
SCR	Serious Case Review
CTB	Children's Trust Board
WT	Working Together
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
BBC	Bedford Borough Council
LBC	Luton Borough Council
NHS	National Health Service
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
MARAC	Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference
SOVA	Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults
DCS	Director of Children's Services
BCHS	Bedfordshire Community Health Services
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
MAAG	Multi Agency Allocation Group
SEPT	South Essex Partnership Trust
SHA	Strategic Health Authority
LA	Local Authority
ECM	Every Child Matters
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
ICS	Integrated Children System (Care First)
PVI Sector	Private Voluntary and Independent Sector
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
YOS	Youth Offending Service
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators

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Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 6 September 2011
Subject: Review of Disabled Children's Services
Report of: Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services.
Summary: This report outlines the detail of the independent review of services for children with disabilities which will take place in Autumn 2011 with a view to a report to Executive in January 2012. Scrutiny are asked to comment on the content of the review and to consider setting up a Task and Finish Group to meet and comment during the course of the review.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services.
Contact Officer: Catherine Parry, Assistant Director Children's Services Operations.
Public/Exempt: Public.
Wards Affected: All.
Function of: Council.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The provision of facilities for disabled children is a core statutory duty for the Council.

Council Priorities:

This report presented supports Priority 2 of Central Bedfordshire's Strategic Plan 2009-2011, Educating, Protecting and Providing Opportunities for Children and Young People. The information also supports the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan priorities, Priority 2 Protecting Children and keeping them safe and Priority 1 increased educational achievement.

Financial:

The budget for provision for disabled children in the Council is £4.3m + £890k from the Early Intervention Grant. This review is about quality and benchmarking. Whilst efficiencies might be found during the course of the review, it is also likely that areas may be found that require improvement. There is no financial efficiency target set for this review.

Legal:

The legal framework is laid out in The Children Act 1989, Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and new Care Planning and Regulations implemented nationally in April 2011 (“Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers”). The Break for Carers for Disabled Children regulations 2011 also came into force on the 1 April 2011 and the Council will publish a statement for carers on the website by the due date of 1st October 2011.

Risk Management:

There are no new risk management implications arising from the report.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

There are no new staffing implications arising from this report. The current resources deployed enable the service to deliver all of its statutory responsibilities. However, in year budget pressures are identified as a risk.

Equalities/Human Rights:

The review will take account of the need to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

Community Safety:

There are no new community safety implications arising from this report.

Sustainability:

There are no new sustainability implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

1. **that the Over View and Scrutiny Committee**
 - (a) **Comment on the brief for the review of disabled children’s services**
 - (b) **Agree that a Task and Finish Group of Scrutiny be constituted to meet during October and November 2011 to inform the report for the Scrutiny Committee in December 2011, prior to the Executive report in January 2012.**

Background

1. The current provision for disabled children has not been reviewed since Central Bedfordshire Council was set up on 1 April 2009.
2. The current service to disabled children comprises facilities and budget share that was relevant to the disaggregation of the legacy Council, Bedfordshire County Council.
3. It is now timely to review the service and the review framework is set out in Appendix A.

4. Attached as an appendix to the review document, i.e. Appendix 1, is the criteria that a Council would need to meet for the statutory Lead Member Children's Services, i.e. the Executive Member for Children's Services to feel confident to sign the "Every Disabled Child Matters Local Authority Disabled Children's Charter". At the end of the review and the implementation plan, it is hoped that evidence will have been collated to show that each of the criteria have been met.

5. Section 5 of the regulations of the Break for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 came in force on 1 April 2011. This requires a consultation which is currently on-going on the Council's website and a statement of the offer to be placed on the website by 1 October 2011. This work will run concurrently with the review.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Review of Disabled Children's Services Framework 2011

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Review of Disabled Children's Services
Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC)
2011

PROPOSED REVIEW FRAMEWORK

1. Introduction

1.1 An independent review of services for Children with Disabilities is set out in this framework. This will include social care, residential provision, health and education provision for disabled children, young people their parents and carers living in Central Bedfordshire. It will identify areas of good practice, areas for improvement and will take into account the proposals in the Green Paper March 2011 – Support and Aspiration: A new approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability.

2. Aims

2.1 The aims of the review are to determine what is working well and to make recommendations for change to ensure that:

- Disabled children and young people aged 0 – 25 years, and their families living in Central Bedfordshire receive sufficient high quality coordinated services across, social care, health and education both now and in the future.
- Services are delivered in such a way as to provide good value for money for the Council and its residents that are accessible and equitable across the authority.
- A joint strategic approach and vision is developed across agencies to ensure systems, structures and planning is integrated to prevent duplication of services.
- Decision making takes into account budgetary positions set against the challenges of managing needs led budgets.
- Residential and all short break provision is fit for purpose.
- Parents, carers and young people are fully involved.
- That following the review the Lead Member for Children's Services, i.e. Executive Member, will feel confident to sign the local authority Disabled Children's Charter. The criteria for which are attached at Appendix 1.

3. Scope

3.1 The review will take into account and consider the following:

Appendix A

3.1.1 Operations

- The impact of the Aiming High for disabled children programme.
- Social Work Team scope and delivery model.
- Family support.
- Internal and externally provision.
- Early intervention, including early years.
- Children and young people with complex needs.
- Key points of transition from neonatal to early years to primary to secondary to adolescence and to adulthood.
- Palliative Care.
- Prevention.
- Transport.
- The emerging personalisation agenda.
- Involvement of parents, carers and young people and range of professionals.
- Transition.
- Occupational Therapy.

3.1.2 Finance

- Budgets including capital, revenue expenditure and trends.
- Commissioning arrangements.
- Finance comparisons with statistical neighbours

3.1.3 Administration

- Analysis of stats/data.
- Structures/systems and decision making processes/procedures.
- Statistical comparators between Central Bedfordshire's services and those of other authorities where services are acknowledged as demonstrating best practice (benchmarking).
- Governance arrangements.
- Strategic links to Children's Trust, Health and Well Being Board, Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and to Adult Services.

4. Outcomes

4.1 A range of options/proposals for change which include:

- An overall unified strategy for services for disabled children, young people and their families that is owned by all partner agencies and describes realistic and achievable improvements to the range of options and choices available to families.
- Proposals/options about future service delivery which build on existing good practice, provide the Council with value for money and choice for parents, carers and young people.

Appendix A

- Strategies and documents which provide transparent evidence of joint and shared agreement about thresholds for services and which demonstrate the equitable delivery of services across the Council and partner agencies.
- Identify any risks to the Council in existing and future provision.
- Information about benchmarking with comparator Councils.
- The criteria for the local authority Disabled Children’s Charter is met.

4.2 Implementation Plan

An implementation plan setting out the agreed actions will be developed at the conclusion of the review.

5.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Key Responsibilities
<p>Project Sponsor</p> <p>Catherine Parry</p> <p>Interim Assistant Director, Children’s Services Operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimately responsible for the successful implementation of the outcomes of the review and proposals are drafted in a form to be agreed by Executive in January if key decisions or policy changes are required. • Report on the scope of the review to Overview and Scrutiny in September, take views from two meetings of a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group and then report back to Scrutiny in December. • Oversee progress of the review at a strategic level. • Brief Primary Care Trust and relevant bodies on progress. • Agree budgets and spending plans and any arrangements for aligning or pooling budgets. • Take any necessary decisions on mitigating large risks highlighted by Project Manager. • Establish internal staff reference group to monitor the progress of the review work plan. • Support the work of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee and its Task and Finish Group.
<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Independent Consultant</p> <p>Sheila Reynolds</p> <p>Project Support</p> <p>Ken Harvey</p> <p>Head of Disability and Children’s Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop work plan which identifies key areas of activity (work strands) and key milestones to ensure the review meets Central Bedfordshire Council’s timescales and political processes. • Responsible for the successful development and co-ordination of the review work plan. • Ensure effective project management structure, clear parameters for each work strand and dependencies between them. • Develop a communication strategy to ensure all affected parties are informed and involved. • Establish clear programme timescales and effectively monitor progress against them. • Monitor progress and assess the impact of any potential changes. • Ensure Project Sponsors and reference group are informed of progress and ensure they have appropriate information to make decisions regarding exceptions where necessary. • Provide support to work stream leads, in terms of resources, project management and addressing blockages. • Ensure that risks are being tracked across the project and mitigated as effectively as possible.

Appendix A

Role	Key Responsibilities
Project Co-ordinator Hayley Ingram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to the Project Manager and work stream leads as required • Provide support to review leads • Organise and take notes at group meetings.
Work streams Early Years PCT SEND CAMHS Commissioning Prevention Lead Children with Complex Needs Transition OT Residential and community short breaks Finance Stats Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountable to the Project Manager for supporting the work streams. • Develop the work stream brief and action plan (which will include resource requirements, identified risks and milestones). • Ensure appropriate people are either involved in the project or aware of the work being undertaken. • Ensure that the necessary actions to achieve the project objectives are undertaken either by themselves or others within the agreed timescales. • Provide regular progress reports to the Project Manager. • Monitor risks and escalate to Project Manager if they're not manageable and likely to impact on project timescales or ability to achieve project objectives. • Develop appropriate links with other work streams to maximise co-ordination and minimise duplication. • Have knowledge of all work streams within the project and their objectives.

6. Timelines

July 2011	Agree proposal for Review
August 2011	Set timetable for review and agree scope
6 th September 2011	Scope to Scrutiny and Task and Finish Group members agreed
October 2011	First Task and Finish Scrutiny Group meeting to include visits and information gathering.
November 2011	Second Task and Finish Scrutiny Group meeting to agree outcomes
15 December 2011	Draft Executive Report completed and covering Scrutiny Report prepared.
15 th December	Scrutiny considers draft Executive Report
January/February 2012	Executive Report



APPENDIX 1

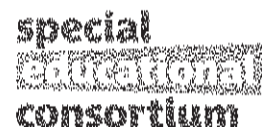
Local Authority Disabled Children's Charter

By [insert date within one year of signing charter] we will ensure that in our authority...

- We know how many disabled children live in our area and all agencies in our area are working together to plan services based on this knowledge.
- We have an identified lead with specific responsibility for services for disabled children and families.
- We are providing clear information to support choice and control for parents that explains how we provide specialist services and also make all universal services accessible.
- Parents and carers in our area have access to transparent information on decisions made about their child, and have access to mechanisms for providing feedback
- Disabled children and their families are involved in the planning, commissioning and monitoring of services in our area, including both specialist and universal services.
- Our Parent Carer Forum is instrumental in developing and reviewing services in our area and promoting choice and control for parents.
- We actively include disabled children and young people in any decisions made about them and the services that they access, that might affect them.
- Parents in our area benefit from our Parent Partnership Service, which is able to provide impartial advice and support to parents of disabled children and young people
- Our staff receive both disability equality training and training to ensure that they have core competencies to work with disabled children.
- We have produced a short break services statement that has been drawn up in partnership with disabled children and their parents and have made it widely available.
- We have regard to the provision of services suitable for disabled children, when assessing the sufficiency and supply of childcare in their area
- We are working together with disabled young people and adult service providers in our area to ensure a smooth transition to adult services for disabled young people preparing for adulthood.

Signed

Lead Member for Children's Services (or equivalent)
Name of Local Authority:



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Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 6 September 2011
Subject: Allowances for Foster Parents
Report of: Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services
Summary: Attached at Appendix A is a draft Executive Report on the payment of allowances for foster parents. The Committee is asked to note the comments of the Corporate Parenting Panel and to make comment on the report.

Contact Officer: Catherine Parry, Interim Assistant Director Children's Services Operations
Public/Exempt: Public
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The Report supports Priority 2 of Central Bedfordshire's Strategic Plan 2009-2011, Educating, Protecting and Providing Opportunities for Children and Young People. The report also supports the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan Priority 2, Protecting children and keeping them safe.

Financial:

The provision of services is funded through core budgets. This recommendation would bring an in year pressure of £59,656 within this needs led budget. This will be reported in monthly financial statements.

Legal:

The legal framework is set out in the draft report.

Risk Management:

Risk management is set out in the report.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None.

Equalities/Human Rights:

Adherence to Human Rights and Equality issues is maintained.

Community Safety:

There are no new community safety issues arising from the Report.

Sustainability:

There are no new sustainability implications arising from the Report.

RECOMMENDATION:

that the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the comments of the Corporate Parenting Panel and to make comment on the report

Meeting: Executive
Date: 4 October 2011
Subject: Allowances for Foster Parents
Report of: Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services
Summary: This report sets out details of the payment of allowances for foster parents.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Catherine Parry, Interim AD Children's Services Operations
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Executive
Key Decision No
Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in (if appropriate) Not applicable

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Central Bedfordshire Council's Strategic Plan 2009-11, Priority 2 – Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people.

The Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014, Priority 2 – Protecting children and keeping them safe.

Financial:

In 2010/11, the Council spent £736,387 on fostering allowances for in-house placements. The policy inherited from the legacy authority, Bedfordshire County Council, is that the rate of fostering allowances is used as the baseline for means-tested Residence Order Allowances, Special Guardianship Order Allowances and Adoption Order Allowances. Spend on these allowances in 2010/11 was £566,308. Therefore, total spend was £1,302,695. The impact of this decision will be a pressure within this needs led budget of £59,659 as no inflation allowances were built into the current budget. This will be reported in monthly financial statements.

There has been no increase in the rate of allowances paid since 1 April 2009.

Legal:

The Children Act 1989 identifies a statutory duty for councils to provide sufficient accommodation in their local area and to provide maintenance for children who are looked after.

The Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011, associated statutory guidance and national minimum standards outline the Council's responsibility to ensure that foster carers are given clear information about the allowances, fees and expenses available to them. The allowance must be sufficient to cover the cost of caring for a child placed with them and must be reviewed annually.

Risk Management:

Regulatory risks: Failure to provide a published policy would be a risk in the light of the new Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011.

Child protection risks: Failure to recruit or retain sufficient foster carers would be a child protection risk.

Reputational risk: Recruitment of foster carers is a competitive market activity and has a high media profile.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

There are no staffing implications from these proposals.

Equalities/Human Rights:

Fostering allowances must meet the cost of caring for a child. The allowance scheme must ensure that any additional costs incurred in caring for a disabled child or a child with other specific needs is met. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and paying these allowances meets the requirements of the Assessment.

Community Safety:

There are no implications from these proposals.

Sustainability:

There are no implications from these proposals.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. that the Executive agrees the proposals for determining fostering and, subject to means testing, Adoption Order, Residence Order and Special Guardianship Order allowances as set out in this report and this approach remain in operation until such a time as the majority of foster parents indicate in the annual consultation that a change should be introduced;**
- 2. that the Executive delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the**

<p>Executive Member for Children’s Services, to introduce minor variations to the policy that arise out of the annual consultation; these variations to be within the annually adjusted budget provision;</p>	
<p>3. that, in making any decisions arising from the delegation of authority set out in recommendation 2 above, the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children’s Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Children’s Services, take account of the comments of foster carers in the annual consultation and the deliberations of the Corporate Parenting Panel on the outcome of this annual consultation.</p>	
Reason for Recommendations:	To meet the requirements of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.

Background

1. The Council has a duty to pay a fostering allowance in respect of each child placed with an approved foster carer. Nationally, this allowance is expected to be set at or above the minimum rate recommended by Government. The allowance is to compensate for the additional expenditure of caring for the child, and is not a salary, fee or reward payment for the carer.
2. The Fostering Network (tFN) is a not for profit organisation representing and campaigning on behalf of foster carers. The Fostering Network publishes its recommended minimum allowance rates annually. The relevant legacy council, Bedfordshire County Council, had a policy of paying fostering allowances at 110% of the rate recommended by the Fostering Network. Central Bedfordshire Council adopted the allowance rates set at this level on 1 April 2009. No changes have been made since this date.
3. For 2010/11, the Fostering Network did not recommend any increase from 2009/10 payment rates, due to the Treasury predictions in respect of the Retail Price Index. For 2011/12, the Fostering Network recommended an increase of 5.1%. No action has yet been taken on this recommendation in 2011/12.
4. It is timely that this Council agrees its framework for allowances as there is a new requirement in the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 that rates should be consulted upon annually.
5. The fostering service is a shared service hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council. Bedford Borough Council pays the total allowance for any child placed in a fostering arrangement or under an Adoption Order, Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order. The decision made by the Executive will be recommended to Bedford Borough Council although each Council could pay a different rate.

Comments

6. The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the options for determining foster allowances at its meeting on 5 July 2011 and recommended that option 1, which provides good payments for foster carers, be adopted.
7. *The views of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be inserted after its meeting on 6 September 2011.*

Options

8. To recruit sufficient foster carers to meet the needs of Looked After Children there is a periodic benchmark review of the allowances paid in Central Bedfordshire Council against the market competitors who also recruit carers in this area, i.e. other local authorities and independent fostering providers. The allowance paid may be a factor that impacts on Central Bedfordshire Council's ability to recruit new carers and retain existing carers. Benchmarking suggests that the recommendation in the report would maintain a competitive rate. The results of a fostering allowances survey, setting out the responses of foster carers is attached at Appendix A.
9. There are different options which could be used to determine fostering allowances.

These could include:
 - To continue with the current system of basing allowances on the annually published Fostering Network recommended rates, at or above its recommended rate (option 1);
 - Consider an annual percentage change in allowance rates not linked to the Fostering Network rates, but to some other measure determined by the Council (option 2);
 - Adopt a tiered payments system which rewards the experience, training and skills of foster carers (option 3).
10. The benefits of option 1 which is the recommended option are:
 - It is a simple scheme which is transparent to carers and easy to administer;
 - The Fostering Network publish suggested rates six months before the new financial year, enabling timely budget planning;
 - It is considered the industry standard and the market rate supplement means the Council's allowances are competitive with other local authorities and Independent providers who recruit carers in our area;
 - Current budget provision has been built on this level of expenditure.
11. The disadvantages of option 1 are:
 - The rates and annual uplift are not subject to the views of the Council and do not take account of local cost drivers or pressures;
 - The rates do not reward or incentivise foster carers who have experience or commit to training, develop skills or look after children with more complex behaviours;
 - The annual uplift could add to budget pressures.

12. The views of foster carers on the three options were sought as part of the fostering allowances survey referred to in paragraph 6 above. Foster carers supported option 1 in that it showed that the majority of foster carers who replied were happy with the way that fostering allowances are currently set and reviewed. Alternative options, as set out below, suggested that it would be possible to continue with the current system or to consider a change to tiered allowances. 64% responded that they would wish to continue with the current system of allowances. As the majority supported this option, it is suggested that the Council continues to pay fostering allowances based on the annually published Fostering Network rates plus a locally determined market rate supplement.
13. In 2009/10 the market rate supplement was +10%. In 2010/11 there was no increase and in 2011/12 the uplift on the national minimum had fallen to + 4.6% due to no uplift having been offered. It is therefore suggested that for 2011/12 there is a return to the fostering network rate plus 10% applied retrospectively to April 2011.

Other Options Considered

14. Another option (option 2) was to continue with the current basic rate, but annually review allowances in line with a local measure determined by the Council. No foster carers preferred this option.
15. The benefits of this option are:
 - It is a simple scheme which is easy to administer;
 - Any increase to rates is within the Council's control and can reflect local cost pressures or market rate needs;
 - There is some transparency if the Council identifies the measure on which any increase/decrease has been based.
16. The disadvantages of this option are:
 - The Council would need to be transparent about the measure used to determine change which would be a local measure. This may be subject to challenge from foster carers if it is not comparable with industry recommendations;
 - The rates do not reward or incentivise foster carers who have experience or commit to training, develop skills or look after children with more complex behaviours;
 - Cost pressures may be or be perceived to be a factor in determining uplift and the outcome may not reflect the need to remain competitive in the market to recruit and retain carers.
17. A further option (option 3) was to develop a tiered payments scheme which provided for a basic allowance rate for all carers plus tiered payment levels reflecting their level of experience, training and skill. Fewer foster carers (36%) preferred this option.

18. The benefits of this option are:

- A tiered scheme is considered fairer to carers as it reflects and rewards their skills/ability and engagement with the fostering task;
- Most of the market competitors are moving over to tiered payment schemes;
- A tiered scheme incentivises foster carers training and skills and therefore enables higher quality placements;
- Application of transparent criteria for progression through the tiers is likely to be welcomed by foster carers;
- Yearly inflationary increases could be determined by the Council.

18. The disadvantages of this option are:

- This is a new payments scheme and a significant change to practice at a time when foster carers and staff are still embedding new legislation and requirements;
- As a new annual consultation is required, the scheme should be altered in the light of this consultation and therefore, delegations will be needed to avoid the policy being reset every year;
- The ongoing operation of the scheme is more resource intensive in signing off carers' progression through the tiers.

19. The amounts paid for Adoption Order, Special Guardianship Order and Residence Order Allowances will be affected by this policy, as currently these are based on the basic rate of fostering allowance (subject to means test in most cases). There is scope in the future to change this if necessary but no recommendation to do so is being made, as there is no requirement to link these allowances to the rates paid for fostering allowance; the local authority can determine and publish a different rate of allowances if it wishes.

20. Additional allowances for exceptional activities are also paid as shown below:

Age	Weekly Standard Fostering Allowance	Weekly Disability Fostering Allowance	One-off Clothing Allowance	Holiday Allowance	Birthday and Festival Allowance	Fostering Network Rates
0-4	137.62	156.38	171.00	275.24	137.62	131.47
5-10	156.73	178.08	227.50	313.46	156.73	142.49
11-15	195.09	221.69	227.50	390.18	195.09	177.38
16+	237.30	269.64	446.00	474.60	237.30	226.74

15 carers are paid a weekly fee in addition to the allowance as they are part of schemes for teenagers with complex needs, or providing short breaks to children with disabilities. These fees are fully funded by a separate budget and carers are considered to be self-employed for tax purposes.

21. Adoption allowances paid for Adoption Orders, Special Guardianship Orders and Residence Orders will be paid on the same rate as the fostering allowance. It is suggested that these payments are based on the same rate, i.e. fostering allowance plus 10%. The difference is that these are means tested according to the Department for Education guidance.

Conclusion and Next Steps

22. The Executive is recommended to:
1. agree the payment of the Fostering Network rate plus 10% be applied retrospectively to April 2011;
 2. agree that the Fostering Network rate plus 10% be adopted by the Council for the payment of fees to foster parents, subject to means testing for adoption allowances, and this approach remain in operation until such a time as the majority of foster parents indicate in the annual consultation that it should be changed;
 3. agree that minor amendments to the scheme be approved by the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Children's Services, and that any such changes be within the annually adjusted budget provision;
 4. agree that any minor amendments to the scheme also be subject to the comments of the Corporate Parenting Panel on the outcome of the annual consultation.

Appendices: Appendix A

Background Papers: None

Location of Papers: N/A

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APPENDIX 1 - Fostering Allowances Survey Results

There were 34 responses in total to the survey.
Valid percentages are based on the number of people that responded to the question.

Q1.Are you:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
A Foster Carer	33	97	97
Central Bedfordshire resident	1	3	3
Total	34	100	100

Q2.If you are a Foster Carer, how long have you been in this role?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Less than 1 year	8	24	25
1-2 years	12	35	38
3-5 years	4	12	13
6-10 years	1	3	3
Over 10 years	7	21	22
Total	32	94	100
Missing	2	6	
Total	34	100	

Q3.If you are a Foster Carer, how happy or unhappy are you with the way Foster Carer allowances are currently set and reviewed?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Very happy	3	9	9
Happy	15	44	47
Unhappy	7	21	22
Very unhappy	3	9	9
Don't know/ No opinion	4	12	13
Total	32	94	100
Missing	2	6	
Total	34	100	

Q3a.If you are unhappy with the way the current rates are set please say why.

Highly trained and skilled foster carers are not being rewarded	
I do not think current allowances reflect the skills and commitment to be a foster carer. They are not 'Professional' allowances.	
In no way compensates you for the amount of time/effort you put into fostering. A better rate would mean better retention as foster carers ultimately lowering recruitment costs.	
Individual circumstances are not taken into consideration. Previous allowances are not payable now and I am out of pocket and subsidise the council!	
There is very little flexibility with the allowance and I believe it does not take an individual child's need or the fostering family	
They do not cover the true cost of a family experience for children especially if we have to transport to school and extra playgroup sessions.	
Too much expected for us to do and end up paying out of your own pocket. Nobody does it to make money, but nobody wants to be worse off either. e.g. holidays where the extra money come from? I don't know a weeks holiday for £125 - if there is I'd like to know.	
We feel that children with drug or alcohol withdrawal should be treated the same as those under the disability allowance.	
With the cost of food and petrol and no increase in allowance for 2 years it does not look as though the council is committed.	

Q4.Three options have been identified for setting Foster Carer allowances in the future. Please indicate your most preferred method.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Option 1: Continue with the current system based on allowances published annually by the Fostering Network recommended rates, with the option of a market rate supplement	21	62	64
Option 3: Consider a change of the current allowance system in favour of a tiered payments system which rewards the experience, training and skills of Foster Carers.	12	35	36
Total	33	97	100
Missing	1	3	
Total	34	100	

Note: No Foster Carers voted for Option 2

Q5.How far do you agree or disagree with the criteria for tier 1?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly agree	3	25
Agree	8	67
Disagree	1	8
Total	12	100

Q5a.If you disagree, please say why.

I believe this should again be based on the skills of the fostering family and the needs of each individual child. I have met first time carers with twice the skills of long term carers.

Q6.How far do you agree or disagree with the criteria for tier 2?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly agree	3	25
Agree	9	75
Total	12	100

Q7.How far do you agree or disagree with the criteria for tier 3?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Strongly agree	6	50
Agree	5	42
Disagree	1	8
Total	12	100

Q7a.If you disagree, please say why.

Could joint carers pool learning activities towards their total? Could there be a one off reward if you have a child in placement for more than 6months - say M & S vouchers or similar?

Q8. If a tiered payments system was adopted for setting allowances, what support, if any, do you think you would need with this approach?

	Frequency	Percent
E- learning or distance learning	4	33
Formal training	3	25
External training	3	25
Support with meeting CWDC standards	2	17
Attending support groups	2	17
One:One learning activity with social worker	2	17
Other	2	17

Q8a.Other specified

Already reached this criteria

I have completed all training with my husband and update as needed

Q9.How important is the level of allowance you receive in your decision to be a Foster Carer?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Very important	9	26	27
Important	19	56	58
Not very important	4	12	12
Not important at all	1	3	3
Total	33	97	100
Missing	1	3	
Total	34	100	

Q10. Do you have any other comments about Foster Carer allowances?

Allowances should not be set by local council but nationally with local allowances set on top.
Allowances are not realistic in terms of market rates. Not motivating to attract new foster carers. Rates, financially and perceptually still stuck in the 80's. Not up to date with current workforce.
As a single carer on pension credit I cannot afford to be out of pocket. I love fostering but for instance I live in a large house where foster children are not eligible for housing benefit so I am 'over-housed' and have to pay £410 each month and very large bills and the allowance barely covers my outgoings and disregards children!
Decent allowance for experienced foster carers - value our experience
Everyone should get the same we are all equal. We have to have enough money for the child's expenses. We should not be out of pocket for looking after someone else's child.
Fostering allowances should be more transparent and consistent. The rate is so poor, I am surprised any foster carers continue. You are relying on people's good nature. A structured professional wage would attract and retain professional foster carers.
Fostering has a major impact on the entire family. When it causes further financial difficulties it can put off families who could otherwise offer a great chance to a child in need.
How will this affect the legal agreement re: the 3 special guardianships we have with the department
I believe that full time foster carers should not be 'out of pocket' they should be rewarded for the excellent work they do.
I feel that allowances need to reflect the real cost of a LAC. All bills are rising rapidly and this needs to be reflected in the fostering allowances. This is the only way that you can attract and retain good carers.
I spend most of the allowance on the children so obviously the money is important. I am 'Friends and Family's' and 75 years old
I think we should have allowances and then a payment for the hard work we put in and for the extras that aren't catered for.
It is disappointing that you have assumed that if I favour Option 1, that I have no opinion on tiered payments. This questionnaire is flawed and should be resubmitted to all carers. How are the responses of various groups weighted?
It thought the allowance was to help look after the child - food, clothes, outings etc. None of the allowance states it is a payment
Need to revise the allowance paid for holidays as current amount discriminates against looked after children
The current system does not cover the true cost of a full family experience for young people in a placement. If it is cut it makes recruitment and retention of carers harder, if not impossible!
The vast majority of foster carers do not do the role for the allowances, however, I am convinced that many of the carers would not be able to do the role if it were not for the allowances they receive
There is no mention of it in the survey but a premium as is now in place for looking after a disabled child should remain.
They are okay but need to be in line with the job, which can be very difficult and there is quite considerable expense incurred.

Q11. Are you male or female?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Female	26	76	79
Male	7	21	21
Total	33	97	100
Missing	1	3	
Total	34	100	

Q12. What is your age?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
18-29 yrs	1	3	3
30-44 yrs	11	32	32
45-59 yrs	17	50	50
60-64 yrs	2	6	6
65-74 yrs	2	6	6
75+	1	3	3
Total	34	100	100

Q13. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	33	97	97
Yes	1	3	3
Total	34	100	100

Q14. To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
White British	28	82	85
Black or Black British	3	9	9
Other	2	6	6
Total	33	97	100
Missing	1	3	
Total	34	100	

Q14a. Other ethnicity specified

English
white/Irish

Town

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Bedford	11	32	39
Cambridgeshire	2	6	7
Flitwick	2	6	7
Leighton Buzzard	2	6	7
Ampthill	1	3	4
Biggleswade	1	3	4
Dunstable	1	3	4
Hatch	1	3	4
Houghton Conquest	1	3	4
London	1	3	4
Lower Stondon	1	3	4
Luton	1	3	4
Maulden	1	3	4
Rushden	1	3	4
Westoning	1	3	4
Total	28	82	100
Missing	6	18	
Total	34	100	

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Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 6 September 2011
Subject: Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers
Report of: Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services
Summary: Attached at Appendix A is a draft Executive Report on the transition to adulthood for care leavers. The Committee is asked to comment on the report and will be advised verbally of the comments of the Corporate Parenting Panel following its meeting on 5 September 2011.

Contact Officer: Catherine Parry, Interim Assistant Director Children's Services Operations
Public/Exempt: Public
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The report supports Priority 2 of Central Bedfordshire's Strategic Plan 2009-2011, Educating, Protecting and Providing Opportunities for Children and Young People. The report also supports the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan Priority 2, protecting children and keeping them safe.

Financial:

The provision of these allowances is funded through core budgets. The current budget provision is sufficient.

Legal:

The legal framework is set out in the draft report.

Risk Management:

Risk management is set out in the report.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None.

Equalities/Human Rights:

Adherence to Human Rights and Equality issues is maintained.

Community Safety:

There are no new community safety issues arising from the report.

Sustainability:

There are no new sustainability implications arising from the report.

RECOMMENDATION:

that the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to comment on the report and note the comments of the Corporate Parenting Panel from its meeting on 5 September 2011, which will be offered verbally.

Meeting: Executive
Date: 4 October 2011
Subject: Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers
Report of: Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services
Summary: This report sets out the policy for financial support for transition to adulthood for care leavers.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Catherine Parry, Interim Assistant Director Children's Services Operations
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Executive
Key Decision Yes
Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in (if appropriate) N/A

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Strong corporate parenting arrangements are central to improving all services for children and young people in care. All officers and Members of the Council are responsible for corporate parenting in line with current legislation and guidance. One of these core responsibilities is the support financially of care leavers.

Council Priorities:

Central Bedfordshire Council's Strategic Plan 2009-2011, Priority 2 - Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people (Looked After).

The Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014, Priority 1 - Increased educational achievement and Priority 2 - Protecting children and keeping them safe.

Financial:

There are usually up to 20 young people receiving Leaving Care Allowance at any one time although these numbers may vary. The current budgetary provision is sufficient although this is a needs led budget.

Legal

The legal framework is laid out in The Children Act 1989, Looked After and Leaving Care Act 2000, Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the new Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations implemented nationally in April 2011 ("Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers"). These include increased monitoring and contact requirements. The Human Rights Act 1998, Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Immigration and Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 also impact on this work.

Two key legal judgements are:

- The Southwark Judgement (the Law Lords decreed that local authorities are obliged to offer accommodation to 16 and 17 year olds with identified needs above housing).
- The Barking and Dagenham Judgement (the Court of Appeal stated that the local authority had a duty to provide former relevant children (care leavers aged 18-21 years old) with accommodation to the extent that their welfare required it).

Risk Management:

There are no new risk management implications arising from the report. The function continues to be subject to announced and unannounced inspections and preparation for this is constantly ongoing.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

There are no new staffing implications arising from this report. The current resources deployed enable the service to deliver all of its statutory responsibilities.

Equalities/Human Rights:

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The review addresses the relevance of the difference in application of the grant entitlements to date for unaccompanied asylum seekers and ensures there are no risks to the council as a consequence, relating these entitlements to relevant immigration and human rights legislation. This policy will be subject to regular review and a regular consultation exercise with the Children In Care Council and current care leavers.

Community Safety:

There are no new community safety implications arising from this report.

Sustainability:

There are no new sustainability implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **that the policy for financial support for transition to adulthood for care leavers is agreed;**

- 2. that authority to introduce any minor amendments required as a result of the annual consultation with care leavers and the Children in Care Council be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children’s Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Children’s Services.**

Background

1. The current financial policy for care leavers was last refreshed in early 2009 by the legacy authority, Bedfordshire County Council, and it was subsequently adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council. New legislation and guidance requires the policy to be updated.
2. The publication of the “Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers” guidance in April 2011 extends the duties of the Council to care leavers. This policy relates specifically to care leavers whose legal status falls within one of the categories below, as laid out in The Children Act 1989:
 - Eligible young people: Young people who have been in care for at least thirteen weeks from the age of 14 and who are still in care (looked after) and are age 16 or 17. (Section 31 and Section 20).
 - Relevant young people: Young people who have left care and are aged 16 or 17 and were previously eligible or young people who are/were detained and were looked after for thirteen weeks immediately before being detained. (Section 23).
 - Former relevant young people: Young people aged 18 to 21, or 24 if they started a designated education course before the age of 21 and were previously either eligible or relevant, or both. (Section 23C).
3. Those who qualify are young people aged 16 to 21 who were looked after for less than thirteen weeks (after his or her 14th birthday), but more than twenty four hours after the age of 16 (Respite Care, Special Guardianships Orders, young people who have returned home [Section 20] for more than six months and young people who have been living at home for more than six months and his or her Section 31 Care Order is discharged) are entitled to advice, assistance and guidance. The aim of providing an advice, assistance and guidance service is to supplement the primary source of support that should come from the family with a ‘safety net’. In situations where a 16 and 17 year old qualifying young person is unable to remain living at home before his or her 18th birthday they revert to, or become “a relevant young person”.
4. Care leavers are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion as they usually make the transition to adulthood sooner than most young people. The Leaving Care Grant provides them with the secure financial support that any parent would usually afford their child. Appendix A outlines the proposed payments accounting for those elements required as universal to all care leavers and elements requiring support based on assessed need.

5. Governance suggests that payments should mirror the types of support that families would usually provide. The policy should be flexible in its application and recognise the needs of the young person as an individual as they progress into adulthood, employment, training and further education.
6. Councils have a duty to support Looked After Children and care leavers to manage their financial resources and money, gradually helping them to take responsibility for themselves, but recognising that taking risks, making mistakes and needing second chances are all elements of that journey that most young people obtain support from their parents to address.

Comments

7. *Comments from the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be inserted after its meeting on 6 September 2011.*

Requirements

8. It is a statutory requirement that the Council begins to consider independence preparation for young people from the age of 16 onwards. This can continue up to the age of 25 years in some cases pending the young person's education, employment and training status. This provision is monitored through robust care planning processes and each young person will have an individual assessment made.
9. Young people and their support workers will be made fully aware of the financial support and entitlements that they will be able to access during their transition to adulthood.
10. Young people and those working with them will be made aware that a clear and transparent policy is in place and that it sets out what entitlements young people have, what conditions are attached to these and how any payments will be made.
11. The Schedule of Payments will set out how the Council, as a "good corporate parent", will assist the young people with financial support to achieve economic well being and make a positive and successful transition to adulthood. It will be reviewed every year.
12. As an absolute minimum, the support will provide a leaving care maintenance allowance (equivalent to the prevailing Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance benefit rate) and the provision of a suitable and appropriate placement/accommodation or the financial means to secure the accommodation (up to the young persons 18th Birthday). Care leavers are not able to access any public funding through the benefits system until 18 years old.
13. The policy for payments will be accessible and be easily understood by young people. It will be published on the Council's website and a copy given to all Looked After Children and care leavers. Young people should be consulted with and asked to assist in the development of age appropriate versions of the publication of the published payments policy.

14. The published payments policy should set out how the Council will support the young person to enhance their life chances and make a successful transition to adulthood in collaboration with all of the corporate parenting partners including education and health.

Vulnerable Groups

15. Support will be available for specific groups of care leavers such as lone parents, detained young people in custody or hospital, disabled young people and unaccompanied asylum seeker children. Young people who may be in receipt of means tested benefits as a result of their vulnerability may also seek to change their entitlements.
16. Entitlements to young people, who have been placed at home, or returned home in a planned or emergency manner, will also be addressed in the context of their presenting legal status.

Governance

17. The policy should provide equity, and, in order to be transparent and ensure fair access, should be reviewed every year and be open to independent audit and scrutiny, including the Children In Care Council.

Recommendations

18. The Executive is recommended to agree:
 - a) The policy for financial support for transition to adulthood for care leavers;
 - b) That authority for introducing any minor amendments required as a result of the annual consultation with care leavers and the Children in Care Council is delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Children's Services.

Appendices:

Appendix A – A Financial Model for Care Leavers to Support Their Transition to Adulthood

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

Bedfordshire Financial Policy 2008/2009

Location of Papers:

Priory House, Chicksands

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APPENDIX A - Financial Model for Care Leavers to support their transition to adulthood

Item	Current policy	Proposed policy		Comment
Setting up home allowance - independent living	£1,786.00	£1,786.00		For setting up home including months rent and deposits for accommodation. Basic home care needs hoover, cooker, ironing board etc.
Winter clothing allowance per annum	£120.00	£120.00		Currently payable to 21/24 years of age.
Clothing allowance per calendar month up to 18 years of age.	£240.00	£240.00		Up to 18 years.
Birthday Allowance at 18 and 21 years	£100.00	£300.00		To pay each birthday, 16 to 21 years of age if living independently
Transition at 18 years	£53.85	£53.85		This is the amount that a young person could claim in benefits if not a Looked After Child
Cultural Festival allowance to 21 years of age	£20.00	£20.00		This would be assessed against known cultural designations
Access to education £300.00	£300.00	£300.00		Pending assessment and young persons engagement in education. The £300 would be a maximum
Cost of obtaining key document	£100.00	£100.00		Based on need
Computer Grant	£500.00	£500.00		Based on assessed need.
Driving Lessons, theory test, licence and test	up to £150.00	up to £150.00		Payment will match 5 driving lessons to young persons' own contribution and £62.00 for driving test, £31.00 for theory test and £50.00 for provisional driving licence. The young person must save for 10 lessons before seeking assistance. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children status must be checked.
Activities in relation to peer group	£300.00	£300.00		Single annual payment on assessed need

Winter heating allowance per annum	£60.00	£300.00		£300.00 paid for first year of independent living.
College Incentive per annum	£400.00	£400.00		Education Maintenance Allowance is no longer current but schools with 6th forms and FE providers are able to provide support from the grant they receive from the Young People's Learning Agency. Support will be on assessed need based on whether the young person has exploited all other routes of support.
Higher Education needs	£5,000.00	£5,000.00		This is a maximum amount per academic year of the course taking into account grant/bursary arrangements.
Special needs	This is cost as per item	This is cost as per item		Individual payments for equipment due to special learning need
Emergency payments per annum	£60.00	£60.00		Maximum amount payable for emergency situations, e.g. lost cash etc., to 18 years only
Family contact	Assessed need	Actual amount required		Assessment of travel costs to maintain family contact
Child maternity grant	Assessed need	Actual amount required		Assessment of need following conception and birth
Disabled students allowance	Assessed need	as required		Individual payments for equipment or specialist travel due to disability
Counselling	Assessed need	as required		Mental health services will usually provide
Interpreters	Assessed need	Automatic entitlement where english not preferred language		Individual assessment of need
Family Tracing	Assessed need	Referral to Red Cross and possible need for interpreter		Individual assessment of the amount of support required

Legal appointments	Assessed need	All appointments will be supported in evidence and needs assessed		Individual assessment of the amount of support required up to 18 years

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Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 6 September 2011
Subject: Annual Reports for the Adoption Service, Fostering Service and Private Fostering Provision
Report of: Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services
Summary: The report outlines the new statutory framework regarding annual reports and summarises key points contained within the reports.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Catherine Parry, Assistant Director Children's Services Operations
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Central Bedfordshire Council's Strategic Plan 2009-11 Priority 2 – Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people.

The Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 Priority 2 – Protecting children and keeping them safe.

Adoption and fostering are key statutory services to Looked After Children.

Private fostering is a statutory child protection function ensuring that children living away from home in private arrangements are safe and in suitable placements.

Financial:

Adoption and fostering within Children's Services has an annual budget of £5.015 million, including income from Bedford Borough Council under the shared service arrangement. There are no new financial considerations arising from the annual reports.

Legal:

Regulations, associated statutory guidance and national minimum standards outlines the requirement to report to Members on the management and outcomes of the services, in order that they can satisfy themselves that the services are effective and achieving good outcomes for children.

Risk Management:

Regulatory risks: Failure to report would be a breach of national minimum standards.

Child protection risks: Failure to assess risk may lead to unfavourable outcomes.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

There are no staffing issues.

Equalities/Human Rights:

Adoption, fostering and private fostering affects all sectors of communities.

Community Safety:

There are no community safety issues.

Sustainability:

There are no sustainability issues.

RECOMMENDATION:

that the Committee comments on the statutory reports.

Background

1. The Children Act 2004, Care Standards Act 2000 and associated relevant regulations and national minimum standards require local authority adoption services, fostering services and private fostering provision to report regularly on the operation of the services. The service specific regulations outline the frequency of reporting and to whom the reports must be submitted.
2. The Adoption and Fostering Service is a shared service hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council. Annual reports contain information activity in respect of both Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils. This report will also be provided to Bedford Borough.

Adoption Service

3. The Adoption Service is required to report at six-monthly intervals. In Central Bedfordshire Council, this will be to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. An annual report will be presented by the end of June each year covering the preceding April to March period. In addition a six-monthly briefing update will be produced by the end of October each year and presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel. As these new regulations have just been made the sequence is late this year.
4. In 2010–11 there was a significant increase in the number of children whose cases were presented to the Adoption Panel for a recommendation as to whether adoption should be the plan for the child. This was for 27 children, an increase of 14 over the previous 12 months. 11 households were approved as adopters and matches of children to adopters were made.
5. Five Adoption Orders were granted in respect of looked after children in Central Bedfordshire Council, with a further two being granted Special Guardianship.
6. As of 31 March 2011, 41 adopted children and their families who were in receipt of support. This is no change to the average number of cases in the previous year. In addition contact plans were being made on behalf of 204 children. Each child placed for adoption is required to have a contact plan in relation to their birth family, which usually involves supporting the periodic exchange of letters or information between adoptive and birth families.
7. There were 80 referrals from adult adoptees and their birth relatives. Post adoption support in the form of tracing birth records, counselling and practical advice during tracing, an intermediary service and pre and post reunion support was provided.

Fostering Service

8. A report to Members is required at three monthly intervals. This will be achieved by production of an annual report to this Committee by the end of June each year covering the April to March period. In addition, three-monthly updates will be presented at the end of July, October and January each year to the Corporate Parenting Panel.
9. 27 new fostering households were approved during 2010-11. At 31 March 2011 there were a total of 121 fostering households offering various types of foster placements. These included long term/permanent placements, short term or emergency provision, specialist Youth Care placements for young people aged 10 years and over with complex needs, respite placements and Family Link placements offering short breaks to children with disabilities.

10. 121 children were placed in full-time foster placements at the end of March 2011, of whom 59 were looked after by Central Bedfordshire Council. Across both Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council, there have been 159 referrals for placements; 74 with carers approved by Central Bedfordshire Council, 35 placed in independent fostering agencies, eight placed in residential units and the remainder who did not become looked after by either Council.
11. The number of enquiries from members of the public interested in becoming foster carers rose from 221 in 2009-10 to 260 in 2010-11. All enquiries received prompt information and a visit from a social worker. From these enquires 45 households made formal application to become a foster carer.
12. Over the course of the year 118 training activities were provided for foster carers on 46 topics. 570 delegates attended. A range of support was provided to foster carers, including regular supervision from a social worker, support groups, peer mentoring and out-of-hours telephone support.

Private Fostering Provision

13. An annual report in respect of private fostering is required by regulation to be provided to the Director of Children's Services and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). As these reports are produced six monthly, the report to cover April to September 2011 is scheduled to be presented to the LSCB Strategic Boards for both Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils in October 2011. When agreed, the annual report will also be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information.
14. The Council has a duty to publicise the requirement for it to be notified of any private fostering arrangements in its area. Notifications have to be responded to within seven working days by way of a visit to the household and the start of an assessment as to the suitability of the arrangement. The child and family are then visited at least six-weekly for the duration of the arrangement.
15. There were 10 new notifications in Central Bedfordshire Council area during April 2010 to March 2011. Nine were visited within seven working days. There were legitimate reasons why the final visit did not meet target. Four private fostering arrangements were ongoing at 31 March 2011. Most children were over 10 years of age and were of white British origin.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Adoption Agency Annual Report
Appendix B – Fostering Agency Annual Report
Appendix C – Private Fostering Annual Report

Location of papers:

Priory House, Chicksands



Central Bedfordshire Council
and Bedford Borough Council
working together

Adoption Agency

Annual Report

**For the period
2010/2011**



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FOREWORD

On 1st April 2009 the new unitary arrangement came into being. Bedfordshire County Council ceased to be, and two new councils emerged – Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils.

From this date, Adoption and Fostering became a shared service, hosted by Central Bedfordshire, but serving both of the new councils. Over the last year our focus has continued to be building on the positive work and outcomes achieved over the past three years for the children of both Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough. We believe that over the past year we have continued to provide an excellent service to those children, adults and families affected in some way by adoption.

This report is provided as part of the monitoring of the adoption agency required under the Local Authority Adoption Service Regulations 2003 and National Minimum Standards 2011. This annual report will be presented to the Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2011 and a six monthly update report will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

June 2011

SECTION 1

1.0 - INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 This report describes the activity of Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils' Adoption Agencies during the period 1st April, 2010 to 31st March, 2011, noting their achievements, clarifying the remit and focus of their work and identifying recommendations for the development of the service.

1.1 STAFFING / SERVICE STRUCTURE

1.1.1 Staffing and Service Structure

- 1.1.2 The Adoption and Permanence Support Team is currently made up of the following staff as of 31st March 2011

- 1 x full time Team Manager
- 1 x full time Deputy Team Manager
- 4 x Senior Practitioners (three full time equivalent)
- 8 x Social Workers (full time equivalent)
- 3.5 x Social Work Assistants (three full time equivalent / .5 part time)
- 0.5 x Administrator for Letter-box contact
- 1 x Lifestory Senior Practitioner

There have been some changes during this period with a new Team Manager in post from September 2010, one full time social worker retiring and 3 social worker assistants on maternity leave.

1.2 THE ADOPTION PANEL

- 1.2.1 The Adoption Panel usually meets every month of the year, with an occasional extraordinary panel as and when required. There was one extra panel during 2010/2011. During this period the Panel met on 13 occasions.

1.3 ADOPTION PANEL MEMBERSHIP

- 1.3.1 As at 31st March 2011 the Adoption Panel membership was as follows:

Panel Chair	Independent
Independent	Adoptive Mother
Independent	Adoptive Father
Independent	Birth Parent of an Adopted Child
Social Work Member	Fostering Team Manager
Social Work Member	Head of Service for Looked After Children, Leaving & After Care & Asylum (Vice Chair) (BBC)
Educational Psychologist (Vice Chair)	Educational Psychologist (BBC)
Medical Adviser	Consultant Community Paediatrician

Elected Member	Central Bedfordshire Council
Independent	Adopted Person
Elected Member	BBC - Vacancy

1.3.2 In attendance but non voting members are:

Professional Adviser	
Panel Secretary	

1.3.3 The Legal Adviser to the Panel gives advice in writing in advance of Panel meetings.

1.3.4 As from 1st April 2009, the Adoption Panel became a Joint Adoption Panel shared between the two new unitary authorities – Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils. This means that from 1st April 2009 there were vacancies for two elected members on the Panel, one from each new unitary authority. There remains a vacancy for an elected member for Bedford Borough Council.

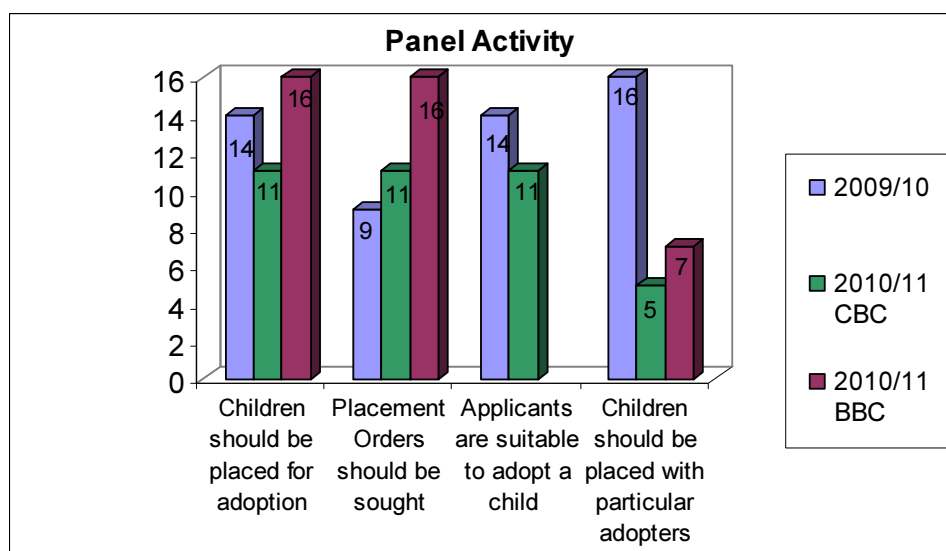
1.4 PANEL ACTIVITY

1.4.1 In 2010/2011 the Adoption Panel met 13 times and recommended that 27 children should be placed for adoption. Of these 11 were from Central Bedfordshire and 16 from Bedford Borough. This compares to 14 children in 2009/10 and represents a significant increase. The Panel also recommended that Placement Orders should be sought in relation to 27 children. Of these 11 were from Central Bedfordshire and 16 were from Bedford Borough. This compares to 9 in 2009/10.

1.4.2 In relation to approvals, the Panel recommended that 11 households were suitable to adopt a child (of these applicants, all attended the panel). This compares to 14 households in 2009/10.

1.4.3 In terms of matching, the panel recommended that 12 children should be placed with particular adopters. Of these 5 were from Central Bedfordshire and 7 from Bedford Borough. This compares to 16 children in 2009/10.

1.4.4 In addition to this, one child was placed for adoption with existing foster carers.



1.5 PANEL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

1.5.1 Over the past 12 months, the following training has been provided to the Panel Members:

April 2010	Attachment Style Interviews (Bitesize)
May 2010	Siblings – Assessment and Planning (Full day training)
January 2011	Gypsy & Roma Cultures (Bitesize)
February 2011	Adoption Preparation Training (Bitesize)

1.5.2 The Panel Adviser has devised a comprehensive training programme for the coming year which will include a full day training on Safeguarding and Allegations in Fostering and Pre-Adoptive Placements in June 2011, a closer look at aspects of preparation training, support services post adoption and a workshop with the “Teenage Adoption Panel” in August.

1.6 PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON ADOPTION

1.6.1 Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils have a single point of contact to the service through a freephone line. A regularly updated information pack outlining the services available and procedures for prospective adopters is sent within 24 hours to those expressing an interest in adoption.

1.6.2 Bi-monthly Information Evenings are held by the Adoption and Permanence Support Team where current information on the needs of children requiring adoption and the process of assessment is given to those people who are interested in becoming prospective adopters. It is a legal requirement for the agency to ensure that prospective adopters are offered the opportunity to attend an Information Evening within 8 weeks of their enquiry to the team.

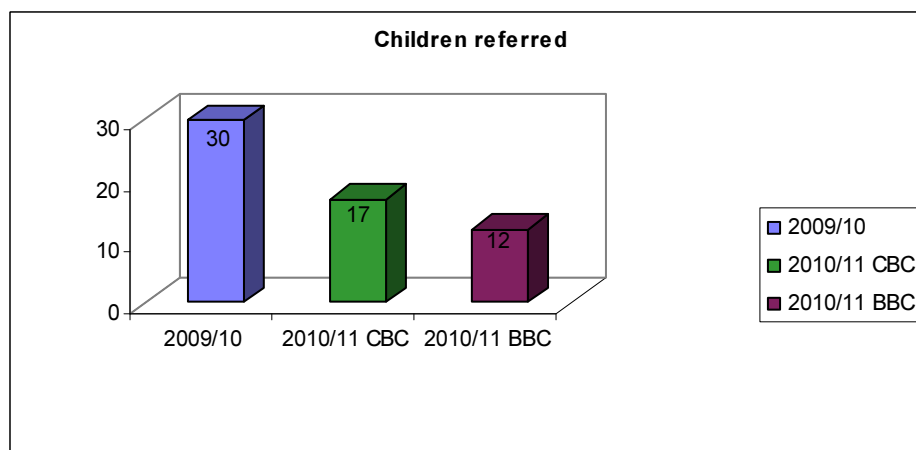
1.6.3 Preliminary counselling discussions in the form of an initial interview with prospective adopters are offered by Adoption Social Workers, supported by the Adoption Manager to enable enquirers to decide whether to pursue their enquiry. This counselling session also enables the Adoption Agency to decide whether to accept an application and whether this is an assessment which should be prioritised as a likely resource for children awaiting adoption.

1.6.4 Statistics in relation to enquiries received are included later in this report.

SECTION 2 – CHILDREN AND ADOPTION

2.0 – CHILDREN REFERRED FOR ADOPTION

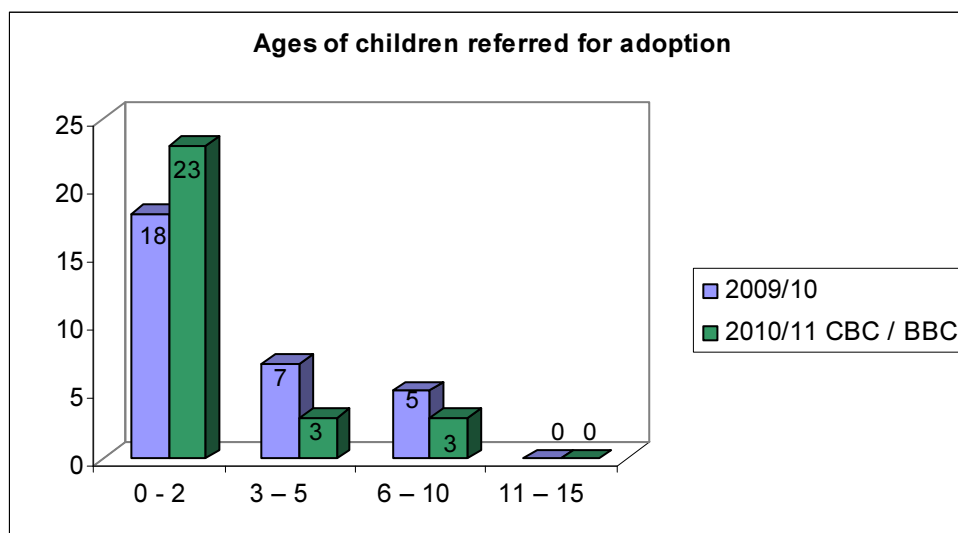
2.0.1 In 2010/11, there were 29 children referred to the service for adoption. Of these, 17 were from Central Bedfordshire and 12 from Bedford Borough. This compares to 30 children in 2009/2010 (22 of whom were from Central Bedfordshire and 8 from Bedford Borough).

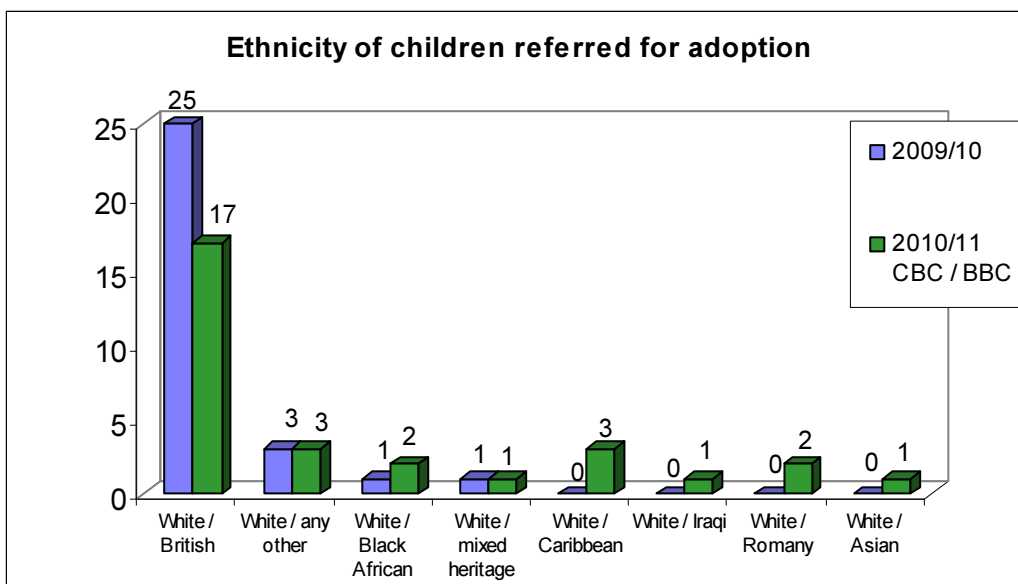
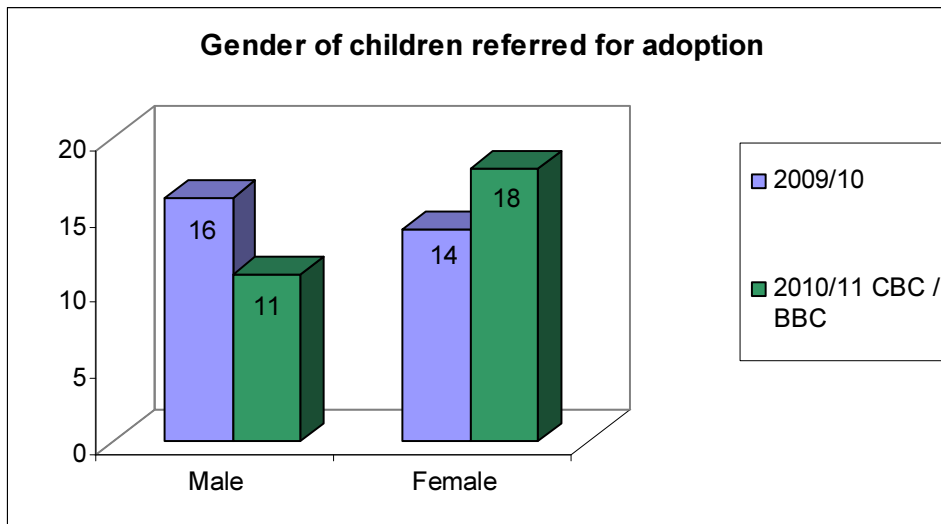


2.1 – AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN REFERRED FOR ADOPTION 2010/2011

2.1.1 As can be seen from the figures below, the majority of children referred for adoption were under the age of 5 years. This was also the case in 2009/2010. There were slightly more girls than boys referred to the service in 2010/2011 (18 girls and 11 boys). Of the 29 children referred for adoption 16 were from White / British, 3 were White / any other backgrounds, 2 children were White / Black African, 1 was White / mixed heritage - father's ethnicity unknown, 3 were White / Caribbean, 1 was White / Iraqi, 2 were White / Romany Traveller and 1 was White / Asian.

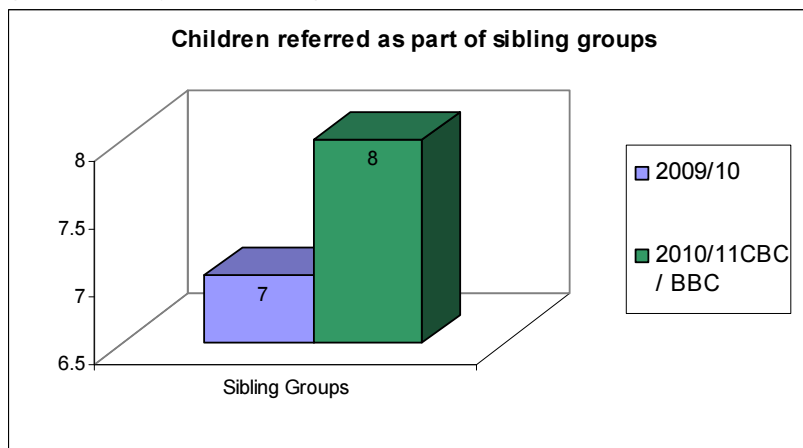
- 0 – 2 years - 23 children (15 girls and 8 boys)
- 3 – 5 years - 3 children (1 girl and 2 boys)
- 6 – 10 years - 3 children (2 girls and 1 boy)
- 11 – 15 years - 0 children



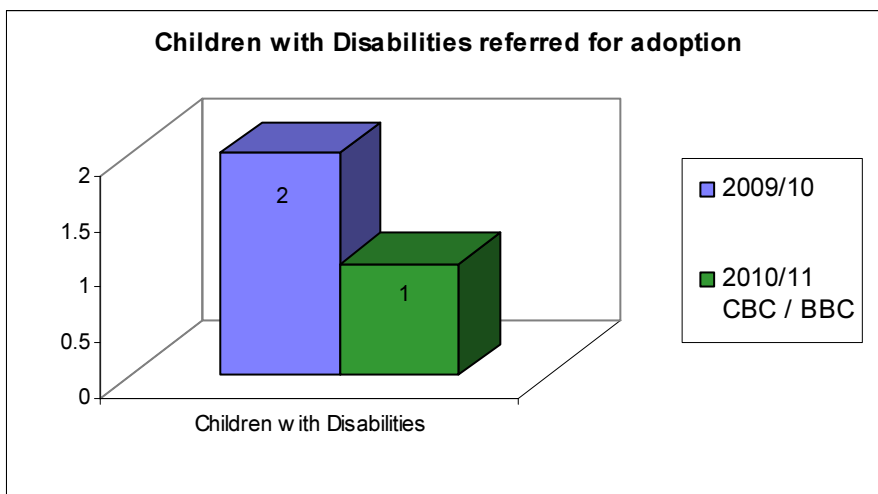


2.2 SIBLING GROUPS OF CHILDREN REFERRED FOR ADOPTION

2.2.1 The service received referrals for 8 sibling groups during the year 2010/2011. This compares to 7 sibling groups in 2009/2010. Placing large sibling groups together can be challenging, especially when the group contains older children.



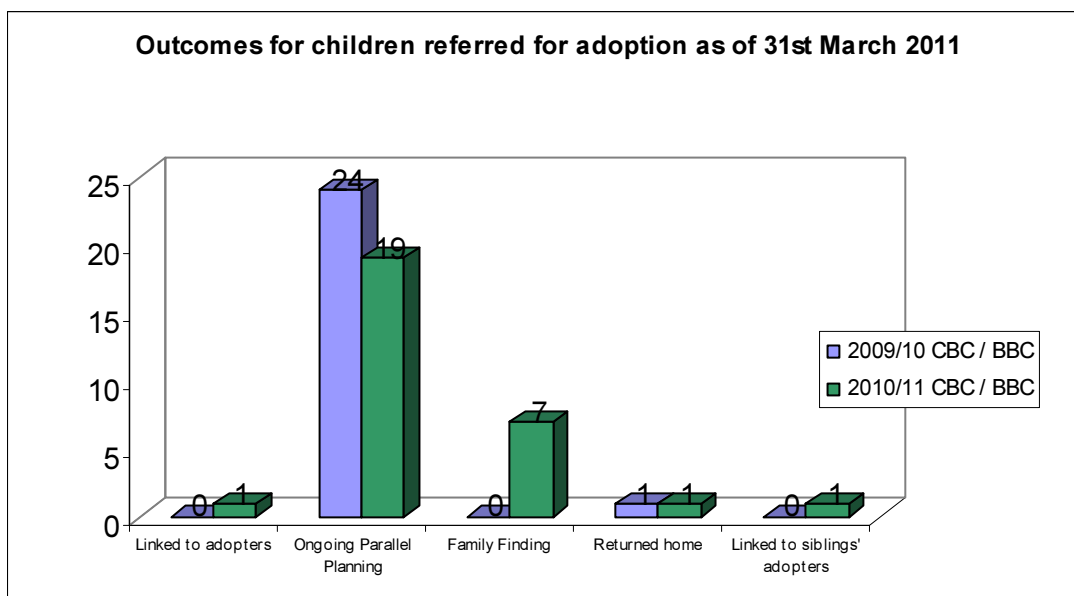
2.3 – CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES REFERRED FOR ADOPTION IN 2010/2011



2.3.1 The service received 1 referral for a child with a disability during 2010/2011. This was a slight decrease in the figures from 2009/2010, when there were 2 referrals received for children with disabilities.

2.4 OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN REFERRED FOR ADOPTION

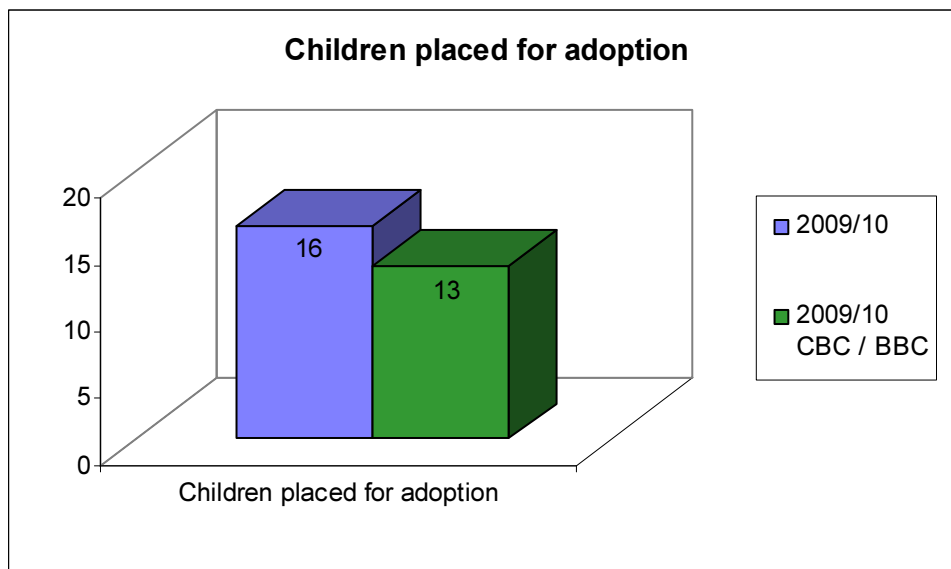
2.4.1 Of the 29 children referred for possible adoption in 2010/2011, only 1 was placed for adoption by March 2011. 1 child was returned home to her birth parents, 1 child's siblings' adopters were in the process of being re-assessed as prospective carers for her. In the case of 7 children the team were actively family finding as of 31st March 2011 and as at the time of writing in June 2011, 7 have already been "matched". The remaining 19 children were still subject to care proceedings as at 31st March 2011. Permanence planning was in place with potential adopters beginning to be identified in order to expedite placements once Placement Orders were granted.



- 2.4.2 In order to avoid case drift for children, social workers are asked to refer children for family finding when adoption is a possible outcome for that child. This does not mean that all children referred will subsequently be adopted, but ensures that robust planning is considered as part of a child's care plan. In many cases, children safely return to their families or are placed with extended family members under other Orders, such as Special Guardianship.
- 2.4.3 In the year 2010/2011 we have seen a large number of children where Care Proceedings have taken much longer than expected, often due to viability assessments of family members taking place consecutively.

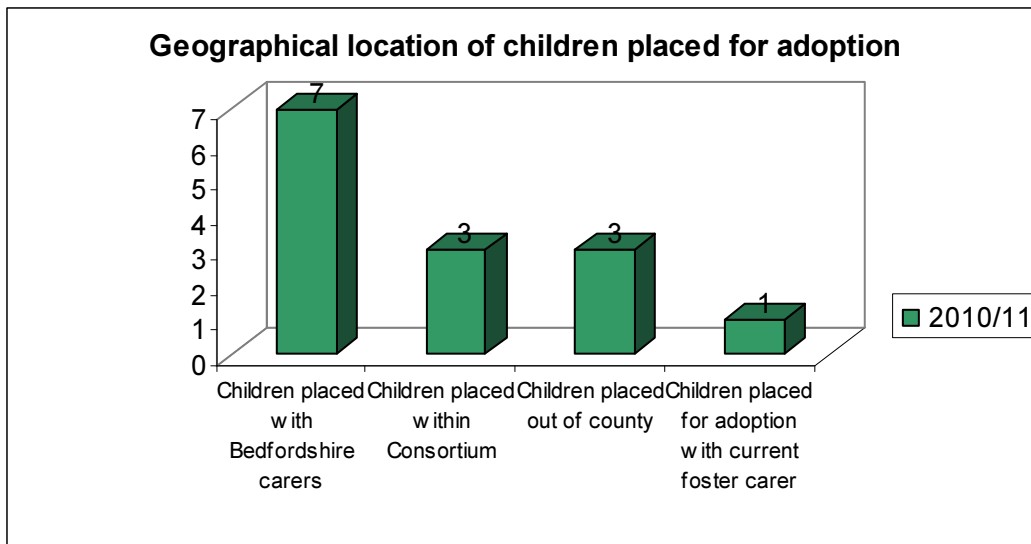
2.5 – PLACEMENTS OF CHILDREN

- 2.5.1 Members of the Adoption Team were active in facilitating the placements of the 13 children placed for adoption in 2010/2011. This compares to the placement of 16 children in the previous year.
- 2.5.2 There were 3 sibling groups placed for adoption during 2010/2011. Additionally 1 child was able to join a sibling who had already been adopted.



2.6 – GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION (INTER-AGENCY VERSUS BEDFORDSHIRE)

- 2.6.1 Of the 13 children placed for adoption in 2010/2011, 7 were placed with adopters assessed and approved by Bedfordshire. 1 sibling group and 1 single child were placed with adopters from the Consortium. Another sibling group and single child were placed out of county and 1 child was placed for adoption with his foster carers.



2.7 – ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION 2010/2011

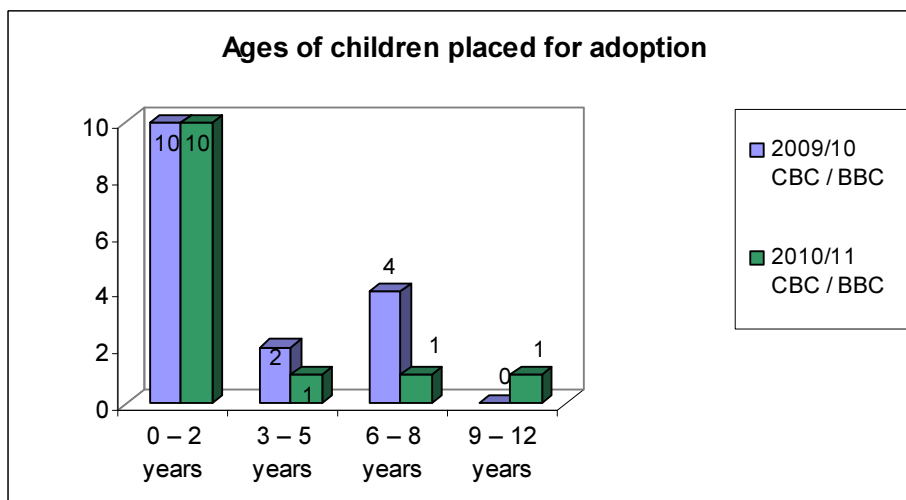
2.7.1 Of the 13 children placed for adoption in the year 2010/2011, 10 were White / British, 2 were of White / British / Irish Traveller heritage and 1 child was of Polish heritage.

2.8 – AGES OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION 2010/2011

2.8.1 Of the 13 children placed for adoption in 2010/2011, 3 were aged three and above. 10 out of the 13 were aged 2 years or under. The age of a child at placement is the single most important variable in predicting a successful outcome, the younger the child at placement, the higher the likelihood of success.

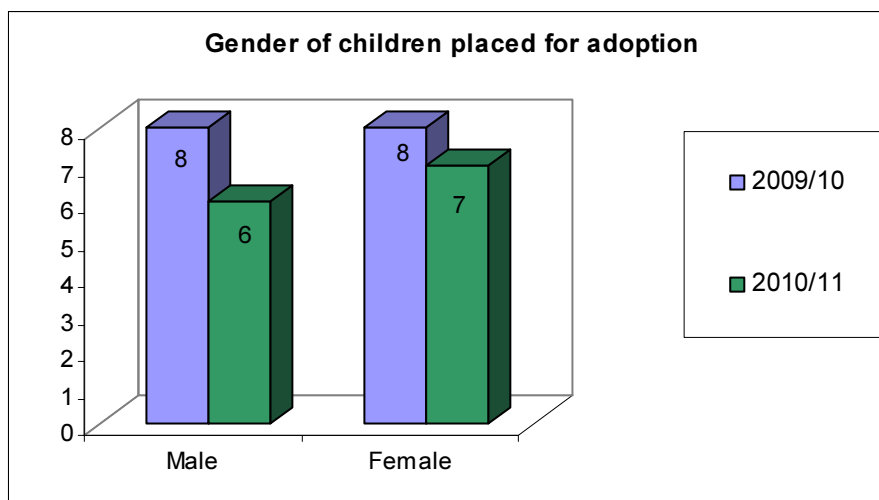
2010/2011

0 – 2 years	10
3 – 5 years	1
6 – 8 years	1
9 – 12 years	1



2.9 – GENDER OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION 2010/2011

- 2.9.1 Of the 13 children placed for adoption in 2010/2011, 7 were female and 6 were male. Of these in Central Bedfordshire there were 3 females and 2 males placed for adoption and in Bedford Borough, there were 4 females and 4 males.



2.10 – ADOPTION ORDERS / SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS 2010/2011

- 2.10.1 Adoption Orders were made in respect of 16 children during the period 1st April 2010 – 31st March 2011. Of these 5 were for children from Central Bedfordshire and 11 from Bedford Borough. Special Guardianship Orders were made in respect of 13 children. Of these 2 were from Central Bedfordshire and 11 from Bedford Borough.

SECTION 3 - ADOPTERS

3.0 – THE WORK OF THE ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE SUPPORT TEAM

- 3.0.1 Every child looked after who may need a new permanent family has a social worker from the Adoption and Permanence Support Team allocated to take lead responsibility for finding a suitable family. Family Finding Social Workers attend regular permanence planning meetings with other professionals involved with the child. For those children for whom a return to the care of his / her parents or a member of the extended family is not possible, adoption or permanent fostering will need to be the plan. Family Finding Social Workers are active in identifying not just adoptive families, but also foster families, as appropriate to the needs of the child. This helps ensure that permanence is achieved for all children in a timely manner.

3.1 – ADVERTISING AND RECRUITMENT OF FAMILIES

- 3.1.1 It has not been possible to place all of Bedfordshire children with families assessed and recruited by Bedfordshire. This is in part due to the needs of the individual children, but also in some instances because they cannot be placed safely within the area. During the year it was therefore decided to actively recruit adopters and so a “drop in” was held in November, alongside adverts in local newspapers, highlighting the need for adopters who can consider

children who are older, in sibling groups, have specific needs or are from mixed heritage backgrounds. This event brought forward five sets of potential adopters on the evening, however, may also have contributed to increased numbers attending the open evenings in December and February.

3.2 – THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS OF PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS: ENQUIRIES, ASSESSMENTS AND APPROVALS

- 3.2.1 All assessments are carried out in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Adoption (Care Standards Act 2000) and the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 and their Statutory and Practice Guidance. All prospective adopters are required to undertake a training programme as part of the preparation and assessment process and have a review of their assessment conducted by a Manager or Senior Practitioner of the Adoption and Permanence Support Team.
- 3.2.2 The number of enquiries from prospective adopters has decreased slightly from 121 enquiries in 2009/2010 to 104 in 2010/2011. All enquirers were invited to attend information evenings and sent information packs. 70 households attended with 38 households being interviewed. We accepted 18 applicants of whom 11 went on to be approved.
- 3.2.3 Of the adopters approved the majority of them were White / British, apart from two couples where in one case one partner was Colombian and in another one partner was Black / Caribbean.

3.3 – ETHNICITY OF ADOPTERS

- 3.3.1 2 of the 104 enquiries were referred straight to PACT and 2 to other agencies. (Parents and Children Together – PACT – are contracted to provide an adoption service for adopters wishing to adopt from abroad). Of the remaining 100 enquiries, 8 enquiries were of an Asian background, 3 of a Black / African and 6 were of a White / British / European background. 1 couple were of White / British and South American backgrounds. In the past year, all but 3 of the children placed for adoption by the service have been White / British, 1 was White / European and 2 were of Irish Travelling heritage.

3.4 – POST APPROVAL SUPPORT

- 3.4.1 All approved prospective adopters are supported by a Social Worker from the Adoption and Permanence Support Team from approval, through the process of placement of children, to the making of an Adoption Order.
- 3.4.2 Once an Adoption Order has been made, adopters can continue to access support or request an assessment of their additional support needs through the Adoption and Permanence Support Team.

3.5 – TRAINING FOR ADOPTERS

- 3.5.1 Social Workers from the Adoption and Fostering Service provide the preparation training for adopters. Adopters also have access to the full training programme offered to the Agency's foster carers and adopters. This ongoing training is available to both approved adopters as well as to adoptive parents at any point after an Adoption Order has been granted.
- 3.5.2 During the year April 2010 to March 2011 a four day preparation training programme was held on four occasions and was attended by 14 households, compared to 18 households during 2009/2010.
- 3.5.3 The training covered a variety of topics including:
- The Adoption Process
 - Agency Policy / Legislation
 - Valuing Diversity
 - Disability Awareness
 - Child Development
 - Attachment and Resilience
 - Health and Education
 - Abuse
 - Memories, Loss and Separation
 - Lifestory work
 - Adoption Support Team – Their work (including Contact and Adoption Support)
 - Disruptions
 - Matching
- 3.5.4 Training is evaluated at the end of each programme, and again when prospective adopters attend Adoption Panel. The feedback to Panel during the past 12 months has been universally positive.
- 3.5.5 The Team re-evaluated the preparation training programme in December 2010, in response to evaluation from attendees. As a consequence it was decided that the format would include further experiential activities, such as "Loving Waters", which is an attachment exercise and the "String Exercise", which illustrates children's connections and relationships. Subsequent evaluation forms from attendees shows that such experiential exercises are particularly valued and understood by prospective adopters.

SECTION 4 – ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES

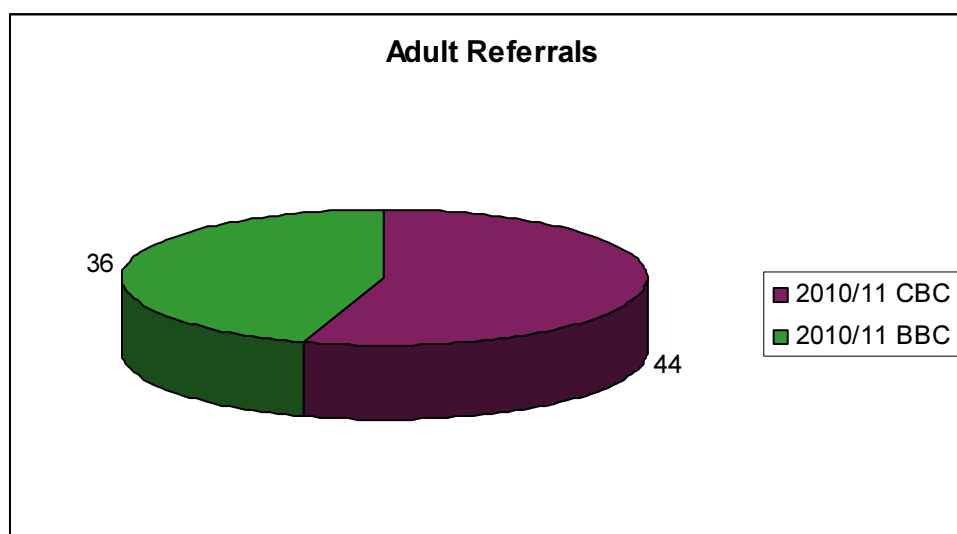
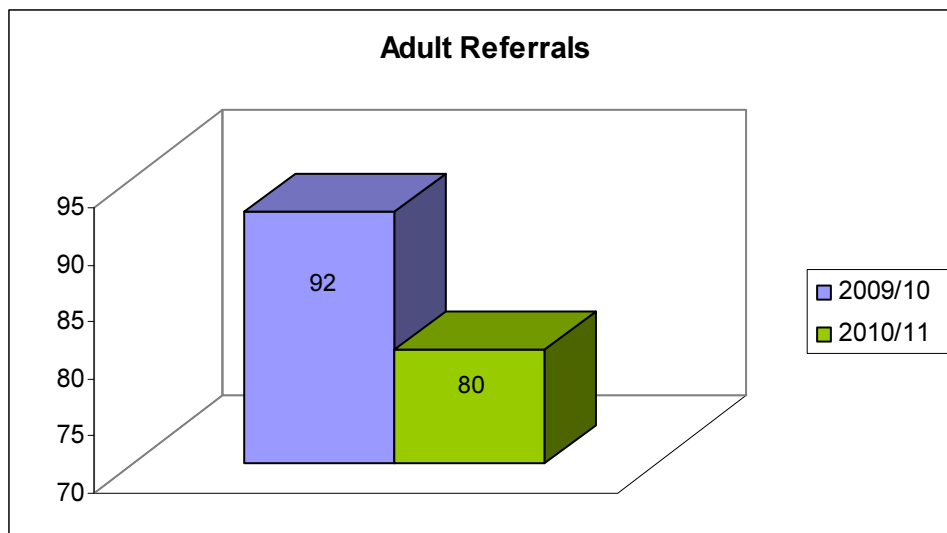
4.0 – POST ADOPTION SUPPORT TO FAMILIES

- 4.0.1 The Adoption and Children Act 2002 established the right of adopted families to request an assessment of their adoption support needs. These families either self-refer or come to the attention of the department via another agency. In such instances the team either provides direct social work support or where a specific need is identified, a specialist service may be commissioned.
- 4.0.2 As of the 31st March 2011, the team were working directly with 41 adopted children and their families who were in need of support. Of these 20 were from Central Bedfordshire and 21 from Bedford Borough. This compares to 49 children, 25 from Central Bedfordshire and 24 from Bedford Borough on 31st March 2010. Between 1st April 2010 and the 31st March 2011 the team received a total of 25 referrals for adoption support, 11 from Central Bedfordshire and 14 from Bedford Borough.

- 4.0.3 The team have a mailing list of 130 adoptive families from Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough who are sent newsletters, invitations to support groups for adoptive parents and family days, all provided by Adoption UK. They are also sent information about training events provided by the Adoption and Fostering Service.
- 4.0.4 All new adoption support referrals are offered an Adoption UK Buddy and access to the above services. The Adoption & Permanence team also provide groups for adopted children and their families, including Talking About Adoption workshops. All adoption support referrals have an assessment of need and adoption support plan upon request.
- 4.0.3 Each child placed for adoption is required to have a contact plan in relation to their birth family. The service currently manages contact plans on behalf of 204 children (compared to 193 children in 2009/2010), many of which have required direct intervention to support all the parties involved in the contact arrangements, i.e. adopted children and young people, their adoptive parents and their birth families.

4.1 – SERVICES TO ADOPTED ADULTS / BIRTH RELATIVES

- 4.1.1 Social Workers in the Adoption Support Team provide an advice and counselling service to adopted people seeking information and access to their birth records. For all residents of Bedfordshire, a counselling service is offered and information is provided to other local authorities who are supporting people in their areas who were adopted through Bedfordshire. Specific leaflets outlining this service are available to enquirers through the Adoption Duty Desk.
- 4.1.2 Not only is an initial counselling interview offered to those seeking birth records, but work is undertaken to locate records held by other Adoption Agencies. Counselling and practical advice during tracing, an intermediary service and pre and post reunion support are also available to adopted adults and their birth relatives.
- 4.1.3 Birth relatives seeking to make contact with adopted adults are offered information and advice and an intermediary service. In the case of birth relatives, they are not given any identifying information about the adopted person.
- 4.1.4 In the period 2010/2011 there were 80 referrals from adult adoptees and their birth parents who were seeking Post Adoption counselling support.
- 4.1.5 Of the 80 adult referrals received during 2010/2011, 44 came from Central Bedfordshire, 36 from Bedford Borough. 59 were adopted adults and 21 were birth relatives.



4.2 – DISRUPTED ADOPTIONS

4.2.1 Nationally the disruption rate pre Adoption Order is in the region of 20%. After 3 years with no disruptions the placement of one child aged 12 years disrupted post order in the year 2009/10. There were no disruptions again in 2010/11 of children placed by the two local authorities. This low figure reflects the care given to the matching process between children and adoptive families, the resilience and commitment of adoptive parents and the support given to them and the children in the critical early months of placements.

SECTION 5 – OTHER ACTIVITIES

5.0 – INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTION

5.0.1 Inter-Country adoption has become increasingly more complex in terms of the legal requirements of those countries that permit children to be placed for adoption outside of their country of origin. In recognition of this and given the specialist knowledge and expertise which this work demands, the Adoption Agency has a Service Level Agreement (S.L.A.) with a voluntary adoption agency based in Reading, Parents and Children Together (PACT), which is recognised as being a leading agency in this area of work, to provide this service on its behalf.

- 5.0.2 Families who are normally resident in Bedfordshire wishing to adopt children from overseas are referred to PACT who will provide information and preparation training and will assess and approve families wishing to adopt children from overseas.
- 5.0.3 Families are required to pay for their assessment in accordance with Regulations but Bedfordshire funds all of the initial counselling interviews.
- 5.0.4 During 2010/2011 there were 6 enquiries concerning inter-country adoption from residents of Central Bedfordshire or Bedford Borough, all of whom were referred straight to PACT. In addition PACT received a further 14 enquiries directly from people living in the Central Bedfordshire/Bedford Borough Council areas.

5.1 – THE ADOPTION CONSORTIUM

5.1.1 Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council Adoption Agency is a member of the local adoption consortium whose aim is to work in partnership to share information about children and approved adopters to make local matches and to share good practice. The other full members are:

- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Luton Borough Council
- Milton Keynes Council

Associate member: St Francis Children's Society

5.1.2 We are pleased to be able to assist other consortium members and in the year 2010/2011 there were 3 children from Bedford Borough placed with adopters approved outside of Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils. There were no children from within the consortium placed with adopters trained, assessed and approved by Bedfordshire.

5.2 – BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR ADOPTION AND FOSTERING (BAAF)

- 5.2.1 Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council Adoption Agencies are full members of BAAF which is a leading national voluntary organisation working to promote best practice for children separated from their birth families. It is the leading organisation representing local authority and voluntary adoption agencies and provides training courses, practice guidance, research material, and a consultation and advice service to all its members.
- 5.2.2 Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council Adoption Agency is also a member of the BAAF Eastern Region, a group which meets quarterly to discuss and exchange best practice in the East Anglia region. Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough are represented by the Agency Adviser, Adoption and Fostering.

5.3 – INDEPENDENT BIRTH FAMILY COUNSELLING

- 5.3.1 In 2008, the agency introduced an Independent Birth Family Counselling service. This is a pilot project and the service is provided by Adoption Plus Limited on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council Adoption Agency. Adoption Plus is an independent adoption support agency.
- 5.3.2 The aim of the service is to provide birth relatives of children who might be adopted an opportunity to talk about their feelings. Although the agency are involved in commissioning this service, Adoption Plus will undertake all counselling work with the birth family members and the counselling will be confidential unless concerns arise about the safety or welfare of a child.
- 5.3.3 The contract with Adoption Plus was renewed in 2010/2011. Currently this service is under review, but has been renewed until September 2011 when it is hoped that the service will go out to tender.

SECTION 6

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS, ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES
1ST APRIL 2010 – 31ST MARCH 2011

- 6.0.1 2010/11 has been the second year of the shared service for Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils. Our primary aim for the year was to continue to offer a quality service to the children living in Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils, as well as to their adoptive and birth families.
- 6.0.2 We consider this to have been a successful year for the service and one in which we have continued to develop our practice and meet challenges of offering creative and quality services that are cost effective.
- 6.0.3 Following on from the Ofsted Inspection of 2008 which judged the Adoption Service as “Outstanding”, we have continued to develop and review our practice.
- 6.0.4 2010/2011 saw further developments in the services offered by the Adoption Team:
- Support to adopted children and their families continues, both to individual families requesting a service and through delivery of more informal support.
 - Family and Friends days and Talking about Adoption workshops have been offered throughout the year and have been well attended.
 - The complexities around adopted young people and their birth relatives making contact through social networking sites has been discussed nationally. The team have presented two workshops to adopters to highlight this and offer support and guidance.
 - Groups for young people and a parent and toddler group continue to be offered and are becoming an established part of our service.
 - Following a successful pilot of a Teenage Adoption Panel this has become part of our preparation for adopters. Prospective adopters have found the opportunity to hear from, and be questioned by, adopted young people, both challenging and enlightening.
- 6.0.5 Overall in 2010/2011 there has been another significant increase in the number of children who have been referred for adoption – a trend which we believe will continue throughout 2011/2012 as statistics from April, May and June indicate. There has also been an increase in the number of complex post adoption support cases referred.
- 6.0.6 We continue to seek the most appropriate means of offering early intervention and low level support, as well as identifying and commissioning cost effective services with the aim of preventing adoption disruption.
- 6.0.7 To increase the number and variety of support events being made available to adopters, from workshops, children’s groups and social events. It is hoped that by engaging adopters in this way we will see a reduction in families only approaching us in difficulty.
- 6.0.8 In 2009/10 the adoption team recognised that adopters feeling confident in talking to their children about adoption and their “stories” is key to successful outcomes. Consequently we introduced a rolling programme of workshops for adopters of children of all ages, in order to

develop their confidence in this complex and sensitive area. The workshops also gave them the opportunity to share their experiences with other adoptive families. The feedback received from those attending has evidenced that such a service is invaluable to adoptive families.

- 6.0.9 In 2009/10 we also developed our group work with and for adopted children and young people. We now have a group for girls and a group for boys, who meet separately, but met together as a whole in the summer and at a Christmas party.
- 6.0.10 We have also reviewed the BAAF "Pushing the Boundaries of Assessment" publication and as a consequence, we are piloting a Youth Panel. This Panel is made up of adopted young people who will interview prospective adopters as part of the adoption assessment. This will be reviewed and may be incorporated into our assessment process in the future.

Please note this report will be updated in November 2011.

Report composed by:

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This information can be made available in
Large print and in other languages if required

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Central Bedfordshire Council
and Bedford Borough Council
working together

Fostering Agency

Annual Report

For the period
2010/2011

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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

- 1.0 As of 1st April 2009 Bedfordshire County Council ceased to exist, being replaced by 2 new unitary authorities, Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils. From the year 2009/2010, Central Bedfordshire has hosted the Fostering Service as a shared service on behalf of both new unitary authorities. This report describes the activity of Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council's Fostering Agency during the period 1st April, 2010 to 31st March, 2011, noting its achievements, clarifying the remit and focus of its work and identifying recommendations for the development of the service.
- 1.0.1 This report is provided as part of the monitoring of the Fostering Agency required under the Fostering Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards 2011. This report will be presented to the Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2011 and three monthly update reports will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

1.1 STAFFING/SERVICE STRUCTURE

- 1.1.1 The Fostering Service is currently made up of the following staff as of 31st March 2011:
- 1 x full time Team Manager
 - 1 x full time Deputy Team Manager
 - 8 x Senior Practitioners
 - 10 x Social Workers
 - 2 x Social Work Assistants
 - 1 x Duty Worker
- 1.1.2 The service is supported by 1 full time and 2 part time administrators.
- 1.1.3 The workforce is diverse and as at 31st March 2011 includes three staff members from black and minority ethnic groups. This level of diversity is valued when considering case allocation.
- 1.1.4 All staff have access to the Council's extensive learning and development programme, and can apply to attend external courses and conferences where appropriate. The service also provides diversity training for staff in order to improve its understanding of the needs of children from black and minority ethnic communities and enable them to meet their needs more appropriately.

SECTION 2 – THE PANELS

2.1 THE FOSTERING PANEL

- 2.1.1 The Fostering Panel meets every month of the year, with an occasional extraordinary panels as and when required.
- 2.1.2 The Fostering Panel considers applications from prospective foster carers and makes recommendations as to their approval. The panel also considers the first annual review of foster carers, as well as any change or termination of approval. The Panel is advised of

any exemptions to a carer's existing range of approval. Reviews following complaints or allegations are also presented to the Panel.

2.2 FOSTERING PANEL MEMBERSHIP

2.2.1 As at 31st March, 2011 the Fostering Panel Membership was as follows:

Panel Chair	Independent
Educational Psychologist	Educational Psychologist, Central Bedfordshire Council
Social Worker (Vice Chair)	Senior Practitioner, Adoption Team, Central Bedfordshire Council
Social Worker	Team Manager, Children with Disabilities, Central Bedfordshire Council
Elected Member BBC (vacancy)	
Independent	Foster Carer – IFA
Independent	Health Visitor
Independent	Independent Social Worker
Elected Member	Central Bedfordshire Council
Independent	Foster Carer – IFA

2.2.2 In attendance but non voting members were:

Professional Adviser	Central Bedfordshire Council
Panel Secretary	Central Bedfordshire Council

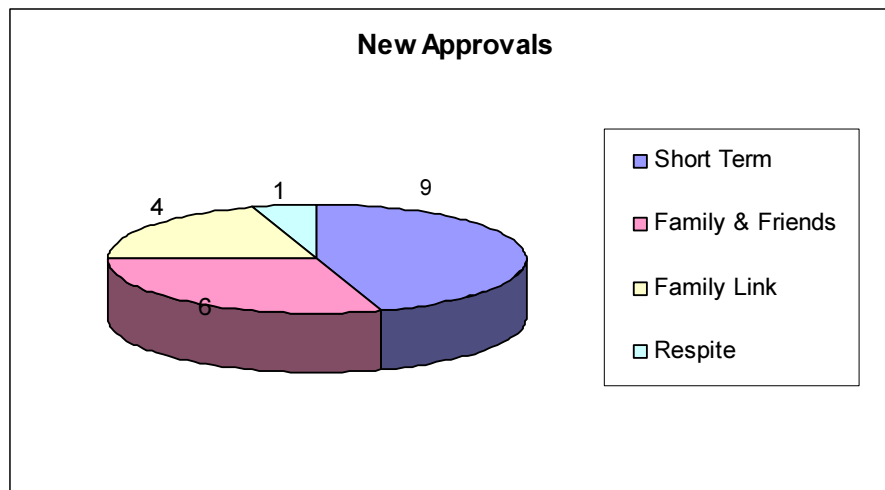
2.2.3 A Medical Adviser to the Panel was appointed from April 2008 and gives advice in writing in advance of Panel meetings, but may attend in person if requested.

2.2.4 A Legal Adviser to the Panel gives advice in writing in advance of Panel meetings and attends in person as requested.

2.3 FOSTERING PANEL ACTIVITY

2.3.1 In 2010/2011 the Fostering Panel met 12 times and recommended that 20 households should be approved as foster carers. This compares to 29 during 2009/10.

2.3.2 Of the 20 carers newly approved by the Fostering Panel, 4 were approved for the Family Link Scheme, 9 as short-term carers, 6 as Family and Friends carers and 1 as Respite only.



- 2.3.3 The Panel also agreed changes of approval for 9 fostering households and heard 15 fostering reviews.
- 2.3.4 There were 31 fostering households deregistered during 2010/11, offering 41 placements. The reasons for deregistration varied, but included personal circumstances, ill health, retirement, relocation, moving to another local authority and children in placement becoming permanent family members.
- 2.3.5 There were 5 reviews presented following complaints or allegations.
- 2.3.6 In total 45 fostering households attended the panel.

2.4 FOSTERING PANEL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 2.4.1 There is a good level of training, appraisal and induction offered to Panel Members. More informal 'bite-size' training is also provided on a regular basis on panel days and all Panel Members have an annual appraisal where their personal training needs are discussed and considered.
- 2.4.2 Over the past year, the following training has been provided to the Panel Members:

May 2010	CWDC
May 2010	Siblings – Assessment and Planning
August 2010	Attachment Style Interviews
September 2010	Children's Participation Officer
January 2011	Leaving Care Regulations 2010
February 2011	Gypsy and Roma Cultures

- 2.4.3 The Panel Adviser has devised a comprehensive training programme for the coming year which will include a full day training on Safeguarding and Allegations in Fostering and Pre-Adoptive Placements in June 2011, and sessions on Care Proceedings and the Children in Care Council.

2.5 FOSTERING AND JOINT PERMANENCE PANEL

- 2.5.1 The Fostering and Joint Permanence Panel's primary activity is to deal with permanent fostering work. It considers the plan for any child under the age of 13 for whom permanent

fostering is proposed. When the child is over 13 and part of a sibling group containing younger children whose plan is that they remain outside the birth family, the 13+ child's plan will be considered at whichever Panel (Adoption or Permanence) is considering the plan for the other children. The Fostering and Joint Permanence Panel also considers applications by foster carers to be long-term carers for a particular child. All matches for permanent fostering for children under 13 go to the Fostering and Joint Permanence Panel. The Fostering and Joint Permanence Panel also considers the first annual review of permanent foster carers, as well as any changes to their approval. The Panel is advised of any exemptions to a carer's existing range of approval. In all but a few exceptional cases, matching decisions on children over 13 years are made by the Head of Service for Quality Assurance for Central Bedfordshire or the Head of Service for LAC & LAAC for Bedford Borough.

- 2.5.2 However, due to the volume of cases concerning short term fostering, the Fostering and Joint Permanence Panel also considers the approval and reviews of short term foster carers.

2.6 FOSTERING AND JOINT PERMANENCE PANEL MEMBERSHIP

- 2.6.1 As at 31st March, 2011 the Permanence Panel Membership was as follows:

Panel Chair	Independent
Health	Paediatric Nurse
Social Worker	Deputy Team Manager, Adoption & Fostering Service, Central Bedfordshire Council (Vice Chair)
Social Worker	Deputy Team Manager, LAC/LAAC, Central Bedfordshire Council
Educational Psychologist	Educational Psychologist
Independent	Adoptive Parent
Independent	Independent Social Worker
Elected Member	Central Bedfordshire Council
Independent	Foster Carer – IFA
Elected Member Vacancy Bedford Borough Council	

- 2.6.2 In attendance but non voting members were:

Professional Adviser	Central Bedfordshire Council
Panel Secretary	Central Bedfordshire Council

- 2.6.3 A Medical Adviser to the Panel was appointed from April 2008 and gives advice in writing in advance of Panel meetings, but may attend in person if requested.

- 2.6.4 A Legal Adviser to the Panel gives advice in writing in advance of Panel meetings and attends in person as requested.

2.7 FOSTERING AND JOINT PERMANENCE PANEL ACTIVITY

- 2.7.1 The Fostering and Joint Permanence Panel met 12 times during the year 2010/11. During this time, 7 households were approved as permanent foster carers (this compares with 1 the previous year). Plans for 3 children to be permanently placed were recommended and 3 children were recommended for a match. Panel considered first

annual reviews for 10 households, 2 reviews following concerns, 1 change of approval, 1 disruption and 1 termination of approval. 7 households were approved as short term foster carers and 8 as family & friends carers. Overall 26 households attended Panel. Advice was sought from panel regarding particular cases on occasion.

2.8 FOSTERING AND JOINT PERMANENCE PANEL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

2.8.1 As with the Fostering Panel, training, appraisal and induction is offered to Panel Members. More informal 'bite-size' training is also provided on a regular basis on panel days and all Panel Members have an annual appraisal where their personal training needs are discussed and considered.

2.8.2 Over the past year, the following training has been provided to the Panel Members:

May 2010	Siblings – Assessment and Planning
June 2010	Education for Looked After Children
November 2010	Care Proceedings
January 2011	Gypsy and Roma Cultures
February 2011	Leaving Care Regulations
March 2011	Contact

2.8.3 The Panel Adviser has devised a comprehensive training programme for the coming year which will include a full day training on Safeguarding and Allegations in Fostering and Pre-Adoptive Placements in June 2011 and a session with the Children in Care Council.

2.9 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT FOSTERING AND JOINT PERMANENCE PANEL

2.9.1 Children and Young People are welcomed at panels considering their matches for permanence and are also encouraged to attend the disruption meeting if a planned permanent placement has failed to last. One young person attended the Permanence Panel in 2010/2011 to discuss the disruption of their permanent placement.

2.10 PANEL DIVERSITY

2.10.1 The agency has ensured that both panels are diverse and include not only black members but also a member of Bedford's Italian community, a significant group in Bedfordshire. There is also a panel member with personal experience of being looked after and of disruption. Both Panels have male and female panel members, with a majority being female. There is also a diversity of age on both panels. We are hoping to welcome a panel member who is a recent care leaver in the very near future.

SECTION 3 – SPECIALISED FOSTERING

3.1 THE FAMILY LINK SCHEME

- 3.1.1 The Family Link Scheme offers short breaks to children of all ages who have a physical or functional disability. Family Link carers are foster carers who are recruited, approved and trained in the same way as other foster carers. They receive regular support and guidance from a supervising social worker.
- 3.1.2 Family Link Workers can care for a child in their own home, the child's home or by taking the child to an activity. Periods of short breaks will be carefully planned and could be for a few hours occasionally or whole weekends on a regular basis.
- 3.1.3 The child's social worker will make an assessment of the child's needs and specifically what services could be provided to best support the child and their family.
- 3.1.4 The social worker will then make a referral to the CDAP (Children with Disabilities Allocation Panel), which is a panel of experienced children's services managers and other professionals who meet weekly to discuss and authorise levels of support and the allocation of resources.
- 3.1.5 A careful process of matching takes place, taking into account the individual needs of the child and their family and the carer's abilities
- 3.1.6 Families can use the time to do ordinary things such as shopping or going for a meal. It may give an opportunity to spend some quality time with other members of the family, or just provide a break from the normal routine involved with caring for a child with disabilities.
- 3.1.7 On the 31st March 2011, there were 9 Family Link carers approved, offering respite care to a total of 13 children. A further 6 Family Link carers are currently being assessed.
- 3.1.8 During 2010/11 the scheme expanded to include 3 fee-based Family Link carers who have increased availability and can be linked to up to 7 young people receiving short breaks.

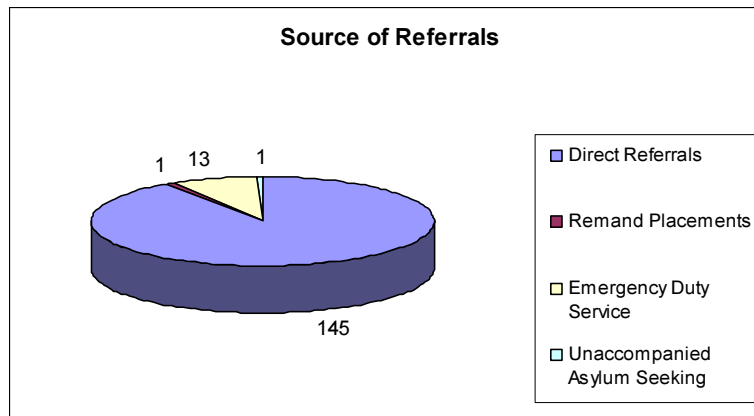
3.2 THE YOUTH CARE SCHEME

- 3.2.1 The Youth Care Scheme is a comprehensive, fee paid fostering scheme which provides specialist care to young people over the age of 10 years who exhibit behaviour which is particularly challenging or complex.
- 3.2.2 As at the 31st March 2011, there were 10 approved Youth Care households. There were 10 young people in placement. There has been a specific recruitment campaign for Youth Care and Youth Care Respite carers. There have been 2 Youth Care specific Information Evenings and 10 initial visits for Youth Care have been undertaken over the last year. 4 new assessments are underway on potential new Youth Carers.

SECTION 4 – CHILDREN AND FOSTERING

4.1 CHILDREN REFERRED FOR FOSTERING

- 4.1.1 During 2010/2011, the Fostering Service received a total of 159 new referrals for foster placements. Of these 78 were Central Bedfordshire children and 81 were Bedford Borough children. 74 of the new referrals were placed with in-house carers. Some children did not ultimately enter foster care, but remained with family. 8 were placed in residential units. For the remaining 35 children, 17 Central Bedfordshire and 18 Bedford Borough, placements in an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) were sought.
- 4.1.2 The referral for the child includes the matching criteria that are essential and preferable when looking for a placement for a child, and a risk assessment is also considered. This is crucial to identifying which carers may be able to support a child. Where a placement does not meet the essential criteria or where any identified risks cannot be managed an alternative placement is sought.
- 4.1.3 Respite took place 130 times, with 16 children having regular respite.
- 4.1.4 Of the new referrals for foster placements, 13 came through the Emergency Duty Service, 1 was a remand placement and 1 was an unaccompanied asylum seeking young person. 145 of the referrals were made directly by the children’s social worker.
- 4.1.5 As at 31st March 2011 a total of 121 children were placed with in house foster carers in the geographical county of Bedfordshire, with 59 children coming from Central Bedfordshire and 62 children from Bedford Borough.

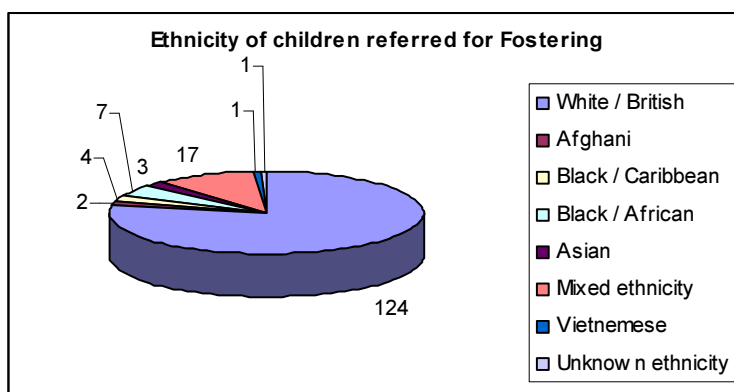
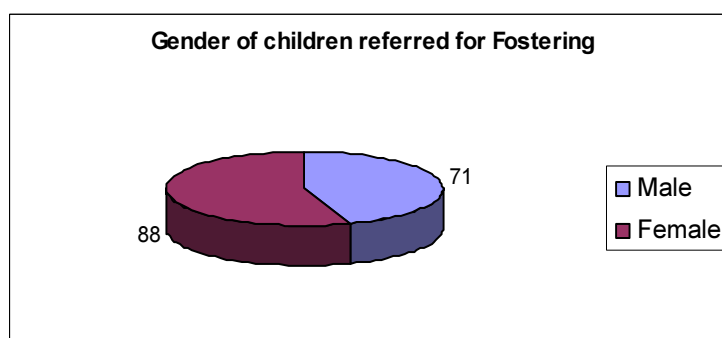
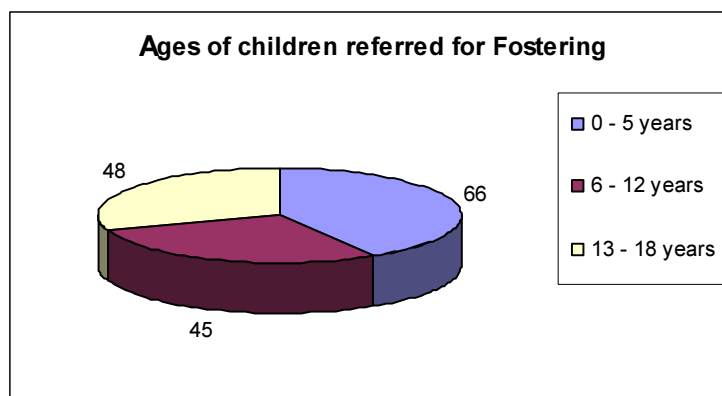


4.2 AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN REFERRED FOR FOSTERING 2010/2011

- 4.2.1 With regard to age, from Central Bedfordshire 33 children were aged 0-5 years, 23 were 6-12 years and 22 were aged 13-18 years and Bedford Borough 33 children were aged 0-5 years, 22 were 6-12 years and 26 were aged 13-18 years
- 4.2.2 Of the 78 children referred from Central Bedfordshire, 41 were female and 37 male. Of the 81 children referred from Bedford Borough 47 were female and 34 were male.
- 4.2.3 In Central Bedfordshire 69 children referred were White / British, 2 were from Afghanistan, 2 were Black / Caribbean, 3 were of mixed ethnicity, 1 was Vietnamese and 1 was of unknown ethnicity. In Bedford Borough 55 children referred were White / British, 7 were

Black / African, 2 Black / Caribbean, 2 were Asian and the remainder were of mixed ethnicity.

4.2.4 The agency has clear management information and monitors closely the ethnicity of Bedfordshire's looked after children.



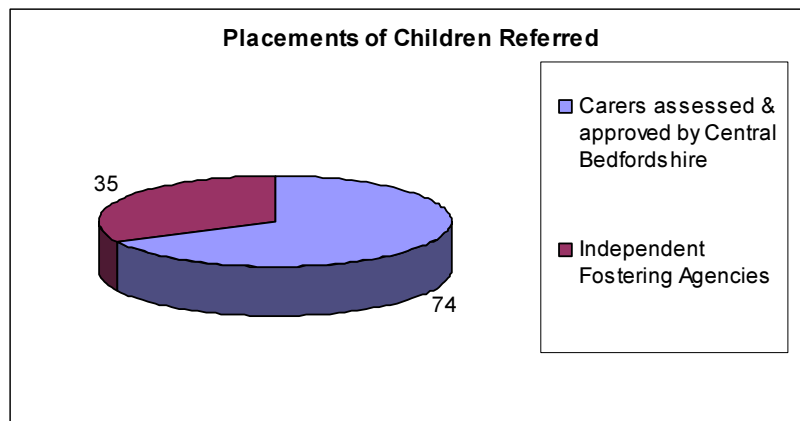
4.3 SIBLING GROUPS OF CHILDREN REFERRED FOR FOSTERING

4.3.1 There were 21 sibling groups within the 159 children referred for fostering 2010/2011. This included 12 sibling groups from Central Bedfordshire and 9 from Bedford Borough.

4.4 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF CHILDREN PLACED IN FOSTER PLACEMENTS (INTER-AGENCY VERSUS BEDFORDSHIRE)

4.4.1 Of the 109 children placed for fostering in 2010/11, 74 were placed with carers assessed and approved by Central Bedfordshire Council. The advantages of this are that the staff of the service have prior knowledge of the children and positive working relationships with the carers, thus enhancing fostering support for these placements.

4.4.2 35 of the children referred were placed externally with Independent Fostering Agencies (17 from Central Bedfordshire and 18 from Bedford Borough).

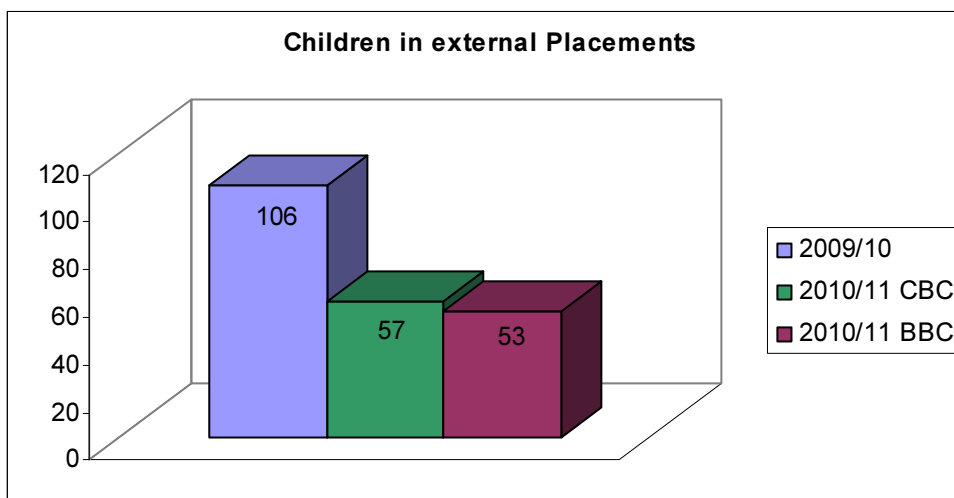


4.5 CHILDREN IN CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE OR BEDFORD BOROUGH PLACEMENTS 2010/2011

4.5.1 As at 31st March 2011, there were 121 fostering households approved by the agency, with a total of 121 children in these placements. Of these 121 children, 59 are from Central Bedfordshire, 62 from Bedford Borough, including 2 Family & Friends placements for Central Bedfordshire children outside the boundary and 4 for Bedford Borough children outside the geographical boundaries of Bedfordshire.

4.6 CHILDREN IN EXTERNAL PLACEMENTS 31/03/11

4.6.1 As at 31st March 2011, there were a total of 110 children in external foster placements provided by independent fostering agencies, as compared to 106 the previous year. Of these 57 children were from Central Bedfordshire Council (including 22 unaccompanied asylum seekers) and 53 from Bedford Borough Council.

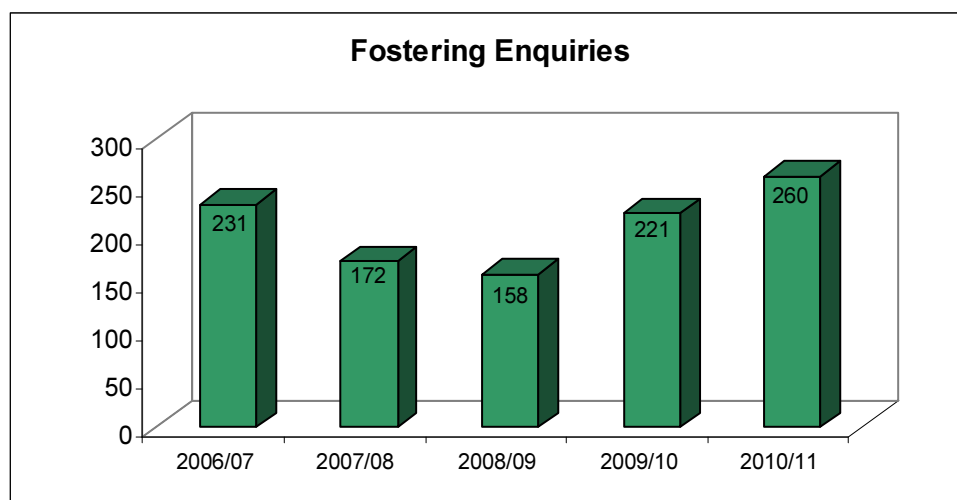


4.6.2 There has been a slight increase in the number of children in external placements as at 31 March 2011, which reflects the overall increase in numbers of looked after children.

SECTION 5 – FOSTER CARERS

5.1 FOSTERING ENQUIRIES

- 5.1.1 All enquirers are sent an Information Pack within 24 hours of their enquiry. A social worker from the Fostering Service will then make a follow-up telephone call to the enquirer within 2 working days and carry out an initial visit within 7 working days if requested.
- 5.1.2 After the initial visit, and a formal application from the enquirer the decision will be made whether or not to complete the assessment or to defer the assessment process until the enquirer is in a better position to proceed.
- 5.1.3 There were 260 initial fostering enquiries during 2010/1 compared with 221 the previous year. Application forms were received from 45 households all of whom were allocated an assessing social worker. 27 new assessments were completed over the course of the year and 45 new assessments were allocated. There were 26 new carers approved.



5.2 THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS OF FOSTER CARERS: ENQUIRIES, ASSESSMENTS AND APPROVALS

- 5.2.1 All assessments are carried out in accordance with the National Minimum Standards and their Statutory and Practice Guidance. All prospective foster carers are required to undertake a training programme as part of the preparation and assessment process.

5.3 ETHNICITY OF CARERS

- 5.3.1 During the year 2010/2011, the agency calculated that 10 out of 150 carers were from black or ethnic minority groups. Whilst this ratio of black carers does not yet reflect the demographics of the two authorities, the increase has improved appropriate matching for children.
- 5.3.2 Since 1st April 2010, the agency has approved 3 fostering households from black and ethnic minority backgrounds and a further one from a mixed heritage couple being assessed as at 31st March 2011.

SECTION 6 – TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR FOSTER CARERS

- 6.0 All foster carers are expected to attend relevant training recommended by their supervising social worker. The service has a full and comprehensive training programme for carers, from preparation training, through induction and core training through to more complex post-approval training.

6.1 SKILLS TO FOSTER

- 6.1.1 New fostering applicants have many questions prior to and during the assessment process. As an essential part of the fostering assessment, the 'Skills to Foster' course examines issues that are relevant, such as what it will be like to have children placed with them, or working in tandem with the local authority in order to reach positive outcomes for children.
- 6.1.2 Spread over several dates, this course provides an opportunity for prospective carers to reflect on their values and attitudes to caring and learn more about the skills and attributes needed to become a foster carer.
- 6.1.3 During 2010/2011, the Fostering Service ran 5 of these courses (compared with 7 the previous year) and they were attended by 47 delegates in total.

6.2 CHILD CARE EMERGENCY FIRST AID

- 6.2.1 As part of the application and assessment process, all applicants must complete an Emergency First Aid course. 6 courses were held during 2010/2011 and these were attended by a total of 86 delegates.

6.3 SONS AND DAUGHTERS

- 6.3.1 'Sons and Daughters' is a one day programme that started last year and mirrors the 'Skills to Foster' course. It is aimed at helping the children of prospective foster carers to consider their role in the process. It also helps increase their awareness of the needs of a child who has come into care.
- 6.3.2 During 2010/11, the Fostering Service ran 2 courses which were attended by 17 children and young people aged between 8 – 16 years.

6.4 INDUCTION

- 6.4.1 Following approval, foster carers enter their 12 month induction phase into the service and are required to complete the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care. The implementation of the new standards has been supported by ongoing workshops for carers alongside group supervision for supporting social workers. Aside from having the opportunity to meet members of the service who work with looked after children, there are also opportunities to ask questions and receive essential information about the agency's policies and procedures. In addition, carers are made familiar with the comprehensive training opportunities available throughout their fostering career.

6.5 THE FOSTERING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- 6.5.1 Each year, the service devises a comprehensive programme covering a wide variety of the skills and knowledge needed in order for carers to develop their careers in fostering. There were a total of 118 different courses on 46 subjects held over the year. This is split into core training recommended in a foster carers first 2 years of approval. This includes:
- Understanding the Mental Health issues for Looked After Children
 - Safeguarding Children
 - Understanding schools and supporting learning
 - Introduction to Lifestory work
 - Makaton
 - Play Deprivation
 - Talking to Teenagers about sex and relationships
 - Working with Self Harm
 - Safer Caring
 - Safeguarding Children Online
 - Contact
 - Managing Behaviour
 - Personal Safety
 - Talking to and Listening to Children
 - Surviving as a Foster Carer
 - Attachment
 - Allegations Awareness
 - Understanding Diversity
 - Exploring the challenges of parenting
 - A Guide to Care Proceedings
 - The Gypsy Roma and Travelling Communities
 - The Muslim Faith
 - Record Keeping
 - Protective Behaviours
 - It's feeling not good
- 6.5.2 Each carer is required to have a record of their training and development needs, although other alternatives to formal training courses are encouraged in order to meet the minimum standards. This can include home study, training, reading and also on-line training (provided by AKAMAS) at both level 2 (induction) and level 3. This can be especially helpful for carers who find it hard to attend training dates. There is also the opportunity for carers to complete an NVQ level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or BTEC in Advanced Foster Care Skills.
- 6.5.3 In total, 570 delegates attended training courses held over the year. This demonstrates the commitment that the agency has towards training foster carers and illustrates the willingness of carers to develop their own knowledge and skill base.
- 6.5.4 As at 31st March 2011, 55 foster carers have completed their CWDC workbooks. Workshops, surgeries and one to one appointments are facilitated for those who have still to complete their workbooks.

SECTION 7 – SUPPORT FOR CARERS

- 7.0.1 Every foster carer from our agency receives regular supervision and support from a Fostering Social Worker. In addition, the agency provides foster carers with an Independent Advisor from the Fostering Network, a national organisation for foster carers. There are also local

support groups of foster carers that meet regularly to discuss fostering issues and to enjoy occasional social events such as the annual awards presentation or a cheese and wine evening. Foster carers also have access to telephone support out of hours, and can access the Bedfordshire Foster Care Association, which is run by foster carers, for foster carers.

- 7.0.2 All new carers are also matched to a foster carer mentor who provides formal and practical guidance and support through the carer's first placement and beyond.

7.1 FOSTER CARERS' SUPPORT GROUPS

- 7.1.1 Foster Carers' Support Groups meet regularly in the north and south of the county. During the year, the Support Group North met 10 times and was attended by 99 delegates and 18 children. During the same period, the Support Group South met 10 times and was attended by 58 delegates and 6 children.
- 7.1.2 Some of the topics discussed included:- Contact, Fire Safety, Domestic Violence, Youth Participation, Black Hair & Skin Care and the Muslim Faith and Preparing children for adoption. There were also fun activities such as craft.
- 7.1.3 A men's support group meets approximately every 3 months and was attended by 20 delegates throughout the year. Guest speakers covered topics on Leaving & After Care, Youth Offending and Fire Safety.
- 7.1.4 A Family Link Support Group was also set up in July 2009. It meets 4 times a year in the evenings. An average of 7 carers attended per meeting. Guest speakers are invited to attend and topics covered included: Autism, Strategies to manage challenging behaviour on the autistic spectrum.
- 7.1.5 A Social Event and Pudding night with a quiz was held in September 2010 and 15 carers and 7 children attended.
- 7.1.6 A Social Event with an Awards Ceremony for foster carers was held in May 2010 which was attended by 85 carers and 85 children. Staff and elected members also attended, including the Directors of Children's Services in both authorities. Media Officers from the two local authorities compered the event. 9 long service awards were given out, and there were 2 awards for carers who had completed their BTEC Level 3 and 4 in Advanced Skills in Foster Care.

7.2 THE MENTORING SCHEME

- 7.2.1 The Fostering Service offers peer mentoring to all new and existing carers. This service for carers, staffed by carers, offers encouragement, support, and opportunities for collaborative working. It also allows experienced foster carers the chance to develop professionally.
- 7.2.2 Carers who join the scheme are linked with a mentor who is an experienced foster carer themselves. Mentors are trained to support foster carers in their role. As well as offering support to new carers, sometimes mentoring can be offered to experienced carers when they are undergoing a particularly challenging time. The service currently employs 9 mentors – who have 117 years of fostering experience between them. The mentors have varying experiences of fostering, including age ranges and types of approval. We are due to advertise for more mentors in the near future.

- 7.2.3 Foster carers can be referred to the mentoring scheme via their supervising social worker and additional detailed information is available from the training team.
- 7.2.4 Mentors attend preparation training on a rota basis to allow them to keep up to date with developments and changes in practice. Mentors have regular group supervision as well as 6 – 8 weekly individual supervision.

7.3 THE OUT OF HOURS SERVICE

- 7.3.1 Fostering Social Workers offer an 'out of hours' service for carers. A mobile telephone number has been dedicated to this service and all carers have access to the number. The service is available from 5.20pm – 11pm weekdays and from 9am-11pm during weekends and bank holidays. This service ensures that foster carers can readily access telephone support from an experienced fostering worker. Research carried out in Bedfordshire indicates that this service is highly valued by foster carers.

7.4 THE FOSTER CARERS ASSOCIATION

- 7.4.1 Both local authorities support the Bedfordshire Foster Carers' Association in meeting new carers and promoting the role and the function of the Association. The agency actively encourages and supports the Association and provides financial support to fund outings for fostering households and to support them in producing and circulating a quality newsletter.

7.5 BAAF AND THE FOSTERING NETWORK

- 7.5.1 Both local authorities are full members of the British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) which is a leading national voluntary organisation working to promote best practice for children separated from their birth families. It is the leading organisation representing local authority and independent fostering agencies and provides training courses, practice guidance, research material, and a consultation and advice service to all its members.
- 7.5.2 The Fostering Service is a member of the BAAF Eastern Region, a group which meets quarterly to discuss and exchange best practice in the East Anglia region.
- 7.5.3 The Fostering Service is a member of The Fostering Network that works to promote fostering in the UK. All approved foster carers are also able to have individual membership funded by the service, as well as access to The Fostering Network Advice and Mediation Service.

SECTION 8 - CONCLUSION 1ST APRIL 2010 – 31ST MARCH 2011

- 8.0.1 We have had another successful year, continuing to deliver a high quality service within a shared arrangement. The second year of this shared service has been positive and we continue to work in close partnership with both Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire to respond to the individual needs of each local authority.
- 8.0.2 Our recruitment strategy has had a positive effect on our enquiry rate, which has increased once again. Throughout the whole of 2010 – 2011 we have had over 30 assessments

ongoing at any one time (a significant increase from the previous year, which averaged 20 at any one time).

- 8.0.3 In the coming year we are driving our recruitment forward by gathering information using various tools and research of our existing customers. This will enable us to formulate successful targeted recruitment campaigns to reach potential customers.
- 8.0.4 By profiling our current foster carers we are able to ascertain receptivity to certain marketing methods and advertising channels. We are able to find out more about what their preferred communication methods are and use this when implementing the Recruitment Plan. We continue to re-evaluate all enquirers to fostering ascertaining their motivation to contact us and by which advertising model they were captivated. We continue to assess which campaigns have worked and why.
- 8.0.5 By using these marketing techniques we will strive to fill gaps in the service with advertising campaigns for Youth Care, Family Link, foster carers for sibling groups and babies.
- 8.0.6 By reaching members of the community we hope to bridge the gap, achieve a heightened awareness and recruit more Adopters and Foster Carers in local towns and rural communities in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire areas.
- 8.0.7 We have continued to develop our support for foster carers and now offer specific workers to support placements. Two social work assistants are available to provide bespoke support to children and carers, with one worker experienced in supporting over 10 year olds and one worker specialising in under 10 year olds. The outcome of a recent survey of carers evidenced that the overall support offered to foster carers is considered to be of a good standard.
- 8.0.8 The Family Link and the Youth Care Schemes continue to expand and we aim to ensure that they run to capacity, thereby minimising the use of Independent Fostering Agencies.
- 8.0.9 We aim to increase the number of approved foster carers, in order to enable children from Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough to be appropriately placed with in house carers. Furthermore we aim to more than replenish our number of approved carers, taking into account the significant number lost to fostering this year due to retirement, moving area, illness and long term placements coming to an end as the children reach 18 years of age. We aim to recruit 40 new fostering households in 2011-12.
- 8.0.10 As of 1st April 2011 new Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards came into force. This has involved updating and refreshing policies and procedures and particular emphasis was placed on "Connected Persons" (Family and Friends carers). We now offer a specific training course for Family and Friends carers and a specific mentor. We recognise that there will be an increasing demand for placements with "Connected Persons" and our service will continue to reflect and meet this need.

Report composed by:

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Central Bedfordshire Council
and Bedford Borough Council

working together

Private Fostering

Annual Report

For the period
2010/2011

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FOREWORD

For the year 2010-2011, Central Bedfordshire hosted the Fostering Service as a shared service on behalf of both new unitary authorities. This report describes the activity of Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council's Private Fostering Service during the period 1st April, 2010 to 31st March, 2011, noting its achievements, clarifying the remit and focus of its work and identifying recommendations for the development of the service.

This annual report is part of the governance of the Private Fostering Provision required by Regulations.

It will be presented to the Directors of Children's Services in Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council in August 2011.

The Local Safeguarding Children's Boards in each authority will also consider this report in October 2011.

July 2011

SECTION 1

1.0 - DEFINITION OF PRIVATE FOSTERING

- 1.01** The Children Act 1989 (section 66) defines private fostering as occurring when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for and provided with accommodation, for 28 days or more by somebody other than a close relative, legal guardian or someone with parental responsibility. Close relatives are defined in the Act as step parents, siblings, brothers or sisters of the parents and grandparents. A private fostering arrangement is one which is made privately, that is to say without the involvement of the Local Authority.
- 1.02** Private foster carers maybe within the extended family such as cousins or Great Grandparents, or they may be a friend of the family or other non relative such as the parents if a boyfriend or girlfriend of the child in question.
- 1.03** For the purposes of the Act, parent includes unmarried or putative father. Relative means as above stated, whether by full, half-blood or by affinity or step-parent. Affinity refers to the relationship resulting from marriage, between the husband and the blood relations of the wife and also between the wife and the blood relations of the husband.
- 1.04** Examples of private fostering arrangements are;
- Children sent from abroad to stay with another family, usually to improve their English or for other educational purposes.
 - Asylum seeking and refugee children placed with an adult known to them, their family or their community;
 - Teenagers who, having problematic relationships with their parents, are staying in short term arrangements with friends or other non relatives;
 - Children living with host families arranged by language schools or other organisations;
 - Local children living apart from their families;

- Young people who have wanted to remain in this country to continue their education but whose parents have returned to their country of origin;
- Young children whose birth families are struggling to cope and turn to a friend or distant relative to care for the child.

1.1 - BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1** The Private Fostering service, in line with the Adoption and Fostering service, is hosted in Central Bedfordshire Council but provides to both Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council under a Service Level Agreement.
- 1.1.2** During 2010 the policy and procedures were reviewed by the Senior Management Team. Information on private fostering has been included on both Councils' web pages for access by professionals and members of the public. This has been updated this year to ensure clarity and ease of use, including the facility for electronic notification of private fostering arrangements.
- 1.1.3** Both Councils' Local Safeguarding Children's Boards received an annual report and six-monthly update in September 2010 concerning private fostering activity in Bedfordshire during 2009-10.

SECTION 2

2.0 – AWARENESS RAISING

- 2.0.1** The Authority has continued to raise the awareness of private fostering within Children's Services, with fellow professionals, in partner agencies and within the community by a wide ranging and ongoing advertising and publicity programme. There has been a dedicated private fostering coordinator since 2010 initially covered by a locum worker and since March 2011 by a permanent worker.
- 2.02** The private fostering co-ordinator in conjunction with the Adoption & Fostering Service Recruitment Co-ordinator has continued to lead on the promotion of private fostering. Awareness raising activities have included;
- Advertises in local papers and radio advertising took place.
 - Articles have been placed in "Primary Times" a publication distributed to families of school age children.
 - Information displayed at Bedford Market during July and August 2010.
 - Presentation of the annual report to the Local Safeguarding board in November 2010, for dissemination to all partner agencies, including the Police, Probation and Ambulance Service, Councils including Housing, Early Years Services, Youth Services, and Voluntary Organisations.
 - Revision of the Private Fostering leaflet and poster.
 - A workshop at the County Wide Social work development day in March 2010.
 - Update of Private fostering information on both Councils' websites, with notification form to be submitted electronically

- Information on both Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils' employees' wage slips
- Information on "What to do when receiving a call or personal enquiry about private fostering" sent to all Customer First Points of Contact including reception staff and child care teams duty desks
- Presentation to Social Care professionals throughout 2010
- Mailshots to schools in March 2011.

2.0.3 We will continue to build on our publicity campaign with professionals and the community in accordance with our action plan for the year to 31st March 2012.

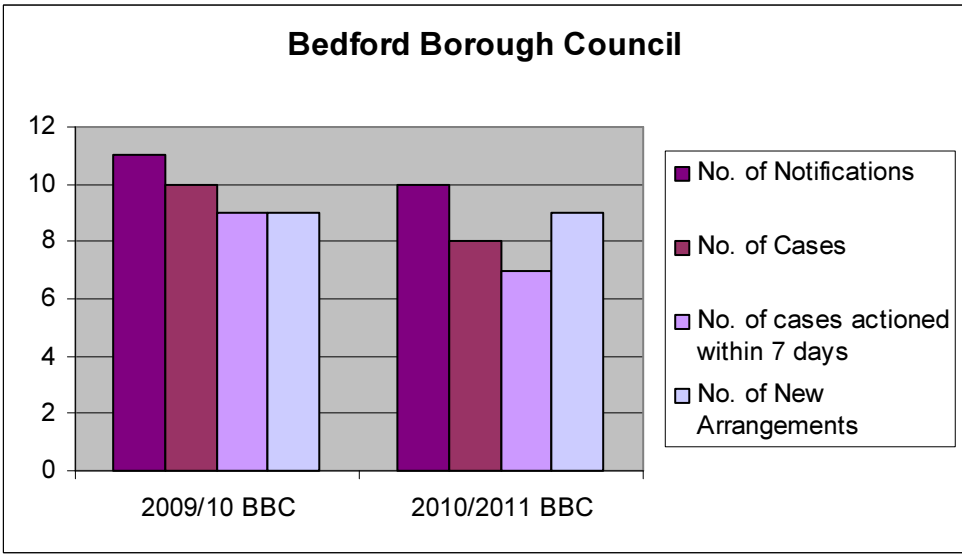
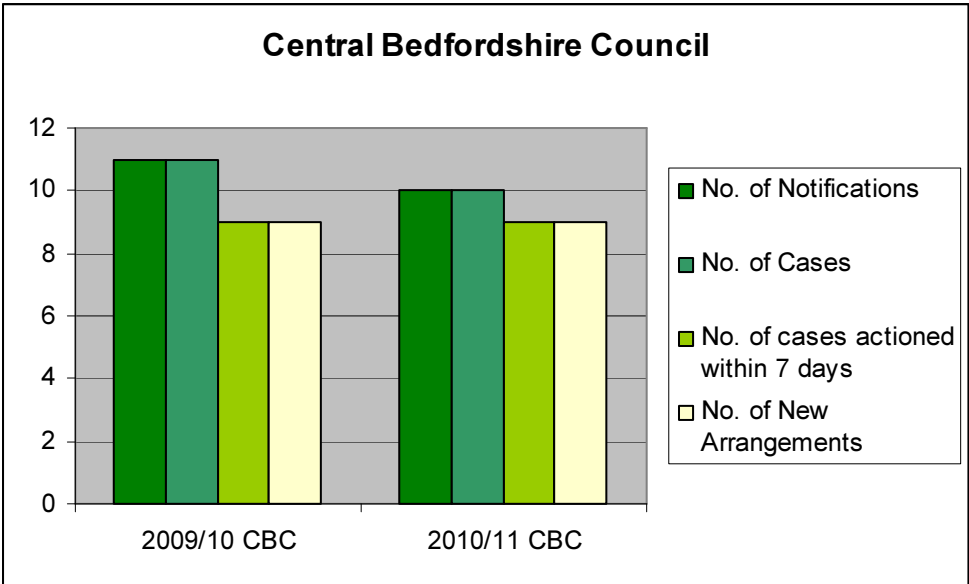
2.0.4 Attendance at the quarterly BAAF Private Fostering Special Interest Group has continued throughout the year to ensure we develop best practice alongside our colleagues in neighbouring authorities.

2.1 – ADVERTISING 1ST APRIL 2010 – 31ST MARCH 2011

May 2010	Exhibition stand at Young Farmers Annual Event
June 2010	Presentation to LAC Team CBC
July 2010	Exhibition stand at Bedford Market
	Presentation to Intake & Assessment Team BBC
Aug 2010	Exhibition stand at Bedford Market
October 2010	Website Information updated
Jan 2011	Article in News Central CBC
	Article in One Team BBC
	Presentation to Intake and Assessment Team CBC
	Training for Head of Safeguarding and Managers BBC
	Posters on display in main council offices
	Presentation by LSCB – Great Denham
Feb 2011	Advert on Heart radio
	Presentation to CWD Team – BBC
	Presentation to LAC and Asylum Teams BBC
	Mail shot – Libraries, Education Centres, Probation, Hospital, CAB, Leisure Centres, YOT, Health Centres, Doctors, RAF Chicksands and Henlow
	Training for Family Support Team CBC
	Presentation LSCB Great Denham and Dunstable Fire Station
March 2011	21 st – 27 th Private Fostering Awareness Week
	Mail shot to private schools
	Mail shot to schools in BBC and CBC
	Presentation LSCB Great Denham and Dunstable Fire Station
April 2011	Advert in local newspaper

SECTION 3

3.0 – STATISTICS



Activity remained consistent in 2010-11 similar levels of open cases to 2009-2010.

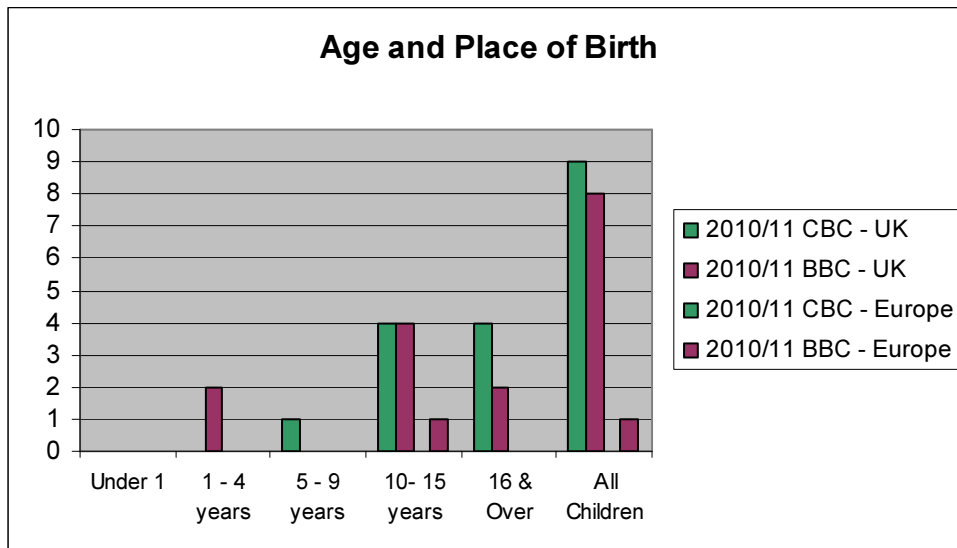
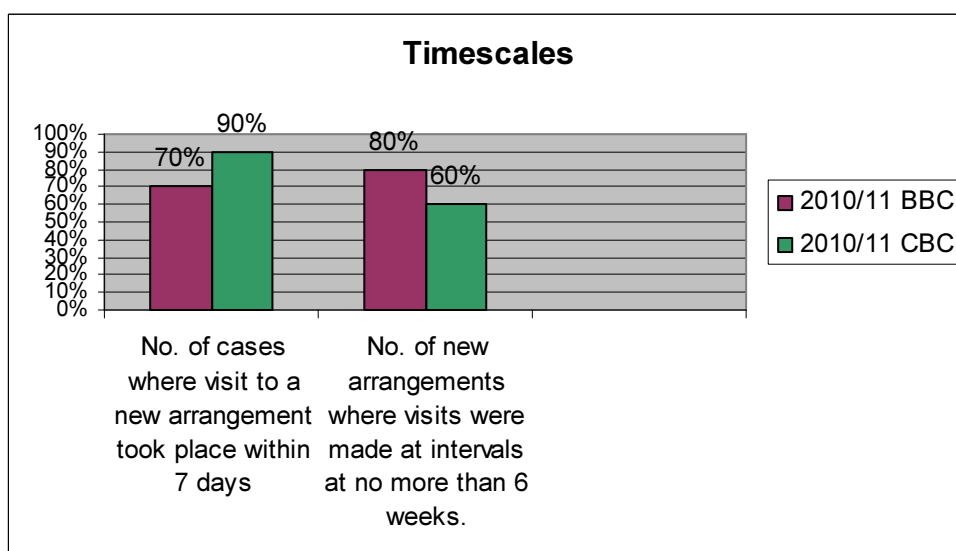


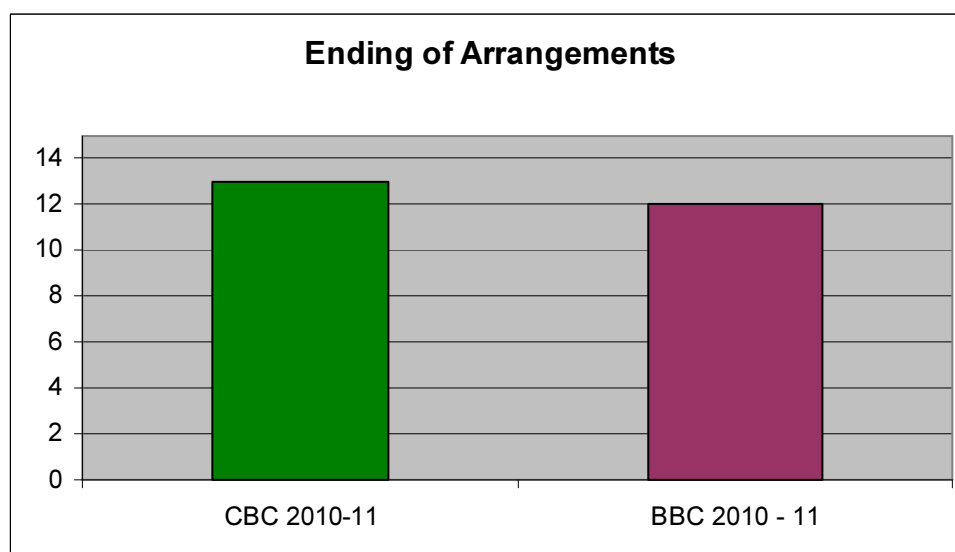
Chart shows only countries of origin where we have data.

3.1 – MEETING TIMESCALES

3.1.1 Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils have been committed to meeting the timescales set down in the Regulations for assessment of arrangements and visiting of children in private fostering arrangements. A tracking sheet is used by managers to ensure ongoing improvement in adherence to timescales. The recruitment of a dedicated worker for private fostering during 2010 improved the timeliness of some assessments and visits, and performance is better than in our comparator authorities.



3.1.2 Ending of arrangements



Records are kept for the reasons that private fostering arrangements end. In 2010-11 the reasons were.

- 6 young people became 16
- 2 young person secured legal arrangements with their carers by way of Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order.
- 12 young people returned to care of their parents.
- 4 young people became looked after.

3.1.3 Suitability of Arrangements

In one case in the reporting period, the assessment raised concerns about the suitability of the arrangement and it was agreed that the young person be accommodated under Section 20. It was decided by the AD Children's Services Operations that it was not necessary or proportionate in that specific case to issue any prohibition notice under S69 Children Act 1989.

In another case the arrangement was assessed as unsuitable and it was necessary to issue notification to the private foster carer of intention to prohibit the arrangement. The young person moved to an alternative private fostering arrangement. Both these cases were in Central Bedfordshire Council.

SECTION 4 - SUPPORT TO YOUNG PEOPLE

4.0 – ADVOCACY SUPPORT

4.0.1 Young people in private fostering arrangements are given the opportunity to have access to an advocate from the National Youth Advisory Service. Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils' Children's Social Care Services have a contract with NYAS to provide advocacy services to children and young people who are in need of these services.

4.0.2 Upon visiting a child or young person in a private fostering arrangement for the first time the social worker gives the child a child friendly pack which explains about private fostering and

gives information for the many services provided for young people across the appropriate council area and the contact details of NYAS should they need independent advocacy.

4.1 – SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE POST 16

- 4.1.1** The Leaving and After Care Teams in each council provide a service to all young people who are approaching their 16th birthday and beyond, and have been within the care system. This service is accessible for all young people in private fostering arrangements to provide advice and guidance to them to make a successful transition to adulthood. This is important in private fostering as the legal age at which a child is no longer deemed to be privately fostered is 16 (18 if disabled) and for many young people their placement may end at 16 leaving them with little or no support.
- 4.1.2** A Supportive Lodging Scheme has been developed so that young people who have been in private fostering situations may be eligible for appropriate accommodation locally with carers who can offer them transitional support to help them learn to live independently.

SECTION 5 – NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS

5.0 – EVALUATION AGAINST NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS

5.1 STANDARD 1 – Statement on Private Fostering

- A Statement of Purpose has been completed setting out the duties and functions in relation to private fostering. This document was reviewed and updated during 2010.

5.2 STANDARD 2 - Notification

As detailed in Section 2 of this report awareness raising has continued across both councils in 2010 – 11.

- A manager from the Adoption and Fostering Services attends both Councils' weekly resource panels, thus ensuring that any private fostering arrangements which come to light and have not been notified are then referred to the Fostering duty team.
- The Family Group Meeting Service continues to be used effectively by proposed and actual private foster carers, parents of privately fostered children and privately fostered children and young people.

5.3 STANDARD 3 – Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare

- The service provides a specific private fostering coordinator post to oversee the private fostering service in conjunction with the fostering manager.
- Assessment social workers in the fostering service have also undertaken assessments of private fostering arrangements to ensure the skills are circulated within the service and to enable assessments to be completed within timescales when the private fostering coordinator is not available.
- All workers have received monthly supervision and all private fostering arrangements are monitored through this process.
- The Head of Service Fostering and Adoption has responsibility for determining the suitability of private fostering arrangements.

5.5 STANDARD 4 – Advice and Support

The local authority provides such advice and support to private foster carers and prospective foster carers as appears to the authority to be needed.

- The co-ordinator for private fostering ensures that private foster carers received appropriate advice and support by providing them with an information pack, timely visits and access to a named worker.
- Information Packs are produced for private foster carers which have detailed written information about private fostering including the BAAF information booklet on private fostering, welfare benefits and information and contact details for other useful organisations. This pack was updated during 2010.

5.6 STANDARD 5 – Advice and Support

The local authority provides advice and support to the parents of children who are privately fostered within their area as appears to the authority as needed.

- Parents are notified in writing when a private fostering arrangement is endorsed.
- The assessing social worker, where possible, visits the parent or person with parental responsibility to discuss and explain the assessment and services available and to obtain their wishes and feelings.
- An Information Pack is produced for parents or those with parental responsibility which has detailed written information about private fostering, and contact details for other useful organisations. This was reviewed in 2010.

5.7 STANDARD 6 – Advice and Support

Children who are privately fostered are able to access information and support when required so that their welfare is safeguarded and promoted; privately fostered children are able to participate in decisions in their lives.

- An Information Pack on private fostering is given to all privately fostered children. This was updated during 2010.
- During 2010 some children were supported by social workers from the Family Support teams where their case was particularly complex.

5.8 STANDARD 7 – Monitoring Compliance with Duties and Functions in relation to Private Fostering

The local authority has in place and implants effectively a system for monitoring the way in which it discharges its duties and functions in relation to private fostering. It improves practice where this is indicated as necessary by the monitoring system.

- Both Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils continued to have robust performance monitoring and reporting systems in relation to private fostering activity.
- PF1 reports were completed by both councils and submitted to the DfE as required.
- An annual report is provided to the Director of Children's Services in each authority.

SECTION 6 – SUMMARY & DEVELOPMENTS

6.0 – SUMMARY AND DEVELOPMENTS

- 6.1** There has continued to be progress in developing the service for privately fostered children and their families in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils. Support for those young people post 16 has been developed to ensure maximum support is available as they mature into adulthood. The Service has a clear Statement of Purpose and also an action plan which is regularly reviewed to ensure an ongoing programme of awareness raising among professionals and the community as a whole.
- 6.2** The provision of a dedicated Private Fostering Coordinator has enabled development and progression of the service.
- 6.3** Appropriate documentation has been put in place to ensure the safety and welfare of privately fostered children is assessed and actively promoted. This documentation has been reviewed to ensure it maintains maximum effectiveness. Tracking tools have been developed and are an active management tool to ensure adherence to statutory timescales.
- 6.4** The levels of notifications have increased along the national level. The provision of a continued shared service arrangement appears to be working well.
- 6.5** We contributed to the consultation on a proposed restructure of the inspection regime by Ofsted, and have begun preparation for a forthcoming inspection of the arrangements in both authorities.
- 6.6** In the meantime Central Bedfordshire will continue on behalf of the two Councils to proactively promote private fostering awareness raising and to work with the children and young people in these situations to ensure they are safe, well cared for and reach their full potential to become positive citizens.

This information can be made available in
Large print and in other languages if required

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Produced by Central Bedfordshire Council

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Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 6 September 2011
Subject: Revenue Budget Management Report Quarter ended 30 June 2011
Report of: Cllr Mark A G Versallion, Executive Member for Children Services
Summary: The report sets out the projected full year forecast as at 30 June 2011

Contact Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children Services
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Sound financial management contributes to the Council's value for money and enables the Council to successfully deliver its priorities. The recommendations will contribute indirectly to all 5 Council priorities

Financial:

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Legal:

None

Risk Management:

None

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

Any staffing reductions as a result of compensatory efficiencies or grant reductions are being carried out in accordance with the Council's Managing Change Policy and in consultation with the Trade Unions.

Equalities/Human Rights:

Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken prior to the allocation of the 2010/2011 budgets and each Directorate was advised of significant equality implications relating to their budget proposals. Many of the pressures outlined in this report are in relation to those needs led services which support the most vulnerable children in our communities.

Community Safety:

Any savings of efficiency proposals and reduction in grant that remove or change the level of service provided may have an impact on the community safety priorities and potentially result in an increase in crime, anti social behaviour, fear of crime and public confidence.

Sustainability:

None

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee notes and considers this report.

Purpose of Report

1. The report sets out the projected financial position to the end of March 2012 based on the information available as at the end of June 2011, being the 1st quarter.

Introduction and Key Highlights (Appendices A2)

2. Children's Services annual expenditure budget is £69.1M and income budget, including transport, is £33.5M which leaves a net expenditure budget of £35.6M.
3. The full year projected outturn position for 2011/12 is £0.1M overspend against a £35.6M budget. This assumes full spend against allocated grants.
4. The budget for the first quarter is £8.86M compared to actual spend in the first quarter of £7.217M, below budget by £1.645M. A number of grants have been received and where appropriate and the data is known, budgets have been profiled in June. The spend to date variance is a combination of the impact of spend against grants, such as the Early Intervention Grant of £8.9M where expenditure will be periodic and the trend of spend associated with Education budgets through the school year which is variable.
5. Within Children's Services Operations, the overall forecast variance is currently showing an under spend of £93K. The Child Protection and Children in Care budgets are forecasting a total overspend to date of £182K. This pressure is mainly due to agency workers covering qualified posts currently vacant, (each individual post costing a third more than permanent staff). Increasing movement in staff turnover and losses is influencing current recruitment and retention however rolling recruitment is taking place so that the most skilled workers available to be recruited can be recruited to full time positions in the Council. The development of qualified social workers to fill vacancies is an ongoing key activity. The current overspend forecast is currently mitigated by staffing consultations that are planned to liberate savings in 2012/2013 and where vacancies have occurred. Children with Disabilities Service is forecast £130K underspend, and work on evaluating ongoing spend on disabled children against other councils has just begun. In particular, spend on short breaks for disabled children is currently subject to a more detailed analysis of spend on a case by case basis.
6. Within Learning and Strategic Commissioning, the forecast variance is an overspend of £179K. The key variance relates to Transport where the difficult to achieve cross cutting efficiency target of £1,054K is expected not to realise by £405K for 2011/12. This has been offset by £88K savings due to the reduction of contribution required by the authority for the affordability gap on the two PFI Schools, and temporary staffing savings within Learning and Strategic Commissioning of £164K mainly due to a restructure of the service where in year savings will arise that will make part contribution to the efficiencies in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

7. Not currently forecast are a number of possible risks that could see the budget variance rise over the forthcoming months:
- Possible future additional roles following Munro's Review of Child Protection. The Government's response to the Munro report and implementation of this is likely to cause additional pressures as recommendations suggest the need to enhance the role of the Local Safeguarding Board.
 - needs led budgets within Child Protection and Special Educational needs and the additional impact of recent OFSTED inspection recommendations on child protection which increase the need for qualified social workers.
 - the budget build assumption that supplies and service (non contractual) and staffing expenditure will have 0% inflation applied. Children Services subjective analysis shows 40% of spend relates to supplies and services. Should suppliers not be forthcoming with a "no inflation" position this will impact significantly.
 - a number of employees are also on Teachers' pay and conditions having achieved a 1% pay rise and this was not accounted for in the revenue budget.
 - legal expert fees that may be required in addition to the budgeted court process and a possible pressure for 24hour cover for the Emergency Duty Team.
 - number of schools converting to Academy status should the recoupment value rise above £1M agreed by School Forum to fund from the Dedicated Schools Grant. Recoupment currently stands at £264K however latest figures based on the number of schools seeking Academy status show that this will rise to £698K.
 - there is currently no agreement with Bedford Borough for charges relating to the Pupil Referral Unit disaggregation for 2011/12.

Medium Term Pressures

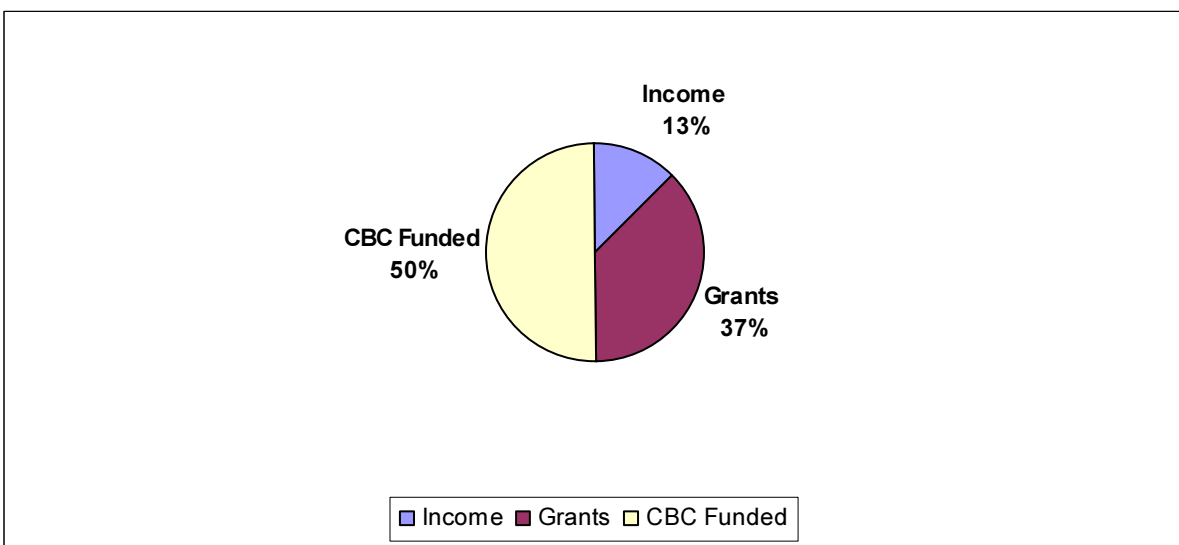
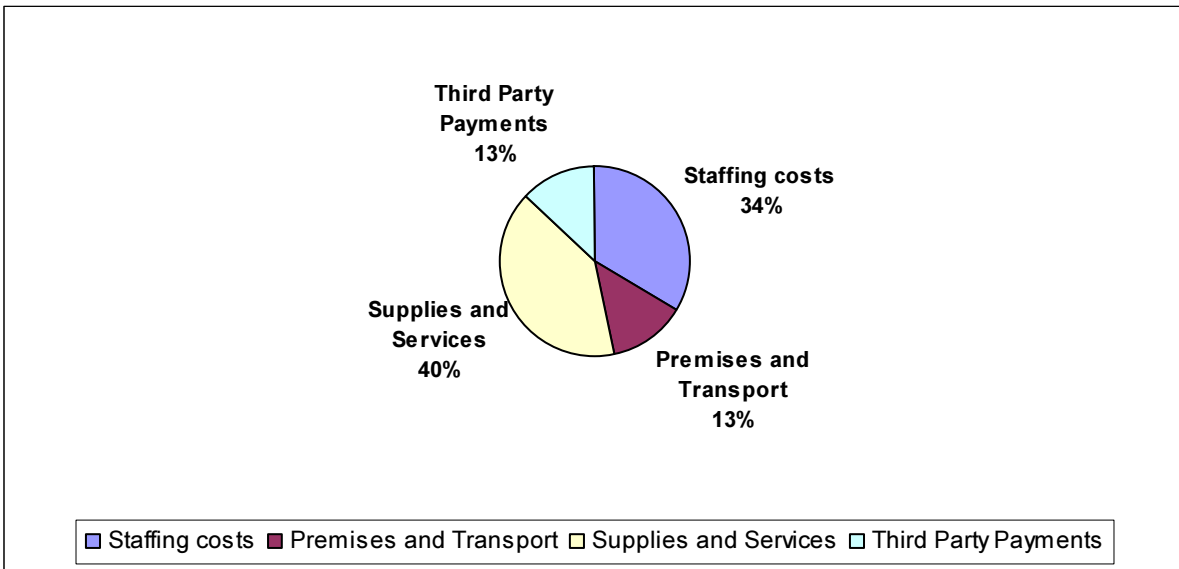
- ICS project management, achieving the required reduction in staff £400K.

Summary Table A: Directorate Overall Position

	Approved Budget	Provisional Outturn Spend for Year	Full Year Forecast Variance (-under)/ overspend	Full Year Forecast Variance after transfers to/from reserves (-under)/ overspend
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Director CS	176	176	0	0
AD - CSO	20,444	20,351	(93)	(93)
AD – L & SC	8,814	8,603	(211)	(226)
Transport	7,955	8,360	405	405
Total (Excluding Schools)	37,388	37,491	102	87
Schools/ DSG	(1,817)	(1,817)	0	0
Total Director of Children's Services	35,571	35,673	102	87

Table B – Subjective Analysis

Expenditure type (Excluding Schools)	Forecast Outturn (Before use of Reserves) £000
Staffing Costs	23,808
Premises and Transport	9,277
Supplies and Services	28,540
Third Party Payments	9,352
Total Expenditure	70,977
Income	8,981
Grants	26,322
Total Income	35,303
Net Expenditure	35,674



Director of Children’s Services

- 8. Full year forecast for the Director is expected to be on budget, there are no significant issues to report.

Children’s Services Operations

- 9. AD Children’s Services

AD Children’s Services is expected to be on budget. It is recognised that potential demand on external contracts may generate a pressure in this area. Two high cost residential placements have recently ceased, with two residential placements starting. This is monitored throughout the year and decisions are made through resourcing panels, Head of Service and Assistant Director sign off.

The service recognises the vulnerability and volatility of these needs led budgets particularly in Child Protection and Looked After Children. The budget risks are raised as soon as they occur. There are currently some tenders re commissioned services that require completion and when confirmed their total costs can be forecast accurately and may demonstrate a reduction in price.

10. Child Protection & Children In Care

Full year forecast is £182K over budget. The pressure is due to the level of agency workers required currently to cover qualified social worker posts. Recruitment processes are in place but recruitment remains challenging due to current 2%. The service continues to support the development of qualified social workers. The Asylum budget is currently on budget and is monitored monthly given the unpredictability of service user numbers and challenges of the Home Office Grant processes.

11. Children with Disabilities Service

Full year forecast is currently £130K under budget. Work is ongoing around short breaks for disabled children and the costs are being profiled to ensure the authority is in line with new legislation and guidance. This will impact upon this under spend by the next quarter.

12. Health

Full year forecast is currently on budget.

13. Quality Assurance CRS Service

Full year forecast is currently £9K under spend. There is a £30K pressure alongside this as a result of extra administrative capacity required to support the role of the Risk and Compliance Manager, child protection and review reporting.

14. Fostering & Adoption Service

Full year forecast is £22K over budget. This is due to a pressure in the Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) budget of £279,780. This has arisen due to new legislation and guidance which precludes the service from using in house carers outside of their approval parameters, resulting in children being placed in IFA much earlier.

15. Local Safeguarding Children's Board

The full year forecast shows a pressure of £6k. This is due to the enhanced role of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Board Chairperson to begin to ensure compliance with the expected impact of the Munro's recommendations. There may be more pressures in this area as new roles emerge as the government responds to the report.

16. Early Intervention and Prevention

Full year forecast is £160k under budget. Savings here are currently mitigating the current overspend forecast within Child Protection and Children In Care. However tenders are currently being progressed for services that will be implemented by September 2011. These will impact on the year end forecast when final costs are agreed.

Learning & Strategic Commissioning

17. AD Learning and Strategic Commissioning

Full year forecast is currently on budget. Actual spend to date is currently under budget due to the holding of budget for pressures within the PRU and the possible impact of Academy conversions.

18. Children's Services Commissioning/Youth Service

Full year forecast is currently on budget. Cost centres are currently being aligned to expected spend and the forecast reviewed. The variance of spend to date is as a result of spend against grant not having yet taken place and the timing of staff being released into redundancy.

19. School Support Service

Full year forecast is £21K over budget. This has arisen within the PRU. Although further pressures may emerge from the re-commissioning of the PRU and disaggregation of staff as the disaggregation may have allocated to Central Bedfordshire more staff than is required going forward. It is anticipated that Bedford Borough will pass over the DSG related to Central Bedfordshire's sole registered pupils as at census date (January 2011).

SEN Recoupmnt remains a concern as disputes on charging levels with Bedford are not resolved. The variance of spend to date relates to the profile of education spend through the year which is not linear.

20. Other School Budgets

The full year forecast is currently on budget. There is no foreseen pressure to arise from this area as these budgets are all funded by the DSG in agreement with School Forum.

21. Partnerships and Workforce Development

Full year forecast position reflects a £164K underspend. Due to a restructure of the service a £100K in year saving will arise that will contribute to the 12/13 efficiencies. There is additional income forecast here of £97K.

22. School Improvement

Full year forecast is currently on budget. The shortfall of budget for the Virtual School will be sought from the School Forum from DSG.

23. Standards Fund

Full year forecast for Standards Fund budgets managed by School Improvement is on budget.

24. Music Service

The full year forecast position reflects an £8K overspend. This may vary in year due to ongoing evaluation of financial predictions as parent take up of lessons is monitored.

25. School Organisation & Capital Planning

The full year forecast reflects an underspend of £88K. The annual PFI review taking account of revised floor areas has resulted in an increased contribution from the schools reducing the affordability gap for the Council. £10K of this underspend has arisen in the School Org & Capital Planning/School ICT teams to reflect a staff vacancy and training spend freeze.

Principle Agreements are currently being drafted to enable the conversion of the PFI schools to Academy status and it is possible from 2012/13 that the affordability gap funded by the LA may be totally funded by the DfE saving the LA an estimated additional £500K in 2012/13

Transport

26. The full year forecast is £405K overspend. This is an area of high risk with a cross cutting efficiency target of £1,054K which is expected not to realise.

Schools

27. The Revenue carry forward to 2011/12 is £10.5M a rise of £2.7M from the previous financial year. The balance control mechanism has been removed from the Scheme for Financing Schools for 2011/12 and along with the consultation on future funding for schools, may have influenced the increase in school reserves.

The Capital reserves fell by £1.6M to £4.4M.

There are three agreed licensed deficits in 2011/12 and a further four currently being considered for approval.

90% of budgets have now been received from schools which will provide information on any schools causing concern.

Academy conversions continue with recoupment of DSG currently forecast at £698K. It is anticipated that 44% of pupils will be attending Academies from September 2011.

The consultation on future funding continues along with the funding of Academies. The impact of Special school converting to Academy status is not yet known.

Virements

28. The budget virements that have taken place during the first quarter have been part of the base budget realignment. Over 125 cost centres have been deleted during this process.

Some budgets have been profiled. Transport budgets have been profiled to reflect the number of school days in a month.

Efficiencies (Appendix B)

29. The efficiency target for 2011/12 is £4.971M (including Cross Cutting efficiencies – Transport £1.054M and Procurement £0.037M).
30. As of 30 June 2011, the forecast is on track to deliver £4.563M of the £4.971M 2011/12 efficiency target, leaving a current anticipated shortfall of £408K relating to the Passenger Transport Review savings and the £8K pressure in Music Service.

Reserves Position (Appendix C)

31. There is a proposed use of corporate reserves of £16K as a result of a duplication in 2010/11 of £24K offset by £40K of redundancy costs in 2011/12.

Debt Management (Appendix D)

32. Debts over £10k total £2,251K. Of this figure £1,650K are debts older than 30 days.

Appendices:

Appendix A2 Directorate Position analysed by AD

Appendix A4 Revenue Subjective Analysis

Appendix B Efficiencies

Appendix C Earmarked Reserves

Appendix D Debt Analysis

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Month: June 2011	Cumulative to Date				Year				Risk	RAG	Activity level Medium/High risk budgets (COMMENTARY)
	Budget	Actual	Variance	Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Proposed use of Earmarked reserves	Forecast Variance after use of earmarked reserves.			
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000			
Children's Services											
Director of Children's Services	44	9	(35)	176	176	0	0	0	Green	L	
AD Children's Services Operations	348	55	(293)	1,391	1,391	0	0	0	Green	L	
Child Protection and Children In Care	2,274	2,414	140	9,096	9,278	182	182	182	Amber	H	Needs led, impact of OFSTED report and use of Agency staff
Children with Disabilities Service	850	468	(381)	3,398	3,268	(130)	(130)	(130)	Green	L	
Health	15	(31)	(46)	61	61	0	0	0	Green	L	
Quality Assurance CRS	271	279	8	1,084	1,075	(9)	(9)	(9)	Green	L	
Fostering & Adoption Service	1,229	1,253	24	4,917	4,939	22	22	22	Green	L	
Local Safeguarding Children's Board	17	(18)	(35)	66	72	6	6	6	Amber	L	
Early Intervention and Prevention	108	(385)	(493)	430	267	(163)	(163)	(163)	Green	L	
Sub Total Children's Services Operations	5,111	4,034	(1,077)	20,444	20,351	(93)	0	(93)	Green	H	
AD Learning and Strategic Commissioning	288	103	(185)	1,151	1,151	0	0	0	Green	L	
Children's Services Commissioning	97	77	(20)	387	387	0	0	0	Green	L	
Youth Service	264	149	(115)	1,057	1,092	35	(37)	(2)	Green	M	Complete service re-design and a move to a mainly commissioned service
School Support	537	649	112	2,148	2,145	(3)	24	21	Green	H	Needs led with children placed on out of county placements. Pupil Referral Unit recommissioned.
Other School Budgets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Green	L	
Partnerships and Workforce Development	186	(60)	(246)	744	581	(162)	(2)	(164)	Amber	L	
School Improvement	383	255	(128)	1,534	1,534	0	(1)	(1)	Green	L	
Standards Fund	0	1	1	0	0	0	(1)	(1)	Green	L	
Music Service	68	140	72	272	280	8	8	8	Amber	H	Rise in fees impacting ability to recover full cost / disaggregation of shared service
School Organisation & Capital Planning	380	332	(49)	1,522	1,433	(89)		(88)	Green	L	
Sub Total Learning & Strategic Commissioning	2,203	1,646	(557)	8,814	8,603	(210)	(16)	(226)	Green	L	
Director Children's Services (excl Transport & Schools)	7,358	5,689	(1,669)	29,434	29,131	(303)	(16)	(318)	Green	L	

Month: June 2011	Cumulative to Date			Year								
	Budget	Actual	Variance	Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Proposed use of Earmarked reserves	Forecast Variance after use of earmarked reserves.	RAG	Risk	Activity level Medium/High risk budgets (COMMENTARY)	
Director	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000				
JSCS - Transport SEN	931	943	12	3,776	4,176	400		400	Red	H	Cross cutting efficiencies which are at risk	
JSCS - Transport CWD	19	19	(1)	79	79	0		0	Green	H	Cross cutting efficiencies which are at risk	
JSCS - Transport Looked After Children	59	56	(3)	240	240	0		0	Green	H	Cross cutting efficiencies which are at risk	
JSCS - Mainstream Transport	949	964	15	3,859	3,865	5		5	Green	H	Cross cutting efficiencies which are at risk	
Joint School Commissioning Service (Transport)	1,958	1,982	24	7,955	8,360	405		405	Amber	H		
Sub Total Children's Services (excluding Schools)	9,317	7,671	(1,645)	37,388	37,491	102	(16)	87	Green	H		
DSG Contribution to Central Support	(454)	(454)	(0)	(1,817)	(1,817)	0		0	Green	L		
Director Children's Services (excl Schools)	8,862	7,217	(1,645)	35,571	35,673	102	(16)	87	Green	L		
Individual Schools Budget (ISB)	38,908	38,908	0	155,633	155,633	0		0	Green	L		
Supported by: YPLA	(3,407)	(3,407)	(0)	(13,627)	(13,627)	(0)		(0)	Green	L		
DSG	(35,502)	(35,502)	0	(142,006)	(142,006)	0		0	Green	L		
Sub Total Schools	0	0	(0)	0	(0)	(0)		(0)	Green	L		
Total Director of Children's Services	8,862	7,217	(1,645)	35,571	35,673	102	(16)	87	Green	H		
Net Forecast Outturn				35,658								
				16								

Appendix A3

Revenue Subjective analysis June 2011 - Forecast Outturn										
Expenditure Type	Staffing costs	Premises and Transport	Supplies and Services	Third Party & Transfer Payments	Other	Gross Costs	Income	Grants	Total Income	Net Costs
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Director										
Social Care Health and Housing	17,704	649	3,470	66,804	18	88,644	-320	31,391	31,071	57,573
Children's Services	23,808	9,277	28,540	9,352		70,977	8,981	26,322	35,303	35,674
Sustainable Communities	21,587	2,567	7,934	29,977	80	62,145	8,598	2,412	11,010	51,135
Customer and Shared Services	20,835	3,601	9,586	858	70,011	104,891	80,871	1,886	82,757	22,134
Office of the Chief Executive	2,526	22	1,928	8		4,483	63	172	235	4,248
Contingency and Reserves			1,624		1,017	2,641		1,803	1,803	838
Corporate Costs	3,080	5	-321		11,535	14,299	1,918	393	2,311	11,989
Total Excluding Schools	89,539	16,122	52,761	106,998	82,661	348,082	100,111	64,379	164,490	183,592

Notes:

Supplies and services * Equipment, Furniture and Materials, Professional Services, Communication and Computing, Conference Expenses, Grants and Subscriptions

Third Party Payments * Other Government/Local Government Agencies, Payments to contractors

Other * Capital Financing, Rent rebates and allowances, Reserves

Targeted Efficiency Savings Monitoring - Summary

Month: June 2011 Updated on: 05/07/11

Service Area	2011/12 Comments (please include new recommendations around the current year's budget, any in-year efficiencies, any in-year savings and any in-year initiatives)	Month			Year to date			Full Year		
		Budget £m	Actual £m	Variance	Budget £m	Actual £m	Variance	Budget £m	Forecast £m	Variance
EFFICIENCIES										
CS4 CSO - Special Educational Needs.	0.128 Disaggregation of shared services	0.011	0.011	0.000	0.032	0.032	0.000	0.128	0.128	0.000
CS5 CSO - Remodel the Youth Service.	1.898 Youth service - staff leaving up to 30th June	0.158	0.088	(0.070)	0.475	0.265	(0.210)	1.898	1.898	0.000
CS8 CSO Parenting Support	0.100 New structure to release savings	0.008	0.008	0.000	0.025	0.025	0.000	0.100	0.100	0.000
CS9a Music Service	0.159 Disag of shared service and move to new delivery	0.013	0.013	0.000	0.040	0.040	0.000	0.159	0.151	(0.008)
CS1 Reduction of posts at Head of Service level and in the Learning and Commissioning services part of the directorate	0.915 New structure to release savings	0.076	0.086	0.010	0.229	0.139	(0.090)	0.915	0.915	0.000
CS2 CSO - Education Welfare.	0.200 New structure to release savings	0.017	0.017	0.000	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.200	0.200	0.000
CS3 CSO - Removal of processes that support regulatory activity.	0.100 New structure to release savings	0.008	0.008	0.000	0.025	0.025	0.000	0.100	0.100	0.000
CS6 CSO - Strategic Commissioning of social care placements and interventions.	0.230 Will be met to changes to strategic commissioning and driving down contract costs	0.019	0.019	0.000	0.057	0.058	0.000	0.230	0.230	0.000
CS7 L&SC - Workforce Strategy	0.100 New structure to release savings	0.008	0.008	0.000	0.025	0.025	0.000	0.100	0.100	0.000
Senior Management review	0.050 Last Years Senior Management Review - final 2 months of savings	0.004	0.004	0.000	0.012	0.013	0.000	0.050	0.050	0.000
SUB TOTAL		0.323	0.263	(0.060)	0.970	0.670	(0.300)	3.880	3.872	(0.008)
CROSS CUTTING EFFICIENCIES										
Transport - Children's Services	1.054 Review of all transport to children to protect most vulnerable.	0.088	0.054	(0.033)	0.263	0.163	(0.100)	1.054	0.654	(0.400)
Procurement	0.037 Reduce spend on Agency staff and other misc initiatives	0.003	0.003	0.000	0.009	0.009	0.000	0.037	0.037	0.000
SUB TOTAL		0.091	0.058	(0.033)	0.273	0.173	(0.100)	1.091	0.691	(0.400)
TOTAL		4.971	4.321	(0.650)	1.243	0.843	(0.400)	4.971	4.563	(0.408)

Commentary for EIG Report - to explain latest forecast, key risks, any variances and compensatory savings to plug shortfall:

Children's Services - the CS efficiency target for 2011/12 is £4.971M (including Cross Cutting efficiencies - Transport £1.054M and Procurement £0.037M). Since the commencement of 2011/2012 financial year progress has been made in all CS efficiencies.

- Youth £1.888M (the largest 2011/2012 efficiency across the council) - the late implementation of arrangements on the new commissioned service and additional resources required for the Big Society agenda have led to a pressure of £475K. This will be mitigated by grant money held for this purpose.
- Reduction of Posts £916K - delay in release of some staff through redundancy to ensure continuity of statutory duties will result in a pressure of £100K to be mitigated by grant money held for this purpose.
- Music Service £169K - this shared service is currently going through a disaggregation process, due for completion at the end of June 2011. Identified pressures will be mitigated by grant money held for this purpose. An £8K shortfall has been identified in June.
- Transport (Cross Cutting) £1.054M - the methodology and assumptions made in the identification of savings are being worked through to ascertain deliverability in 2011/2012. The current view is that there is a potential £

Appendix C

Earmarked Reserves -

Description	Opening Balance 2011/12 £000	Increase in reserves £000	Spend against reserves £000	Release of reserves £000	Proposed Closing Balance 2011/12 £000
Children's Services Reserves					
School Forum	4				4
School Specific Contingency	1,062				1,062
	1,066	0	0	0	1,066
School Reserves					
Revenue 3030050	10,552				10,552
Capital 3030033	4,423				4,423
	14,975	0	0	0	14,975
GRAND TOTAL	16,041	0	0	0	16,041

Children's Services Aged Debt as at 30th June 2011

DATE	NAME OF ACCOUNT	Invoice Number	Amount
05/01/2010	OTHER LA	7010023894	£ 35,837.50
17/03/10	OTHER LA	7010032739	£ 18,683.70
19/03/10	NHS	7010032882	£ 17,266.00
26/03/10	OTHER LA	7010033320	£ 35,851.00
23/02/11	SCHOOL	7010068715	£ 16,508.25
24/03/11	OTHER LA	7010071145	£ 11,989.40
30/03/11	OTHER LA	7010071605	£ 14,451.80
30/03/11	SCHOOL	7010071593	£ 135,637.59
12/04/11	OTHER LA	7010073347	£ 59,570.33
21/04/11	OTHER LA	7010073570	£ 1,152,373.10
06/05/11	OTHER LA	7010074411	£ 35,783.19
16/05/11	OTHER LA	7010074821	£ 55,000.00
16/05/11	OTHER	7010074823	£ 13,317.00
27/05/11	OTHER	7010078521	£ 29,129.26
27/05/11	SCHOOL	7010078523	£ 18,792.00
01/06/11	OTHER LA	7010079080	£ 51,983.43
06/06/11	OTHER LA	7010079830	£ 28,245.72
07/06/11	OTHER LA	7010079968	£ 92,592.03
08/06/11	OTHER LA	7010080039	£ 10,000.00
09/06/11	NHS	7010080134	£ 84,300.00
13/06/11	SCHOOL	7010080273	£ 68,893.33
13/06/11	SCHOOL	7010080274	£ 77,493.33
13/06/11	SCHOOL	7010080275	£ 41,535.83
17/06/11	OTHER LA	7010080753	£ 25,162.43
17/06/11	OTHER	7010080965	£ 11,750.00
28/06/11	OTHER LA	7010082108	£ 25,365.11
28/06/11	NHS	7010082112	£ 73,549.00
01/07/11	OTHER LA	7010082204	£ 10,248.00

£ 2,251,308.33

Summary

Other LA's	£ 1,663,136.74
NHS	£ 175,115.00
Schools	£ 358,860.33
Other	£ 54,196.26
	<u>£ 2,251,308.33</u>
	£ -

Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 6 September July 2011
Subject: Capital Budget Management Report Quarter ended 30 June 2011
Report of: Cllr Mark A G Versallion, Executive Member for Children Services
Summary: The report sets out the projected full year forecast as at 30 June 2011 for Children's Services Capital

Contact Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children Services
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Sound financial management contributes to the Council's value for money and enables the Council to successfully deliver its priorities. The recommendations will contribute indirectly to all 5 Council priorities

Financial:

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Legal:

None

Risk Management:

None

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

Any staffing reductions as a result of compensatory efficiencies or grant reductions are being carried out in accordance with the Council's Managing Change Policy and in consultation with the Trade Unions.

Equalities/Human Rights:

Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken prior to the allocation of the 2010/2011 budgets and each Directorate was advised of significant equality implications relating to their budget proposals. Many of the pressures outlined in this report are in relation to those needs led services which support the most vulnerable children in our communities.

Community Safety:

Any savings of efficiency proposals and reduction in grant that remove or change the level of service provided may have an impact on the community safety priorities and potentially result in an increase in crime, anti social behaviour, fear of crime and public confidence.

Sustainability:

None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (a) Note the current projected full year outturn position to be on budget.**
- (b) Note the management actions, where exceptions reported to relevant schemes, within paragraph 5.**

Purpose of Report

1. The report sets out the projected financial position to the end of March 2012 based on the information available as at the end of June 2011, being the first quarter of the year.

Introduction and Key Highlights (Appendices A1)

2. Children's Services annual capital expenditure budget is £28.04M and income budget is £26.13M which leaves a net expenditure capital budget of £1.91M.
3. The full year projected outturn position for 2011/12 is currently on budget.
4. The major capital budgets have been profiled. The budget to date is £0.6M compared to actual spend to date of £1.14M, above budget by £0.54M. The spend to date variance is mainly due to NDS Modernisation (schools capital maintenance), a standards fund project that slipped from 2010/11. Slippage from 2010/11 is not being approved until the July Executive, however ongoing spend continues.
5. There are no new major projects for 2011/12 or uncontrolled key risks to highlight. It is anticipated that a number of projects will slip into 2012/13.
6. The Roecroft School project continues and is now part funded by £2M of the Basic Need grant releasing the Council contribution to the scheme.

Summary Table: Directorate Overall Position (Appendices A1)

Approved net Budget	Net Spend to Date	Variance to date (-under)/overspend	Net Full Year Forecast Variance (-under)/overspend
£000	£000	£000	£000
1,909	1,144	542	0

Capital Position – exception reporting

7. (a) Etonbury Middle School

This project is mostly funded by Section 106 funding and the forecast budget for 11/12 of £696K are works that are likely to slip into 2012/13.

(b) Tithe Farm Lower

The project has made a series of improvements to the school's accommodation and site and will be handed over in July shortly before a second project concentrating on several condition elements is planned to commence at the start of the school summer holiday. The original OBC approval for the project was to use £1774k PCP funds between 2009/10 and 2012/13 (but principally in 2010/11 and 2011/12) with £624K of that being expended from April 2011. However with PCP funds ceasing from 2011/12 onwards, the project has been re-cast with the improvement half contained within the £1,150K PCP funds actually provided, and the 'Condition' half now being funded from CBC's Strategic Maintenance Programme with a commissioned budget of £438K including fees (tenders returned 4 July 2011).

(c) Schools Access Initiative

The programme enables the Council to meet its statutory obligations to enable pupils with disabilities to attend local schools. There have been delays in some of these projects, and therefore slippage from 2010/11 to the current year.

(d) Arnold Middle School

The project is now underway but budget has slipped from 2010/11 to 11/12 due to late contract commitments. However the project is due to be handed over on 22 August 2011 providing it recovers as expected from being 1 week behind programme. Financially the project is well within budget.

(e) Schools Capital Maintenance (formerly New Deal for Schools)

The 11/12 strategic maintenance programme is now in place and is expected to be fully spent by the end of the financial year.

(f) Basic Need

This grant funding is to enable management of pressures related to population growth and capacity within our schools and has in part funded Roecroft Lower School by £2M. The balance of £7.79M may slip into 2012/13 whilst feasibility studies are carried out. A further report on this will be prepared for early autumn. There is no expenditure deadline on this grant.

(g) Roecroft Lower School

Due to delays caused by last winter's severe weather, the school is content that its relocation will now be completed at the October half term. Financially the project remains within its programme provision.

(h) Temporary Accommodation

This funding covers planning renewal fees for existing temp units and provides funding for additional school accommodation. Last year's budget was reduced to £100K, and there is a slippage amount of £52,491 to carry into 2011/12. However this year there is more demand for funding and the total budget has already been allocated to various lower schools.

(i) All Saints Academy

The commencement of this project was delayed from 2010/11 due to the review by the Department for Education on Academy and BSF capital schemes. The project is now on site but the Academy has now requested approval to retain a part of the former school building, to achieve its proposal to extend its age range. The proposal is being evaluated and CSMT will receive a report in due course.

(j) Teaching / Learning Practical Food Skills at KS3 at Gilbert Inglefield & Parkfields Middle Schools.

The Gilbert Inglefield Food Block was handed over on 16 March 2011 and is already proving to be a very popular and successful facility with pupils and staff. The Parkfields Food Block has also included HAST funded 'special education' provision and will be handed over on 7 July 2011 having also been caught at a vulnerable stage by the early severe winter. Financially both projects were largely completed before 2011/12 and have kept approximately to budget.

(k) Asbestos / Health & Safety

A series of asbestos surveys is underway, building on the work undertaken in 10/11 and prioritised on the basis of risk. Remedial work is being programmed across our school estate.

(l) School Devolved Formula Capital

The allocation to Schools of £938K is for use on capital condition / improvement works on their buildings in line with the priorities in their School Improvement Plan and in context with the Schools Asset Management Plan.

The schools have three years to spend the funds and are deemed spent for this purpose of reporting.

(m) Children Centres

Following grant reduction in summer 2010 the programme was scaled back and spent accordingly.

(n) Short Breaks (AHDC)

£90K under spend on the 2009/11 allocation to be clawed back by the DfE following unavoidable delays and despite contractual commitment on the East Beds Family project which is now in construction. The project is sponsored by the Lawns Early Excellence Centre, Ivel Valley School and Children with Disabilities Service. The clawback, mid project, leaves a shortfall of funding for the remainder of the construction contract of £182K.

However approval has been obtained from PfS for the original grant of £183K that was allocated for the co-location of the Council's Youth Support Services with front line delivery services from the third sector in Dunstable and Houghton Regis to be reallocated to complete the existing AHDC East Beds Family project.

A new AHDC capital allocation for 2011/12 has been announced in the past week of £167K which will need to be spent in year. A new business case is being developed and will be presented to CSMT in July.

(o) Standards Fund for Extended Schools

Following grant reduction in July 2010 the programme was reviewed and spent all except for £15K allocated to St Leonards Preschool, which was instead paid from Sure Start grant to ensure that funding was not lost. This balance to be reallocated.

(p) Holmemead School ASD Provision

This project is now practically complete.

(q) Youth Capital Fund - Non School

This was funded by area based grant that is no longer available.

(r) Various Children's ICT Projects – unfunded by the 'Your Space' programme.

(s) Youth Services

The original proposal to create a collocation facility at Vernon Place, Dunstable for a range of Children's Services and voluntary sector partners is unfortunately undeliverable as a result of the reduction in services over the past year and the move to locate remaining Children's Services in Watling House.

However approval has been obtained from PfS for the original grant of £183K to be reallocated to complete the existing AHDC East Beds Family project – see (n) above.

(t) NDS Modernisation

Approximately £1.6M was planned to be spent between April 2011 and August 2012, due to issues on projects primarily in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis Area there has been some delay and there is likely to be slippage in the region of £200K.

(u) Improvements to School Kitchens

DfE grant funding of £622,006 was awarded to CBC to support 22 projects to improve school dining and/or kitchen areas at a total estimated cost of £1.49M with each of the schools funding the (59%) balance of the costs. 21 of these projects will be complete by the expenditure deadline of 31 August 2011 benefitting over 10,000 pupils. However, one project with a grant award of £18,792 has been unable to proceed. It is proposed that this sum be allocated to support the Asbestos/Health and Safety budget which is also managing Asbestos/gas safety shut-off in school meals kitchens.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Central Bedfordshire Capital Programme 2011/2012

Children's Services

Title and Description of the Scheme	2011/12 Capital Programme. Approved at February 2011 Council.			Approved slippage from 2010/11 (To be agreed by Exec in July)- LOCKED WHEN POPULATED			REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME BUDGET (Feb 2011 Exec plus slippage)			Budget no longer required			Slippage to 2012/13 and future years			Revised Capital Programme- June 2011			Full Year Forecast			Full Year Variance			Over / under spend			
	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	
Various Children's ICT projects unfunded by the Youospace programme including Training Manager Pro. Candidate achievement system (Gizmo), Sheep Dip and SIMP/Collect. SIMP/Collect enables the collection of census data directly from early years (EY) set.	500	0	500	0	0	0	500	0	500	0	500	0	0	0	0	500	0	500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Integrated Youth Support Services Co-location of the Authorities Youth Support Services with the front line delivery services from the third sector in Dunstable/Houghton Regis to ensure that young people receive the app.	184	(184)	0	183	(183)	0	387	(387)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	387	(387)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caddington Lower School				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NDS Modernisation				13	(13)	0	13	(13)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	(13)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Improvements to School Kitchens				14	0	14	14	0	14	0	14	0	0	0	0	14	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SWIFT Phase 3				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BEST Co-location Project Dunstable				47	0	47	47	0	47	0	47	0	0	0	0	47	0	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ESCR				4,032	(2,237)	1,795	32,072	(28,368)	3,704	0	0	0	0	0	0	24,281	(20,577)	3,704	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Children's Families and Learning-Schools	28,040	(26,131)	1,909	4,032	(2,237)	1,795	32,072	(28,368)	3,704	0	0	0	0	0	0	24,281	(20,577)	3,704	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE CAPITAL PROJ

2011/12 Capital Programme
Children's Services

Title and Description of the Scheme	June 2011												Full Project Cost £000s				
	PROFILED BUDGET YTD				ACTUAL				VARIANCE								
	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure		Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure		Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure						
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s					
Eltonbury Middle School additional places The project is to provide additional pupil places in response to recent housing developments in the area, utilising the approved S106 planning obligations funding.			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
Tilts Farm Lower The use of Primary capital Funding to transform the "ired" and unsuitable accommodation at Tilts Farm Lower School to provide a C21st environment capable of providing accommodation fit to meet the needs of teaching and Learning.	399	(399)	0	399	(399)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
Schools Access Initiative There is a programme to enable the Council to meet its Statutory obligations. There is a Statutory duty on the Council to have an agreed accessibility strategy to enable local pupils to attend (local) school.	58		58	58	0	58	0	58	0	0	0	0					
Arnold Middle School (H&S part of larger phase 3 project) The project will meet the needs, first identified in 2003, to improve the administration and music facilities for Arnold Middle School as part of the overall enlargement of the School to 600 permanent places.	123		123	123	0	123	0	123	0	0	0	0					
Schools Capital Maintenance (Formerly New Deal for Schools Modernisation) Modernisation funding is currently the only funding available to address the highest priority Repair and Maintenance needs across the schools estate. It would also be expected to be	1,578	-1578	0	1,578	(1,578)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
Basic Need The funding is given to enable us to manage the pressures of population growth by providing new permanent capacity in our growth areas.			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
Rosecroft Lower Relocation This project is to provide Rosecroft Lower School in stotford with a new school on a new site from sept 2011, in response to increased population from the local growth area, meeting the Council's statutory obligations.	1,518	(1,518)	0	1,526	(1,518)	8	8	8	0	0	8	0					
Temporary Accommodation The purpose of this rolling programme is to enable the council to meet "unforeseen" or short term accommodation needs as a result of increased intakes into schools or as a result of organisational changes to meet KS1 class size legi	250		250	250	0	250	0	250	0	0	0	0					

Children's Services

Title and Description of the Scheme	June 2011												Full Project Cost £000s			
	PROFILED BUDGET YTD			ACTUAL			VARIANCE			Source of External Fund (if applicable)	WBS Element(s)	Percentage of Project Complete		Estimated Project Completion date		
	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure							
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s							
All Saints Academy. The project includes the rebuild and refurbishment of buildings previously comprising of the former Northfields Technology College, now All Saints Academy, Dunstable, as part of the previous Government's Academy programme.	1875	-1875	0	1,875	(1,875)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Teaching / Learning Practical Food Skills at KSS3 at Gilbert Inglefield and Parkfields Middle Schools. Gilbert Inglefield and Parkfields Middle Schools are to be provided with a new purpose-built practical Food room. The new facilities will enable the Scho	0	49	0	49	(24)	25	49	(24)	25							
Asbestos/ Health & Safety Programme of asbestos removal in schools and various Health & Safety related improvements including a programme of fire alarm upgrades in schools, gas safety shut off systems in school kitchens, electrical safety issues, glazing	0	21	0	21	21	21	21	0	21							
Schools Devolved Formula Capital This funding is for schools to use on capital condition / improvement work on their buildings in line with the priorities in their School Improvement Plan (SIP) and within the context of the School's Asset Management Plan	0	235	0	235	(235)	0	235	(235)	0							
Children's Centres (General Sure Start Grant) - Non School Children's Centres projects: 8 new phase 3 centres, major extension to a phase one centre (Tilth Farm Lower School), improvements to 2 phase two centres.	0	66	0	66	0	66	66	0	66							
Short Breaks (AHDC) This is ring fenced capital funding which is provided through the Sure Start Grant. It is specifically to support the transformation of services to disabled children and their families, in particular the provision of short breaks. Pro	0	93	0	93	(93)	0	93	(93)	0							
Standards Fund for Extended Schools A new preschool at Maple Tree Lower School. Funding has been withdrawn for other projects but may be reinstated. CBC have yet to be advised.	0	35	0	35	(35)	0	35	(35)	0							
Holmehead School ASD Provision The re-provisioning of the Library and ICT Suite in new build attached to the Sports Hall, and a refurbishment of the existing library and ICT Suite to become the ASD Provision and ancil	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0							
Youth Capital Fund - Non School Create/enhance facilities for young people and provide equipment to enable positive activities.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0							

Children's Services

Title and Description of the Scheme	June 2011										Full Project Cost £000s	
	PROFILED BUDGET YTD			ACTUAL			VARIANCE					
	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure			
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s		
Various Children's ICT projects unfunded by the Youospace programme including Training Manager Pro. Candidate achievement system (Gizmo), Sheep Dip and SIMP/Collect. SIMP/Collect enables the collection of census data directly from early years' (EY) set.			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Integrated Youth Support Services Co-location of the Authorities Youth Support Services with the front line delivery services from the third sector in Dunstable/Houghton Regis to ensure that young people receive the app.			0	46	(46)	0	46	(46)	0			
Caddington Lower School			0	4	0	4	4	0	4			
NDS Modernisation			0	403	(13)	390	403	(13)	390			
Improvements to School Kitchens			0	8	(13)	(11)	8	(19)	(11)			
ACS			0	20	0	20	20	0	20			
Swift Phase 3			0	97	0	97	97	0	97			
BEST Co-location Project Dunstable			0	85	0	85	85	0	85			
ESCR			0	8	0	8	8	0	8			
Total Children's Families and Learning-Schools	5,801	(5,370)	431	6,979	(5,835)	1,144	1,178	(465)	713			0

Meeting: Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date: 6 September 2011
Subject: Work Programme 2011 – 2012 & Executive Forward Plan
Report of: Chief Executive
Summary: The report provides Members with details of the currently drafted Committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.

Contact Officer: Bernard Carter, Overview & Scrutiny Manager
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The work programme of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee will contribute indirectly to all 5 Council priorities.

Financial:

n/a

Legal:

n/a

Risk Management:

n/a

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

n/a

Equalities/Human Rights:

n/a

Community Safety:

n/a

Sustainability:

n/a

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. **that the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**
 - (a) **considers and approves the work programme attached, subject to any further amendments it may wish to make;**
 - (b) **considers the Executive Forward Plan; and**
 - (c) **considers whether it wishes to add any further items to the work programme and/or establish any Task Forces to assist it in reviewing specific items.**

Work Programme

1. Attached at Appendix A is the currently drafted work programme for the Committee.
2. Also attached at Appendix B is the latest version of the Executive's Forward Plan so that Overview & Scrutiny Members are fully aware of the key issues Executive Members will be taking decisions upon in the coming months. Those items relating specifically to this Committee's terms of reference are shaded in light grey.
3. The Committee is now requested to consider the work programme attached and amend or add to it as necessary. This will allow officers to plan accordingly but will not preclude further items being added during the course of the year if Members so wish and capacity exists.

Task Forces

4. In addition to consideration of the work programme, Members may also wish to consider how each item will be reviewed i.e. by the Committee itself (over one or a number of Committee meetings) or by establishing a Member Task Force to review an item in greater depth and report back its findings.

Conclusion

5. Members are requested to consider and agree the attached work programme, subject to any further amendments/additions they may wish to make and highlight those items within it where they may wish to establish a Task Force to assist the Committee in its work.

Work Programme for Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2011 - 2012

Ref	Indicative OSC Meeting Date	Report Title	Issue to be considered	Comment
1.	6 September 2011	Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report	To consider the 2010/11 Annual Report of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board	Chair of LSCB (Phil Picton) invited
		Disabled Children's Services	To consider a review of disabled children's services in Central Bedfordshire	
		Allowances for Foster Parents	To consider an options paper regarding the payment of allowances to foster parents	
		Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers	To consider a report on the transition to adulthood for care leavers	Chair of Foster Carers Alliance (Brian Roberts) invited
		Adoption, Fostering & Private Fostering Annual Reports	To consider the annual reports for the Adoption Service, Fostering Service and Private Fostering Provision	
		Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring	To consider the directorate's capital & revenue budget monitoring information for the first quarter of 2011/12.	

Ref	Indicative OSC Meeting Date	Report Title	Issue to be considered	Comment
2.	18 October 2011	Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring	To consider performance monitoring information for the first quarter of 2011/12	
		School Organisation Plan	To receive an update on the School Organisation Plan	
		Children's Centres	To discuss early options for Children's Centres	
3.	29 November 2011			
4.	15 December 2011	Children & Young People's Plan	To consider the half year monitoring report of the Children & Young People's Plan	
		Children's Centres	To receive details of the tender for Children's Centres	
		Validated Upper School Results	To receive the validated upper school results for Central Bedfordshire	
5.	17 January 2012	Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring	To consider the directorate's capital & revenue budget monitoring information for the second quarter of 2011/12.	

Ref	Indicative OSC Meeting Date	Report Title	Issue to be considered	Comment
		Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring	To consider performance monitoring information for the second quarter of 2011/12	
		Education Vision	To receive a presentation regarding a refresh of the Education Vision	
		Children's Health	To receive a presentation regarding children's health	
6.	28 February 2012			
7.	17 April 2012	Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring	To consider the directorate's capital & revenue budget monitoring information for the third quarter of 2011/12.	
		Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring	To consider performance monitoring information for the third quarter of 2011/12	
8.	22 May 2012			

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**Central Bedfordshire Council
Forward Plan of Key Decisions
1 September 2011 to 31 August 2012**

- 1) During the period from **1 September 2011 to 31 August 2012**, Central Bedfordshire Council plans to make key decisions on the issues set out below. “Key decisions” relate to those decisions of the Executive which are likely:
- to result in the incurring of expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant (namely £200,000 or above per annum) having regard to the budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
 - to be significant in terms of their effects on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the area of Central Bedfordshire.
- 2) The Forward Plan is a general guide to the key decisions to be determined by the Executive and will be updated on a monthly basis. Key decisions will be taken by the Executive as a whole. The Members of the Executive are:

Cllr James Jamieson	Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Executive
Cllr Maurice Jones	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources
Cllr Mark Versallion	Executive Member for Children’s Services
Cllr Mrs Carole Hegley	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing
Cllr Ken Matthews	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Strategic Planning and Economic Development
Cllr Brian Spurr	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services
Cllr Mrs Tricia Turner MBE	Executive Member for Economic Partnerships
Cllr Richard Stay	Executive Member for External Affairs

- 3) Those items identified for decision more than one month in advance may change in forthcoming Plans. Each new Plan supersedes the previous Plan. Any person who wishes to make representations to the Executive about the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made should do so to the officer whose telephone number and e-mail address are shown in the Forward Plan. Any correspondence should be sent to the contact officer at the relevant address as shown below. General questions about the Plan such as specific dates, should be addressed to the Committee Services Manager, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford SG17 5TQ.
- 4) The agendas for meetings of the Executive will be published as follows:

Meeting Date	Publication of Agenda
15 March 2011	03 March 2011
05 April 2011	24 March 2011
31 May 2011	19 May 2011
12 July 2011	30 June 2011
23 August 2011	11 August 2011
4 October 2011	22 September 2011
15 November 2011	3 November 2011
6 December 2011	24 November 2011
10 January 2012	22 December 2011
14 February 2012	2 February 2012
27 March 2012	15 March 2012
15 May 2012	3 May 2012

Central Bedfordshire Council

Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 September 2011 to 31 August 2012

Key Decisions

Date of Publication: 15.08.11

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
1.	Central Bedfordshire Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board -	To establish a Central Bedfordshire Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board.	4 October 2011	Design and implementation plans for the Shadow Board have been through engagement and information sharing with statutory partners. A wider stakeholder engagement event to include other partners is planned for Autumn 2011.	Report Terms of Reference	Cllr James G Jamieson Comments by 03/09/11 to Contact Officer: Patricia Coker, Head of Service, Partnerships - Social Care, Health & Housing Email: patricia.coker@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5521
2.	Options for determining Fostering Allowances -	To consider the options for determining Fostering Allowances.	4 October 2011	Consultation will take place with existing Foster Carers. Being a web-based consultation it will also be open to the public and prospective fosters. The Consultation will run throughout July.	Report	Cllr Mark A G Versallion Comments by 03/09/11 to Contact Officer: Catherine Parry, Assistant Director, Children's Services Operations Email: catherine.parry@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6441

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
3.	Leaving Care Allowance Option Paper -	To consider the Leaving Care Allowance Option Paper.	4 October 2011	Consultation in July and August 2011 with Children in Care Council and with Looked After Children pending parental permission issues being resolved.	Report	Cllr Mark A G Versallion Comments by 03/09/11 to Contact Officer: Catherine Parry, Assistant Director, Children's Services Operations Email: catherine.parry@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6441
4.	Sub-Regional Allocations Policy -	To formally adopt the Sub-Regional Allocations Policy as Central Bedfordshire's Allocation Policy and to adopt the changes made to the Sub-Regional Allocations Policy.	4 October 2011		Report	Cllr Mrs Carole Hegley Comments by 03/09/11 to Contact Officer: Hamid Khan, Head of Housing Needs Email: hamid.khan@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5369
5.	Minerals and Waste Core Strategy: Pre-Submission Consultation -	To consider the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy.	4 October 2011		Report	Cllr Brian J Spurr Comments by 03/09/11 to Contact Officer: Roy Romans, Minerals and Waste Team Leader Email: roy.romans@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 8307

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
6.	Central Bedfordshire Local Development Scheme -	To agree the broad scope of new planning policy documents for Central Bedfordshire and the timetable for their production.	4 October 2011	Documents referred to in the Local Development Scheme will be subject to separate consultation in line with statutory requirements.	Central Bedfordshire Local Development Scheme	Cllr Ken C Matthews Comments by 03/09/11 to Contact Officer: Richard Fox, Head of Development Plan Email: richard.fox@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4105
7.	Proposal to establish a shared legal service for Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes Councils -	To consider the proposal to establish a shared legal services for Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes Councils.	15 November 2011		Report	Cllr Maurice R Jones Comments by 14/10/11 to Contact Officer: John Atkinson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services Email: john.atkinson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6255
8.	Economic Development Plan including the Approach to All Age Skills -	To recommend to full Council to approve the Central Bedfordshire Economic Development Plan.	15 November 2011	13 week consultation from 8 June 2011, to include focus groups, workshops, key stakeholder meetings and web based consultation.	Draft final Economic Development Plan	Cllr Ken C Matthews Comments by 14/10/11 to Contact Officer: James Cushing, Head of Economic Policy Email james.cushing@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4984

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
9.	Review of Capital Programme -	To consider the review of the Capital Programme.	15 November 2011		Report	Cllr Maurice R Jones Comments by 14/10/11 to Contact Officer: Interim Assistant Chief Executive - Resources Email: john.unsworth@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5875
10.	Fairer Charging - Phase 2 -	To receive an update on phase 2 fairer charging and to make a decision on the introduction of weekly charge for Telecare Services.	15 November 2011	Current Telecare users (individual letter and survey); Stakeholder Groups and Public (email and web-based survey) 15 August 2011 – 4 November 2011.	Report Consultation document containing proposals Analysis of consultation responses	Cllr Mrs Carole Hegley Comments by 14/10/11 to Contact Officer: Tim Hoyle, Head of Business Systems Email: tim.hoyle@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6065
11.	Review of Central Bedfordshire Council Library Service -	Approval is sought to: A: agree the Central Bedfordshire vision for the Libraries Service; and B: agree a sustainable model of future Library Service provision.	6 December 2011	Throughout May/June a series of focus groups and workshops with service users and partners and stakeholders. From July – September/October a formal consultation for a minimum of 13 weeks on the vision and potential service delivery models.	Emerging vision, core service offer and aspiration Libraries Service Review Report Outcomes from consultation process Equality Impact Assessment	Cllr Brian J Spurr Comments by 05/11/11 to Contact Officer: Kate McFarlane, Head of Community Regeneration & Adult Skills Email: kate.mcfarlane@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5858

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12.	Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring -	To consider the quarter 2 budget monitoring report.	6 December 2011		Report	Cllr Maurice R Jones Comments by 05/11/11 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Assistant Director Finance Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147
13.	Draft Budget 2012/13 -	To consider the draft budget for 2012/13.	6 December 2011		Report	Cllr Maurice R Jones Comments by 05/11/2011 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Assistant Director Finance Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147
14.	Gypsy & Traveller Development Plan Document -	To recommend to Council the adoption of the Gypsy & Traveller Development Plan Document.	10 January 2012	Statutory Local Development Framework consultation process and Examination by Planning Inspector.	Gypsy & Traveller Development Plan Document (Local Development Framework North)	Cllr Ken C Matthews Comments by 09/12/11 to Contact Officer: Richard Fox, Head of Development Plan Email: richard.fox@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4105

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15.	Award of the Housing Responsive Maintenance and Void Repairs Contract -	To award the housing responsive maintenance and void repairs contract.	10 January 2012		Report	Cllr Mrs Carole Hegley Comments by 09/12/11 to Contact Officer: Basil Quinn, Housing Asset Manager Performance Email: basil.quinn@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5118
16.	Budget 2012/13 -	To recommend to Council the proposed budget for 2012/13.	14 February 2012		Report	Cllr Maurice R Jones Comments by 13/01/12 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Assistant Director Finance Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147
17.	Localism Bill -	To consider the Localism Bill and the delivery through the Community Strategy.	14 February 2012		Report	Cllr Maurice R Jones Comments by 13/01/12 to Contact Officer: Peter Fraser, Head of Partnerships & Performance Email: peter.fraser@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6740

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
18.	Community Safety Partnership Priorities and the Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2012-2013 -	To adopt the Community Safety Partnership Priorities and the Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2012-2013.	27 March 2012	Strategic Assessment & Partnership Plan will be considered at the Community Safety Partnership Executive meeting in November/December, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Local Strategic Partnership.	Strategic Assessment Priorities & Community Safety Partnership Plan 2012-2013	Cllr Brian J Spurr Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Jeanette Keyte, Community Safety Manager Email: jeanette.keyte@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5232
19.	Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2012-2013, Age Restricted Sales Plan 2012-2013 and the Health and Safety (as a Regulator) Service Plan 2012-2013 -	To approve the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2012-2013, Age Restricted Sales Plan 2012-2013 and the Health and Safety (as a Regulator) Service Plan 2012-2013.	27 March 2012		Central Bedfordshire Enforcement Policy; FSA Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement; Food Law Code of Practice (England); HSE Section 18 Standard on Enforcement	Cllr Brian J Spurr Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Susan Childerhouse, Head of Public Protection (North) Email: susan.childerhouse@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4394
20.	Leighton Buzzard Town Centre Planning and Development Briefs -	To endorse the planning document for two sites as Interim Technical Guidance for Development Management Purposes.	27 March 2012	Statutory consultation procedure to be carried out in Autumn 2011.	Leighton Buzzard Town Centre sites Planning and Development Briefs	Cllr Ken Matthews Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Liz Wade, Assistant Director Economic Growth and Regeneration Email: liz.wade@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6288

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21.	Brewers Hill Road Sites, Dunstable Regeneration -	To adopt the plans for the Brewers Hill Road sites as a Supplementary Planning Document or endorsement as Interim technical guidance for Development Management Purposes.	27 March 2012	Statutory consultation procedure to be carried out in November/December 2011 via exhibitions, meetings and questionnaires.	Brewers Hill Road sites, Dunstable Development Brief	Cllr Ken C Matthews, Cllr Maurice R Jones Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Peter Burt, MRICS, Head of Property Assets or Andy Lewis, Major Projects Officer Email: peter.burt@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5281 or andy.lewis@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5526
22.	Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring -	To consider quarter 3 budget monitoring report.	27 March 2012		Report	Cllr Maurice R Jones Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Assistant Director Finance Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147

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NON KEY DECISIONS						
23.	Quarter 1 Performance Report -	To receive quarter 1 performance report.	4 October 2011		Report	Cllr Maurice R Jones Comments by 03/09/11 to Contact Officer: Elaine Malarky, Head of Policy Email: elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5517
24.	Outcome of the Disability Review Children's Services -	A review of the non schools provision for disabled children is on going during September to December 2011. There may be need for structural changes which would form the content of an Executive report.	10 January 2012		Report	Cllr Mark A G Versallion Comments by 09/12/11 to Contact Officer: Catherine Parry, Interim Assistant Director, Children's Services Operations Email: catherine.parry@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6441
25.	Quarter 2 Performance Report -	To receive quarter 2 performance report.	10 January 2012		Report	Cllr Maurice R Jones Comments by 09/12/11 to Contact Officer: Elaine Malarky, Head of Policy Email: elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5517

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
26.	Quarter 3 Performance Report -	To receive quarter 3 performance report.	27 March 2012		Report	Cllr Maurice R Jones Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Elaine Malarky, Head of Policy Email: elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5517

Postal address for Contact Officers: Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford SG17 5TQ

**Central Bedfordshire Council
Forward Plan of Decisions on Key Issues**

For the Municipal Year 2011/12 the Forward Plan will be published on the fifteenth day of each month or, where the fifteenth day is not a working day, the working day immediately proceeding the fifteenth day, or in February 2012 when the plan will be published on the fourteenth day:

Date of Publication	Period of Plan
15.04.11	1 May 2011 – 30 April 2012
13.05.11	1 June 2011 – 31 May 2012
15.06.11	1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012
15.07.11	1 August 2011 – 31 July 2012
15.08.11	1 September 2011 – 31 August 2012
15.09.11	1 October 2011 – 30 September 2012
14.10.11	1 November 2011 – 31 October 2012
15.11.11	1 December 2011 – 30 November 2012
15.12.11	1 January 2012 – 31 December 2012
13.01.12	1 February 2012 – 31 January 2013
14.02.12	1 March 2012 – 28 February 2013
15.03.12	1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013

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