

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



please ask for Bernard Carter

direct line 0300 300 4175

date 23 August 2012

NOTICE OF MEETING

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date & Time

Tuesday, 4 September 2012 10.00 a.m.

Venue at

Council Chamber, 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), Mrs A Barker, R D Berry, D Bowater, P Hollick, K Janes, D Jones, I A MacKilligan and R B Pepworth

[Named Substitutes:

Mrs R J Drinkwater, Mrs S A Goodchild, B Saunders, A Shadbolt and N J Sheppard]

Co-optees: Mr S Court (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 24 July 2012 and to note actions taken since that meeting.

3. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members any declarations of interest and of 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	Executive Member Update To receive a brief verbal update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	*
10	Annual Report for the Adoption Service, Fostering Service and Private Fostering Provision To consider the annual reports for the Adoption Service, Fostering Service and Private Fostering Provision.	* 11 - 72
11	Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2011/2012 To consider the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's Annual Report for 2011/12.	* 73 - 106
12	Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring To consider performance monitoring information for the first quarter of 2012/13.	* 107 - 114
13	Quarter 1 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report To consider the directorate's revenue budget monitoring information for the first quarter of 2012/13.	* 115 - 130
14	Quarter 1 Capital Budget Monitoring Report To consider the directorate's capital budget monitoring information for the first quarter of 2012/13.	* 131 - 138
15	Work Programme 2012 - 2013 & Executive Forward Plan The report provides Members with details of the currently drafted Committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.	* 139 - 168

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CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 24 July 2012

PRESENT

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

Councillors:	R D Berry D Bowater P Hollick	Councillors:	K Janes D Jones I A MacKilligan
Parental Co-optees:	H Copley D Landman		
Church of England Co-optee: Roman Catholic Co-optee:	J Reynolds		
Apologies for Absence:	Cllrs	Mrs A Barker Mrs S Beattie R B Pepworth Mrs F Image	
Substitutes:	Cllrs	N J Sheppard	
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	P N Aldis Mrs S Clark A L Dodwell Mrs S A Goodchild B Saunders M A G Versallion	Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services Executive Member for Children's Services
Officers in Attendance:	Mr B Carter Mr P Dudley		Corporate Policy & Scrutiny Manager Assistant Director Children's Services (Learning & Strategic Commissioning)

CS/12/11 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 June 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CS/12/12 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

None.

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

None.

CS/12/13 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman announced the result of the recent Parent Governor Representative election, confirming that Stephen Court, governor at Ivel Valley Area Special School, had received the highest number of votes and would formally take his place on the Committee at its meeting on 4 September 2012.

The Chairman also wished to thank Sara Beattie, the outgoing Parent Governor Representative, for her valued contribution over the past year.

CS/12/14 **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/12/15 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

No questions, statements or deputations were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

CS/12/16 **Call-In**

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

CS/12/17 **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/12/18 **Executive Member Update**

The Executive Member for Children's Services provided the Committee with an update on current activities pertaining to his portfolio, which were not already included on today's agenda. These covered the following issues:-

- His recent meeting with Lord Hill, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools and Andrew Selous, MP for South West Bedfordshire, when a number of issues were discussed regarding education and schooling in Central Bedfordshire. Specifically, the Executive Member impressed upon Lord Hill the need to consider an extension of the 2 year protection period proposed for the minimum funding guarantee for Central Bedfordshire due to its unique situation, particularly with regard to its 3 tier education system. In response to a question, the Executive Member confirmed that he would continue to lobby the government about this issue;
- The Department for Education's approval of Central Bedfordshire's bid to provide an Alternative Provision Free School; and
- The planned provision of a new 3G artificial grass pitch at Cedars Upper School, funded by grants from the Council and the Football Association;

The Assistant Director of Children's Services (Learning & Strategic Commissioning) also provided the Committee with further detail regarding 2 issues, which had been raised at the last meeting:-

- The disaggregation of the Adoption & Fostering service currently shared between Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils. A project team had been established to plan, manage and execute the disaggregation and the transition into a Central Bedfordshire adoption and fostering service in 2013. The scope of the project included all statutory functions and draft staffing structures had already been prepared (subject to consultation). Some business functions such as the Adoption Panel may however be maintained on a shared basis, which would have the benefit of retaining expertise and managing costs; and
- The recent publication by the government of draft orders to revise the national primary curriculum in September 2014. These draft orders are intended to inject greater rigour in the key primary subjects of English, maths and science and would now be the subject of informal consultation and public debate. The Department for Education will then consider the public debate before re-drafting the orders later in the year for formal consultation.

At the end of the verbal update, a Member raised two further issues regarding:-

- Reception class funding in Central Bedfordshire and how this compared nationally; and
- The regulations governing accounting periods for Academy schools.

The Executive Member agreed to investigate these issues and respond directly to the Member concerned.

CS/12/19

Safeguarding and Looked After Children Post Inspection Action Plan

The Executive Member for Children's Services presented his report, which set out the Council's action plan following the Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children. The Executive Member particularly drew the Committee's attention to the record of main findings, which confirmed the Council's overall effectiveness and capacity for improvement was good. He did however acknowledge that health outcomes for looked after children were poor and addressing this issue would be the main focus of attention of our partners in NHS Bedfordshire, who would lead on this particular issue. The Executive Member went on to describe the phased approach of the action plan, which would ensure all issues had been addressed by the time of re-inspection in the autumn of 2013.

Members of the Committee discussed the contents of the report in detail and raised the following issues:

- The status of the actions contained within the plan, whose completion date had already passed. The Executive Member was happy to confirm that those actions had been completed according to plan;
- The Council's confidence in its ability to recruit additional health visitors. The Assistant Director of Children's Services (Learning & Strategic Commissioning) confirmed that the Council was on track to achieve its target; and
- The number of looked after children who go missing whilst in care. The Assistant Director of Children's Services (Learning & Strategic Commissioning) confirmed that although some children do go missing temporarily from time to time (sometimes necessitating police assistance), the Council had not experienced any long term disappearance of children in its care.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee endorses the action plan to support improvement following the inspection of services for Safeguarding and Looked After Children.

CS/12/20

Children's Trust Annual Report

The Executive Member for Children's Services presented the Children's Trust Annual Report for 2011/12, which set out progress in delivering the priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14.

Members of the Committee discussed the contents of the report in detail, concentrating specifically on educational attainment and examination rigour. It was Members' opinion that performance at Key Stage 2 and 4 needed to improve. The Executive Member confirmed that addressing this issue was his key priority and referred Members of the Committee to the list of activities that the Council was undertaking in partnership with schools to raise educational attainment.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report be noted.

CS/12/21

Quarter 4 Performance Report

The Executive Member for Children's Services presented the Quarter 4 Performance report, which highlighted performance within the Children's Services directorate for the final quarter of 2011/12. The Executive Member particularly drew the Committee's attention to those performance indicators judged to be good, and provided further detail regarding those judged to be poor.

Members of the Committee discussed the contents of the report in detail and raised the following issues:

- The Ofsted inspection judgement of Ashton Middle School and the performance of Ofsted generally in undertaking inspections and producing reports;
- The sponsor of Queensbury Upper School, confirmed as the CfBT Education Trust; and
- Performance at Key Stage 2, which had dropped. The Executive Member expressed his disappointment regarding this drop in standards and outlined the actions that had been taken to improve performance in 2012, including a number of successful middle school conferences. The Assistant Director of Children's Services (Learning & Strategic Commissioning) commented that, although results were not yet available for 2012, the initial view of head teachers was positive.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report be noted.

CS/12/22

11/12 Provisional Outturn Revenue Budget Monitoring Report

The Executive Member for Children's Services presented his report, which set out the revenue position of the Children's Services Directorate to the end of March 2012.

He further explained that the full year provisional revenue outturn position for 2011/12 was a £1.32M under spend against a £35.6M net budget. He also discussed the continuing trend of pressures within Children's Services operations (safeguarding, looked after children, etc) mitigated by under spends within Learning, Commissioning and Partnerships, a trend which was unsustainable in the long term.

Members of the Committee discussed the contents of the report in detail and raised a number of specific issues regarding transport (detailed below), which were noted by the Executive Member and officers in attendance:-

- The challenge of identifying efficiencies within transport, which was currently the subject of extensive review, the outcomes of which would be presented to a future Committee meeting;
- The need to consider the use of other providers of public transport (i.e. the third sector and charitable organisations) during the review;
- The opportunity such a review presented in terms of the provision of complementary health and healthy living education; and
- The need to consult ward Members and schools when undertaking walking to school re-assessments.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report be noted.

CS/12/23

11/12 Provisional Outturn Capital Budget Monitoring Report

The Executive Member for Children's Services presented his report, which set out the capital position of the Children's Services Directorate to the end of March 2012.

Members of the Committee discussed the contents of the report in detail and raised a number of minor queries, which were addressed by the Executive Member and officers in attendance.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report be noted.

CS/12/24

Work Programme 2012 - 2013 & Executive Forward Plan

The Committee considered its current Work Programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan, and noted the inclusion of a review of Youth Services as requested at the last meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Children's Services OSC Work Programme be noted.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.45 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated

Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 4 September 2012
Subject: Annual Report 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 Statutory framework regarding Annual Reports and summarises key points contained within the reports.

Advising Officer: Pete Dudley, Acting Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Yolanda Corden, Interim Assistant Director Children's Services Operations
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. Central Bedfordshire Council's Strategic Plan 2012-16 Priority 3 – Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable

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

Financial:

2. 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:

3. 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:

4. Regulatory Risks: Failure to report would be a breach of National Minimum Standard.

Child Protection Risks: Failure to assess risk may lead to unfavourable outcomes.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. There are no staffing issues.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. Adoption, Fostering and Private Fostering affect all sectors of communities.

Community Safety:

7. There are no community safety issues.

Sustainability:

8. There are no sustainability issues.

RECOMMENDATION:

- That the Committee comments on the statutory reports.

Background

9. 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.
10. The Adoption and Fostering service is a shared service hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council. Annual reports contain information activity in respect of both Councils. This report will be provided to Bedford Borough.

Adoption Services

11. The Adoption Service is required to report at six-monthly intervals. In Central Bedfordshire Council, this will be to the 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.
12. In 2011/12 there was an increase for the second year running 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 31 children, an increase from 27 in the previous 12 months. 14 households were approved as adopters, an increase from 11 in 2010/11 and matches of 15 children to adopters were made.
13. 4 Adoption Orders were granted in respect of looked after children in Central Bedfordshire Council, with a further 11 being granted Special Guardianship. Whilst the number of adoptions was down from 5 the previous year, the overall number of children where a permanent legal option was secured via adoption or Special Guardianship increased from 7 in 2010/11 to 15 in 2011/12.
14. As of the 31 March 2012, 25 adopted children and their families were in receipt of support. In addition contact plans were being made on behalf of 190 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.
15. There were 88 referrals from adult adoptees and their birth relatives, a slight increase on the previous 12 month period. 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.
16. As part of the Government reform of adoption services, a range of measures is planned for implementation 2012 to 2015 to increase the number and speed of adoptions. Measures include addressing delay in Court Proceedings, the publishing of an adoption 'scorecard' for each council, and the setting of challenging targets to reduce delay. The Adoption Service is in a strong position to meet the requirements of the action plan, having robust performance monitoring and good practices in place in regard to planning for adoption.

Fostering Services

17. 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.
18. 41 new fostering households were approved during 2011/12, an increase on the previous year.

19. 162 children were placed in full-time foster placements at the end of March 2012, of whom 85 were looked after by Central Bedfordshire Council. This is a significant increase from the 118 who were in placement in April 2011. Across both Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council, there have been 375 referrals for new or a change of placement. 146 children were placed with carers approved by Central Bedfordshire Council, 116 placed in Independent Fostering Agencies, 9 placed in residential units and the remainder did not become looked after by either Council.
20. The number of enquiries from members of the public interested in becoming foster carers fell slightly from 260 in 2010/11 to 218 in 2011/12. All enquiries received prompt information and a visit from a social worker. 84 households made formal application to become a foster carers either from a follow up enquiry as a member of the public or because they wished to care for a looked after child known to them as a family member or friend. This was an increase from the 45 applications received in 2010/11.
21. Over the course of the year 77 training activities were provided for foster carers on 36 topics. 567 delegates attended. A range of support is provided to foster carers, including regular supervision from a social worker, support groups, peer mentoring and out-of-hours telephone support.

Private Fostering provision

22. 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). It was presented to the LSCB Strategic Boards for both Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough in July 2012.
23. 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 7 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.
24. There were five new notifications in Central Bedfordshire Council area during April 2011 to March 2012. Four were successfully visited within 7 working days. There were legitimate reasons why the final visit did not meet target. Two private fostering arrangements were ongoing at 31 March 2012. Most children were over 10 years of age and were of White British origin.

Shared Service Arrangement

25. In March 2012, following the annual review of the Shared Service Level Agreement, it was decided to end the Shared Service Arrangement as of 31 January 2013. Key staff in both councils have been meeting regularly during 2012 to plan the arrangements and have now mutually agreed to extend the end date until 31 March 2013. The planning process involves consultation with key stakeholders and staff to ensure that effective adoption and fostering services that meets the needs of children can be maintained and developed

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

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Central Bedfordshire Council
and Bedford Borough Council
working together

Adoption Agency

Annual Report

**For the period
2011/2012**

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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 This report describes the activity of Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils' Adoption Agencies during the period 1st April, 2011 to 31st March, 2012, noting their achievements, clarifying the remit and focus of their work and identifying recommendations for the development of the service.
- 1.0.2 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 report will be presented to the Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a six-monthly update report will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel. A copy of this report is provided to Bedford Borough Council for presentation to Elected Members.

1.1 STAFFING / SERVICE STRUCTURE

- 1.1.1 The Adoption and Permanence Support Team is made up of the following staff as of 31st March 2012:
- 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 (6.5 full time equivalent)
 - 4 x Social Work Assistants (2 full time equivalent)
 - 0.5 x Administrator for Letter-box contact
 - 1 x Lifestory Senior Practitioner
 - 2 x Administrators
- 1.1.2 The service has remained fully staffed this year, with staff seconded from within the service to cover a secondment and maternity leave cover.
- 1.1.3 Most staff have a number of years post-qualifying experience, and a programme of additional support is in place for those newly-qualified or in the early years of their social work career.
- 1.1.4 The adoption agency is supported by specialist staff who work across the Adoption and Fostering service area. These staff include a Business Support Officer with responsibility for adoption and special guardianship allowance payments, a Recruitment and Marketing Officer, a Training Officer and Training coordinator, and the Panel Advisor and Secretaries who support the adoption panel.

1.2 THE ADOPTION PANEL

- 1.2.1 The Adoption Panel usually meets every month of the year, with extraordinary panels as and when required. There were three extra panels during 2011/2012 and the panel therefore met on 15 occasions.
- 1.2.2 The Adoption Panel considers applications from prospective adopters and makes recommendations as to their approval. The panel also considers whether adoption should be pursued as the plan for a child, and considers the proposed match between children with adopters, making recommendations on both these matters.

1.3 ADOPTION PANEL MEMBERSHIP

- 1.3.1 From 1 April 2011 amended Regulations introduced greater flexibility in relation to the membership of adoption panels, allowing for the use of a 'central list' of panel members from which attendees for any particular panel could be chosen in accordance with quoracy requirements. The Regulations also allowed for the appointment of more than one vice chair to afford greater flexibility to agencies when convening panels.
- 1.3.2 As at 31st March 2012 the Adoption Panel central list 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	Team Manager, Children with Disabilities Team (BBC)
Educational Psychologist (Vice Chair)	Educational Psychologist (BBC)
Medical Adviser	Consultant Community Paediatrician
Elected Member	Central Bedfordshire Council
Independent (Vice Chair)	Adopted Person
Elected Member	Bedford Borough Council

- 1.3.2 In attendance but non voting members are:

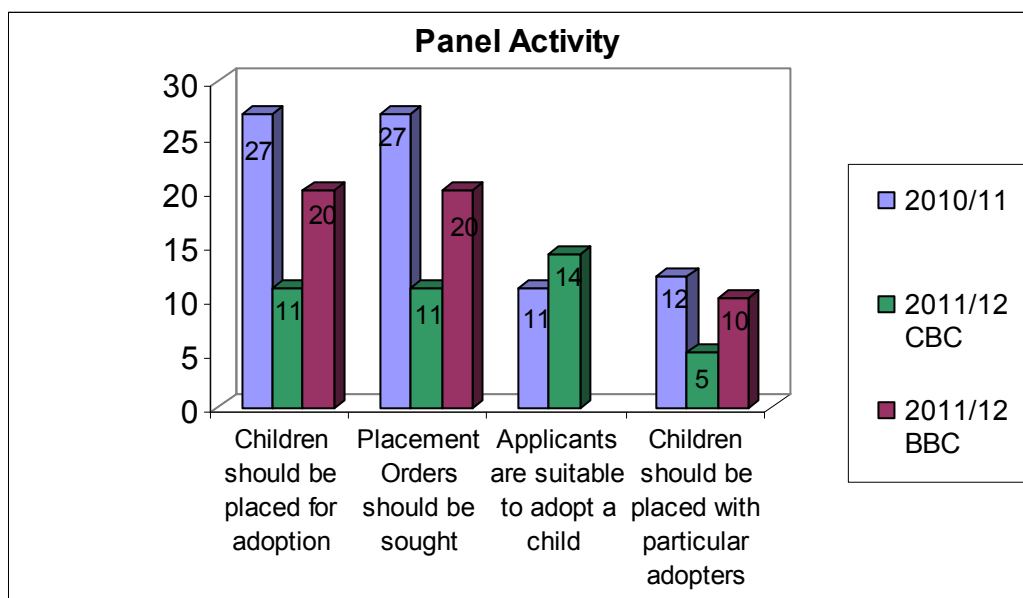
Professional Adviser	
Panel Secretary	

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

1.4 PANEL ACTIVITY

- 1.4.1 In 2011/2012 the Adoption Panel met 15 times and recommended that 31 children should be placed for adoption. Of these 11 were from Central Bedfordshire and 20 from Bedford Borough. This compares to 27 children in 2010/11 and represents an increase for the second year in succession. The Panel also recommended that Placement Orders should be sought in relation to all 31 children.

- 1.4.2 In relation to approvals, the Panel recommended that 14 households were suitable to adopt a child. This compares to 11 households in 2010/11. All applicants attended the panel.
- 1.4.3 In terms of matching, the panel recommended that 15 children should be placed with particular adopters. Of these 5 were from Central Bedfordshire and 10 from Bedford Borough. This compares to 12 children in 2010/11.



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 2011	A Guide to Care Proceedings (Bitesize) The Role of the Guardian (Bitesize) Education – From Risk to Resilience (Bitesize)
May 2011	Adoption Support Service (Bitesize)
June 2011	Loving Waters and String Exercise (Bitesize) Safeguarding and Allegations (Full day)
August 2011	Teenage Adoption Panel (Bitesize)

- 1.5.2 A full day's training is planned in July 2012 which will include consideration of the implications of the Government Action Plan for Adoption.

1.6 PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON ADOPTION

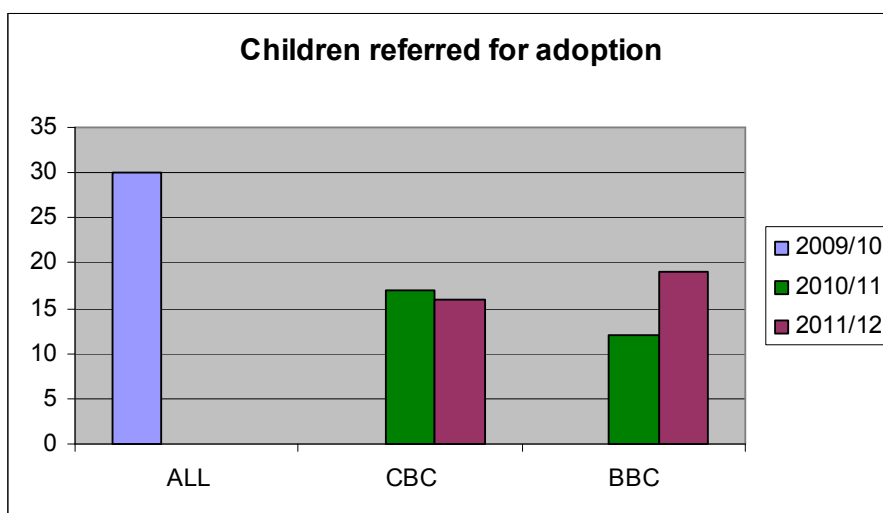
- 1.6.1 Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils have a single point of contact to the service through a local rate telephone line. A regularly updated information pack outlining the services available and procedures for prospective adopters is sent within 24 hours to those expressing an interest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

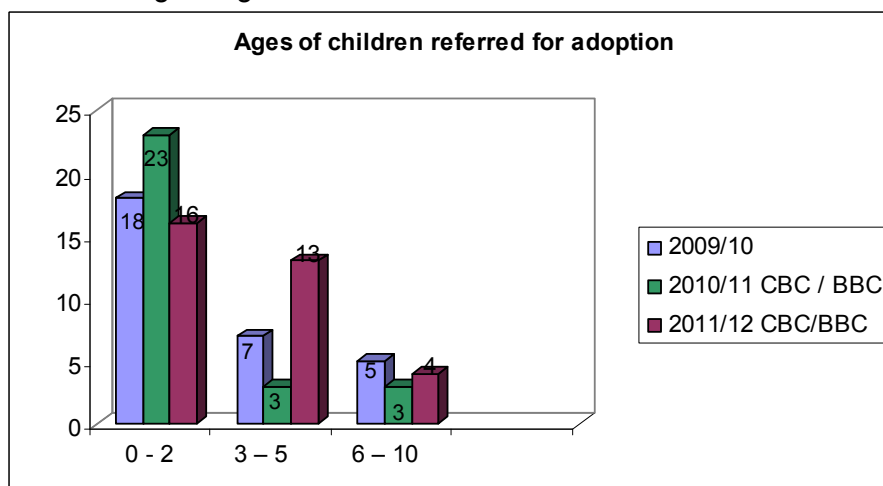
2.0.1 In 2011/12, there were 35 children referred to the service for adoption. Of these, 16 were from Central Bedfordshire and 19 from Bedford Borough. This compares to 29 children in 2010/2011 (17 of whom were from Central Bedfordshire and 12 from Bedford Borough).

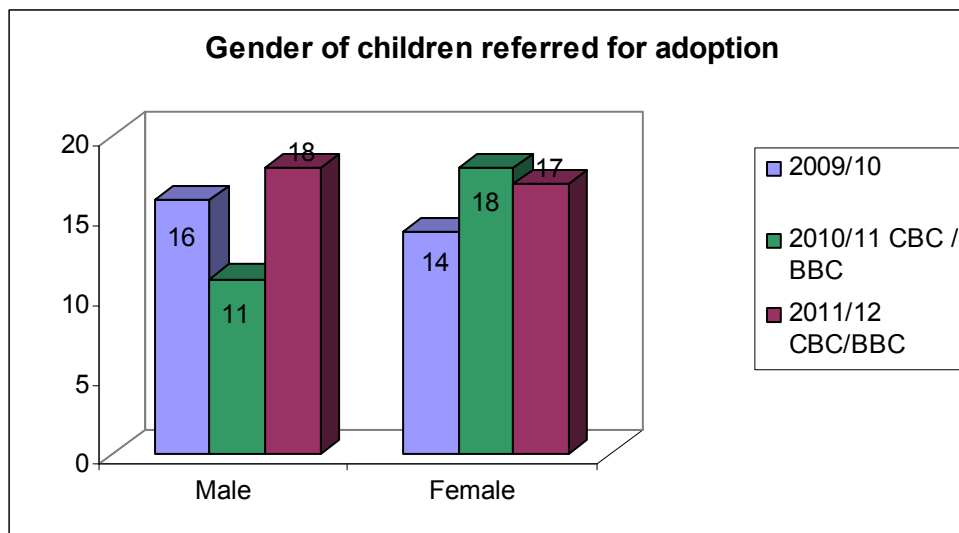


2.0.2 During 2011/12 a further 75 looked after children were referred for permanence planning, where the primary plan was long-term fostering or permanency by way of a Special Guardianship Order or Residence Order. 29 children were from Central Bedfordshire and 36 children were from Bedford Borough.

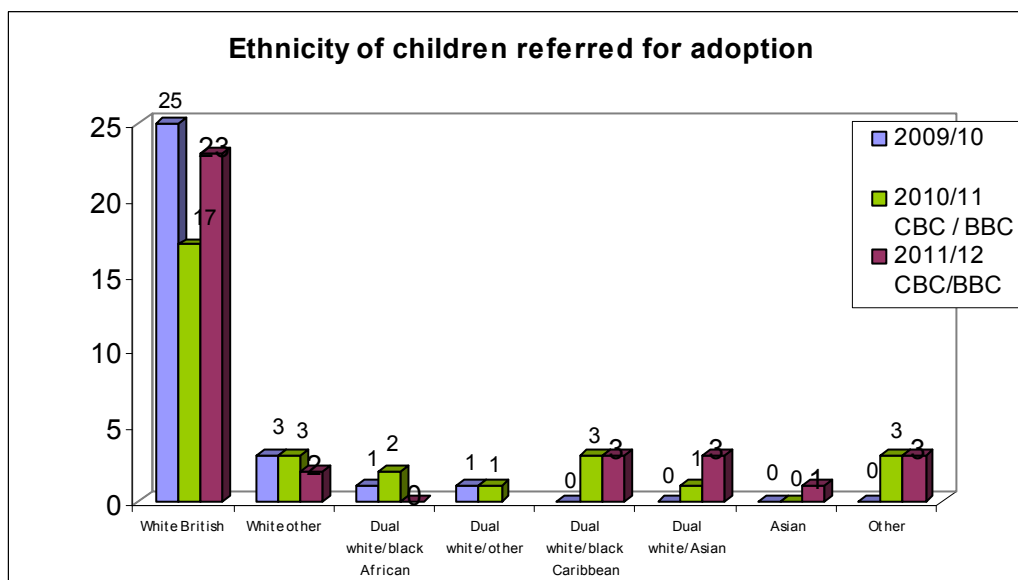
2.1 – AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN REFERRED FOR ADOPTION

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 has also been the case in previous years. Even numbers of boys and girls were referred. There was a significant increase in the number of referrals for children in the 3-5 age range.





Of the 35 children referred for adoption 23 were from White British ethnicity, 2 were White other backgrounds, 3 were dual heritage White / Caribbean, 3 were dual heritage White / Asian, 1 was Asian and 3 were from other ethnicities.



2.2 SIBLING GROUPS OF CHILDREN REFERRED FOR ADOPTION

2.2.1 The service received referrals for 8 sibling groups during the year 2011/2012. This compares to 8 sibling groups in 2010/2011. Placing large sibling groups together for adoption can be challenging, especially when the group contains older children.

2.3 – CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES REFERRED FOR ADOPTION

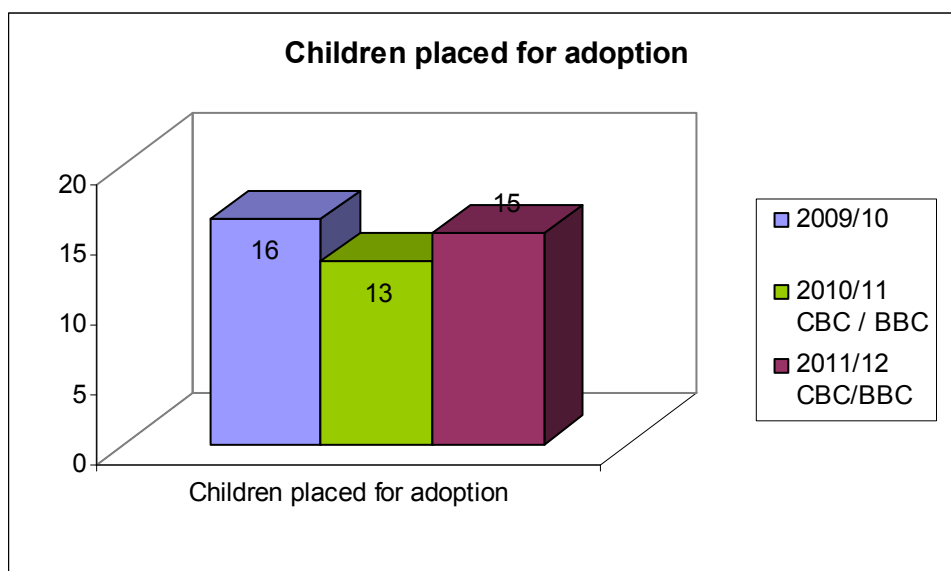
2.3.1 The service received 2 referrals for siblings with a disability during 2011/2012. This was a slight increase on the previous year when there was one referral for a child with a disability.

2.4 OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN REFERRED FOR ADOPTION

- 2.4.1 Of the 35 children referred for possible adoption in 2011/2012, 2 had been matched with adopters by March 2012. In the case of 10 children the Adoption Panel had considered their case and a decision made that adoption should be the plan. For 2 children possible adopters had been considered and were being assessed in respect of those children. The remaining children were still subject to care proceedings as at 31st March 2012. 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 2011/2012 we have continued to see 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 15 children placed for adoption in 2011/2012. This compares to the placement of 13 children in the previous year.
- 2.5.2 There were 2 sibling groups placed for adoption during 2011/2012. Additionally 1 child was able to join a sibling who had already been adopted.



2.6 – TYPE OF ADOPTION PLACEMENT

2.6.1 Of the 15 children placed for adoption in 2011/2012, 11 were placed with adopters assessed and approved by Bedfordshire. 1 sibling group and 2 single children were placed with adopters recruited by other adoption agencies – a Voluntary Adoption Agency for the sibling group, and other local authorities for the single children.

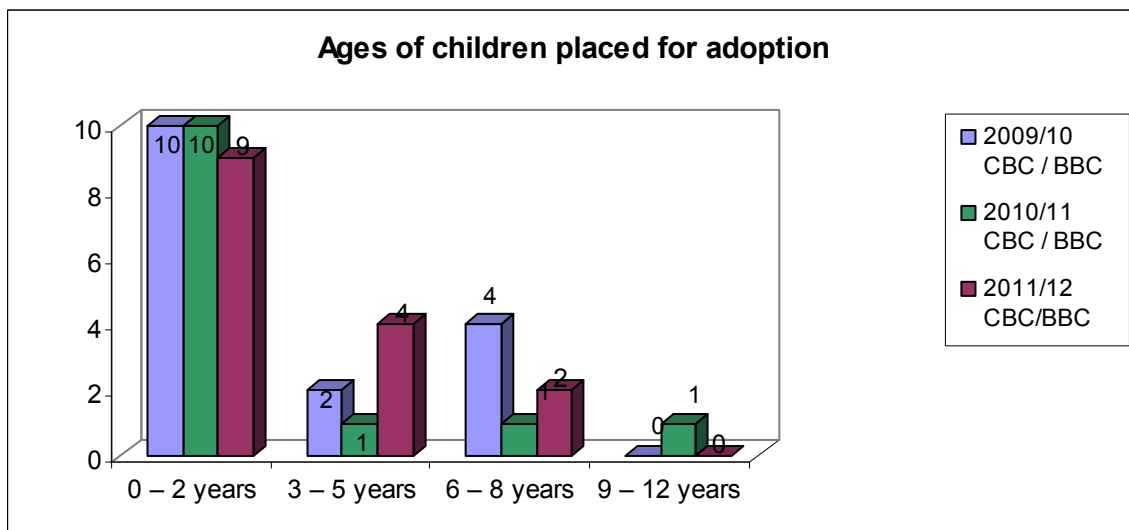
2.7 – ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION

2.7.1 Of the 15 children placed for adoption in the year 2011/2012, 7 were White British, 2 were of White British/Irish Traveller heritage, 1 child was of White European heritage and 5 children were of dual heritage, including White/Black Caribbean, White/Turkish and White/Iraqi heritages.

2.8 – AGES OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION

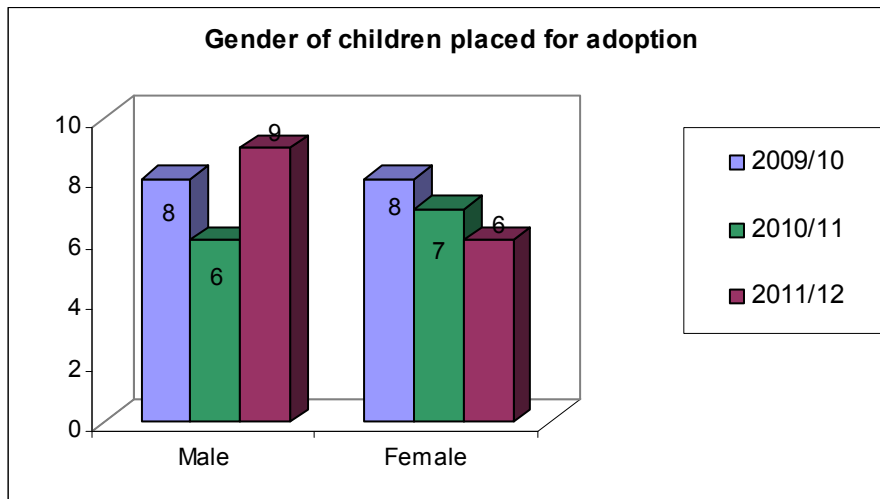
2.8.1 Of the 15 children placed for adoption in 2011/2012, 6 were aged three and above. 9 out of the 15 were aged 2 years or under. The age of a child at placement is the single most important variable in predicting a successful outcome, the younger the child at placement, the higher the likelihood of success.

0 – 2 years	9
3 – 5 years	4
6 – 8 years	2
9 – 12 years	0



2.9 – GENDER OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION

2.9.1 Of the 15 children placed for adoption, 9 were female and 6 were male. Of these in Central Bedfordshire there were 2 females and 3 males placed for adoption and in Bedford Borough, there were 7 females and 3 males.



2.10 – ADOPTION ORDERS / SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS

2.10.1 Adoption Orders were made in respect of 12 children during the period 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2012. Of these 4 were for children from Central Bedfordshire and 8 from Bedford Borough. This is a decrease on the 16 orders made in 2010/11.

2.10.2 Special Guardianship Orders were made in respect of 12 children. Of these 11 were from Central Bedfordshire and 1 was 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 long term fostering will 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 – RECRUITMENT OF ADOPTERS

- 3.1.1 In order to ensure a range of adopters are recruited for both Bedfordshire children and to meet the needs of children nationally requiring adoptive families a range of recruitment activity has taken place this year. Drop-in sessions were held in June 2011 and February 2012, as well as four specific drop-in events during National Adoption Week in October 2011. A radio advertising campaign was also broadcast in October 2011 to tie-in with National Adoption Week. In addition the Adoption and Fostering service had stalls at Bedford Market, Leighton Buzzard Market, Linslade Canal Festival and Bedfordshire Young Farmers Event during 2011.

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

- 3.2.1 All assessments are carried out in accordance with the 2011 National Minimum Standards for Adoption 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.
- 3.2.2 104 enquiries from prospective adopters were received in 2011/12 which was an identical number to the 104 in 2010/2011. All enquirers were invited to attend information evenings and sent information packs. 73 households attended with 37 households being interviewed. Applications were accepted from 25 households. 14 adoptive households were approved in 2011/12

3.3 – ETHNICITY OF ADOPTERS

- 3.3.1 Of the 104 enquiries, 85 were white British. 12 households were of a dual heritage background, with 8 being white and white European heritage. 5 households were from an Asian background, 1 of a black African and 1 from a black Caribbean heritage.
- 3.3.2 Of the adopters approved 11 households were White / British. In other cases the household comprised one partner of white of non-British heritage and another household were Asian.

3.4 – POST APPROVAL SUPPORT

- 3.4.1 All approved 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 2011 to March 2012 a four day preparation training programme was held on four occasions and was attended by 19 households, compared to 14 households during 2010/2011. In addition, specific preparation training was held for second-time adopters in November 2011 attended by 3 households.
- 3.5.3 The training covered a variety of topics and experiential exercises 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 including contact
 - 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.

SECTION 4 – ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES

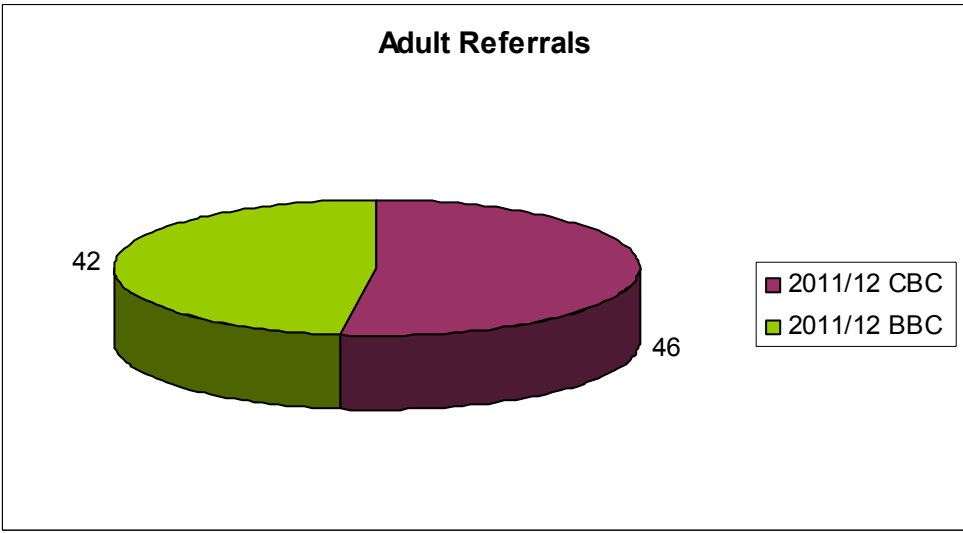
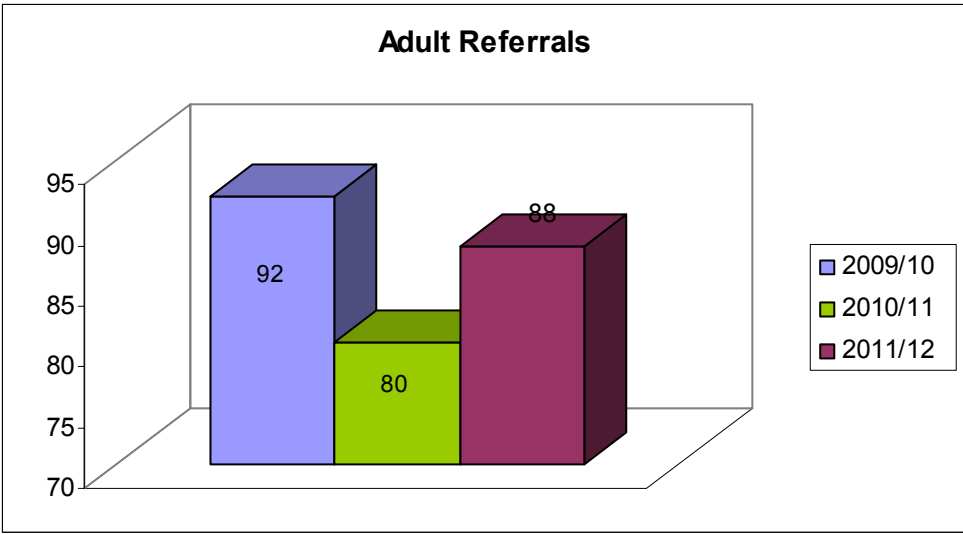
4.0 – POST ADOPTION SUPPORT TO FAMILIES

- 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 2012, the team were working directly with 25 adopted children and their families who were in need of support. Of these 12 were from Central Bedfordshire and 13 from Bedford Borough. This compares to 41 children and their families in March 2011. The reduction in open cases is largely as a result of a lower number of referrals than in the preceding 12 months, coupled with the service supporting children and families to make use of some of the lower level group support offered. Between 1st April 2011 and 31st March 2012 the team received a total of 17 new referrals for adoption support, 8 from Central Bedfordshire and 9 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, some of which are provided by the service and some 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.
- 4.0.5 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 190 children (compared to 204 children in 2010/2011), 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. In addition the service currently manages contact plans in Special Guardianship cases on behalf of 18 children.

4.1 – SERVICES TO ADOPTED ADULTS AND 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 councils 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 2011/2012 there were 88 referrals from adult adoptees and their birth relatives who were seeking Post Adoption counselling support. This was an increase on the 80 referrals received in 2010/11
- 4.1.5 Of the 88 adult referrals received during 2011/2012, 46 came from Central Bedfordshire and 42 were from Bedford Borough. .



4.2 – DISRUPTED ADOPTIONS

- 4.2.1 Nationally the disruption rate pre Adoption Order is considered to be in the region of 20%. There were no disruptions in 2011/12 of children placed by the two councils, meaning that there had only been one disruption in the last 4 years. 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.
- 4.2.2 During 2011/12 the service provided advice in the cases of three children placed by other councils, but living in this area, whose adoptions had disrupted post Adoption order.

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 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 2011/2012 PACT received 6 enquiries concerning inter-country adoption from residents of Central Bedfordshire or Bedford Borough. 2 of these enquiries were followed by an initial interview. During the period PACT approved one adoptive household and made one inter-country placement. This is a reduction in enquiries and interviews from the previous 12 months.

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 2011/2012 2 children from Bedford Borough were placed with adopters from the consortium. Three children from within the consortium were 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.
- 5.2.3 During the last 12 months the agency has taken up membership of New Family Social, a national charity supporting adopters and foster carers from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-gender community. The organisation provides social events, a website and membership events for carers, and support and advice to adoption agencies.

5.3 – INDEPENDENT BIRTH FAMILY COUNSELLING

- 5.3.1 The agency provides an Independent Birth Family Counselling and support service. This 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 2011/2012 and at that time the arrangements for how the service is provided were changed to provide more flexibility for those accessing the service and to encourage a greater take up by birth parents.

SECTION 6 CONCLUSION

- 6.0.1 2011/12 has been the third year of the shared service for Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils. This has 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.
- 6.0.2 Compared to last year there has been an increase in activity across all aspects of the service. The increase in looked after children in both councils during 2011/12 resulted in increased numbers of referrals for permanence planning, both for adoption and for long-term fostering or for other legal alternative permanent options, such as Special Guardianship or Residence Orders.
- 6.0.3 In response, the service has increased the number of assessments of prospective adopters, resulting in increased numbers of approvals. The full success of this will be seen in 2012/13 as children are placed with those adopters and adoption orders granted. In order to meet continued demand a recruitment target for adopters has been set again for 2012/13, based on known and likely numbers and needs of children requiring adoption. The target has been set at 24 new approvals in 2012/13.
- 6.0.4 In August 2011 the Adoption Service was inspected by Ofsted and judged to be Good with outstanding features. The Teenage Adoption Panel was singled out for particular praise as an example of innovative practice.
- 6.0.5 Overall in 2011/2012 there has been another significant increase in the number of children who have been referred for permanence planning, including those where adoption is being considered. Additional adoption panels have been required to meet the need.
- 6.0.6 During 2011 there has been considerable Government attention paid to the performance of councils in respect to the numbers and timeliness of adoptions of children. In March 2012 the Department for Education published 'An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay' which outlines measures planned to monitor and improve performance. Measures include addressing delay in Court Proceedings, the publishing of an adoption 'scorecard' for each council, and the setting of challenging targets to reduce delay. The Adoption Service is in a strong position to meet the requirements of the action plan, having robust performance monitoring and good practices in place in regard to planning for adoption.
- 6.0.7 In March 2012 following the annual review of the Shared Service Level Agreement it was decided to end the Shared Service Arrangement as of 31st January 2013. Key staff in both councils will therefore be meeting regularly during 2012 to plan the arrangements for February 2013 and beyond. This planning process will involve consultation with key stakeholders and staff to ensure that an effective adoption service that meets the needs of children can be maintained and developed

Report written by:

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Joint Service for Central and Bedford Borough Councils

Telephone: 0300 300 8090

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
2011/2012

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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 Since Local Government reorganisation in April 2009 Central Bedfordshire has hosted the Fostering Service as a shared service on behalf of both new unitary councils. This report describes the activity of Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council's Fostering Agency during the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March, 2012, noting its achievements, clarifying the remit and focus of its work and identifying recommendations for the development of the service.
- 1.0.2 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 and three monthly update reports will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel. A copy of this report is provided to Bedford Borough Council for presentation to Elected Members.

1.1 STAFFING/SERVICE STRUCTURE

- 1.1.1 The Fostering Service is made up of the following staff as of 31st March 2012:
- 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 2 full time and 1 part time administrators.
- 1.1.3 The workforce is diverse and includes staff of both genders, and from other European and 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.
- 1.1.5 Most staff have a number of years post-qualifying experience, and a programme of additional support is in place for those newly-qualified or in the early years of their social work career.
- 1.1.6 The fostering agency is supported by specialist staff who work across the Fostering and Adoption service area. These staff include a Business Support Officer with responsibility for foster care payments, a Recruitment and Marketing Officer, a Training Officer and Training coordinator, and the Panel Advisor and Secretaries who support the fostering and permanence panels.

SECTION 2 – THE PANELS

2.1 THE FOSTERING PANEL

- 2.1.1 The Fostering Panel meets every month of the year, with 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 or variations to a carer's existing terms of approval. Reviews following complaints or allegations are also presented to the Panel.

2.2 FOSTERING PANEL MEMBERSHIP

- 2.2.1 From 1 April 2011 the new Fostering Regulations 2011 introduced greater flexibility in relation to the membership of fostering panels, allowing for the use of a 'central list' of panel members from which attendees for any particular panel could be chosen in accordance with quoracy requirements. The Regulations also allowed for the appointment of more than one vice chair to afford greater flexibility to fostering agencies when convening panels.
- 2.2.2 As at 31st March, 2012 the Fostering Panel central list 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	Deputy Team Manager, Looked After Children, Central Bedfordshire Council
Elected Member (vacancy)	Bedford Borough Council
Independent	Foster Carer – IFA
Independent	Health Visitor
Independent	Independent Social Worker
Elected Member	Central Bedfordshire Council
Independent	Foster Carer – IFA
Independent	Gypsy and Traveller Education Consultant
Independent	Independent Family Group Meeting Coordinator

- 2.2.3 In attendance but non voting members were:

Professional Adviser	Central Bedfordshire Council
Panel Secretary	Central Bedfordshire Council

- 2.2.4 A Medical Adviser to the Panel gives advice in writing in advance of Panel meetings, but may attend in person if requested.
- 2.2.5 A Legal Adviser to the Panel gives advice in writing in advance of Panel meetings and attends in person as requested.

2.3 FOSTERING AND JOINT PERMANENCE PANEL

- 2.3.1 The Fostering and Joint Permanence Panel's primary activity is to deal with permanent fostering work and family and friends placements.
- 2.3.2 The panel considers the plan for any child under the age of 13 for whom permanent or long-term fostering is proposed and any matches with specific carers for these children. 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.
- 2.3.3 This panel also considers applications by foster carers to be long-term carers for a particular child and applications by those who are family and friends foster carers. The panel also considers the first annual review of permanent foster carers and family and friends foster carers, as well as any changes to their approval. The Panel is advised of any exemptions or variations to a carer's existing range of approval.
- 2.3.4 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 from time to time.

2.4 FOSTERING AND JOINT PERMANENCE PANEL MEMBERSHIP

- 2.4.1 From 1 April 2011 the new Fostering Regulations 2011 introduced greater flexibility in relation to the membership of fostering panels, allowing for the use of a 'central list' of panel members from which attendees for any particular panel could be chosen in accordance with quoracy requirements. The Regulations also allowed for the appointment of more than one vice chair to afford greater flexibility to fostering agencies when convening panels.
- 2.4.2 As at 31st March, 2012 the Permanence Panel central list was as follows:

Panel Chair	Independent
Social Worker	Deputy Team Manager, Looked After Children, Central Bedfordshire Council (Vice Chair)
Social Worker	Independent Social Worker (Vice Chair)
Social Worker	Team Manager, Looked After Children, Central Bedfordshire Council
Educational Psychologist	Educational Psychologist
Independent	Adoptive Parent
Independent	Independent Social Worker
Independent	Independent Social Worker
Independent	Foster Carer – IFA
Elected Member (Vacancy)	Bedford Borough Council
Elected Member	Central Bedfordshire Council
Independent	Gypsy and Traveller Education Consultant
Independent	Family Group Meeting Team Manager

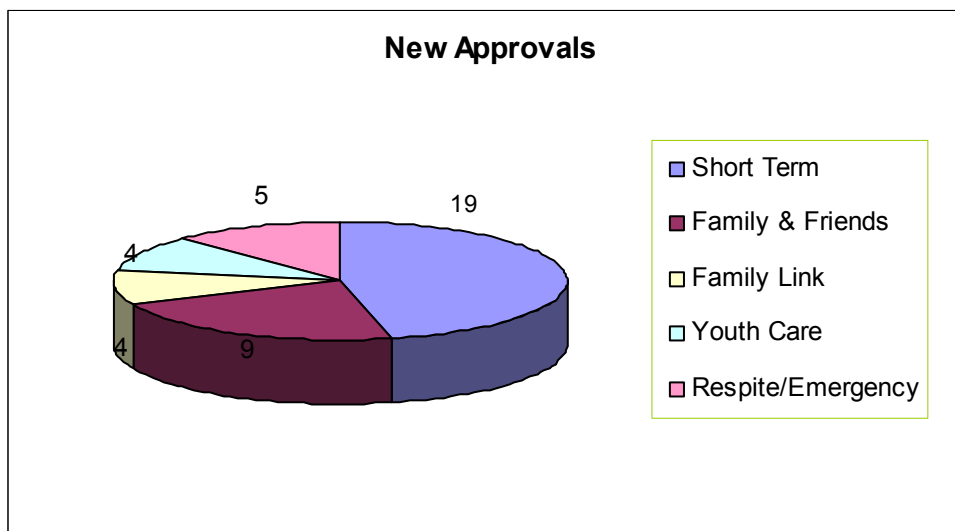
- 2.4.3 In attendance but non voting members were:

Professional Adviser	Central Bedfordshire Council
Panel Secretary	Central Bedfordshire Council

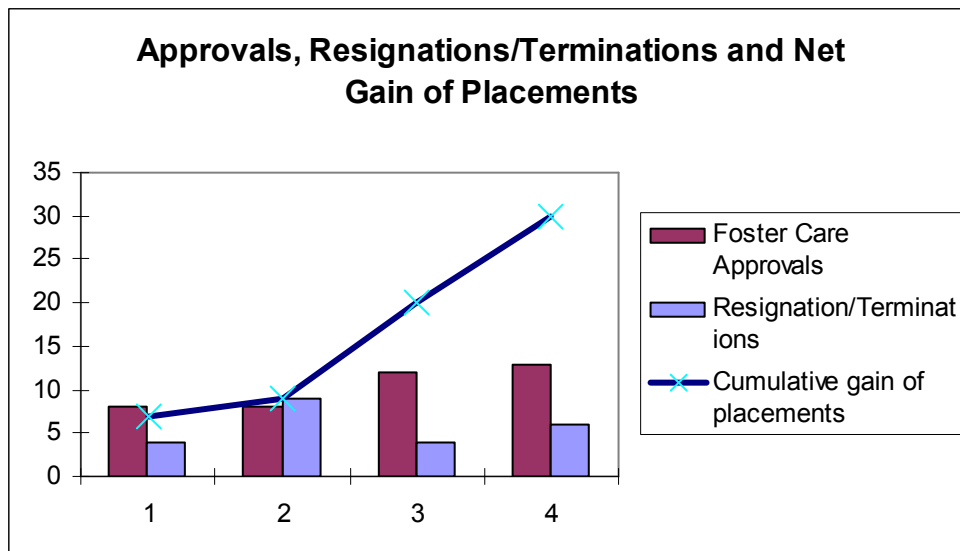
- 2.4.4 A Medical Adviser to the Panel gives advice in writing in advance of Panel meetings and may attend in person if requested.
- 2.4.5 A Legal Adviser to the Panel gives advice in writing in advance of Panel meetings and attends in person as requested.

2.5 PANEL ACTIVITY

- 2.5.1 In 2011/2012 the Fostering Panel met 13 times and recommended that 20 households should be approved as foster carers. This is the same number of approvals as 2010/11.
- 2.5.2 Of the 20 carers newly approved by the Fostering Panel, 4 were approved for the Family Link Scheme, 12 as short-term carers and 4 for the Youth Care Scheme.
- 2.5.3 The Fostering and Joint Permanence Panel met 17 times during the year 2011/2012. During this time, 21 households were approved as foster carers (which compares with 16 the previous year). Plans for 12 children for permanent or long-term fostering were recommended and 2 children were recommended for a match. 7 households were approved as short term foster carers, 9 as family & friends carers and 5 as emergency or respite foster carers.



- 2.5.4 The Panels considered first annual reviews for 19 households, 7 reviews following concerns or allegations, 11 requests for change of approval, 2 terminations of approval following allegations.
- 2.5.5 In total 96 fostering households attended one or other of the panels.
- 2.5.6 21 fostering households resigned at their request in 2011/12 and 2 households had their approval withdrawn by the Fostering Agency. This total was down from 31 in 2010/11. 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. Balancing new approvals against resignations there was a net gain of fostering placements of 30 during the year.



2.6 PANEL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 2.6.1 The Fostering Agency strives to ensure that there is a good level of training, appraisal and induction offered to Panel Members. This year, due to the number of cases and business on the agendas it has been a challenge to find time for the 'bite-size' training on panel days. All Panel Members had an annual appraisal where their personal training needs are discussed and considered.
- 2.6.2 A full day's training on Safeguarding and Allegations in Fostering and Pre-Adoptive Placements was held in June 2011 for Panel Members and staff of the Fostering Agency. In addition a bitesize training session on Care Proceedings was held in April 2011.

2.7 PANEL DIVERSITY

- 2.7.1 The agency has ensured that both panels are diverse and include members of black and minority ethnic groups. Panel members also bring particular expertise or experience, including a member experienced in working with gypsy and traveller communities, a member with personal experience of being looked after and of disruption. Both Panels have male and female panel members. During this year more male panel members have been recruited giving a more even gender balance on panels. There is also a diversity of age on both panels.

2.8 AGENCY DECISIONS AND INDEPENDENT REVIEW MECHANISM

- 2.8.1 If a foster carer is not satisfied with the Fostering Agency's decision about their approval or the terms of their approval, they have a right to make a request within 28 days for a review by the Independent Review Mechanism. The Independent Review Mechanism is a review process conducted by a review panel independent of the fostering service provider who hears the evidence presented to the Agency's own panel and then makes a recommendation to the Agency in respect of their decision. Whilst the Agency Decision Maker must take into account the recommendations of the IRM, the final decision remains with the Agency.

- 2.8.2 In two cases this year foster carers applied for a review by the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for an independent panel view about their approval.

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 Once agreement has been given for the care package from the resource panel, a careful process of matching takes place, taking into account the individual needs of the child and their family and the carer's abilities
- 3.1.4 On the 31st March 2012, there were 12 Family Link carers approved with a further 3 Family Link carers being assessed.
- 3.1.5 During 2011/12 the scheme expanded with 4 more new carers being approved and 24 children being supported. This is an increase of 3 carers and 11 children from 2010/11. The 3 fee-based Family Link carers continue to be an integral part of the scheme, having increased availability and the capacity to be linked to up to 7 young people receiving short breaks.

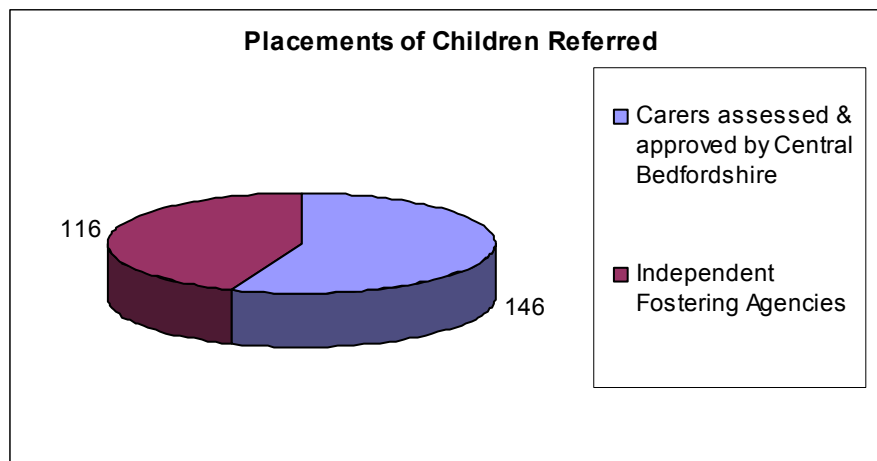
3.2 THE YOUTH CARE SCHEME

- 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 have needs which are particularly challenging or complex.
- 3.2.2 As at the 31st March 2012, there were 13 approved Youth Care households. This was an increase from the 10 approved households at the beginning of the reporting year, and reflected a successful recruitment campaign during 2011 for Youth Care and Youth Care Respite carers.

SECTION 4 – CHILDREN AND FOSTERING

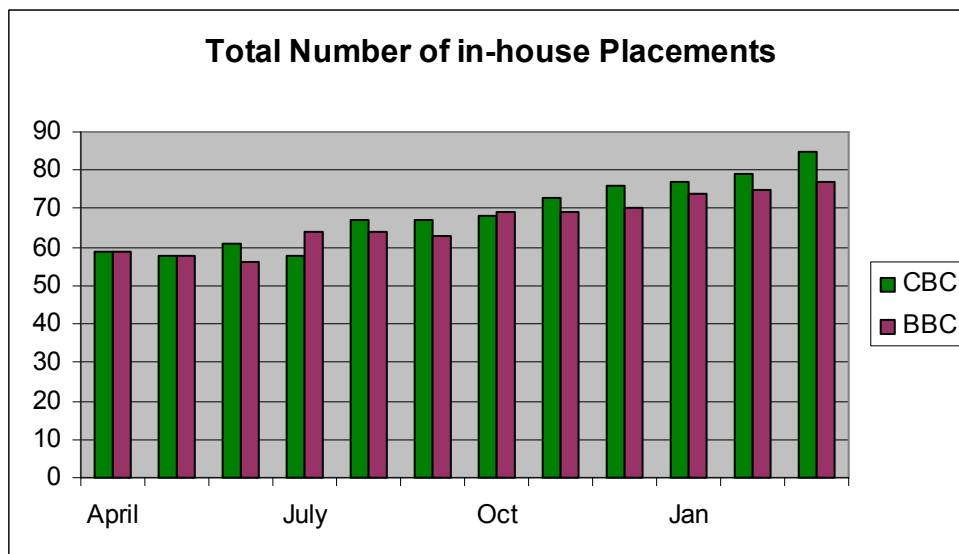
4.1 CHILDREN REFERRED FOR FOSTERING

- 4.1.1 During 2011/2012, the Fostering Service received a total of 375 referrals for foster placements of which 197 were for children becoming newly looked after. The remainder of referrals were for a change of placement. This is a significant increase on the total number of 159 referrals received in 2010/11 and reflects the increase in both councils of social care activity and numbers of looked after children.
- 4.1.2 Of the referrals received 198 were Central Bedfordshire children and 177 were Bedford Borough children. 146 of the referrals resulted in placements with in-house carers. 9 young people were placed in residential units. 116 children (45 Central Bedfordshire and 71 Bedford Borough children) were placed in an Independent Fostering Agency placement as a result of becoming looked after or due to a change of placement. Some children did not ultimately enter foster care, but remained at home.



- 4.1.3 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.
- 4.1.4 Respite placements were provided on 142 occasions, with 11 children having regular respite as part of their care plan.
- 4.1.5 Of the new referrals for foster placements, 19 came through the Emergency Duty Service, an increase from 13 in 2010-11.

4.1.6 As at 31st March 2012 a total of 162 children were placed with in house foster carers, with 85 children coming from Central Bedfordshire and 77 children from Bedford Borough.



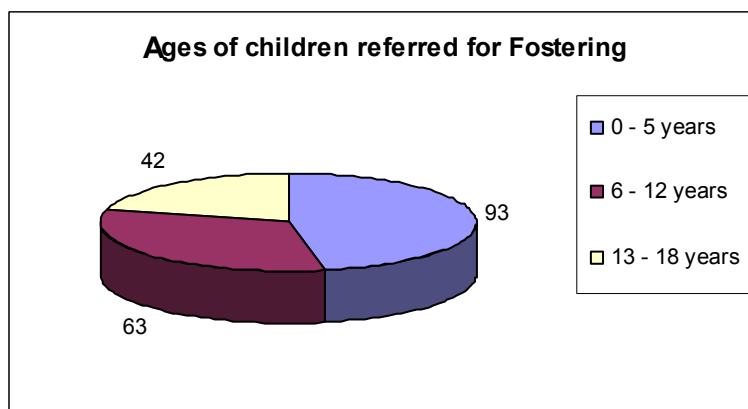
4.2 AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN REFERRED FOR FOSTERING

4.2.1 Nearly half the children referred because they were newly looked after were aged 0-5 years. From Central Bedfordshire the age distribution was as follows:

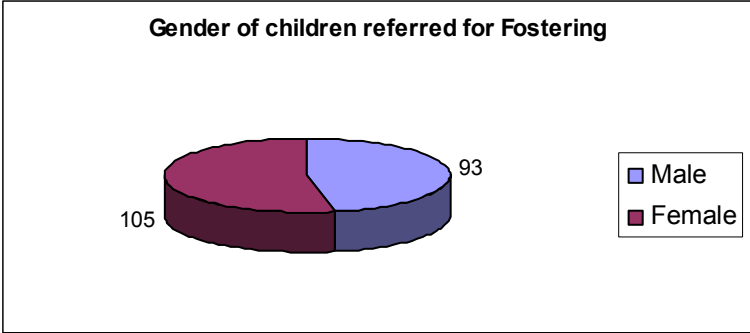
0-5 years	48 children
6-12 years	32 children
13-18 years	16 young people

From Bedford Borough the age distribution was:

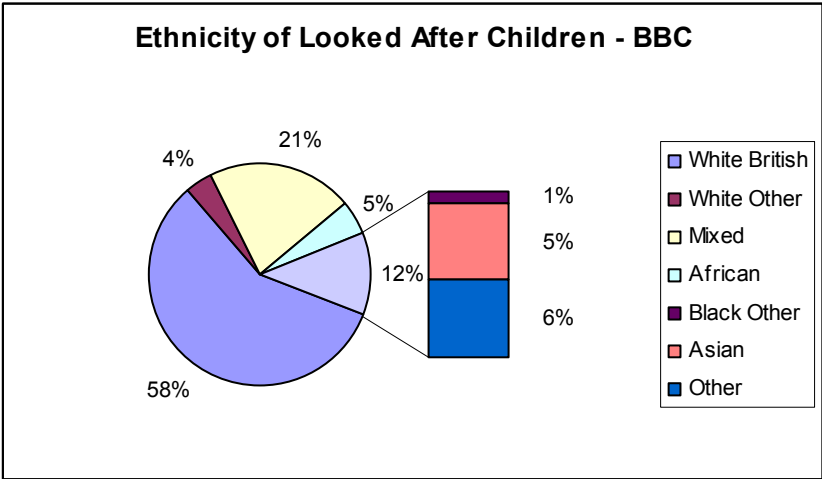
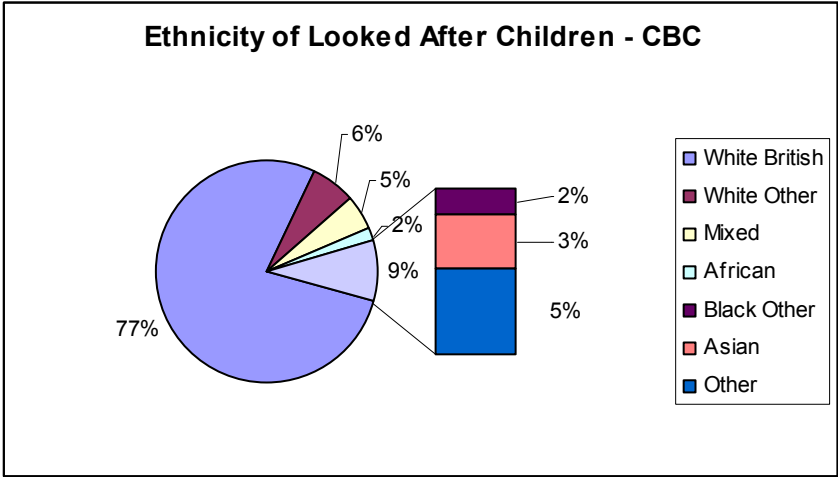
0-5 years	45 children
6-12 years	31 children
13-18 years	26 young people



4.2.2 Of the 96 children referred from Central Bedfordshire, 51 were female and 45 male. Of the 102 children referred from Bedford Borough 54 were female and 48 were male.



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



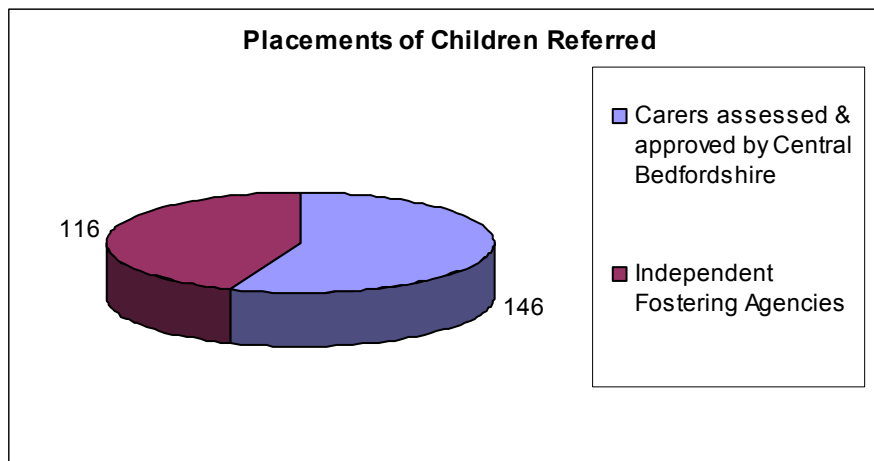
4.3 SIBLING GROUPS OF CHILDREN REFERRED FOR FOSTERING

4.3.1 There were 36 sibling groups within the children referred for fostering during the year. This comprised 19 sibling groups from Central Bedfordshire and 17 from Bedford Borough.

4.4 TYPE OF FOSTER PLACEMENT PROVIDED

4.4.1 Of the 236 children placed in foster placements this year, 146 were placed with carers assessed and approved by Central Bedfordshire Council on behalf of both Councils. 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.

4.4.2 116 of the children referred were placed externally with Independent Fostering Agencies (45 from Central Bedfordshire and 71 from Bedford Borough).



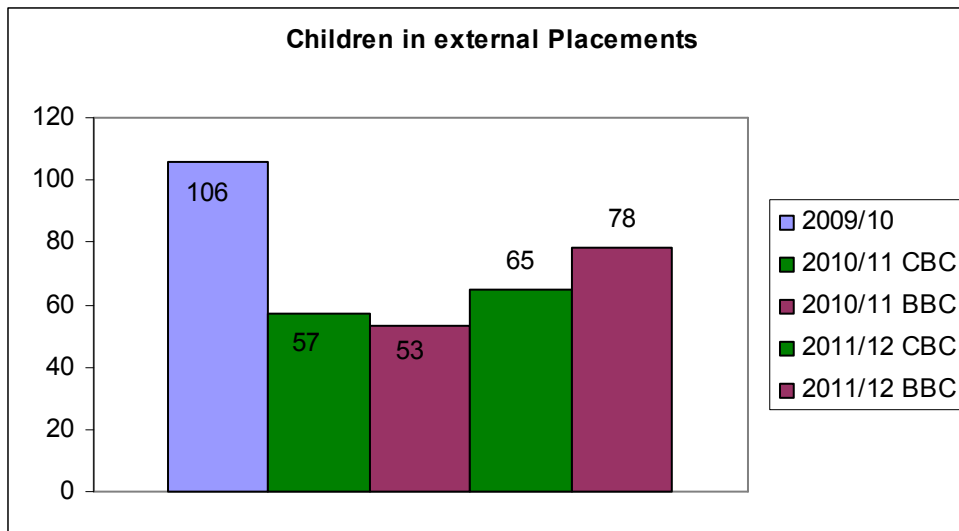
4.5 CHILDREN IN PLACEMENT AT 31ST MARCH 2012

4.5.1 As at 31st March 2012, there were 120 fostering households with full fostering approval, and a further 23 with temporary approval pending full assessment.

4.5.2 A total of 162 children were in these placements. Of these 85 were looked after by Central Bedfordshire Council and 77 by Bedford Borough Council

4.5.3 A total of 143 children were living in external foster placements provided by independent fostering agencies, as compared to 110 the previous year. Of these 65 children were from Central Bedfordshire Council and 78 from Bedford Borough Council.

4.5.4 In November 2011 both Councils entered into a regional Framework Agreement for the commissioning of placements in Independent Fostering Agencies. This agreement sets out quality and cost standards for placements with 19 preferred providers with the aim of reducing costs and improving quality of placements to meet need.

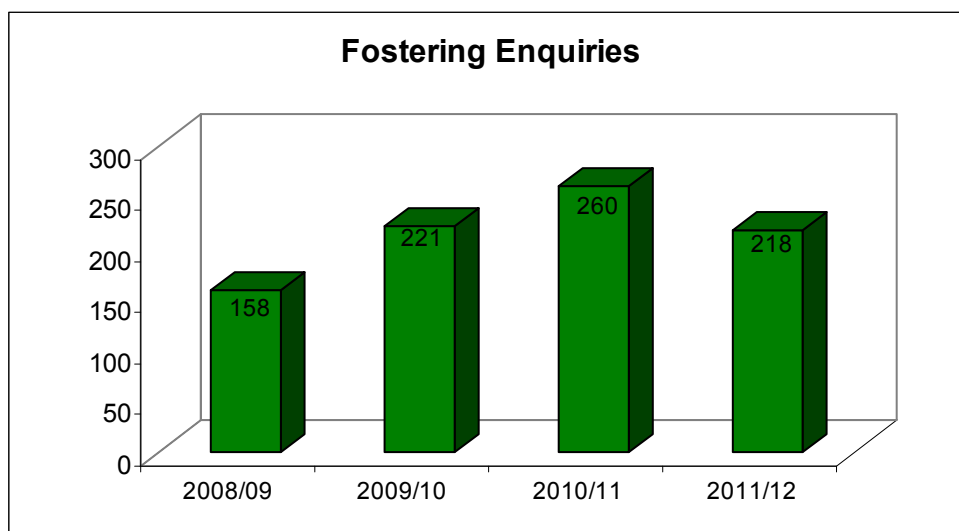


4.6.1 There has been a significant increase in the number of children in external placements as at 31 March 2012, which reflects the overall increase in numbers of looked after children.

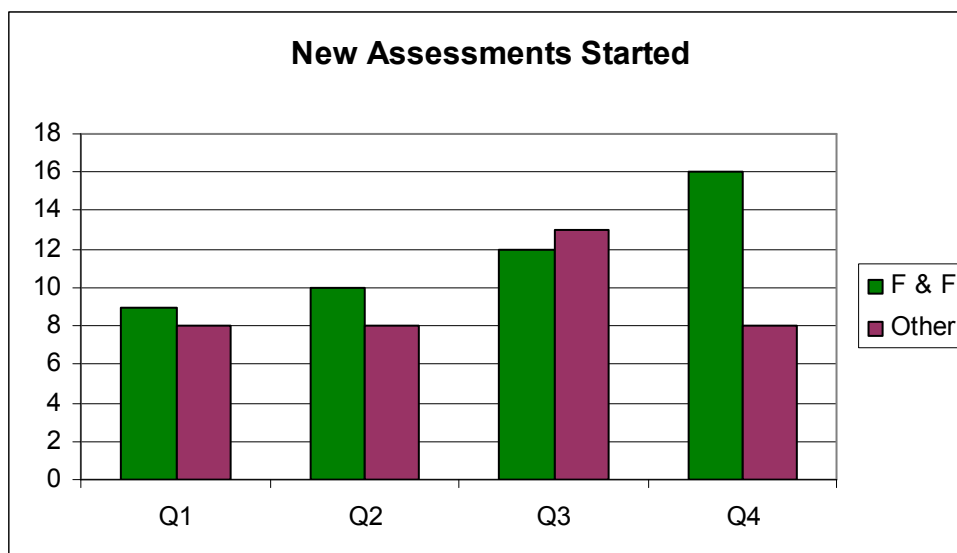
SECTION 5 – FOSTER CARERS

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 218 initial fostering enquiries from members of the public during 2011/12 compared with 263 the previous year.



- 5.1.4 Application forms were received from 37 households and in addition application was made by 47 households wishing to care for a child known to them as a family member or friend. This is an increase in the number of applications and in assessments of family and friends. There were 41 new fostering households approved, up from 26 in 2010-11.



5.2 THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR 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.
- 5.2.2 Implementation of new Regulations on 1st April 2011 changed the way in which family members or friends of looked after are assessed if the child needed to be placed with them prior to a full fostering assessment being completed. In this situation temporary approval may be granted under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning Regulations pending a full fostering assessment being carried out and presented to the Fostering Panel. This temporary approval lasts for 16 weeks in the first instance and can be extended for one period of 8 weeks. 23 such temporary approvals were granted in 2011-12.

5.3 ETHNICITY OF CARERS

- 5.3.1 At 31st March 2012, 12 out of 121 fostering households included carers from black or ethnic minority groups. At 10% this ratio broadly reflects the population in Bedfordshire, although carers from Asian backgrounds are under-represented.
- 5.3.2 Since 1st April 2011, the agency has approved 5 fostering households from black and ethnic minority backgrounds and a further household from a white eastern European background.

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 2011/2012, the Fostering Service ran 6 of these courses (compared with 5 the previous year) and they were attended by 58 delegates in total, (compared with 47 the previous year). For the first time this year bespoke preparation training was offered to friends and family foster carers. 3 such courses were run attended by 24 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. 10 courses were held during 2011/2012 and these were attended by a total of 123 delegates.

6.3 SONS AND DAUGHTERS

- 6.3.1 'Sons and Daughters' is a one day programme that started in 2010 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 2011/12, the Fostering Service ran 2 courses for children and young people aged between 8 – 16 years. In response to feedback from young people from fostering families, the service also provided a specialist training session for them on 'Moving On and Letting Go'.

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 77 different courses on 36 subjects held over the year. This includes:
- Understanding the Mental Health issues for Looked After Children
 - Safeguarding Children
 - Introduction to Lifestory work
 - Talking to Teenagers about sex and relationships
 - Working with Self Harm
 - Safer Caring
 - Safeguarding Children Online
 - Contact
 - Managing Behaviour
 - Helping in learning
 - Attachment
 - Allegations Awareness
 - Understanding Diversity
 - Food, Feelings and Strategies
 - A Guide to Care Proceedings
 - The Gypsy Roma and Travelling Communities
 - Protective Behaviours
 - Working with birth families
 - Foetal Alcohol syndrome
- 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. 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, 567 delegates attended training courses held over the year, a similar number to the previous 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 2012, 59 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 the 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 11 times and was attended by 130 delegates. During the same period, the Support Group South met 10 times and was attended by 72 delegates.
- 7.1.2 Some of the topics discussed included:- Leaving and After Care, The role of the Designated allegations Officer, and the role of the Fostering Review Officer. There were also fun activities such as craft and opportunities to socialise informally.
- 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 Allegations, Autism awareness and the Foster Care Association.
- 7.1.4 The Family Link Support Group met twice during 2011/12 in the evenings. An average of 9 carers attended per meeting. One of the meetings had the Lead Nurse for Specialist Children's Services as the Guest speaker.
- 7.1.5 This year a support group specifically for family and friends foster carers was started. The group aims to meet every two months. Two groups were held, attended by 8 carers.
- 7.1.6 Towards the end of 2011 a support group for single carers was established and met monthly. The groups were attended by 12 different foster carers.
- 7.1.7 The annual Foster Carers Awards Ceremony and Social Event was held in May 2011 which was attended by 92 carers and 85 children. Staff and elected members also attended, including the Directors of Children's Services in both authorities. 11 long service awards were given out, and there was 1 award 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 6 mentors – who have varying experiences of fostering, including age ranges and types of approval. This year 3 new mentors have been recruited to the scheme, including a mentor for friends and family foster carers.

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. Feedback from foster carers indicates that this service is highly valued.

7.4 THE FOSTER CARERS ASSOCIATION

- 7.4.1 The Bedfordshire Foster Carers Association is run by foster carers and provides local support and social activities for foster carers. Both Councils actively encourage and support the Association and provide financial support and services in kind to assist with 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

- 8.0.1 We have had another successful year, continuing to deliver a high quality service within a shared arrangement. The third 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 council.
- 8.0.2 This year the service has faced some challenges from the significant increase in the referrals of children requiring a foster placement, due to the increase of looked after children in both councils. Whilst the overall number of children accommodated in in-house fostering placements has increased, the service has not been able to accommodate all children and the number of new placements made in Independent Fostering Agencies has significantly increased. In particular, both authorities have accommodated a number of sibling groups of three, four and five children, where we have struggled to find placements.
- 8.0.3 Our recruitment strategy continues to have a positive effect on our enquiry rate. Whilst overall the number of enquiries is slightly reduced from last year, the number of applications from prospective carers has increased once again. The increase in the number of foster care approvals and a reduction in resignations of carers demonstrates the success of our recruitment and retention programme. Throughout the whole of 2011 – 2012 we have had nearly 40 assessments ongoing at any one time (another increase from the previous year, which averaged 31 at any one time). We exceeded our recruitment target of 40 new fostering households during 2011-12.
- 8.0.4 The increase in numbers of looked after children, and the change in regulations concerning family and friends foster carers has changed significantly the numbers and types of assessment of these fostering arrangements. The number of friends and family assessments has doubled during the year, and coupled with a new statutory 16 week assessment timescale, the service has had to increase the staffing resources to meet these requirements.
- 8.0.5 This year we spent time and effort gathering information using various tools and research of our existing customers to enable us to formulate successful targeted recruitment campaigns to reach potential customers. By profiling our current foster carers and those that had previously responded to advertising were able to ascertain receptivity to certain marketing methods and advertising channels. This has led to the development of an internet and social networking based campaign for 2012-13 as well as the traditional advertising and marketing activity.
- 8.0.7 We have continued to develop our support for foster carers and two social work assistants continue 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. This year we have expanded the specific tailored support offered to those fostering children from within their family or social network through specialist preparation training sessions and the establishment of a support group.
- 8.0.8 The Family Link and the Youth Care Schemes have both expanded this year and we aim to ensure that they run to capacity, thereby minimising the use of Independent Fostering Agencies.
- 8.0.9 The service has to be able to respond to the identified need for more children from Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough to be appropriately placed with in house carers. Furthermore we need to ensure we replenish the number of approved carers who will resign or retire from fostering. . We therefore aim to recruit 50 new fostering households in 2011-12.

8.0.10 In March 2012 following the annual review of the Shared Service Level Agreement it was decided to end the Shared Service Arrangement as of 31 January 2013. Key staff in both councils will therefore be meeting regularly during 2012 to plan the arrangements for February 2013 and beyond. This planning process will involve consultation with foster carers and staff to ensure that an effective fostering service that meets the needs of children can be maintained and developed.

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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

Private Fostering

Annual Report

For the period
2011/2012

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FOREWORD

For the year 2011-2012, Central Bedfordshire continued to host the Private Fostering Service as a shared service on behalf of both unitary authorities. This report describes the activity of Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council's Private Fostering Service during the period 1st April, 2011 to 31st March, 2012, 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. The Local Safeguarding Children's Boards in each authority will also consider this report in July 2012.

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 Both Councils' Local Safeguarding Children's Boards received an annual report in Autumn 2011 concerning private fostering activity in Bedfordshire during 2010-11.
- 1.1.3 The private fostering provision was inspected by Ofsted in each council in January/February 2012 as part of the Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspections. No concerns or actions were identified by the inspectors in respect of private fostering.

SECTION 2

2.0 – AWARENESS RAISING

- 2.0.1 The Council 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.
- 2.0.2 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;
- Adverts in local papers and radio advertising took place.
 - Articles have been placed in "Primary Times" a publication distributed to families of school age children.
 - Presentation of the annual report to each council's Local Safeguarding board in Autumn 2011, for dissemination to all partner agencies, including the Police, Probation and Ambulance Service, Councils including Housing, Early Years Services, Youth Services, and Voluntary Organisations.
 - Update of Private fostering information on both Councils' websites.
 - LSCB training.
 - 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.
- 2.0.3 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 2011 – 31ST MARCH 2012

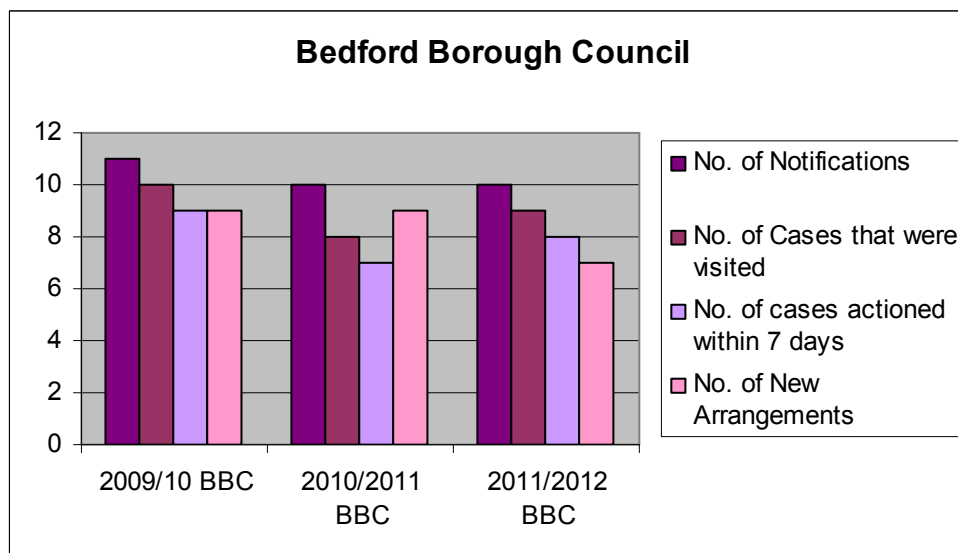
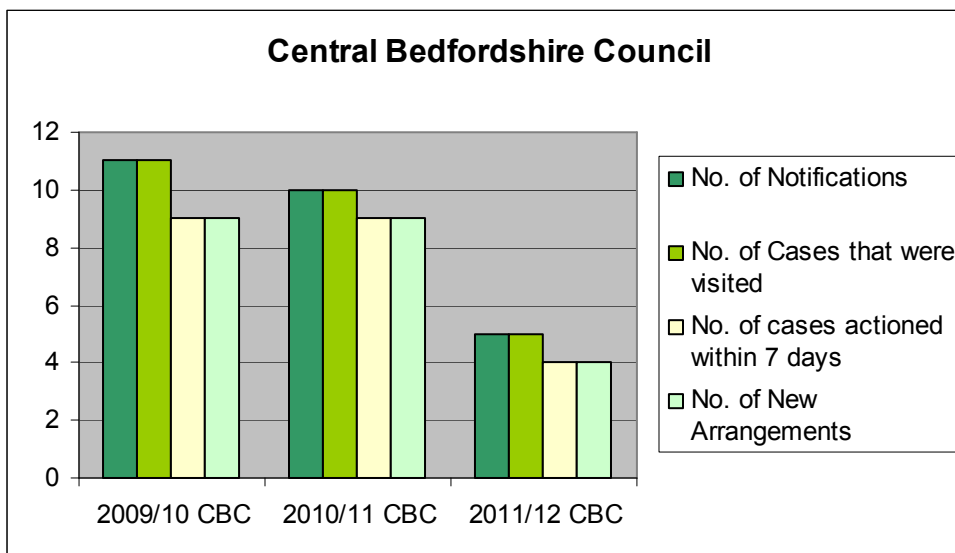
2.1.1 An annual plan is developed each year outlining activity to raise awareness amongst professionals and the local community

April 2011	Mailshot to local schools, state and private sector
	Advert in local newspaper
May 2011	Exhibition Stand – Young Farmers Annual Event
	Presentation LSCB - Great Denham
June 2011	Presentation LSCB – Dunstable Fire Station
July 2011	Exhibition Stand – Bedford Market
	Posters
	Presentation LSCB – Dunstable Fire Station
August 2011	Exhibition Stand – Bedford Market
	Advert in local papers
Sept 2011	Presentation LSCB – Great Denham
Nov 2011	Advert in local newspaper
March 2012	Advert in local newspaper
	Distribution of posters to GPs, parish councils, organised groups

SECTION 3

3.0 – STATISTICS

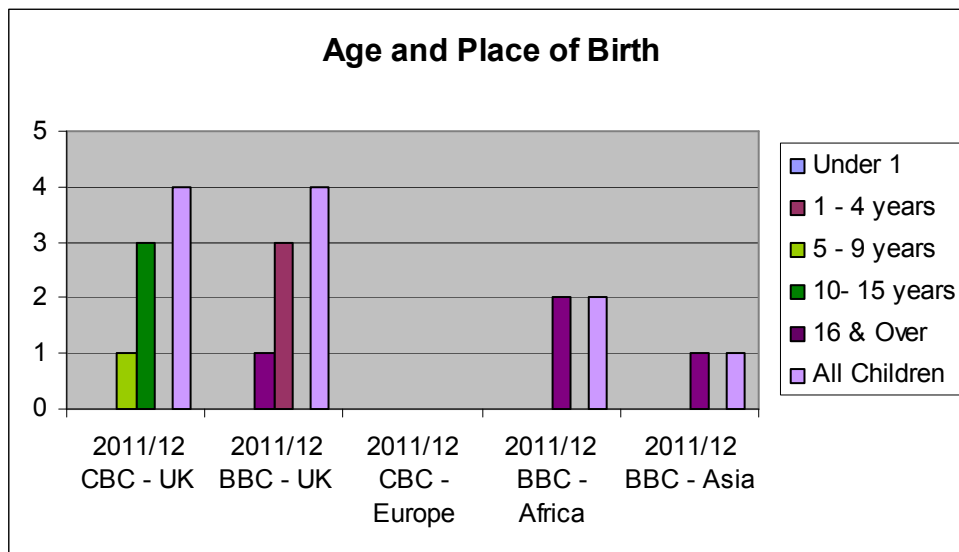
3.0.1 Each council has to submit data annually on the number of notifications received, how many of these notifications were responded to within 7 days, and how many of these cases were assessed as being a new private fostering arrangement.



3.0.2 Activity in the Bedford Borough Council area remained consistent in 2011-12 with similar levels of activity to previous years.

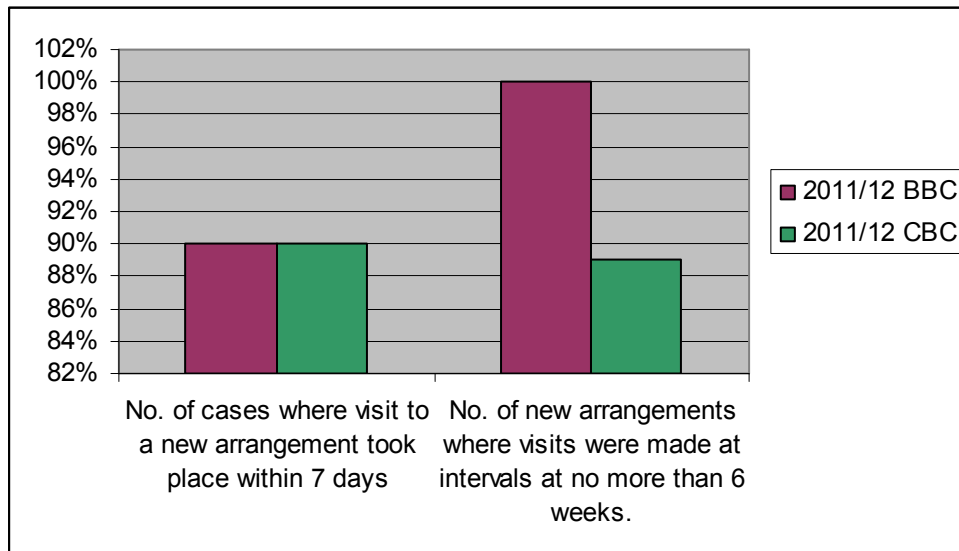
3.0.3 In Central Bedfordshire Council activity by way of notifications and ongoing cases decreased from the previous 12 months. There is no identifiable reason why this should be the case.

3.0.4 The councils also have to monitor the age and place of birth in respect of children in private fostering arrangements. The majority of children are white British and aged over 10 years at the time the private fostering arrangement commences.



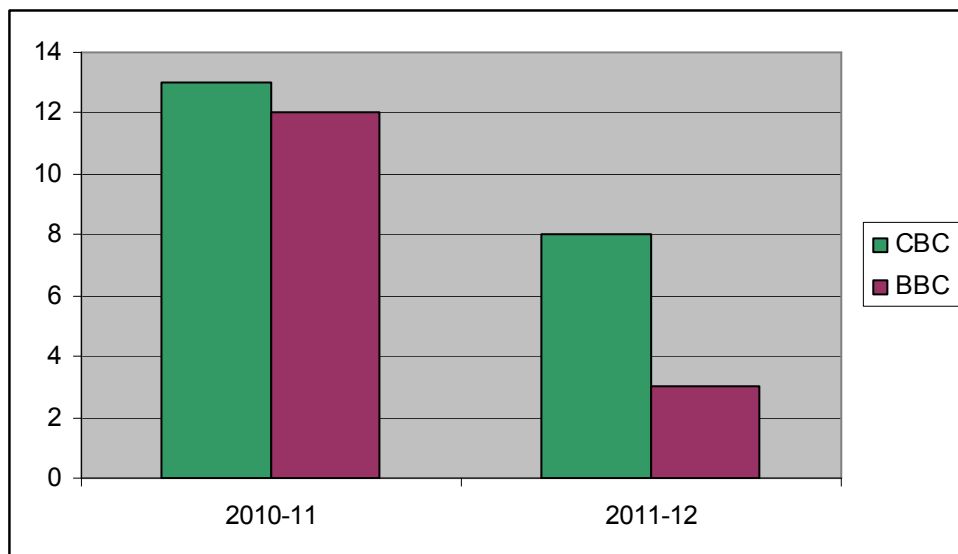
3.1 – MEETING TIMESCALES

- 3.1.1 The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 outline statutory timescales for visiting new arrangements and subsequent visits. Following notification of a new or proposed arrangement, the council must visit within 7 working days. In regard to ongoing arrangements the council must visit a privately fostered child at least every six weeks in the first year of the private fostering arrangement, and at least every 12 weeks in the second or subsequent year.
- 3.1.2 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.
- 3.1.3 In one case in each council the first visit was attempted but not achieved within 7 working days because of difficulty in contacting the family or finding them at home within the timescale.



3.1.4 Records are kept for the reasons that private fostering arrangements end. In 2011-12 the reasons were.

- 3 young people became 16
- 3 young people returned to care of their parents.
- 2 young people became looked after.
- 2 young person moved out of the area
- 1 arrangement was the responsibility of a neighbouring council and was transferred



3.2 – SUITABILITY OF ARRANGEMENTS

3.1. All new private fostering arrangements have to be assessed and a report compiled as to the suitability to meet the needs of the child. The decision on suitability usually rests with the Head of Adoption and Fostering, with appropriate discussion or decision making from the Assistant Director in complex cases. There were no concerns about the suitability of arrangements during 2011 – 12.

SECTION 4 - SUPPORT TO YOUNG PEOPLE

4.0 – ADVOCACY SUPPORT

- 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 where they need accommodation or advice and guidance 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 2011.

5.2 STANDARD 2 - Notification

As detailed in Section 2 of this report awareness raising has continued across both councils in 2011 – 12.

- 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 co-ordinator for private fostering ensures that private foster carers receive 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 2011.

5.6 STANDARD 5 – Advice and Support - Parents .

- 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 .

- An Information Pack on private fostering is given to all privately fostered children. This was updated during 2011.
- Some children continue to be supported by social workers from the Family Support teams where their needs or circumstances are particularly complex.

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

- 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

- 6.1** The service continues to have a dedicated Private Fostering Coordinator which has enabled development and progression of the service, alongside the development of expertise in this practice area.
- 6.2** Whilst the number of notifications has increased since 2006 when the requirement was first enacted, levels remain below those of comparator authorities. Awareness- raising activities and advertising campaigns continue and there is a good level of awareness amongst local professionals. Neither council has any of the features that may impact on private fostering numbers, such as language schools, boarding schools, transient or migrant populations.
- 6.3** Central Bedfordshire has continued 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.
- 6.4** In March 2012 following the annual review of the Shared Service Level Agreement it was decided to end the shared service arrangement as of 31 January 2013. Key staff in both councils will be meeting regularly during 2012 to plan the arrangements for delivery of private fostering duties for February 2013 and beyond.

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: 4 September 2012
Subject: Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2011/2012

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: Yolanda Corden, Interim Assistant Director Children's Services Operations
Public/Exempt: Public
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. 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:

2. 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:

3. 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:

4. 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):

5. None

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. Adherence to Human Rights and Equality issues is maintained

Community Safety:

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

Sustainability:

8. 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 2011/2012 of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (Appendix 1)**

Background Information

9. 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".
10. 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.

11. 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

12. 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 2011/2012 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.
13. Performance in relation to child protection key indicators has remained good throughout the year and is reviewed regularly by the Board.
14. The 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 2012/13 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

15. The Committee is requested to comment on the Annual Report 2011/2012 of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (Appendix 1).

Appendices:

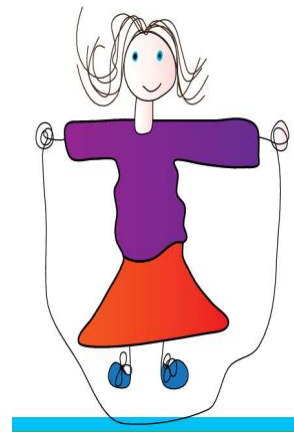
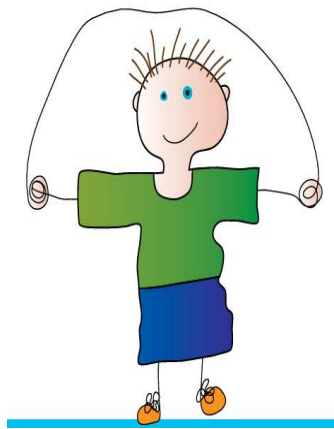
Appendix 1 – Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2011/2012

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands

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Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

Annual Report 2011 – 2012



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1. Independent Chair's Summary of Safeguarding Performance and Issues

This is the second annual report of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. The report looks back on safeguarding activities in Central Bedfordshire between April 2011 and March 2012 and looks forward to the progress to be made and challenges anticipated in 2012 –2013. The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, (CBSCB), became independently chaired in 2009, following the restructuring of the local authorities in Bedfordshire. It brings together the main organisations working with children, young people and families in the area so that they can coordinate their work, evaluate their accomplishments and receive multi-agency training on safeguarding issues.

Overall, partners in Central Bedfordshire have worked together well to safeguard children and this was confirmed by the recent Ofsted/CQC inspection, which rated safeguarding as 'Good'. In addition, there is clearly a great commitment from the Council and its partners to continue to improve and build on the suggestions which Ofsted made, through the development of a wide ranging improvement plan.

The Board has continued to review all deaths of children through its Child Death Overview Procedure (CDOP). It has not had cause to initiate any Serious Case Reviews in the past year, but reviews some individual cases and carries out audits to identify lessons to learn for all agencies. It has continued to make good progress in delivering multi-agency training and has been particularly successful in carrying out briefings to staff about the lessons which have come from local cases and those of note from elsewhere.

Current Issues for Safeguarding

This report is produced at a time when the partner agencies face major upheaval. All public sector and voluntary organisations are struggling to reduce their budgets in a time of national austerity. In addition, the key safeguarding partners are facing specific restructuring of their systems and governance which could have significant impacts on the safeguarding of children. These are particularly:

- **NHS Restructuring**

Local health services are undergoing major changes with the development of Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Offices of the National Commissioning Board. Clarity is starting to appear in the way in which the new Health Structures will ensure that children are safe, but the Board will need to find new ways of coordinating the efforts of CPs and other clinicians to continue to develop NHS safeguarding effectiveness. It is particularly important that the new leaders in health recognise that safeguarding children is a key part of their new role.

- **Health and Wellbeing Board**

In addition to these NHS changes, the relationship between the health organisations and the Council is altering with the introduction of the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB). The Board will lead strategies for the health of children and it will be a challenge for members to keep a balance between the needs of the young and the pressures of the more expensive provision of services to a growing elderly population. The relationships between CBSCB and the Central Bedfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board have yet to be agreed. Clear processes which allow the Safeguarding Board to effectively contribute to and challenge the new strategies and their outcomes are a critical requirement for the two Boards to work well in the long term without the burden of excessive bureaucracy.

- **Election of a Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Constabulary faces a new challenge in its governance with the election of a Police and Crime Commissioner in November 2012. This role will carry responsibility for the development of the community safety strategy in Central Bedfordshire. Current community safety approaches make a significant contribution to safeguarding children through their focus on substance abuse and domestic abuse. Children are at risk from adults they live with who abuse alcohol or illegal drugs or where relationships are violent. In some households substance abuse and violence is aggravated by adult mental ill-health leaving children extremely vulnerable. Community Safety Strategies are particularly important in addressing these behaviours and reducing risk to the young. The election of the Commissioner brings a risk to existing services, but also an opportunity for a greater impact on such parental behaviours as a new Police and Crime Strategy for the coming years is developed.

- **The role of Schools and Children's Centres**

Changes in national legislation have required and enabled schools to work more independently from the Council as the Local Education Authority. Whilst these new freedoms bring opportunities they also bring increasing responsibilities for governors and management teams to ensure that schools are resilient and effective in safeguarding. Schools and for the younger ages Children's Centres, also have a key role to play in identifying children suffering from the early impact of abuse and neglect, offering appropriate support and working with partner agencies to help families. In times of reducing budgets such early help is at risk. Following the government's Munro Report and recently published draft of the Working Together guidelines, CBSCB is likely to have an obligation to evaluate the success of this early help. This has been included in the new CBSCB plan as a specific project which partners will need to contribute to over the coming months.

It is generally recognised that during periods of change, organisations experience a reduction in their operational performance. There is therefore a risk that through restructuring and relocation of staff, organisations which have been very successful in safeguarding children may 'take their eye off the ball' to the detriment of vulnerable children in Central Bedfordshire. The Safeguarding Board has a duty to ensure that this does not happen and to continually remind directors and managers of the need to monitor operational effectiveness. To date this has been achieved but the coming year will continue to test the resilience of partners.

The CBSCB Business Plan

At the start of 2011-12, CBSCB set itself a very ambitious plan to address a wide range of issues. As you will see from the following report, the priorities were generally accomplished well, even though, with reducing resources all organisations struggled at times to actually report progress and attend meetings. However there is still a need to both maintain performance and improve in specific areas, both within individual organisations and through joint working. To address the pressure on partners and manage resources better, the Board, reduced the need for some sub-committees to meet routinely and set a smaller number of realistically achievable priorities for 2012-13. These five new priorities are:

- Better identifying early signs of physical and emotional abuse and neglect.
- Improving the response to domestic abuse
- Dealing more effectively with sexual abuse and exploitation
- Development of the Board, such as the recruitment of lay members

- Monitoring and, on some occasions, implementing actions in response to the Munro review and the local Ofsted and CQC Inspections.

Joint Working across Safeguarding Boards

In its sub-committees CBSCB works jointly with Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board and the two independent chairs regularly discuss common issues. The partners who work across the three local authorities of Luton, Central Bedfordshire and Bedford, such as the Police, are particularly challenged to service three Safeguarding Children Boards. The three Directors of Children's Services and their Safeguarding Chairs have discussed the potential for further close working. Whilst recognising the challenges for some partners, the local authorities as the lead agencies are unanimous in their view that the only effective way of ensuring safeguarding is through separate Safeguarding Boards working jointly when priorities are similar. This discussion led to the recognition that there were further opportunities to pool safeguarding efforts and as a result the Boards now have one combined plan for tackling Sexual Exploitation and a joint initiative to further address domestic abuse more effectively.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Picton', with a horizontal line underneath.

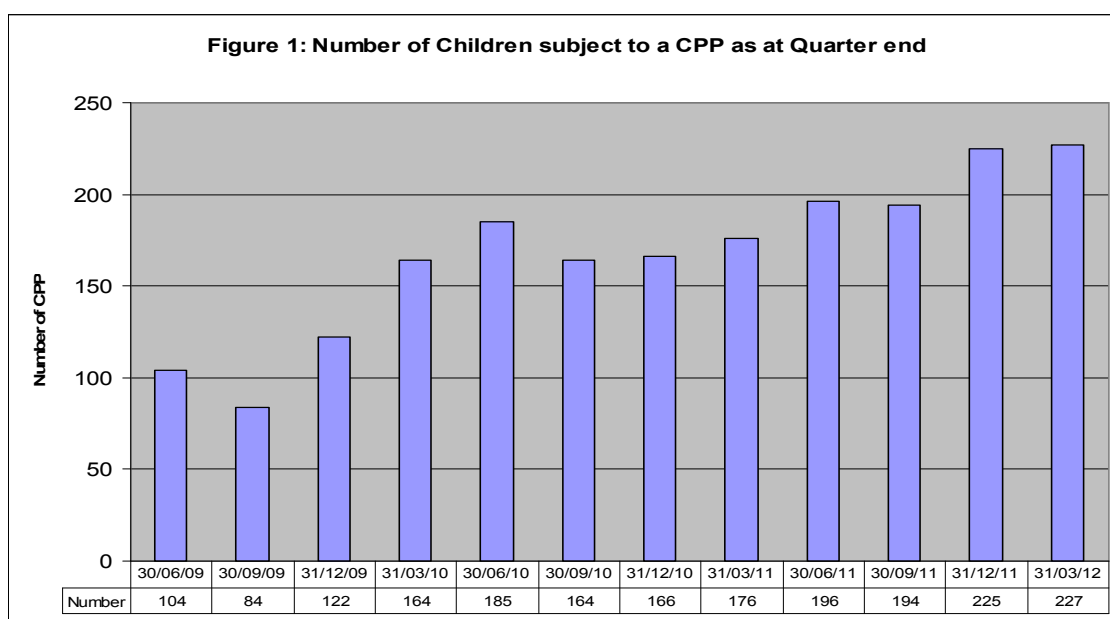
Phil Picton
Independent Chair
Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Board

2.0 The Context for Safeguarding Children in Central Bedfordshire

- 2.0.1 Central Bedfordshire has a resident population of approximately 56,400 children and young people aged 0 to 18, representing 22.1% of the total population of the area. In January 2011, 13.2% of the school population was classified as belonging to an ethnic group other than White British compared to 22.5% in England overall. Some 3% of pupils speak English as an additional language. Polish and Urdu are the most recorded commonly spoken community languages in the area
- 2.0.2 The majority of these children are educated in the 140 local schools comprising 96 primary schools, 33 secondary schools (23 middle schools and 10 upper schools), seven special schools/pupil referral units and 4 Independent schools. The structure and governance is changing as increasing numbers of schools seek academy status. Up until 31st March 25 schools had achieved Academy status. Early years service provision is delivered predominantly through the private and voluntary sector in over 108 settings; there are four local authority maintained nurseries.
- 2.0.3 Central Bedfordshire Council is the statutory lead agency for safeguarding children across the area and in appropriate cases has the legal powers to take children into care. On 1 April 2009 when Central Bedfordshire Council became a unitary authority, the Looked After Children population stood at 132 children & young people. The numbers of Looked after Children have risen steadily since that time to 176 at 31 March 2011 and the population as at 31 March 2012 stood at 208. This represents a rate per 10,000 of the population under 18 of 37, up from 31 per 10,000 the previous year. This compares to a national rate of 59 and a statistical neighbour rate of 46 per 10,000 population under 18 in 2010/11.
- 2.0.4 During 2011/2012 the following trends have been identified in relation to child protection activity compared to the previous year.
- 7.3% increase in the number of contacts to Children Social Care;
 - 18.5% decrease in the conversion rate: Contacts to Referrals;
 - 12.5% decrease in the number of referrals to Children Social Care;
 - 30.8% increase in Section 47 enquiries started;
 - 19.1% increase in initial assessments undertaken;
 - 24.4% increase in core assessments undertaken;
 - 36.9% increase in children who were the subject of an initial child protection conference;
 - 38.2% increase in the number of children starting to be looked after
- 2.0.5 Changes in the number of children subject to a child protection plan and looked after as at 31.3.11 and 31.3.12 identify the following:
- 27.5% increase in children subject to a child protection plan at period ends (31/03/11 & 31/3/12)
 - 18.2% increase in the numbers of looked after children at period ends (31/03/11 & 31/3/12)

- 2.0.6 The numbers of children subject to a child protection plan have risen from 178 at the end of March 2011 to 227 one year later. This has led to a 27.5% increase in the number of children subject to a plan at year end.
- 2.0.7 Expressed as a ratio per 10,000 of the population (under 18) in Central Bedfordshire, as at 31 March 2011, 32 per 10,000 (178 children) were subject to a child protection plan. As at 31.3.2012 40 per 10,000 of the population were subject to a plan. This compares with the national average for 2010/11 of 38 children per 10,000 and our statistical neighbour average of 28 per 10,000. It is important to note that during 2010/11 a 9.2% increase nationally was reported in respect of child protection plans. At the time of writing the outturn for 2011/ 2012 nationally is not available.

Figure1 illustrates the change on a quarterly basis of children subject to a child protection plan since the beginning of Central Bedfordshire in 2009



- 2.0.8 Between 1.4.2011 and 31.3.2012 268 children became subject of a child protection plan compared to 208 children during the previous year. This is a 22.3% increase in children becoming subject to a child protection plan.
- 2.0.9 Expressed as a ratio per 10,000 of the under 18 population, 268 children becoming subject of a plan equated to 47.5 compared to 37 per 10,000 population under 18 at the end of March 2011. National and statistical neighbour rates per 10,000 under 18 at the end of March 2011 were 44.4 and 33.3 respectively. Central Bedfordshire has therefore experienced a considerable increase in children becoming subject to a child protection plan. 114 children were made subject of a plan during the first six months of 2011/12 hence the rise in activity has been noticeable during the period October 2011 to March 2012 when 154 children were made the subject of a child protection plan.
- 2.0.10 The increase can be attributed to two main factors – the increase in referrals meeting a threshold for child protection interventions and the application of more rigour than the previous Bedfordshire County Council in applying thresholds and intervening to ensure children are protected from harm.

2.1 Categories of Child Protection Plans

2.1.1 Figure 2 illustrates the category of child protection plan for children subject to a child protection plan at the end of March 2012. 61% were recorded in the category of neglect; 28% in the category of emotional abuse; 7% in the category of sexual abuse and 4% in the category of physical abuse.

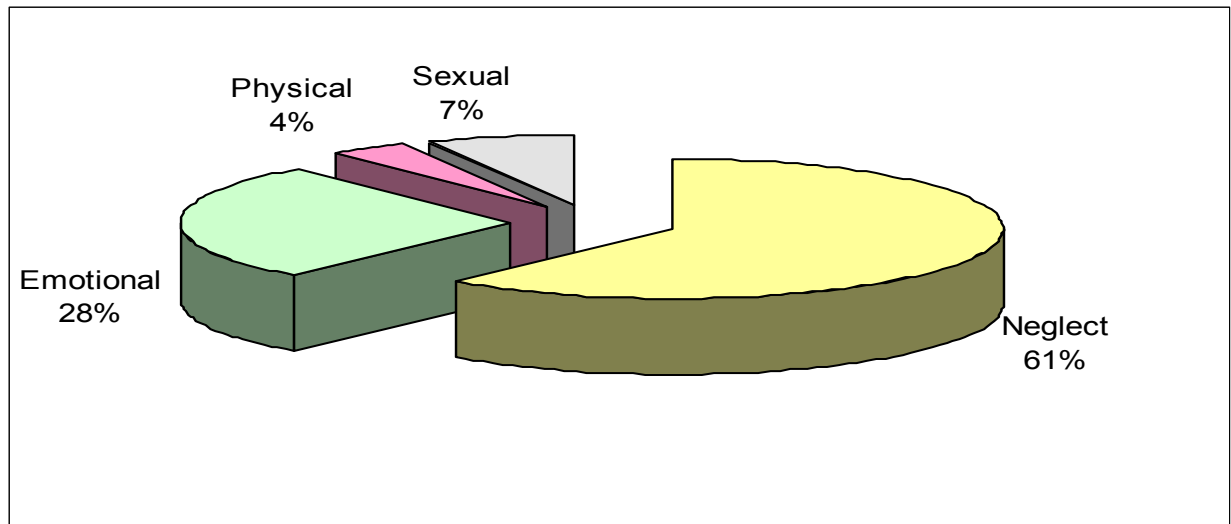


Figure 2: Percentage of children subject to a CPP at 31/3/12 by category of abuse

2.1.2 National figures for categories of child protection plan for 2010/11 were as follows: 43.9 % neglect; 29.2% emotional abuse; 10.6% physical abuse; 5.4% sexual abuse and 11.8 % multiple categories.

2.1.3 The categories of abuse recorded in relation to child protection plans is in line with the national average for emotional abuse and higher than the national average in relation to neglect. Locally there is a smaller percentage of children on a plan in the category of physical abuse and a higher than national average of plans in the category of sexual abuse.

2.2 Children subject to a plan on more than one occasion

2.2.1 Performance in relation to the national indicators for children subject to a plan on more than one occasion at the end of March 2012 was 9.3%. Nationally for the year ending March 2011 the percentage was 13.3% and for our statistical neighbours the figure percentage was 12.1%. Central Bedfordshire has seen a reduction in the year end figures in respect of children subject to a plan for the second or subsequent time compared to the previous year.

2.2.2 Performance in relation to duration of child protection plans i.e. children on plans over 2 years was 6.8% at the end of the year. This relates to 15 children whose plan was discontinued over two years of a total of 219 discontinued plans. The outturn at March 2011 was 6.5% locally compared to a national outturn of 6%.

2.3 Child protection cases reviewed on time

2.3.1 All children subject to a child protection plan have had their reviews held within timescale since 01/04/09. All children subject to a child protection plan have a qualified social worker allocated to their case.

2.3.2 As at March 2012 the percentage of children on child protection plans from non white backgrounds was higher than the Central Bedfordshire population by 3.7% and 11.5% within the looked after population. Expressed in terms of a percentage in relation to Central Bedfordshire schools the percentage is 0.3 % lower for child protection and 8.5% higher for looked after children. The number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children account for this in part due to the relatively low numbers of looked after children.

2.4 Gender and age of children subject to a child protection plan

2.4.1 The gender profile of children with child protection plans is almost equal. As at 31 March 2012 the gender of children subject to a Child Protection Plan in Central Bedfordshire is consistent with the national average.

2.4.2 The age profile of children subject to a plan in Central Bedfordshire is set out below.

CP Plans by Age					
	31/03/2011			31/03/2012	
	Total CBC	% CBC	National	Total CBC	% CBC
Unborn	4	2%	2%	0	0%
Under 1	18	10%	11%	25	11%
0-4	53	30%	32%	78	34%
05-09	53	30%	29%	67	30%
10-15	47	26%	26%	51	22%
16-17	3	2%	2%	6	3%
TOTAL	178	100%	100%	227	100%

3.0 Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Activity in 2011 – 2012

3.0.1 The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in Central Bedfordshire will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Central Bedfordshire, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

3.0.2 The functions of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board is set out in primary legislation and regulations. The core objectives of the Board are:

- to co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board
- for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority; and
- to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for that purpose.

3.1 Progress against the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board 2011-12 Business Plan Priorities

3.1.1 Each year the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board develops a business plan to focus its work on key priorities. The 2011-12 business plan was ambitious

reflecting the desire of partners to continue to make progress across a wide range of safeguarding issues. The key improvements against each priority are shown below and the full report against this plan can be read at Appendix A to this report.

3.2 Strategic Priority 1

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. This will involve maintaining strong relationships with health and schools during a period of transition and promoting the safeguarding of older adolescents who may be vulnerable to crime, homelessness, or sexual exploitation.

- 3.2.1 Schools are able to access the 2 day Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board training and e-learning courses and can commission their own single agency training. Within the Ofsted School Inspection framework safeguarding is an element and the Ofsted reports are monitored by the Council.
- 3.2.2 Central Bedfordshire Council has made available to schools a course dealing with cyber bullying. Schools are kept informed of safeguarding issues and available training via the Central Bedfordshire Council's Central Essentials newsletter which is issued to schools fortnightly.
- 3.2.3 A health and well-being questionnaire is currently being modelled to seek the views of children and young people in schools. Its outputs will be available to partner agencies to inform service planning and development. The questionnaire includes bullying.
- 3.2.4 Central Bedfordshire Council's secure website holds the policy and procedures and all relevant documentation for schools to access on safeguarding and safer recruitment. The Council assists schools with processing CRB checks.
- 3.2.5 A report on proposals for the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of GP practice training in safeguarding was presented to the Board. Each GP Practice in Bedfordshire now has a safeguarding children Lead GP. NHS Bedfordshire continues to monitor GP training.
- 3.2.6 NHS Bedfordshire has updated the Board in relation to the planning and provision of Child Protection Medicals. NHS Luton and Bedfordshire (project management lead), together with most of Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board partners have made significant progress over last 9 months in the development of sexual assault services. The Bedfordshire and Luton Sexual Assault Referral Centre – The Emerald Centre – opened in March 2011 to provide a forensically secure environment for medical examinations plus a 'soft room' where professionals can meet with victims.
- 3.2.7 The Emerald Centre sees all victims aged 14 and over. For child sexual assault cases that are not forensically acute, negotiations are underway with Bedford Hospital to move these services, which currently take place in the community, into the hospital which will provide an more integrated service to be provided.
- 3.2.8 NHS Bedfordshire and Luton and Bedfordshire Police have put in place an agreement with Peterborough Sexual Assault Referral Centre and Cambridge & Peterborough Foundation Trust community paediatricians to provide Sexual Assault Referral Centre paediatric services i.e. examination of children under the age of 13 (and those aged 13 and over with additional needs as determined by the forensic medical examiner) by a community paediatrician alongside a forensic medical examiner in a forensically

secure environment. The out of hours rota provided by Peterborough Sexual Assault Referral Centre allows cases to be seen in a timely manner. There is now therefore one pathway across the county, both in and out of hours for acute sexual assault.

- 3.2.9 Health Crisis aims to establish clear processes to support young people who may require acute admission to a mental health adolescent in-patient unit.
- 3.2.10 MAPPA (multi agency public protection arrangements) work closely with partners to communicate and manage and reduce the risk of harm to children in the community where parents or guardians are supervised by the Probation Trust. MAPPA attendance by children's services staff is excellent as evidenced by Ministry of Justice thematic inspection results with 100% attendance of staff invited to MAPPA meetings.
- 3.2.11 Bedfordshire Probation Trust has begun to develop the criminal justice children and families pathways and has recognised that domestic abuse in families and child safeguarding issues are a high priority when addressing risk and the needs of offenders. Community Domestic Abuse programmes to include I-DAP and Caring Dads have been set up.
- 3.2.12 Sexual Exploitation was a growing priority during 2011-12 as a number of high profile national cases highlighted the risks to children particularly young teenage girls. In response to the Government Sexual Exploitation Action Plan, Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board linked with the Bedford and Luton Boards to develop a joint local action plan which features as a significant priority in the 2012-13 Business Plan (see section on 2012-13 priorities).

3.3 Strategic Priority 2.

To incorporate the lessons from the Serious Case Review of 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. Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board should ensure that strategic links between adult and children's safeguarding are strengthened.

- 3.3.1 The Child J Serious Case Review was completed in 2010, but some actions resulting from the review were still to be completed at the start of 2011-12. Although the action plans are now complete, the issues have been combined into multi-agency training sessions.
- 3.3.2 As a result of the Child J Serious Case Review a joint Guide for the Police, Crown Prosecution Service and Local Safeguarding Children Boards to assist the exchange of information when there are simultaneous Serious Case Reviews and criminal proceedings was signed off at the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board in July. This document has been accepted nationally as good practice.
- 3.3.3 Briefings were held on the 20th June 2011 to provide good practice guidance and advice in respect of the risk assessment of sex offenders. These briefing events were attended by 274 frontline professionals and volunteers and were very positively evaluated.
- 3.3.4 In keeping with the Serious Case Review's recommendations, Central Bedfordshire Council presented a report to the Strategic Board in respect of commissioning services (Child J). The Commissioning Team completed an audit of practice to ensure appropriate procedures are in place when commissioning specialist assessments and risk assessments.

3.4 Protecting children and keeping them safe (Children & Young Peoples Plan)

3.4.1 Partners have continued working closely to develop the processes for identifying and responding to children whose safety is, or is likely to be, compromised. The national Tellus survey to gauge children and young people's feelings of safety no longer exists. The Central Bedfordshire Children's Trust is assessing partners' engagement and youth participation activities. Once this is complete, Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board will look to develop its approach to youth engagement building on the Children's Trust's work.

3.4.2 The Board has achieved a number of new initiatives including:

- Reinvestment of training income to provide better evaluation of the longer term learning from courses. Initial data is very good.
- Continued dissemination of learning points from Serious Case Review Child J, through staff briefings and training events.
- Development of e-learning modules with good take up by GPs
- Development of an annual audit programme and performance management framework.
- Discussion and collection of information from agencies on sexual exploitation which has led to a strategy of training frontline staff in the awareness of sexual exploitation in preparation for further Sexual Exploitation training and work streams in 2012

3.5 Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people:

3.5.1 Domestic abuse in households where children live is a continuing risk to safeguarding. The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) was launched in 2007 in order to provide a multi-agency response to the most high risk cases in order to safeguard against domestic abuse and ensure that effective information sharing was taking place. Central Bedfordshire now holds a monthly MARAC meeting where an average of 18 cases is referred every month (based on data from December 2010 – January 2012). Referrals are received from a range of agencies including Police, Children's Services and Housing. As part of the recommendations from the Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment for 2012 a review of the MARAC will be undertaken this year.

3.5.2. 35% of domestic abuse starts or escalates during pregnancy. In order to address this, an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) is now based in the maternity unit at Luton & Dunstable Hospital one day a week. Arrangements have recently been agreed with Bedford Hospital for a similar arrangement. A series of briefing sessions took place during 2011 which trained all Community Midwives based out of Bedford Hospital on what the MARAC & IDVA Service is and how to refer into these services. It is planned that similar sessions will be arranged for all midwives based out of the Luton & Dunstable Hospital.

3.5.3 In Central Bedfordshire there was an 8.8% decrease in overall reporting to the police from 2793 incidents between April 2010 – March 2011, to 2546 incidents for the same period 2011-2012.

3.6 Central Bedfordshire MARAC:

Jan 2011 – Dec 2011:

- 174 referrals (an increase from 141 in 2010)
- 15% were repeat referrals (19% in 2010)
- 318 children were resident in the households subject to MARAC (243 in 2010)
- 56% of the referrals originated from the Police (similar in 2010)

Central Bedfordshire IDVA Service:

April 2011 – Sept 2011:

- 135 referrals (264 in the previous six months)
- 37% were re-referrals (25% in previous six months)
- 61% referrals originated from the police (56% in previous six months)
- 65% of clients have engaged with the service (national average 60%) (previous data not available).

(Data for October to March 2012 is not available at this point due to the re-tendering of the IDVA Service)

- 3.6.1 The Freedom Programme is for women who have experienced domestic abuse and supports women in an abusive relationship to identify and recognise abusive behaviours and be aware of the impact that this has on any children in the household. The programme also supports women who are no longer in an abusive relationship, reminding them of the early warning signs, and providing beneficial peer support to other women.
- 3.6.2 The Freedom Programme has been co-ordinated through the Parenting team of Central Bedfordshire Council since October 2011. Since taking over the co-ordination role awareness training has been delivered to 40 professionals and there are 15 newly trained facilitators delivering rolling programmes in 5 locations – Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Buzzard (run through Homestart), Sandy and Stotfold, The team also hosted an awareness raising event (Mockingbird High) during Domestic Abuse Awareness Week which was attended by over 100 professionals. The Team hosts a support network for all those involved in delivering the programme and also promote the Freedom Home Study Course for women unable to access the programme.
- 3.6.3 Until recently there has been a gap in provision of services for individual children where families do not meet the threshold for children's social care intervention. As a result families no longer living with domestic abuse might not meet the threshold for support, despite the experience of living with domestic abuse still having a significant impact on their lives. The organization, 'Sorted', have been commissioned to deliver one to one therapeutic interventions for children aged 5 – 13 years affected by domestic abuse. Interventions combine talking therapies with play and theraplay appropriate to the age of the child.
- 3.6.4 A robust training programme relating to domestic abuse has been established and delivered by the Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership has also involved a 'Training for the Trainers' component to ensure continuation of training. Much of the programme is available via the Domestic Abuse Partnership however there is close working with the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board which offers a specific course on Domestic Abuse and the Impact on Children & Young People (see later Multi-Agency Training section 5).

- 3.6.5 In response to a lack of coordinated education in schools, Healthy Relationships Education Packs were developed, culminating in a launch event in March 2011. The packs are now being used in a number of schools in the area. The packs won an Equality & Diversity Award in October 2011 presented by the Bedfordshire Race & Equalities Council at their annual Equality Awards. There will be a second stage launch in 2012 which will target schools who did not attend the original event. This will be arranged jointly between the Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership and the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. Schools are also provided with signposting information and advice and guidance with regard to pupils who may disclose domestic abuse taking place at home.
- 3.7 To ensure that a comprehensive, set of multi-agency policies, practice and guidance is available to all staff working with children across Central Bedfordshire.**
- 3.7.1 The Joint Policy and Procedures Group have continued to meet in order to develop and revise the web based Pan Bedfordshire Interagency Child Protection Procedures that are compliant with national and local changes.
- 3.7.2. Web based Interagency Child Protection Procedures developed by Tri X Childcare with Luton LSCB at <http://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm> these continue to be worked on by the 3 LSCB's.
- 3.8. To further develop the agreed performance framework to measure and report on safeguarding performance**
- 3.8.1 The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board monitors performance to assist in understanding the manner in which agencies work both individually and together to safeguard the welfare of children and young people in Central Bedfordshire.
- 3.8.2 Information is obtained from a variety of sources including:
- Case File Audits
 - Thematic Audits
 - Serious Case Reviews/Management Reviews.
 - Data collection at child protection conferences and core groups that assists the LSCB to understand the effectiveness of these crucial decision making activities.
 - Multi-agency safeguarding data set.
 - Local direct contact with hundreds of multi-agency staff attending training, workshops and conferences.
- 3.8.3 The Joint Performance Management & Audit Group case file audit programme has undertaken themed case file audits in relation to Core Groups, Strategy meetings and Section 47 enquiries. These audits included the development of a theme specific audit tool; the selection of cases; the analysis and evaluation of information collected and the dissemination of messages arising from the audits to Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board partners.
- 3.8.4 In addition the Joint Performance Management & Audit Group considers cases (which can be presented by any agency) where the Boards believe there is learning that should be shared.
- 3.8.5 The purpose of multi-agency audits is to learn from existing casework to:

- improve effectiveness of multi-agency assessment, planning and intervention
- improve management, supervision and decision making in casework
- improve outcomes for children and families

3.8.6 Multi-agency audit is a critical part of the Boards scrutiny and challenge role. They involve each agency bringing their audit of a pre-determined case(s) and sharing the findings amongst partner agencies. The process enables scrutiny of the effectiveness of multi-agency practice including information sharing, agreeing any lessons learned from the audit; and any corrective actions and / or actions to improve safeguarding practice.

3.8.7 Multi-agency audits are organised and overseen by two joint groups - the Joint Performance Management and Audit Group and the Joint Executive Serious Case Review Panel. Multi agency audits are also achieved through Inter-agency Practice Reviews; Independent Management Reviews and Serious Case Reviews.

3.8.8 Responsibility for producing a comprehensive quarterly Performance Monitoring Summary of Child Protection activity, with trend and contextual benchmarking information with our statistical neighbours has been the responsibility of Central Bedfordshire Council and reported to all the Strategic Boards in the last year.

3.8.9 The Joint Performance Management & Audit Group has struggled to obtain for the purposes of collation and analysis, activity data from partner agencies for regular reporting into the Joint Steering Group. This task will be completed in June 2012 following the collection of end of year data.

3.9 To ensure the effectiveness and quality of the multi agency safeguarding training improves outcomes for children.

3.9.1 During the financial year 2011-2012 the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board delivered 43 courses involving 56 days of face to face training to 1001 delegates a 6% increase on the previous year. Free Online E learning has continued to be provided and the E learning training menu has been extended to 8 courses including one specifically designed for Young people aged 13-18 years. 1177 workers and volunteers have successfully completed an E learning course and 88 are in progress. E learning completion runs at 93%. E learning and face to face training has been provided at a charge to private and independent organisations and this has resulted in significant income generation.

3.9.2 Given the needs of partner organisations to assess the impact of all activity including training on positive outcomes for children then some of this income was used to fund a part time training evaluation administrator from December 2011 on a fixed term contract going forward until end April 2013. The key activity of this post is Course Evaluation and particularly how Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board courses impact on worker's practice. All partner organisations have been advised of feedback and reports will be continuously generated and refined to reflect job role and setting analysis going forward into 2012-2013.

3.9.3 All Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board courses are regularly over subscribed and extra 2 day courses have been arranged to accommodate delegates from across the extended children's workforce.

3.9.4 Remaining challenges and issues include

- further improving links with schools and their Governing Bodies as more local schools convert to Academy status

3.9.5 Fuller reports of the multi-agency training activity and evaluation of training are included in Section 5 of this report.

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

3.10.1 No serious case reviews were commissioned during 2011-12. The work of the Serious Case Review Panel is set out in detail in section 3.14 of this report.

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

3.11.1 The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) reports to the Board have demonstrated that the role is exercised effectively, good reporting and tracking arrangements ensure that appropriate analysis of the referral patterns and levels of awareness across agencies is undertaken. Prompt action is taken to address any deficits. Learning from cases referred to the LADO is used well, for example in delivering training and in commissioning arrangements. Partner agencies, particularly schools, appear to value highly the consultation and advice available through the LADO service. Internal performance information demonstrates that notifications receive a prompt considered response with appropriate outcomes, and this was evidenced in a sample of cases reviewed by Ofsted inspectors.

3.12 Confirm the funding for the operation of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board for 2012-13

3.12.1 The administration of the Safeguarding Boards for Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough is jointly managed and funding is agreed by both Boards with contributions by both councils and other partners. Proposed funding arrangements presented to the Strategic Board and agreed in December 2011 were as follows;

	Bedford Borough Council	Central Bedfordshire Council	Police	NHS Beds	Probation	CAFCASS
Funding Formula	25.09%	25.09%	12.15%	33.55%	3.82%	0.30%
Budget 2012/13	£51,927	£51,927	£25146	£69,437	£7906	£620

3.12.2 The Training Function is funded by Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board partners' contributions funding commissioned training places at £60 per day per delegate for their workforce. Income is also generated from charges to other partner organisations such as Probation, schools and GPs and from the Private and Independent sector requiring face to face training or E learning.

3.12.3 In addition to the progress made by the Board partners working together to achieve its 2011 -12 Business Plan, individual partners have made significant progress in taking forward plans within their own organisations.

3.13 Child Death Overview - Bedfordshire and Luton Child Death Overview Panel

3.13.1 Safeguarding Children Boards are required to carry out reviews of all child deaths in their area. Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board carries out this process by working jointly with Luton and Bedford Safeguarding Children Boards in the Bedfordshire and Luton Child Death Overview Panel. The panel comprises senior managers from across the partners together with relevant clinicians from health organisations. The panel also has a lay member who is able to provide a non-medical independent perspective on the review of child deaths. The CDOP process is managed by NHS Luton and Bedfordshire on behalf of the three Boards.

3.13.2 The specific purposes of the panel are:

To collect and analyse information about the deaths of all children (0-18yrs) in Bedfordshire and Luton with a view to identifying:

- Any matters of concern affecting the safety and welfare of children in the area of the authority, including any case giving rise to the need for a Serious Case Review (SCR)
- Any general public health or safety concerns arising from deaths of children

3.13.3 To put in place procedures for ensuring that there is a co-ordinated response by the authority, their Board partners and other relevant persons to an unexpected death of a child (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010)

3.13.4 During the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012 a total of 58 child deaths were reported to the Bedfordshire and Luton Child Death Overview Panel. This is a reduction of just over 6% on the previous year. 19 of the child deaths were of children residing in Bedford Borough, 17 of the deaths were of children living in Central Bedfordshire and 22 of the child deaths were of children living in Luton.

3.13.5 During the year 2011-2012 eight CDOP panel meetings were held plus 1 extra meeting with neonatologists, senior paediatric nurses and midwives to review a cohort of neonatal deaths.

3.13.6 The panel are required to determine if there are any modifiable factors during the review of the death. These are defined as one or more 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.

3.13.7 17 Central Bedfordshire child deaths were reported during 2011-2012. This is a slight increase of 2 on the previous year. 4 of the deaths were unexpected but notably there were no 'Sudden Unexpected Deaths of Infants (SUDI)' reported compared to 3 in 2010-2011. There are no common themes identified with the unexpected deaths.

3.13.8. 11 deaths were reviewed; some of the children had died during the previous reporting year. Of these 4 of the cases were noted to have modifiable factors. These were concerned with maternal smoking and 1 SUDI where unsafe sleeping practices had been identified. This is similar to the situation across the partner Boards, with a total of 55 deaths in Bedfordshire and Luton - 43% of which had one or more modifiable factors.

- 3.13.9 The issues around smoking have been brought to the attention of Public Health in Bedfordshire. The Public Health Smoking in Pregnancy lead works closely with maternity units to ensure maternity staff understand the importance of raising the issue of smoking and to ensure best recommended practice (as per NICE guidelines) is implemented.
- 3.13.10 NHS Bedfordshire's Stop Smoking Service Specialist Advisors, offer dedicated tailored clinics to pregnant women at maternity units, with clinics also available to pregnant women in the community at a range of different locations.
- 3.13.11 'Smoke free baby and me programme' supports pregnant women from referral up to 6 months post partum. This is delivered in partnership with Children Centres. The programme is an incentive based scheme to encourage ongoing cessation.
- 3.13.12 The Stop Smoking Service also maintain links with stop smoking services in Hertfordshire, as many Bedfordshire mothers deliver at Lister Hospital Smoke free Homes and Cars is a national campaign that is being rolled out locally. In Bedfordshire it will include an online pledge system to 'keep homes and family cars smoke free'. This will be underpinned by a training programme for frontline staff that have contact with pregnant women and young families.
- 3.13.13 The emerging themes in regards to unsafe sleeping practices from the review of cases are incorporated into CDOP multi agency training sessions. The issue has also been flagged with maternity units and health visiting teams. It is known that the safe sleeping messages are being delivered to new mothers. Currently CDOP are considering how to re-launch the keeping baby safe campaign and an initial meeting has been held with service providers across the county. These safe sleeping issues are a national issue as they involve a complex public health message which needs to be delivered to parents from all communities and ethnic groups.
- 3.13.14 A meeting was held in March 2012 with providers across the county to discuss how the safe sleeping message is currently delivered and how it can be re-enforced. This will be the subject of ongoing discussion but the group felt the key issue was about educating the professionals to enable them to deliver the safe sleeping messages effectively.
- 3.13.15 During recent the Ofsted/CQC Inspections across the three local authorities in Bedfordshire concerns were expressed by the inspectors that frontline staff was not aware of the messages arising from the review of Child Deaths locally. Efforts had already been made within training sessions and by publication of the CDOP annual report and a newsletter to disseminate messages widely but an action plan has now been developed to include regular training sessions on CDOP issues identified for all frontline staff. The CDOP annual report and a short commentary on the emerging themes has also been placed on the independent contractors section of NHS Bedfordshire and Luton intranet
- 3.13.16 The CDOP annual report for 2011 - 2012 will provide further analysis of the data and any emerging themes in child death and will be presented to the Safeguarding Board and published on the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board website later in the year.

3.14 Serious Case Reviews.

- 3.14.1 Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board considers a serious case review when a child dies or is seriously injured, and abuse and/or neglect are suspected or

known to be a factor, or there are concerns about how local agencies worked together. The purpose of such reviews is to learn lessons and improve practice. These reviews result in action plans that should drive this improvement.

- 3.14.2 The Joint Executive Serious Case Review Panel is convened when there is a need to consider an individual case where it is considered there might be a situation where a serious case review should be commenced. The Panel consists of colleagues from Health, Police, Children's Social Care and Probation. The Panel are supported by the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board Independent Chair and Safeguarding Children Board Business Manager.
- 3.14.3 No Serious Case Reviews have been instigated in 2011- 2012. In one case referred to the Panel there were lessons to be learnt and the relevant agencies were asked to report back to the Panel on their response to the actions required. This was completed and the lessons learnt disseminated to agencies to disseminate to their staff and also presented to the Child Death Overview Panel. Another case referred at the end of March 2012 is in the process of being reviewed via a Multi Agency Case Review rather than as a Serious Case Review.
- 3.14.4 Key messages are incorporated into all Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board training courses and single agency courses validated by the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. This is a standing agenda item for the Training Commissioning Group and Training Development & Implementation Group. Courses reviewed annually/bi-annually and as required by national developments. Training has been adapted to incorporate learning from local and national serious case reviews. New courses have been developed or commissioned in response to these findings e.g.; Impact of Substance Misuse Awareness.
- 3.14.5. The last two serious case reviews which took place in 2005 (Child DL) and 2010 (Child J) – both had comprehensive action plans where all the actions were been completed, evidenced and reviewed.

4.0 Governance and accountability arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

- 4.0.1 The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all relevant authorities to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; this primarily deals with how organisations working with children ensure that they have appropriate regard to safety and welfare.
- 4.0.2 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 (HM Government) provides statutory guidance regarding the governance of Safeguarding Boards, including the procedures for CDOP and Serious Case Reviews. Following the Munro Report on Child Protection published in May 2011, the national guidance is being re-written and is likely to be published during the summer of 2012. Following that, the Board will consider its governance structures and processes to ensure it responds appropriately.
- 4.0.3 The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board has been effectively established since April 2010 The Strategic Board meets three times each year and has good attendance by representatives from the senior levels of all organisations involved in protecting or promoting the welfare of children. Most key partners contribute well to its work at the strategic and operational level, although as responsibilities of public sector organisations change there is a need to have increasing involvement of new key players such as GPs and schools. The Board is actively working with these key

partners to secure their active contribution. Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board demonstrates clear priorities through its business plan and specific areas of achievement such as the impact of multi-agency training and improvements in the quality of practice resulting from multi-agency audits.

- 4.0.4 Ofsted Inspection of safeguarding and looked after services in Central Bedfordshire in February 2012 rated Partnership Working as good. Most partners are engaged and communicate well with each other to safeguard children. In some instances conflicting priorities within individual agencies create barriers to partnership working and these are evident at both operational and strategic planning levels. For example issues such as health involvement in domestic violence initiatives at the strategic level, and appropriate police involvement in child protection conferences. Issues such as this are discussed and resolved within the Joint Steering Group (joint with Bedford Borough Board) which is led by the Chair of Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and if necessary are elevated to full Board level for resolution.
- 4.0.5 Central Bedfordshire Council leads the Children's Trust Partnership in delivering the local Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). This plan includes a wide range of multi-agency initiatives to improve health and wellbeing including a 'Stay Safe' theme which emphasises the importance of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and promotes an active response to domestic abuse in families with children. This Children's Trust is chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services and has appropriate representatives from key partners, including the voluntary sector, and has clear governance arrangements. It ensures that safeguarding is suitably prioritised across a broad range of organisations and has clear lines of communication, reporting and oversight with other strategic safeguarding fora such as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.0.6 Representatives from the voluntary sector are actively engaged in a wide range of strategic and operational groups through the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and Children's Trust, and are able to influence the development of services to support children and families. Voluntary sector organisations work well with statutory partners and some are commissioned to provide a range of readily accessible services to young people, in particular early intervention to prevent safeguarding concerns escalating and working with vulnerable groups. Strong collaboration between statutory and voluntary sector partners is enhanced through the secondment of some council staff to services provided by voluntary organisations and through some voluntary organisations delivering training to statutory partners.
- 4.0.7 In January 2012 a proposal to rationalise Board structures was presented to the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board in response to some partners concerns around capacity and being able to engage effectively across three safeguarding children boards.
- 4.0.8 As a result, the Board agreed to disband the below groups as sitting sub-committees with the groups meeting in future as needed by partners rather than routinely. Nominated lead officers have been identified to ensure that group meetings are called appropriately. The Lead Officers are responsible for the development and delivery of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board business plan objectives, via flexible mechanisms determined by the Lead Officers and Joint Steering Group.
- Joint Policy & Procedures Group
 - Joint Training Commissioning Group
 - Joint Training Development & Implementation Group
 - Joint Communications Group

4.0.9 The Board agreed for the following groups to remain as a formal part of the Board structure, meeting regularly to deal with relatively wide agendas;

- Joint Steering Group
- Joint Executive Serious Case Review Panel
- Joint Performance Management & Audit Group
- Cross border Child Death Overview Panel.

4.0.10 As part of their submission for this annual report, partners have set out their own governance contribution to the Board. The Police contribution highlights the challenge for partners of servicing three Safeguarding Boards during a period of public sector austerity but appreciates the view of Central Bedfordshire Council and the other partner councils that there is a need to retain the individual Boards in the foreseeable future.

5.0 Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's Delivery of Multi-Agency Training

5.0.1 The Joint Training Commissioning Group has met quarterly during 2011-2012 and the Training Development and Commissioning Manager has reported directly to these meetings and has also presented reports to the Strategic Boards for each LSCB on the activities, finances and strategy for inter agency training in both areas.

5.0.2 The full time Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Training Officer co-delivers most inter- agency courses in conjunction with safeguarding leads/trainers from partner agencies. This assists in ensuring single agencies' training messages are consistent with local audit messages, research evidence and national safeguarding training messages. In addition these Pool Trainers are required to attend Pool Update meetings that are held 3 times per year where local, national and research messages are presented.

5.0.3 A Working in Core groups ½ day course was developed in direct response to Audit findings and four courses have run since November 2012. This course has been very positively evaluated and has had clear impact on practice e.g.

'Course also gave me confidence to insist on being a member of a specific core group of child dual rolled with another school as I felt I could add another perspective to meeting. Agreed that it is a priority for staff to attend these meetings to become involved & network for benefit of child' (BBC School delegate January 2012)

5.0.4 The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's quality assurance and performance monitoring activities e.g. Enquiries have recently been made of both Local Authorities with regard to service level agreements held with providers and the safer recruitment training and other Safeguarding training requirements of such agreements so that the Training Manager may contact the service providers direct and support and advise on S.11 compliance. This work will continue into 2012-2013. In addition messages for learning arising from multi-agency audits undertaken by the Joint Performance Management & Audit Group are incorporated into training.

5.0.5 Learning from serious case reviews: The training function developed responses to the training actions arising out of Child J Serious Case Review and these have been implemented during 2011-2012. Constructive challenge is now part of the core training content and activity for all inter agency training courses and a specific externally

commissioned 1 day course on how this is maintained in particularly complex cases has been held bi –annually. Further awareness raising as well as targeted training events on Child Sexual Abuse themes and Sexual Exploitation are planned for 2012-2013 and indications are that recruitment will be excellent.

- 5.0.6 The Training Function collects and analyses evaluation data as already described above. In addition the Training Officer attends all events and engages in facilitated discussion with delegates around further training needs as well as the challenges and quality of partnership working. Where concerns are identified these are immediately responded to by the Training Manager via direct contact with the delegate, their manager and agency Board members as necessary. The response to these concerns by all has been excellent – prompt and thorough. Any newly identified Training needs (for example Working in Core Groups) are incorporated into the Joint Training Strategy and plans on a continuous basis.
- 5.0.7 There have been no complaints made regarding Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board inter agency training or other activities in 2011-2012

5.1 Areas of strength for interagency training

- 5.1.1. The consistency of the training messages that are given and the culture of working together is promoted by the course content and training delivery. As the Training Officer is involved in the planning and delivery of every course then key national and local messages can be delivered consistently at single agency training events in the co-trainers own agency.
- 5.1.2 The Training Function has commissioned courses from good quality external providers as all evaluation data shows and its work on the impact of interagency training is advanced when compared to other LSCBs in the region or indeed in England and Wales.
- 5.1.3 The Training Function is the preferred interagency training provider for the East of England Ambulance service and provided 26 days of training to their key safeguarding staff in 2011-12 and has pre-purchased 68 days for 2012-13.
- 5.1.4 The Impact on Practice evaluation work has been developing strongly and useful data evidence was provided to Agencies and OFSTED Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspections in Central Bedfordshire in February 2012.
- 5.1.5 Safeguarding in schools – In addition an Anti Bullying On line e learning package is being developed by the current E learning provider and this will be offered in addition to the current menu of courses in due course. An On line package for 11-18 year olds in peer mentoring or similar roles has been provided since October 2011.
- 5.1.6 Equality and diversity issues in safeguarding work with children young people and families are incorporated in to all inter agency training courses. Attendance data is collected from delegates regarding ethnicity and gender. Disabled staff and volunteer training delegates have been successfully accommodated and all venues have excellent disability access.
- 5.1.7 Safer workforce – An extended menu of FREE On Line e learning has been provided since October 2011 provided by the LSCB for all staff and volunteers from partner Agencies in both Local Authorities. Recruitment to these courses has been slow –

1177 for 2011- 2012 but completion rates of 93% are excellent and feedback indicates that 1148 of these individuals found accessing the system very easy (789) or easy (359). Income has been generated from GP and Dental practices who have adopted this form of learning for all staff in contact with children and families. It is intended to continue with the current menu into 2012 -2013. While completion rates are good, mail shots and other marketing strategies to promote this safeguarding learning opportunity will be made during the coming year.

- 5.1.8 Safer workforce strategies are implemented by partner organisations and the Training Manager advises on training needs of the workforce and how these may be met on request from the partner organisation and via workforce training manger meetings and other fora.
- 5.1.9 CDOP – the training function has assisted with the promotion of CDOP training events.
- 5.1.10 Sexual exploitation – Planning has been in progress since early 2012 and Briefing events for 340 staff from across Luton, Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough are planned for June 20th 2012. Further specifically targeted courses on this and other sexual abuse themes are planned going forward. An e learning package was added to the menu of on line learning in October 2011
- 5.1.11 Domestic Abuse – Impact on the Child course has run 3 times in 2011-12 and this is planned to continue in the next year. Delegates have assessed impact as follows; Highlighted behaviours in children that could be indicators. In corporate training for whole school Central Bedfordshire Council Schools; enabled me to discuss a recent incident with the child's carers, Voluntary Organisation. An added awareness level course is planned to run in Summer/Autumn 2012 on Teen and Dating Violence for targeted youth, health and schools workers.
- 5.1.12 Adult Mental Health – a newly developed 1 day Impact of Parental Mental Illness course has run seven times during 2011-12 and has been open to Luton delegates. This course is planned to run quarterly in 2012-13 and now requires mandatory successful completion of the E learning package prior to attendance. Impact Evaluation data shows excellent transfer to practice, for example 'From attending course have written a training package for staff with the Trust & information will be used for CPD for all operational staff', Ambulance Trust delegate; Raised awareness of impact on children & have used this knowledge gained in recent CIN meetings', CBC schools delegate
- 5.1.13 Learning Difficulties & Disabilities – a newly developed 1 day Safeguarding Disabled Children course was developed and ran twice in 2011-12, and will run 3 times in 2012-13. Impact data includes now looking at support groups within Children Services for families with children with SEN & Disabilities. Important to look at the effect on siblings - discussions re setting up a sibling support group, Children's Centre Manager; Improving monitoring & making students aware of who they can contact, Schools delegate.
- 5.1.14 Drugs & Alcohol a newly developed ½ day awareness of the Impact of Parental Substance Misuse on Babies Children and young people ran twice in the past year and is planned to run three times in 2012-13. A SEPT worker – Health Visitor assessed the impact on practice as: Am now more vigilant of possible effects such as school absence, missed appointments & disengagement. Will bring these types of changes/ indicators to meeting re CIN & CP plans

- 5.1.15 Private fostering – content on this topic has been presented to every 2 day course audience since autumn 2010 and is set to continue. Indications are that awareness remains low in the general children’s workforce but delegates’ responses are positive with many indicating that they will raise awareness on return to their own settings.
- 5.1.16 Engagement of the wider community in safeguarding, e.g. VCS, faith groups – 176 volunteers and staff from VCS and faith groups have attended training events free of charge in 2011-12, this is a 6% increase on the previous year and the policy will continue for 2012-13. Any volunteer may also access E learning free of charge

5.2 Future areas for development include:

- 5.2.1 Expansion of the co-trainer Training Pool so as to limit the burden placed on health representatives who contribute in the highest numbers to the training pool. Senior Practitioner Social Workers have recently been recruited for co-delivery of the Working in Core groups and this has worked well to date.
- 5.2.2 Communication with schools - although schools’ designated personnel and deputies attend in good numbers these links could be improved. Two FREE Briefing events are being planned around the Somerset Serious Case Review for October 2012 and these personnel together with Lead Safeguarding Governors will be invited.

6.0 Monitoring and Evaluation activity

- 6.0.1 A key role of Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board is to monitor safeguarding activity in Central Bedfordshire and evaluate its impact. This is achieved in a number of ways:
- By considering reports of external agencies such as Ofsted and CQC which carry out inspections of services to safeguard children. Of particular importance to the Board is the monitoring of actions by the partners in response to the comments in those reports.
 - By the Board carrying out its own audit and performance monitoring activity including the evaluation of its multi-agency training, and
 - By the Board overseeing partners’ self-assessment auditing of their compliance with safeguarding standards (known as Section 11 assessment)

6.1. External Inspection and Assurance – Ofsted, CQC

- 6.1.1 A short Ofsted Inspection of contact, referral and assessment processes in Central Bedfordshire Council’s Children’s Social Care took place in March 2011 identifying one strength and some areas for improvement, as set out below. These have all been addressed – with the completed plan signed off at the Strategic Board 13th Dec 2011.

Ofsted Inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment March 2011
<p>Strengths Arrangements for the transfer of cases between teams are undertaken efficiently and without delay. The transfer is underpinned by a two-stage process that ensures that all tasks are completed and that plans and ensuing actions are fully understood and promptly implemented in order to safeguard children.</p>
<p>Areas for development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The electronic record-keeping system does not provide effective support to staff and

managers. Record-keeping, data retrieval and analysis and the efficient use of social worker time are all compromised by the inadequacies of the current system.

- Performance management systems do not provide an overview of the work of the intake and referral team. The council is not easily able to provide information on the amount or nature of duty work being undertaken at any given time.
- Unqualified staff undertake both initial and core assessments as part of supervised staff development. This is contrary to the guidance in 'Working Together'. Whilst there is no evidence that outcomes for children have so far been affected by work being carried out by unqualified staff, risks are increased by this arrangement.
- Work undertaken at the point of contact does not always meet the guidance in 'Working Together'. In some cases seen by inspectors decisions had been made to close contacts before full information had been gathered.
- Referrals from the police are variable in timeliness and the detail of information provided. This can impact on the council's ability to provide appropriate responses to safeguarding concerns.

6.1.2 A full Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services in Central Bedfordshire was carried out over two weeks at the end of February 2012. This inspection was informed by a simultaneous inspection of safeguarding in health organisations by CQC. The headline findings of the inspection are given below and the full Ofsted report can be read at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/central-bedfordshire>

Summary of Ofsted Comments following Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services in Central Bedfordshire, March 2012

Safeguarding services: Overall effectiveness Grade 2 (good)

The overall effectiveness of safeguarding services is good. Children and young people at immediate risk of significant harm are identified and responded to in a timely way and partner agencies collaborate well to safeguard children and young people. Safeguarding outcomes for children are good.

Partnership work is well embedded, with active engagement of most agencies including the private and voluntary sector. The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board effectively promotes collaborative work and oversees safeguarding services.

Robust performance management and quality assurance systems are embedded across the partnership. Managers and independent reviewing officers provide effective oversight of safeguarding work and are readily accessible to staff for supervision and advice. However, supervision records do not always evidence that supervision is regularly undertaken.

The contribution of health services to safeguarding is adequate. A number of areas require improvement which include: ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of community practitioners; that training improves practice; that transfer arrangements of children to adult mental health services are effective and that service developments are informed by the experience of service users.

Safeguarding is assessed as good or better in the majority of provision. A range of effective early intervention services has been developed. Referrals are promptly acted on and

assessments enable those children in need or in need of protection to be appropriately supported by partner agencies. However, chronologies do not sufficiently assist case planning, and diversity issues are often not sufficiently considered.

Workforce planning across the partnership has been sufficiently effective to secure and retain suitably experienced and qualified staff. Safe recruitment practices are well established.

Services for looked after children: Overall effectiveness Grade 3 (adequate)

The overall effectiveness of services for looked after children was judged to be adequate. Capacity for improvement, and ambition and prioritisation for looked after children were also judged to be adequate.

Inspectors judged that Health outcomes for looked after children are poor and that outcomes to enable looked after children to be healthy are inadequate. Ofsted concluded that health services face significant challenges in ensuring that the health needs of looked after children are addressed.

- 6.1.3 Response to the inspection findings, Central Bedfordshire Council, as the lead agency, are developing an action plan with partners in health and other agencies to address the findings and further improve services to children. Progress on this action plan will be reported to the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Strategic Board during 2012-13 and reported on in future Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board annual reports.

6.2 Audit and Performance Monitoring

- 6.2.1 Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board provides the forum through which partners audit or share the results of their audits of activity in cases where good partnership working is crucial. It also provides an opportunity for partners to consider their own and other's performance on safeguarding children. This work takes place in the Joint Steering Group and the Joint Performance Management and Audit Group. Where appropriate audit and performance issues are reported to the Strategic Board for further discussion and decision. In addition partners carry out their own individual monitoring and evaluation.
- 6.2.2 The Joint Performance and Audit Group (with Bedford Borough) undertook a number of multi agency case file audits. In addition multi agency case audits were completed as part of the recent Ofsted inspection. All the messages from the case audits have been disseminated to agencies and incorporated into Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board training.
- 6.2.3 The Joint Performance Management & Audit Group case file audit programme has been set out with themed case file audits such as Core Groups, Strategy meetings and the Section 47enquiries. These audits included the development of an audit tool; the selection of cases; dissemination to Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board partners and the analysis and evaluation of information collected.
- 6.2.4 Over the past year, 4 multi agency audit has been conducted including three audits specifically recommended from the Central Bedfordshire Child J Serious Case Review. The 6 reoccurring messages learned from these audits and others conducted over the last 2 years are;

- Information Sharing
- Record Keeping
- The Child's Voice
- Practitioner Responsibility & Challenge
- Assessments and Risk Assessments
- Parental co-operation/engagement

6.3 Impact

6.3.1 Messages for learning from the audits have been collated and disseminated to all agencies through Single Points of Contact. This is designed to enhance standard practice for information sharing; record keeping; ensuring the child's views are considered Practitioner responsibility and robustness of Practitioner challenge; quality of assessments and risk assessments; parental cooperation and engagement.

6.3.2 Examples of impact from multi-agency audits include:

- Domestic Violence and Information Sharing - The Safeguarding Children Boards Information Sharing Protocol was revised with strengthened guidance for information sharing in cases of domestic violence impacting children. The Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse partnership ensures agencies are aware of and adopt the guidance to ensure improved protection of children affected by/living with domestic abuse.
- Escalation Procedures – Multi-agency audit has tested the effectiveness of the procedures, particularly the use of the procedure to bring Practitioner challenge to a local authority decision to convene or not convene a child protection conference.
- Responding to children who display sexually harmful behaviour – Multi-agency guidance has been revised to make it explicit that where a child/young person is assessed as posing a risk to other children/young people, then within a child in need meeting there is a multi agency plan/ response to managing that risk within and outside of school.
- Effective and appropriate use of written agreements - A direct outcome of this audit led to the development and dissemination of written guidance and an exemplar template, for agencies in the use of written agreements to ensure they are only used in exceptional circumstances as a bridging tool but not to replace or substitute the statutory plans. The effect will be to reduce the routine use of working agreements which have no statutory basis, and strengthen the quality of statutory plans and their accessibility and relevance to service users.

6.3.3 The Joint Performance Management & Audit Group has received single agency audits from the following agencies;

- Bedfordshire Community Health Services (Aug 2011) – Growth monitoring following a Serious Case Review in Hertfordshire
- SEPT Supervision Audit
- SEPT – Did Not Attend appointments

6.4 Evaluation of Multi-agency training

6.4.1 The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Training Function has a responsibility to monitor arrangements and quality of provision for single agency and

inter agency safeguarding training and to advise on effectiveness. Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board offers a validation service to agencies for the quality assurance of their single agency training courses as well as training advice and consultancy free of charge.

- 6.4.2 The full time Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Training Officer co-delivers most inter- agency courses in conjunction with safeguarding leads/trainers from partner agencies. This assists in ensuring single agencies' training messages are consistent with local audit messages, research evidence and national safeguarding training messages. In addition these Pool Trainers are required to attend Pool Update meetings that are held 3 times per year where local, national and research messages are presented.
- 6.4.3 End of day course evaluation scores for all face to face inter agency training courses are excellent with 63% of all delegates reporting completely and 35% mostly achieving intended learning outcomes; 96% of delegates state that the courses attended were completely or mostly relevant to his/her job role and 71% stated that the trainer(s) had completely enabled the development of new knowledge and skills and a further 26% felt mostly enabled in this area. Delegate feedback is actively considered when courses are reviewed or new courses developed or commissioned.
- 6.4.4 All delegates self assess their level of safeguarding knowledge on entry to any inter agency training course and self assess progress at the end of the day. This data is analysed by Agency and also by job role. Should any cause for concern be identified then this is communicated to the Agency. For example 18% of schools designated personnel in CBC self rated at 3/10 or below and 51% at 5/10 or below on entry to the 2 day interagency working courses held between April and October 2011. The possible causes for this were discussed at Joint Children's Workforce Training Managers meetings with both CBC and BBC and a Free to Schools Briefing Event on the Somerset First School Serious Case Reviews of 2011 is planned for October 2012.
- 6.4.5 Evaluation data for schools staff demonstrates that the learning is taken back to the workplace and actions instituted that have a positive effect on outcomes, for example an upper school teacher generated a student leaflet outlining the reasons why a School Counsellor may need to share information to stop child abuse, while many teachers reported having reviewed and updated school safeguarding procedures and policies in the 4-6 weeks following the course.
- 6.4.6 Impact on Practice evaluation of face to face courses has been extended and formalised since September 2011. Current available data is for courses delivered from September 2011 until the end of February 2012 and has revealed evidence of workers taking new or refreshed knowledge back to base and sharing it with colleagues and managers. Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Training has also impacted positively on safeguarding arrangements in Agencies, for instance several delegates including a GP report placing safeguarding as a standing item on weekly meeting agenda following the course attended; some report placing attendance at CP meetings as a priority as a direct result of Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board training.

6.5 Auditing of Partners' Compliance with Safeguarding Standards (s11 of the Children's Act 2004)

- 6.5.1 Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004, requires partners to work together to improve the safeguarding of children. Most Boards oversee a process in which partners self-assess their compliance with 8 safeguarding standards every two or three years. In

keeping with the Boards desire to reduce the bureaucracy of this self assessment process, it was agreed that partners would submit a summary of their compliance with six of the standards within their 2011–2012 annual returns for this report. The remaining two standards will be the subject of in-depth self-assessment in 2012-13. These remaining standards are:

- Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children’s welfare;
- Effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

6.5.2 The initial summary of compliance on the six s11 standards from individual partners will be discussed within the Board during its meetings in summer 2012-13 and if necessary, further assurance will be required from individual partners to satisfy the Board that they are either compliant with the standards or taking appropriate action to achieve compliance.

7.0 Safeguarding Priorities for 2012 – 13

7.0.1 Taking into account the changing national requirements on safeguarding children, the discussed in the previous pages of this report and the local needs of children and agencies providing safeguarding services, Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board has developed its business plan for 2012-13 with the following priorities:

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan 2012-13
<p>Priority 1 - Early Signs and intervention in respect of physical, emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the awareness of early signs abuse and neglect amongst practitioners. • Assess the impact of early intervention approaches by designing and implementing an appropriate project, to include collection of data on CAF. • Evaluate the potential for implementing the Family Nurse Partnership programme for new mothers and if appropriate implement it in Central Bedfordshire as this is a model of good practice. <p>Priority 2 - Domestic Abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the implementation and impact of the Domestic Abuse objectives in the Children & Young Peoples Plan (2011-14). Which are being pursued by Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership • Monitor and where appropriate contribute to the development of the Children Workforce Development Council funded domestic abuse project across the 3 LSCBs and review the achievements and outcomes of the work. • Develop the multi agency training in respect of Domestic Abuse – The Impact on children and young people <p>Priority 3 - Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse through Exploitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the neighbouring Bedford and Luton Boards, implement the LSCB elements of the Government’s action plan on Sexual Exploitation. • Review and if appropriate develop the Sexual Exploitation procedures • Support the implementation of a local approach to Multi-Systemic Therapy for

Sexualised Behaviours in young people

- Review and if appropriate deliver new multi-agency training in child sexual abuse and awareness of child sexual abuse through exploitation

Priority 4 - Develop the Board

- Develop the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Performance Monitoring and Reporting Process
- Recruit lay members to the Strategic Board
- Develop work with new NHS arrangements and improved engagement with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and the new CCGs Structures
- Improve Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board engagement with and support for schools
- Monitor participation in and impact of Multi agency and Single agency Training
- Improve the dissemination of lessons from the Child Death Overview Panel
- Manage and disseminate the learning from partners S11 self evaluation audits
- Develop Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board relationship with Health and Wellbeing Board and Police and Crime Commissioner, (including the publication of an appropriate annual report)

Priority 5 - Implementing the recommendations from the Munro Review, Ofsted, CQC/IST & HMIP Inspections

- Implement the Munro recommendations for LSCBs.
- Monitor the implementation of Munro's recommendations by individual partners
- Implement any actions identified for Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board following the Ofsted inspection in March 2012
- Monitor the implementation of partners' action plans relating to safeguarding from the Ofsted/CQC Inspection in March
- Monitor the implementation of partner's safeguarding action plans resulting from other Inspections in 2012 – 2013 in relation to safeguarding children and young people
- Monitor the implementation of partner's safeguarding action plans resulting from the Criminal Justice Joint Inspection of Youth Offending (anticipated in May 2012)

Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny
Date: 4 September 2012
Subject: Quarter 1 Performance Report
Report of: Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services
Summary: The report highlights the Quarter One performance for the Children's Services Directorate.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Karen Oellermann, Head of Partnerships, Performance and Workforce Development
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. The Quarterly Performance Report ensures that progress on the delivery of the Council's priorities is monitored.

Financial:

2. There are a number of performance indicators within the full corporate suite that have a financial link.
3. It will be important to consider any financial implications in addressing ongoing areas of under performance.

Legal:

4. Not applicable

Risk Management:

5. Areas of ongoing underperformance are a risk to both service delivery and the reputation of the Council.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

6. Not applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

7. This report highlights performance against a range of indicators which seek to measure how services impact across all communities in Central Bedfordshire, so that specific areas of underperformance can be highlighted for further analysis.

8. As such it does not include detailed performance information relating to the Council's stated intention to tackle inequalities and deliver services so that people whose circumstances make them vulnerable are not disadvantaged. The interrogation of performance data across vulnerable groups is a legal requirement and is an integral part of the Council's equalities and performance culture which seeks to ensure that, through a programme of ongoing impact assessments, underlying patterns and trends for different sections of the community identify areas where further action is required to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups.

Community Safety:

9. There are Children's Services indicators that relate to ensuring children and young people are kept safe.

Sustainability:

10. Not applicable.

Procurement:

11. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee notes and reviews Quarter One performance.

Background

12. The Council's framework for performance management supports the delivery of the Council's priorities.
13. The following provides an overview of the performance position for Quarter 1. This is supported by the detailed performance information provided in Appendix A.

Quarter 1 Performance Summary

14. The new system for monitoring the council's performance in relation to protecting vulnerable children and young people was installed at the end of the 2011/12 financial year. Issues experienced in migrating historical data means that two of the four measures for this area are not able to report.
15. Performance in relation to indicators available has been good in Quarter 1 and key indicators are on target at quarter end.
16. Overall the proportion of schools being classified as good or outstanding has remained stable over the last three years. In quarter one published inspection outcomes show that 75% are either good or outstanding

17. During this first quarter Ashton Middle School, a previously inadequate school, has been judged to be a satisfactory and improving school.
18. Queensbury Upper School which was inspected on 13 and 14 October 2011 was judged to require special measures. Progress in becoming a sponsored academy is on track and recent Ofsted monitoring shows that satisfactory progress is being made.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Performance Indicators

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)
Executive (Quarter 1 Performance Report)

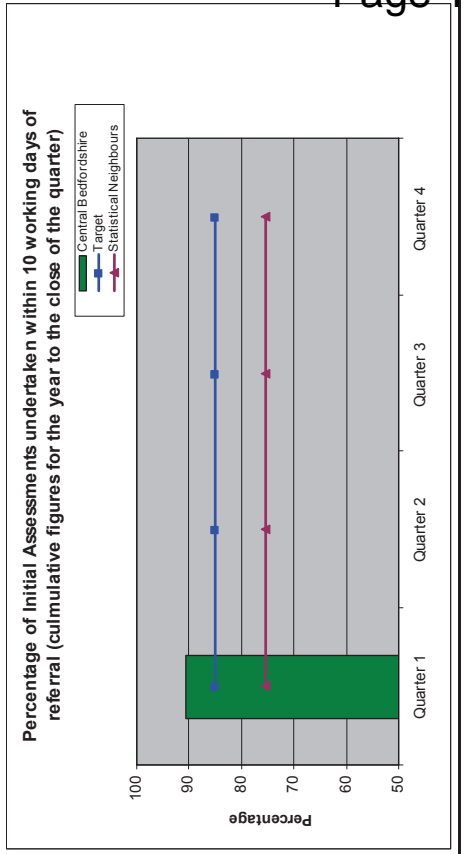
Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands

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Performance Report		Appendix A	
Quarter 1 2012/13			
Ref	Indicator	Quarterly Performance	
Children's Services			
CS 1	Percentage of initial assessments within ten working days of referral (NI 59)	↑	G
CS 2	Percentage of children looked after at 31 March with three or more placements during the year (NI 62)	Not Available	Not Available
CS 3	Percentage of child protection cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed (NI 67)	Not Available	Not Available
CS 4	The percentage of children in need that led to initial assessments (NI 68)	↑	G
CS 5	Achievement at level 4 and above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2 (NI 73) (Annual report Qu2)	Reported in Qu2	Reported in Qu2
CS 6	Achievement of 5 or more A* - C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths (NI 75) (Annual report Qu3)	Reported in Qu3	Reported in Qu3
CS 7	Published Ofsted school and college classifications	↔	G

Report comparison - Depends on the nature of the indicator		Performance Judgement	
Seasonal	Quarter on quarter	Quarterly Performance	
Compared to the same time in the previous year	Compared to the previous quarter	Compared to one fixed point in the previous year	
↘	↔	↑	
Performance is reducing	Performance remains unchanged	Performance is improving	
R	A	G	
RED - target missed / off target - Performance at least 10% below the required level of improvement	AMBER - target missed / off target - Performance less than 10% below the required level of improvement	GREEN - Target achieved or performance on track to achieve target	

Percentage of initial assessments undertaken within ten working days of referral (NI 59 Revised) (Cumulative)																	
CS 1	Good is	High	2010/11				2011/12				2012/13						
			Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4	Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4	Outturn		
			N/A	85.0	82.7	81.3	84.1	86.6	86.6	85.0	90.7						



Comment: The target of 85% was achieved in quarter 1.

Percentage of children looked after at 31 March with three or more placements during the year (NI 62)																					
CS 2	Unit	Good is	2010/11				2011/12				2012/13				Latest comparator group average	11.8 NFER (2010/11)	Report comparison	Seasonal	Performance Judgement	Not Available	Not Available
			Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4	Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4							
	%	Low	6.3	10.0	2.2	6.2	11.2	13.0	13.0												
Comment: Data is not yet available.																					

Percentage of child protection cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed (NI 67)																					
CS 3	Unit	Good is	2010/11				2011/12				2012/13				Latest comparator group average	97.1 NFER (2010/11)	Report comparison	Quarter on quarter	Performance Judgement	Not Available	Not Available
			Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4	Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4							
	%	High	100	100	100	100	100	100	100												
Comment: Data is not yet available.																					

Percentage of referrals of children in need that led to initial assessments (NI 68) (Cumulative)																					
CS 4	Unit	Good is	2010/11				2011/12				2012/13				Latest comparator group average	74.7 NFER (2010/11)	Report comparison	Quarter on quarter	Performance Judgement	Not Available	Not Available
			Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4	Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4							
	%	High	56.0	60	60.2	67.2	71.5	78.5	78.5	75	82.1										
Comment: The target of 75% was achieved in quarter 1.																					



Published Ofsted school and college classifications* (Published inspection outcomes during the quarter as shown by the figure in brackets)										
CS 7	Ofsted category	Unit	2009 /10		2010 /11		2011 /12		2012/13	
			Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4
	Total	Number of schools	140 (33)	139 (37)	140 (33)	139 (11)				
	Outstanding	Number of schools	29 (5)	34 (7)	37 (3)	38 (1)				
	Good	Number of schools	77 (19)	71 (19)	67 (16)	66 (6)				
	Satisfactory	Number of schools	33 (8)	32 (9)	34 (13)	34 (4)				
	Inadequate	Number of schools	1 (1)	2 (2)	2 (1)	1 (0)				
Comment:										
Queensbury Upper School was inspected on 13-14 October and was judged to require special measures. Progress in becoming a sponsored academy is on track with the Expression Of Interest having been signed by Lord Hill. Local Authority monitoring shows that satisfactory progress is being made in addressing a significant number of areas and recent Ofsted monitoring shows that satisfactory progress is being made.										
Ashton Middle School is now judged to be a satisfactory and improving school.										

Latest comparator group average	N/A	Report comparison	Quarter on quarter	Performance Judgement
				G

Published Ofsted Inspections

Category	Count
Outstanding	38
Good	66
Satisfactory	34
Inadequate	1

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V1

Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 4th September 2012
Subject: Budget Management Report Quarter ended 30th June 2012
Report of: Cllr Mark A G Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services
Summary: The report sets out the projected full year forecast as at 30th June 2012

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Dawn Hill, Senior Finance Manager
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. 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:

2. The financial implications are set out in the report.

Legal:

3. There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

Risk Management:

4. Sound financial management and budget monitoring mitigates adverse financial risk.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. Not applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. Public Authorities must ensure that decisions are made in a way which minimises unfairness and without a disproportionately negative effect on people from different ethnic groups, disabled people, women and men. It is important that Councillors are aware of this duty before they take a decision.
7. Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken prior to the allocation of the 2011/2012 budgets and each Directorate was advised of significant equality implications relating to their budget proposals.

Community Safety:

8. Not applicable.

Sustainability:

9. Not applicable.

Procurement:

10. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Committee is asked to:-

11. Note and consider this report.

Introduction and Key Highlights (Appendices A2)

12. The full year projected outturn position for 2012/13 is £0.822M overspend. This assumes full spend against allocated grants.
13. The budget to date is £5.08M compared to actual spend to date of £5.329M, above budget after allowing for Use of Reserves by £0.247M. There are some detailed profiled budgets within SAP and work continued with budget managers during July to further update profiles. The main spend to date variances relate to Child Protection and Children in Care £0.133M and Fostering and Adoption £0.150M
14. The two areas contributing to the current forecast overspend are Child Protection and Children in Care (£452k), and the Fostering and Adoption Service (£379k). This pressure is due to additional expensive specialist children placements, increases in Looked After Children and the cost of agency workers covering qualified posts. The development and recruitment of qualified social workers to fill vacancies is an ongoing activity. A recruitment campaign has been launched and early responses are positive. First interviews will take place in August.
15. Between April 2011 and March 2012 the number of Looked After Children increased by 32. In the first quarter of 2012/13 the number has increased by a further 27 bringing the number of Looked After Children from 176 as at March 2011 to 235 as at June 2012. This number is expected to rise since the rise in the number of children with a child protection in all probability will result in a small proportion of those children becoming Looked After. In order to minimise the impact of these, all high cost placements are agreed by the Interim Assistant Director.

16. Not currently forecast are a number of possible risks that could see the budget variance rise over the forthcoming months:
- needs led budgets within Child Protection and Fostering and Adoption following a significant increase in referrals and placements and the additional impact of recent OFSTED inspection recommendations on safeguarding which increase the need for qualified social workers and support staff.
 - Service Level Agreement with Bedford Borough for Fostering and Adoption ceasing in February 2013 resulting in a reduction to income and an increase in costs.

Summary Table A: Directorate Overall position

	Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Variance after Use of Reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Director CS	347	347	0	0
AD - CSO	20,680	21,811	1,131	831
AD – L & SC	5,384	5,375	(9)	(9)
Transport	7,437	7,437	0	0
Partnerships	606	606	0	0
Sub Total	34,454	35,577	1,122	822
DSG Contribution to Central Support	(1,817)	(1,817)	0	0
Total Children Services	32,637	33,760	1,122	822
Schools Individual Budgets	103,171	103,171	0	0
Supported by DSG/EFA	(102,621)	(102,621)	0	0
Total Schools	550	550	0	0
Total Children's Services	33,187	34,309	1,122	822

Table B – Subjective Analysis excluding Schools (Based on Forecast Outturn)

Expenditure type (Excluding Schools)	Forecast Outturn excluding Partnerships (Before Reserves) £000
Staffing Costs	21,903
Premises and Transport	8,257
Supplies and Services	24,940
Third Party Payments	9,712
Total Expenditure	64,813
Income	7,272

Grants (See Table C)	24,082
Total Income	31,355
Net Expenditure	33,459

Table C – Grant Analysis

The majority of Grants listed in the table below are ring fenced and have corresponding direct expenditure.

Grant	£000's	Ring fenced / Non ring fenced
Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	12,673	Ring fenced
Early Intervention Grant	9,770	Non Ring fenced
YPLA Grant	430	Ring fenced
Social Work Training	428	Ring fenced
Asylum Seekers Grant	403	Ring fenced
Music Grant	354	Ring fenced
Misc	24	Income
Total Grants*	24,082	

17. The distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is in accordance with The School Finance (England) Regulations 2011 which prescribes in Schedule two the purposes that the LA may hold funding to contribute to central services. The DSG reported in Table C (£12.673M) can be further analysed as below:

	£000's
Special Education Provision	5,204
Academies Statements / Early Years	2,223
DSG Contribution to Central Overheads*	1,817
Pupil Referral Unit	1,336
School Contingency / School Forum	1,270
Access to Education	379
14 – 19 Practical Learning	168
Teachers Unions and Professional Associations	97
Other Expenditure (AST, Attainment, Academy support)	179
Total	12,673

18. The Central Overheads* that are apportioned to Children's Services at year end are supported by £1.817M of Dedicated Schools Grant.

Director of Children's Services

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

Children's Services Operations

20. AD Children's Services Operations
AD Children's Services is expected to be on budget.
21. Child Protection & Children In Care
Full year forecast is £452k over budget. The over spend initially stood at £752k over budget before applying use of reserves of £300k. The reserve had been set aside from the 2011/12 financial year as the rise in Looked after Children was expected. The increase in numbers in Specialist Residential Placements and Secure Provision are the principle reasons for the overspend. This is further impacted by the use of Agency workers whilst the recruitment campaign is carried out for qualified Social Workers. The pressures are expected to increase with the significant number of child protection plans currently in place and the implementation of recent OFSTED recommendations.
22. Children with Disabilities Service
Full year forecast is currently on budget although there is a risk that the efficiency of £200k may be difficult to achieve. The variance of spend to date of £150k is due to unfilled posts and increased income. This has not yet been forecast as a saving until the budgets have been realigned and the efficiencies have been met.
23. Quality Assurance CRS Service
Full year forecast is currently on budget
24. Fostering & Adoption Service
Full year forecast for this service is £379k over spend. The pressure for the Medium Term Plan will be significantly higher as one off discretionary savings within the Children Services Directorate has reduced this in year (£300k). The overspend is in line with the increase in Looked After Children increasing spend in both In house and Independent Fostering (£235k), Special Guardianship Orders (£240k), Adoption Allowances (£92k) and Residential Orders (£60k). A further pressure for this service is the disaggregation of the SLA with Bedford Borough which will see a reduction to income and increased costs. The impact of the disaggregation is currently being evaluated.
25. Local Safeguarding Children's Board
The full year forecast is currently on budget.
26. Early Intervention and Prevention
Full year forecast is currently on budget.

Learning, Commissioning and Partnerships

27. AD Learning, Commissioning and Partnerships
Full year forecast is currently on budget.

28. Children's Services Commissioning/Youth Service
Full year forecast is currently on budget.
29. School Support Service (including School Improvement and Music Service)
Full year forecast is currently on budget. SEN Recoupment 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, profiled budgets are currently being reviewed to take account of this.
30. 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.
31. Partnerships and Workforce Development
Full year forecast is currently on budget.
32. School Organisation & Capital Planning
The full year forecast is currently on budget.

Transport

33. The full year forecast is currently on budget. This is an area of high risk with efficiencies of £799K for 2012/13.

Partnerships

34. Full year forecast is currently on budget.

Schools

35. The Revenue carry forward for maintained schools to 2012/13 is £9.5M, a rise of £2.6M from the previous financial year. The rise in balances held is believed to be in part due to the increased funds directed through the ISB of £1.2M from School Contingency mid way through the 2011/12 and the pending outcome of the National Consultation with the uncertainties for School funding in future years.
36. The Capital reserves fell by £1.6M to £2.1M.
37. School budgets are currently being received and reviewed which will provide information on any schools causing concern.
38. Academy conversions continue with recoupment of DSG currently forecast at £465K relating to 30 converted schools as at June 2012. It is anticipated a further 22 schools will convert by the end of the financial year.

39. The final details of the school funding reform has been announced by the Department of Education, details of which are currently being reviewed with the School Forum for implementation in 2013/14.

Virements

40. There have been three cross directorate budget virements that have taken place during April to June 2012.
- £1,001K to Property & Assets for the transfer of PFI budget provision
 - £50K to SI Children's Workforce Development for a L&D Manager role from HR
 - £25k to Change Management for an Administrative role from ICT.

Efficiencies (Appendix B)

41. The efficiency target for 2012/13 is £2.861M. Although the efficiency target is forecast as achieved, there is uncertainty on the delivery of the cross cutting saving for phase1 of the passenger transport review of £340k and £200k relating to the processes efficiency gained in the new social care IT system.

Reserves Position (Appendix C)

42. There is a total proposed use of reserves of £300k set aside for the increased number of children in care.

Debt Management (Appendix E1 and E2)

43. Total debt for Children's Services is £1.43M, £491k over 61 days.

The debt over £10K (Appendix E1) totals £892k, £202k of which relates to Bedford Borough.

An additional report is now provided as Appendix E2 detailing the top ten invoices for the directorate.

Appendices:

Appendix A2 Directorate Position analysed by AD

Appendix B Efficiencies

Appendix C Earmarked Reserves

Appendix E1 Debt over £10K

Appendix E2 Top Ten Invoices

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Month - June 2012	Cumulative to Date				Year				Forecast % of Budget	RAG	Risk	Activity level Medium/High risk budgets (COMMENTARY)
	Budget to Date	Actual	Manual Adjustment to Actual	Use of Reserves	Variance	Approved Budget	Forecast Outcome	Forecast Variance				
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Children's Services												
Director of Children's Services												
AD Children's Services Operations	245	250	0	0	5	981	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Child Protection and Children in Care	2,493	2,806	120	(300)	133	9,894	10,646	752	0	(300)	452	5%
Children with Disabilities Service	796	648	150	0	(0)	3,200	3,200	0	0	0	0	0%
Quality Assurance CRS	251	237	0	0	(15)	979	1,054	76	(76)	0	(0)	0%
Fostering & Adoption Service	1,355	1,430	75	0	150	5,416	5,797	379	0	0	379	7%
Local Safeguarding Children's Board	(108)	(108)	0	0	(0)	61	61	0	0	0	0	0%
Early Intervention and Prevention	(40)	(40)	0	0	(0)	148	148	(0)	0	0	(0)	0%
Total Children's Services Operations	4,995	5,223	345	(300)	273	20,680	21,887	1,207	(76)	(300)	831	4%
AD Learning, Commissioning & Partnerships	170	163	0	0	(6)	679	679	(0)	0	0	(0)	0%
Children's Services Commissioning	112	71	40	0	(1)	450	450	0	0	0	0	0%
Youth Service	75	33	40	0	(2)	920	920	0	0	0	0	0%
School Support (incl Music)	485	201	284	0	(0)	1,982	1,977	(5)	0	0	(5)	0%
Other School Budgets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Partnerships and Workforce Development	210	191	20	0	1	840	840	0	0	0	0	0%
School Organisation & Capital Planning	128	98	30	0	(1)	514	509	(5)	0	0	(5)	-1%
Total Learning, Commissioning & Partnerships	1,191	758	424	0	(10)	6,384	5,375	(9)	0	0	(9)	0%
JSCS - Transport SEN	900	534	360	0	(6)	3,461	3,461	0	0	0	0	0%
JSCS - Transport CWD	21	20	0	0	(2)	82	82	0	0	0	0	0%
JSCS - Transport Looked After Children	65	61	0	0	(4)	249	249	0	0	0	0	0%
JSCS - Mainstream Transport	946	858	90	0	2	3,645	3,645	0	0	0	0	0%
Joint School Commissioning Service (Transport)	1,932	1,472	450	0	(10)	7,437	7,437	0	0	0	0	0%
Partnerships	151	145	0	0	(7)	606	606	0	0	0	0	0%
DSG Contribution to Central Support	(454)	(454)	0	0	0	(1,817)	(1,817)	0	0	0	0	0%
Director Children's Services (excl Schools)	7,902	7,230	1,219	(300)	247	32,837	33,835	1,198	(76)	(300)	822	0
Individual Schools Budget (ISB)	25,793	25,793	0	0	0	103,171	103,171	0	0	0	0	0%
Supported by DSG / EFA	(28,612)	(28,612)	0	0	0	(102,621)	(102,621)	0	0	0	0	0%
Total Schools	(2,819)	(2,819)	0	0	0	550	550	0	0	0	0	0%
Total Director of Children's Services	5,083	4,410	1,218	(300)	247	33,187	34,385	1,198	(76)	(300)	822	0
Net Forecast Outcome						34,085	300					

Targeted Efficiency Savings Monitoring - Summary

Appendix B

Updated on : 30th June 2012

June 2012

Month:

Service Area	2012/13 Budget £m	Comments (please include here explanations around the current status of the efficiency, i.e why it is or is not on target and the full year implications)	Month			Year to date			Full Year		
			Budget	Actual	Variance	Budget	Actual	Variance	Budget	Forecast	Variance
			£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
EFFICIENCIES											
CS1 Strategic commissioning of social care placements and interventions.	0.500		0.042	0.021	(0.021)	0.125	0.313	0.188	0.500	0.500	0.000
CS2 Learning, Commissioning and Partnerships Workforce Strategy.	0.100		0.008	0.000	(0.008)	0.025	0.100	0.075	0.100	0.100	0.000
CS3 Special Educational Needs.	0.272		0.020	0.020	0.000	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.272	0.272	0.000
CS4 Post 16 Transport Policy	0.459		0.013	0.000	(0.013)	0.038	0.026	(0.012)	0.459	0.459	(0.000)
CS6 Childrens ICS Case Management System.	0.200		0.005	0.005	0.000	0.015	0.015	0.000	0.200	0.200	0.000
CS7 Parental Support.	0.100		0.005	0.005	0.000	0.015	0.015	0.000	0.100	0.100	0.000
CS8 Reduction in Administrative Services	0.150		0.010	0.010	0.000	0.030	0.030	0.000	0.150	0.150	(0.000)
CS10 Reduction to School Improvement	0.240		0.027	0.027	0.000	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.240	0.240	0.000
CS12 Removal of one of four Early Years consultant posts.	0.060		0.210	0.158	(0.051)	0.629	0.851	0.222	0.060	0.060	0.000
CS13 Removal of three consultant posts.	0.120		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.120	0.000
CS14 Early intervention and prevention work by Educational Psychologists.	0.320		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.320	0.320	0.000
SUB TOTAL	2.521		0.339	0.246	(0.093)	1.016	1.490	0.474	2.521	2.521	0.001
CROSS CUTTING EFFICIENCIES											
CS5 Passenger Transport Review Phase 1	0.340		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.340	0.340	0.000
SUB TOTAL	0.340		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.340	0.340	0.000
TOTAL	2.861		0.339	0.246	(0.093)	1.016	1.490	0.474	2.861	2.861	0.001

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 2012/13 is £2.861M (including Cross Cutting efficiencies - Transport £0.340M).

Since the commencement of 2012/2013 financial year progress has been made in all CS efficiencies.

Transport (Cross Cutting) £0.340M – CS5 Passenger Transport Review Phase 1. This is the cross-cutting transport efficiency and we are not confident to achieve the figures is due to the methodology and assumptions made in the identification of savings, which are being worked through to ascertain deliverability in 2012/13. The efficiencies relating to PTR1 are not secured as Children's Services are reliant on re-tendering transport contracts and implementing new walking assessments (road safety assessments). The re-tendering is taking place at the moment, led by the Procurement Team and Sustainable Communities, and as soon as we know the outcome these will be reported via the tracker and through this report. This is likely to be mid/late September. The amount of efficiencies from PTR1 will be determined through the PTR2 Project Board. The ability to achieve these efficiencies will also be affected by overachieving efficiencies in 2011/12 and as not all accruals were completed at the end of 2011/12 by Sustainable Communities. This is being investigated further.

Earmarked Reserves -		Appendix C				
Children's Services Reserves	Opening Balance 2011/12	Spend against reserves	Release of reserves	Proposed Transfer to Reserves	Proposed Closing Balance	Description
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Performance Reward Grant	174				174	
LSP Sustainable Neighbourhoods	47				47	
DSG - SEN ISB adjustment	257				257	Unspent DSG for SEN - School Forum agreement to Earmark and add to ISB through HILLN factor for 12/13
DSG - School Support	494				494	Expected DSG underspend to be carried forward and applied to Schools Budgets 2012/13
DSG-School Org Team - Academy Transfers	7				7	DSG for Academy Recoupment process
DSG/ Advanced Skills Teachers	162				162	DSG ringfenced - agreed with School Forum to carry forward reduced budget for AST 12/13
DSG/School Contingency	900				900	
DSG/EIG	45				45	DSG/ EIG Transfer to the Teaching School on behalf of all schools when the commission has been agreed following consultation
EIG - Agreement of Childrens Trust	270				270	Decision of Children Trust to allocate remaining EIG to be spent on Parenting Support - Partnership Funds
EIG - Early Years Specific	87				87	Contract Paid in advance funds set aside to reflect in 12/13 where service will be delivered
EIG - Early Year/ Specific	67				67	Contract in place to be paid June
EIG - FAST/FIP	81				81	Late payment and unspent EIG to be used in 12/13
SEN Evaluation & positioning for additional duties when SEN Green paper becomes an Act	150				150	Green Paper late summer requires new duties that were flagged as risk last year that were not included as pressures
"Working Together" - New National Guidance	200				200	New National Social Care guidance requiring enhanced working between all partners particular Health and Social Care
OFSTED Action Plan	250				250	To be developed following publication of the OFSTED Action Plan, work needed in Health and to address adequate judgement on equalities
OFSTED recommendations for Admin and continued Social Worker Support	300	300			0	The OFSTED inspector commented on the increase number of children in care and the fact this needs attention to resourcing, we remain in the lower quartile against statistical neighbours
Developing Corporate Parenting Panel	50				50	Developing Corporate Parenting Panel, this is likely to need further development when the OFSTED report is published

Earmarked Reserves -						Appendix C
Children's Services Reserves	Opening Balance 2011/12	Spend against reserves	Release of reserves	Proposed tfr to Reserves	Proposed Closing Balance	Description
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Health and School Links key deprivation areas across the Council	100				100	An evaluation on Health, focus in schools is poor and needs development work
Children Health additional Staff	100				100	This supports the above item
Social Workers Recruitment Campaign	50				50	Funds set aside for Social Workers recruitment campaign delayed and not due to take place until April 2012
	3,791	300	0	0	3,491	
School Reserves -						
Revenue 3030030	9,548				9,548	
Capital 3030033	2,108				2,108	
PVI Revenue Reserves 3030030	416				416	
	12,072	0	0	0	12,072	
GRAND TOTAL	15,863	300	0	0	15,563	

DATE	Customer Number	NAME OF ACCOUNT	Invoice Number	Profit Centre	Amount
24/03/11	150791	Other Local Authority	7010071145	423760/640301	£ 11,989.40
20/07/11	114465	School	7010083571	120094	£ 18,511.00
27/02/12	109572	Other Local Authority	7010102446	456100	£ 130,039.86
07/03/12	110539	School	7010103417	120094	£ 21,923.00
10/05/12	109572	Other Local Authority	7010109986	456000	£ 13,044.78
16/05/12	109640	NHS	7010110367	414120	£ 69,437.10
21/06/12	115689	Other Local Authority	7010113221	423100	£ 488,030.95
26/06/12	109572	Other Local Authority	7010113886	415220	£ 10,596.06
26/06/12	109572	Other Local Authority	7010113885	415340	£ 37,776.94
26/06/12	109572	Other Local Authority	7010113888	423530	£ 10,517.54
27/06/12	148496	Other	7010113946	423710	£ 65,580.48
28/06/12	109640	NHS	7010113951	413340	£ 14,826.72
					£ 892,273.83
				Other LA's	£ 701,995.53
				NHS	£ 84,263.82
				Schools	£ 40,434.00
				Other	£ 65,580.48
					£ 892,273.83

Childrens Services

Customer	Customer Name	Invoice reference	Baseline Payment Dte	Total Debt
115689	Other Local Authority	7010113221	21/06/12	488,030.95
153783	Pre-School	7010104286	22/03/12	130,734.03
109572	Other Local Authority	7010102446	27/02/12	130,039.86
148496	Other	7010113946	27/06/12	90,498.91
109572	Other Local Authority	7010094375	15/12/11	48,067.50
109572	Other Local Authority	7010112687	12/06/12	40,376.25
109572	Other Local Authority	7010113885	26/06/12	37,776.94
110539	School	7010103417	07/03/12	21,923.00
147126	School	7020000115	28/03/12	18,819.60
114465	School	7010083571	20/07/11	18,511.00

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V1

Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 4th September 2012
Subject: Capital Budget Management Report Quarter ended 30th June 2012
Report of: Cllr Mark A G Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services
Summary: The report sets out the projected full year forecast as at 30th June 2012

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Dawn Hill, Senior Finance Manager
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The financial implications are set out in the report. |
|--|

Legal:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. There are no direct legal implications arising from the report. |
|--|

Risk Management:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Sound financial management and budget monitoring mitigates adverse financial risks. |
|--|

Staffing (including Trades Unions):
--

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Not applicable |
|---|

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. Public Authorities must ensure that decisions are made in a way which minimised unfairness and without a disproportionately negative effect on people from different ethnic groups disabled people, women and men. It is important that Councillors are aware of this duty before they take a dedision.
7. 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:

8. Not applicable.

Sustainability:

9. Not applicable.

Procurement:

10. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Committee is asked to:-

11. **Note and consider this report.**

Introduction and Key Highlights (Appendices A1)

12. Children's Services revised annual capital expenditure budget is currently £34.09M, this includes £7.1M of slippage from 2011/12 to be approved. The income budget is £32.65M which leaves a net expenditure capital budget of £1.44M.
13. The full year reported outturn position for 2012/13 is on budget, however it should be noted there may be significant slippage with New School places works continuing into 2013/14.
14. All but three projects (Schools Access, Temporary Accommodation and Asbestos, Health and Safety) are funded wholly by grant receipts. Health and Safety works will be transferred to Assets making the net Council contribution for Children Services £1M. There is no expenditure deadline to the spending of the grant receipts.

Summary Table: Directorate Overall position (Appendices A1)

	Gross Budget	Profiled Gross Budget YTD	Net Spend to Date	Variance to date	Full Year Forecast Variance (
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Children Services	32,909	3,942	4,182	240	0
Partnerships	1,183	47	0	(47)	0
Total	34,092	3,989	4,182	193	0

15. Learning, Commissioning and Partnerships

16. New School Places /Basic Need

This grant funding is to enable management of pressures related to population growth and capacity within our schools. There is no expenditure deadline on this grant. DfE capital announcements for 12/13 included £5.8M of basic need funding for Central Bedfordshire. This is a significant reduction on the 11/12 allocation as a result of changes in DfE methodology. The outline programme to commission new school places over the next five years will drive the expenditure of basic need grant and will also align S106 contributions that are being collected for major projects.

17. Schools Capital Maintenance (formerly New Deal for Schools)

The project is externally funded by DfE grant but does require schools to contribute to the cost of works, as set out in a formula contained within the Scheme for Financing Schools. These contributions are invoiced once planned works are complete.

The slippage into 2012/13 still remains under review as the expectation was that the project would be largely complete and fully committed within 2011/12, although there is no expenditure deadline on the grant itself. The 12/13 programme is drafted and was subject of consultation with School Forum on the 5th March 2012. The programme is now being commissioned but with a much reduced funding envelope as a result of Academy capital held centrally by the EFA.

18. All Saints Academy

Slippage into 2012/13 is partly attributable to the economic failure of the roofing contractor.

The construction phase which provides the Academy's new buildings should complete in mid-August, 2012. It is anticipated that this date will be met although poor weather is currently hampering progress on site. The Academy are due to occupy the new buildings in September 2012. The final phase of the project will lead to the completion of the external works and the demolition of the former school premises.

During the summer 2011 period, early construction work brought to light asbestos in the current building, not included in the earlier surveys undertaken, predominantly in a hall-floor and sealed external heating ducts. Under the terms of the Partnerships for Schools' model contract, the responsibility for removal lies with the Council, not the design and build contractor. The risk, which is being dealt with within the existing contract sum through value engineering, agreed with the Academy and Sponsors and a further, small contingency has been created in case further asbestos is discovered during the final demolition works on the site. The pre-demolition survey of the old school buildings is scheduled for late July.

The project risk register has been updated in the light of newer information and the situation is being monitored during the lifetime of the construction contract.

The project is externally funded by DfE, other than a commitment given by the Council's Executive to contribute £300k of its own capital over the lifetime of the project to the cost of site surveys, project management and CDM costs. The project is not reliant on other third party income.

The new school is expected to be open from September 2012.

19. School Devolved Formula Capital

The allocation to Schools 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

20. Temporary Accommodation

This funding covers planning renewal fees for existing temporary units and provides funding for additional school accommodation fulfilling a temporary demand. The total budget, is forecast to be fully spent.

21. University Technical College

This scheme was added to the Capital Programme in March, 2012 and involves converting existing premises at the Kingsland Campus, Houghton Regis, vacated by Central Bedfordshire College, together with the addition of a small new adjoining block .

The project has three Phases. Phase 1 (conversion works) has to be completed by September 2012 to enable the UTC to admit its first cohort of students. It is currently running behind programme but arrangements for accelerated working have recently been agreed with the contractors in order secure completion.

Achieving Phase 1 is demanding but Phase 2 and 3 are less time critical. Phase 3 start arrangements are dependent on achieving planning permission, which is currently under consideration.

The project is funded by external capital grant from the Education Funding Agency together with some £400k of 'section 106' funding for additional local secondary school provision. An element of this budget has been centrally retained by the Council and is being used to cover project support costs and the capital costs of relocating some existing users of the Kingsland Campus within the site.

22. School Access Initiative

This 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.

23. .Kingsland PRU

This project is funded from S106 contributions and direct revenue transfer from SEN budgets to address urgent health and safety issues at the Kingsland building, following disaggregation of the pupil referral unit from Bedford Borough Council and the more intensive use of the existing building. The majority of health and safety issues have now been addressed and the remaining active element of the project is to reconfigure the entrance to the building to make way for the University Technical College which is being provided for in the adjacent building. The Kingsland buildings used by the PRU are part of the Alternative Provision Free School Bid which is progressing for opening in September 2013. A business case setting out further internal works required to deliver the Free School's curriculum, will be commissioned as part of the approval of the Free School capital project in due course.

24. Roecroft Lower School

This project is now complete apart from outstanding defects and the submission of the final account.

25. Arnold Middle School

This project is now complete apart from outstanding defects and the submission of the final account.

26. Holmemead School ASD provision

This project is now complete apart from outstanding defects and the submission of the final account

27. Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) & Local Area Agreement (LAA)

This funding belongs to the Central Bedfordshire Together partnership (CBT) and the Council holds this for administrative purposes. How it is spent rests with the CBT.

Appendices:

Appendix A1 Directorate Overall position

Central Bedfordshire Capital Programme 2012-13

As at 13

Scheme Title		Category	Top 20	Revised 2012/13 Capital Budget				Annual Budget Monitoring				Monthly Budget Monitoring				
				Full Year Forecast as at Month 3		Actual YTD		Variance		Profilled Budget YTD		Actual YTD		Variance		
				Gross Expenditure £'000	External Funding £'000	Net Expenditure £'000	Gross Expenditure £'000	External Funding £'000	Net Expenditure £'000	Gross Expenditure £'000	External Funding £'000	Net Expenditure £'000	Gross Expenditure £'000	External Funding £'000	Net Expenditure £'000	
CS	New School Places	A plus Slippage	Top 20	£13,062	-£13,052	£0	£13,052	-£13,052	£0	£0	£0	£23	£23	£0	£23	
CS	Schools Capital Maintenance (Formerly New Deal for Schools Modernisation)	A	Top 20	£9,251	-£9,251	£0	£9,251	-£9,251	£0	£0	£463	-£463	£743	-£753	£280	
CS	All Saints Academy	A	Top 20	£7,284	-£7,284	£0	£7,284	-£7,284	£0	£0	£2,914	-£2,914	£2,704	-£210	£2,914	
CS	Schools Devolved Formula Capital	B		£938	-£938	£0	£938	-£938	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	
CS	Basic Need	Slippage		£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£64	£64		
CS	Temporary Accommodation	C		£550	£550	£550	£550	£550	£0	£0	£116	£132	£132	£17	£17	
CS	University Technical College - Childrens Services s106 for additional pupil places in Dunstable 14-19 Places	A		£500	-£500	£0	£500	-£500	£0	£0	£450	-£450	£466	£16	£466	
CS	Schools Access Initiative	B		£450	£450	£450	£450	£450	£0	£0	£16	£16	£16	£0	£16	
CS	Asbestos / Health & Safety	B		£400	£0	£400	£0	-£400	£0	-£400	£30	£30	£30	£0	£30	
CS	Kingsland PRU - Childrens Services s106 for additional pupil places in Dunstable Pupil Referral Unit Phase 2	A		£279	-£279	£0	£279	-£279	£0	£0	£2	£2	£2	£0	£2	
CS	Rosecroft Lower Relocation	Slippage		£106	-£106	£0	£106	-£106	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	
CS	Short Breaks	Slippage		£31	-£31	£0	£31	-£31	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	
CS	Teaching / Learning Practical Food Skills at KS3 at Gilbert Ingfield and Parkfields Middle Schools	Slippage		£24	-£24	£0	£24	-£24	£0	£0	£2	£2	£2	£0	£2	
CS	ESCR	Slippage		£17	£17	£17	£17	£17	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	
CS	Arnold Middle School (H&S part of larger phase 3 project)	Slippage		£17	£17	£17	£17	£17	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	
CS	Hornmead School ASD Provision	Slippage		£10	£10	£10	£10	£10	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	
CS	LPSA & LAA Grant payout	A	Top 20	£1,183	-£1,183	£0	£1,183	-£1,183	£0	£0	£47	-£47	£0	£0	£47	
CS Total				£34,092	-£32,648	£1,444	£33,692	-£32,648	£1,044	£0	-£400	£3,989	-£3,873	£116	£4,182	£3,120
															£3,314	

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Meeting: Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date: 4 September 2012
Subject: Work Programme 2012 – 2013 & 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, Corporate Policy & 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 2012 - 2013

Ref	Indicative OSC Meeting Date	Report Title	Issue to be considered	Comment
1.	4 September 2012	Executive Member Update	To receive a brief verbal update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	
		Adoption, Fostering & Private Fostering Annual Reports	To consider the annual reports for the Adoption Service, Fostering Service and Private Fostering Provision.	
		LSCB Annual Report	To consider the Local Safeguarding Children Board's annual report for 2011/12.	
		Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring	To consider performance monitoring information for the first quarter of 2012/13	
		Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring	To consider the directorate's capital & revenue budget monitoring information for the first quarter of 2012/13	

Ref	Indicative OSC Meeting Date	Report Title	Issue to be considered	Comment
2.	16 October 2012	Executive Member Update Youth Services Provision	To receive a brief verbal update from the Executive Member for Children's Services. To review provision of the Council's youth services following reconfiguration	Tentative date to be confirmed.
3.	11 December 2012	Executive Member Update 2013/14 Budget Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring	To receive a brief verbal update from the Executive Member for Children's Services. To consider the 2013/14 draft budget. To consider performance monitoring information for the second quarter of 2012/13 To consider the directorate's capital & revenue budget monitoring information for the second quarter of 2012/13	
4.	15 January 2013	Executive Member Update	To receive a brief verbal update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	

Ref	Indicative OSC Meeting Date	Report Title	Issue to be considered	Comment
		New School Places Programme	To consider a progress report regarding delivery of the new school places programme	
5.	26 February 2013	Executive Member Update	To receive a brief verbal update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	
		Children's Health	To receive a presentation regarding children's health	
6.	23 April 2013	Executive Member Update	To receive a brief verbal update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	
		Peer Review	To consider the outcomes flowing from the Peer Review.	
		Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring	To consider performance monitoring information for the third quarter of 2012/13	
		Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring	To consider the directorate's capital & revenue budget monitoring information for the third quarter of 2012/13	

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**Central Bedfordshire Council
Forward Plan of Key Decisions
1 September 2012 to 31 August 2013**

- 1) During the period from **1 September 2012 to 31 August 2013**, 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 Nigel Young	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 May 2012	3 May 2012
3 July 2012	21 June 2012
21 August 2012	9 August 2012
2 October 2012	20 September 2012
6 November 2012	25 October 2012
4 December 2012	22 November 2012
8 January 2013	20 December 2012
5 February 2013	24 January 2013
19 March 2013	7 March 2013
7 May 2013	25 April 2013
25 June 2013	13 June 2013

Central Bedfordshire Council

Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 September 2012 to 31 August 2013

Key Decisions

Date of Publication: 15 August 2012

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.	Publication of Parking Strategy -	To consider how Central Bedfordshire Council manage parking across the district, recognising the needs of shoppers businesses, residents and new developments.	2 October 2012	The Strategy has been through a full public consultation before coming back to the Executive for approval.	Report	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Comments by 01/09/12 to Contact Officer: Basil Jackson, Assistant Director Highways & Transport Email: basil.jackson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6171
2.	Local Lettings Policy to Rural Exception Sites in Central Bedfordshire -	To agree the Local Lettings Policy to allocate affordable housing to Rural Exception Sites in Central Bedfordshire.	2 October 2012		Report	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 20/07/12 to Contact Officer: Hamid Khan, Head of Housing Needs Email: hamid.khan@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5369

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.	Development Brief for Site Allocations Policy MA5 - Land East of Biggleswade Road, Potton -	To adopt the Development Brief for Site Allocations Policy MA5 - land east of Biggleswade Road, Potton as technical guidance for development management purposes.	2 October 2012	<p>November 2011 – A Stakeholder Group comprising ward Members, Town Councillors, residents, local interest groups and developers has been established whose purpose is to inform the emerging Development Brief. In accordance with the signed Planning Performance Agreement, consultation will take place:-</p> <p>April 2012 – The Development Brief will require sign off by Director/Portfolio Holder in order to commence consultation. Members will also be notified.</p> <p>April/May 2012 – A four week public consultation exercise will be carried out that will include a public exhibition.</p> <p>September 2012 – A presentation on the Development Brief (together with consultation responses) will be given to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee seeking Members to endorse it before the Executive take a decision.</p>	Development Brief and Statement of Community Involvement	<p>Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 01/09/12 to Contact Officer: Mark Saccoccio, Local Planning and Housing Team Leader Email: mark.saccoccio@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5510</p>

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)
4.	Statement of Community Involvement -	To adopt the Statement of Community Involvement.	2 October 2012	Statutory consultation carried out in May/June 2012. Member consideration through the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Statement of Community Involvement Report of Consultation Responses	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 01/09/12 to Contact Officer: Richard Fox, Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy Email: richard.fox@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4105

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)
5.	Woodside Connection -	The Woodside Connection is a key piece of infrastructure without which the proposed growth development east and north of Houghton Regis cannot go ahead. The scheme has now reached the point where the Council will need to apply for planning permission to take it forward. Executive is being asked to agree to consult on this scheme prior to a planning application being made to the National Infrastructure Plan and to consider other matters relating to the scheme.	2 October 2012		Report	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 04/09/12 to Contact Officer: Paul Cook, Head of Transport Strategy and Countryside Access Email: paul.cook@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6244

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.	Astral Park Football Project -	To approve expenditure for playing pitches, changing facilities and car parking at Astral Park, Leighton Buzzard. The project is led by Leighton Linlade Town Council, with project management advice and support provided by Leisure services. The scheme is funded entirely by Section 106 funds of £1.1m).	2 October 2012	Consultation carried out with Leighton Linlade Town Council.	Report	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Comments by 01/09/12 to Contact Officer: Jill Dickinson, Head of Leisure Services Email: jill.dickinson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4258
7.	Houghton Regis North Framework Plan -	To endorse the Houghton Regis North Framework Plan and supplementary written document for development management purposes.	2 October 2012	The Council has consulted residents, councillors, local businesses and statutory consultees for a period of 7 weeks between 20 June and 8 August 2012. The consultation has been conducted using letters, emails, the Council's consultation services, including Central Bedfordshire Council updates and the Member's Bulletin.	Framework Plan and the Framework Plan supplementary written document	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 01/09/12 to Contact Officer: Lachlan Robertson, Consultant Project Manager for Central Bedfordshire Council or Stuart Robinson, Planning Officer (Project Support/Admin) Email: lachlan.robertson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 07943 842861 or stuart.robinson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4236

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)
8.	Annual Adult Safeguarding Report -	To receive the annual Adult Safeguarding Report.	2 October 2012		Report	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 01/09/12 to Contact Officer: Julie Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing Email: julie.ogley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4221
9.	Neighbourhood Planning Process -	To adopt a process whereby Neighbourhood Plan Area boundaries are approved and the Council adopts Neighbourhood Plans to be part of the Development Plan for Central Bedfordshire.	2 October 2012	No public consultation has been undertaken with the report as it identifies a compliant with statutory regulations process. Consultation with internal Central Bedfordshire Council officers has been undertaken in the preparation of the report.	Report and Neighbourhood Planning Process Table	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 01/09/12 to Contact Officer: Sally Chapman, Development Planning Project and Process Team Leader Email: sally.chapman@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4336
10.	Central Bedfordshire CCTV Strategy -	To agree the CCTV Strategy for Central Bedfordshire.	6 November 2012	Key strategic partners will be consulted on the draft Strategy during July 2012. Further consultation on elements of the Strategy will be undertaken once the Strategy is agreed. Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the draft Strategy on 26 September 2012.	Report and draft Strategy	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Comments by 05/10/12 to Contact Officer: Jeanette Keyte, Head of Community Safety Email: jeanette.keyte@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5257

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)
11.	Land at Steppingley Road and Froghall Road, Flitwick -	To endorse the masterplan for development at land at Steppingley Road and Froghall Road, Flitwick (Policy MA2, Site Allocations Development Plan Document, 2011)	6 November 2012	Members and Officers briefed February 2012. Members and Officers briefed on 25 July 2012 at West Placemaking. Public Exhibitions on 7/8 September 2012. Public Consultation from 7 September to 5 October 2012.	Land at Steppingley Road Masterplan Site Allocations Development Plan Document (Adopted 2011)	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 05/10/12 to Contact Officer: Connie Frost-Bryant, Senior Planning Officer, Local Planning and Housing Team Email: connie.frost-bryant@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4329
12.	Development Strategy -	The Development Strategy will set out the broad approach to new development across Central Bedfordshire to 2031, including new housing and employment targets and new large-scale development sites. The Executive will be requested to consider and recommend to Council the Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy for the purposes of Publication and subsequent Submission to the Secretary of State.	6 November 2012	Consultation expected in May/June 2012, Member consideration through the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Draft Development Strategy (Pre-Submission version) Sustainability Appraisal Report of consultation and other technical/evidence reports	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 05/10/12 to Contact Officer: Richard Fox, Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy Email: richard.fox@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4105

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)
13.	Master Plan for Site Allocations Policy MA8 - Land at Chase Farm and Land West and North-East of High Street, Arlesey -	To adopt the Master Plan for Site Allocations Policy MA8 - land at Chase Farm and land west and north-east of High Street, Arlesey as technical guidance for development management purposes.	6 November 2012	<p>May – August 2012: A Stakeholder Group comprising ward Members, Town Councillors, residents, local interest groups and developers has been established whose purpose is to inform the emerging Master Plan. In accordance with the signed Planning Performance Agreement, consultation will take place:</p> <p>August 2012: The Master Plan will require sign off by Director/Portfolio Holder in order to commence consultation. Members will also be notified.</p> <p>22 August 2012: The Master Plan will be presented to Corporate Management Team.</p> <p>August/September 2012: A four week public consultation exercise will be carried out.</p> <p>October 2012: A presentation on the Master Plan (together with consultation responses) will be given to Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a recommendation that they endorse it.</p>	The Master Plan and Statement of Community Involvement	<p>Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 05/10/12 to Contact Officer: Mark Saccoccio, Local Planning and Housing Team Leader Email: mark.saccoccio@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5510</p>

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)
14.	Council's Admissions Arrangements 2014/15 -	Consultation on the Council's Admissions Arrangements for the academic year 2014/15 to approve the commencement of the consultation.	6 November 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Governing bodies of Local Authority schools. b) All other admission authorities within the relevant area. c) Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen. d) Other persons in the relevant area who have an interest in the proposed admissions. e) Adjoining neighbouring authorities. f) The Church of England and Catholic Diocese. <p>Method of consultation: Website. In addition: Letter to a, b, e and f. Information distributed to academies/schools and nurseries and notice in the local press to consult with c and d.</p>	Report	<p>Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 05/10/12 to Contact Officer: Pete Dudley, Assistant Director Children's Services (Learning & Strategic Commissioning) Email: pete.dudley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4203</p>

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)
15.	Award of Kitchen and Bathroom Refurbishment Contract 2013 to 2016 to Council Housing Properties -	To award the preferred contractor for this service.	4 December 2012		Report on tenders	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 03/11/12 to Contact Officers: Ian Johnson, Housing Asset Manager or Basil Quinn, Housing Asset Manager Performance Email: ian.johnson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5202 or basil.quinn@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5118
16.	Revenue and Capital Quarter 2 Budget Monitor Reports -	To consider the revenue and capital quarter 2 budget monitor reports.	4 December 2012		Reports	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 03/11/12 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147

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)
17.	Delivering Superfast Broadband in Central Bedfordshire -	To approve the proposed procurement process and criteria for selecting a private sector partner in delivering superfast broadband in Central Bedfordshire.	4 December 2012	<p>An online broadband survey has been running since February 2012. This has been widely promoted (including through the Parish Council network) and the results used in developing the Local Broadband Plan and local priorities.</p> <p>A formal market consultation will also be undertaken (likely in August/September) to comply with EU state aid requirements.</p>	<p>The adopted Joint Local Broadband Plan and the Council's Broadband Plan www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/local-business/business-information-and-advice/broadband.aspx set the context for intervention.</p>	<p>Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 03/11/12 to Contact Officer: James Cushing, Economic Policy Manager Email: james.cushing@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4984</p>
18.	Contract for Refurbishment of Timberlands Gypsy and Travellers Site -	To award the contract to the preferred contractor for the refurbishment of Timberlands Gypsy and Travellers Site, Pepperstock, Slip End.	4 December 2012		Report	<p>Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 03/11/12 to Contact Officer: John Holman, Head of Housing Asset Management or Ian Johnson, Housing Asset Manager Email: john.holman@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5069 or ian.johnson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5202</p>

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)
19.	Future of the Adult Skills and Community Learning Service -	To agree the future delivery arrangements for the externally funded Adult Skills and Community Learning Service in Central Bedfordshire (please note that this service is currently a shared service with Bedford Borough Council)	4 December 2012	November/December 2011 and August/September 2012: Key strategic partners through series of external interviews. May/June 2012: Focus groups and interviews with service users and no users (individuals and business).	Report	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 03/11/12 to Contact Officer: Kate McFarlane, Head of Community Regeneration & Adult Skills Email: kate.mcfarlane@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5858
20.	Leisure Facility Strategy -	To adopt the Leisure Facility Strategy.	8 January 2013	Communication and Consultation Plan identifies stakeholders and methods of consultation at key stages. Consultation on emerging issues April 2012. Consultation on issues and options October – December 2012.	Leisure Facility Strategy	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Comments by 07/12/12 to Contact Officer: Jill Dickinson, Head of Leisure Services Email: jill.dickinson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4258

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21.	Implementation of the Refreshed School Organisation Plan: New School Places Programme 2013/14 - 2017/18 -	To consider the implementation of the refreshed School Organisation Plan: New School Places programme 2013/14 to 2017/18.	5 February 2013		Report	Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 04/01/13 to Contact Officer: Pete Dudley, Assistant Director Children's Services (Learning & Strategic Commissioning) Email: pete.dudley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4203

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)
22.	East Leighton Linslade Framework Plan -	To consider the east Leighton Linslade Framework Plan for the delivery of up to 2,500 dwellings and 16 hectares of employment land together with its supporting infrastructure.	5 February 2013	<p>September 2012 – Placemaking meeting to take place at which the Landowners are to offer a presentation on the Draft Framework Plan.</p> <p>October 2012 – Executive Member and Director of Sustainable Communities to sign off the Draft Framework Plan for the purposes of public consultation.</p> <p>October 2012 – A 7 week public consultation to begin that will include a 2 day public exhibition event. Consultation with residents, councillors and statutory consultees. Consultation will be conducted using letters, emails, the Council’s consultation services, including Central Bedfordshire Council updates and the Member’s bulletin.</p> <p>January 2013 – A presentation on the Framework Plan (together with consultation responses) will be given to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee seeking Members to endorse it before the Executive take a decision.</p>	Framework Plan and the Framework Plan supplementary written document	<p>Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development</p> <p>Comments by 26/11/12 to Contact Officer:</p> <p>Mark Saccoccio, Local Planning and Housing Team Leader</p> <p>Email: mark.saccoccio@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Tel: 0300 300 5510</p>

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)
23.	Outdoor Access Improvement Plan -	To endorse the Outdoor Access Improvement Plan.	19 March 2013	The Central Bedfordshire and Luton Local Access Forum has established a sub group input into the development of the plan this will be followed by a full 13 week public consultation with both stakeholder and public engagement activities during period.	Report	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Comments by 18/02/13 to Contact Officer: Paul Cook, Head of Transport Strategy and Countryside Access Email: paul.cook@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6999
24.	Revenue and Capital Quarter 3 Budget Monitor Reports -	To consider the revenue and capital quarter 3 budget monitor reports.	19 March 2013		Reports	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 18/02/13 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147
25.	Community Infrastructure Levy -	To approve the consultation and subsequent Submission of the Community Infrastructure Levy draft charging schedule.	19 March 2013		Report	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 18/02/13 to Contact Officer: Jonathan Baldwin, Senior Planning Officer Email: jonathan.baldwin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5510

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.	Draft Gypsy and Traveller Plan -	To consider the draft Gypsy and Traveller Plan prior to submission.	7 May 2013	In line with Regulation 18 of the new Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012, consultation will have been undertaken in autumn 2012 on what a Gypsy and Traveller plan ought to contain. This report follows that consultation and will propose the preferred sites and policies for Gypsy and Traveller provision.	Report and draft Plan	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 06/04/13 to Contact Officer: Richard Fox, Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy Email: richard.fox@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4105
27.	Central Heating Installations Contract District Wide -	To award the contract to the preferred contractor for the central heating installations contract district wide for 2013 to 2016 to council housing properties.	7 May 2013		Report	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 06/04/13 to Contact Officer: Peter Joslin, Housing Asset Manager or Basil Quinn, Housing Asset Manager Performance Email: peter.joslin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5395 or basil.quinn@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5118

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)
28.	Revenue and Capital Provisional Outturn 2012/13 -	To consider the revenue and capital provisional outturn 2012/13.	25 June 2013		Reports	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 24/05/13 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147
NON KEY DECISIONS						
29.	Budget Consultation Policy -	To consider the budget consultation policy.	6 November 2012		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 05/10/12 to Contact Officer: Chief Finance Officer Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147

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)
30.	Quarter 2 Performance Report -	To consider quarter 2 performance report.	4 December 2012		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 03/11/12 to Contact Officer: Elaine Malarky, Head of Programmes & Performance Management Email: elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5517
31.	Draft Revenue Budget 2013/14 -	To consider the first draft of the revenue budget for 2013/14.	4 December 2012		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 03/11/12 to Contact Officer: Chief Finance Officer Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147
32.	Community Safety Partnership Plan and Priorities 2013 - 2014 -	To recommend to Council to approve the Community Safety Partnership Plan and Priorities 2013 - 2014	8 January 2013	Strategic Assessment & Partnership Plan will be considered by the Community Safety Partnership Executive, the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Local Strategic Partnership.	Strategic Assessment Priorities & Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-2014	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Comments by 07/12/12 to Contact Officer: Joy Craven, CSP Manager Email: joy.craven@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4649

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)
33.	Treasury Management Policy and the Treasury Management Strategy -	To recommend to Council the adoption of the Treasury Management Policy and the Treasury Management Strategy.	8 January 2013		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 07/12/12 to Contact Officer: Chief Finance Officer Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147
34.	Localisation of Council Tax Support Scheme -	To recommend to Council the approval of the Localisation of the Council Tax Support Scheme.	8 January 2013		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 07/12/12 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147

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)
35.	Housing Revenue Account 2013/14 -	To recommend to Council the Housing Revenue Account budget 2013/14 for approval.	5 February 2013		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 04/01/13 to Contact Officer: Chief Finance Officer or Tony Keaveney, Assistant Director Housing Services Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147 or tony.keaveney@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5210
36.	Budget 2013/14 -	To recommend to Council the proposed budget for 2013/14: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue budget • Capital budget • Fees and Charges 	5 February 2013		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 04/01/13 to Contact Officer: Chief Finance Officer Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147

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)
37.	Quarter 3 Performance Report -	To consider quarter 3 performance report.	19 March 2013		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 18/02/13 to Contact Officer: Elaine Malarky, Head of Programmes & Performance Management Email: elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5517
38.	Minerals and Waste Core Strategy -	To recommend to Council the adoption of the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy.	7 May 2013	A wide range of stakeholders were involved in consultations undertaken from 2006 to 2012, using methods which include an internet portal, deposit of hard copies at points of presence, and displaying the Core Strategy on the Council website. Consultees included the Parish Councils, statutory bodies, special interest groups, minerals industry, waste management industry, and individuals who had expressed an interest at previous consultations.	Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and the Inspector's report following the Examination in public.	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 06/04/12 to Contact Officer: Roy Romans, Minerals and Waste Team Leader Email: roy.romans@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6039

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 2012/13 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 2013 when the plan will be published on the fourteenth day:

Date of Publication	Period of Plan
13.04.12	1 May 2012 – 30 April 2013
15.05.12	1 June 2012 – 31 May 2013
15.06.12	1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013
13.07.12	1 August 2012 – 31 July 2013
15.08.12	1 September 2012 – 31 August 2013
14.09.12	1 October 2012 – 30 September 2013
15.10.12	1 November 2012 – 31 October 2013
15.11.12	1 December 2012 – 30 November 2013
14.12.12	1 January 2013 – 31 December 2013
15.01.13	1 February 2013 – 31 January 2014
14.02.13	1 March 2013 – 28 February 2014
15.03.13	1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014