

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

**This meeting
may be filmed.***



**Central
Bedfordshire**

please ask for Paula Everitt
direct line 0300 300 4196
date 4 September 2014

NOTICE OF MEETING

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date & Time

Tuesday, 16 September 2014 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 A Barker (Chairman), N B Costin (Vice-Chairman), D Bowater,
Mrs G Clarke, Mrs R J Drinkwater, P A Duckett, P Hollick, D Jones, D McVicar and
R B Pepworth

[Named Substitutes:

R D Berry, Mrs S A Goodchild, K Janes, B Saunders and N J Sheppard]

Co-optees: Mr Chapman (Parent Governor), Mr Court (Parent Governor),
Mr Hodey (Parent Governor), Ms Image (Roman Catholic Diocese), 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**

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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 22 July 2014 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	<p>Executive Member Update</p> <p>To receive a brief verbal update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.</p>	* Verbal
10	<p>Children's Trust Annual Report</p> <p>To receive the annual report of the Children's Trust.</p>	* 15 - 44
11	<p>Annual Report for the Adoption Service and Fostering Service and Private Fostering</p> <p>To receive the annual report of the Adoption, Fostering and Private Fostering Panels</p>	* 45 - 98
12	<p>Quarter 1 2014/15 Budget Report</p> <p>To receive a presentation regarding the directorate's capital and revenue budget monitoring information for the first quarter of 2014/15.</p>	* 99 - 106
13	<p>Update on Schools' Curriculum</p> <p>To receive an update on the schools' curriculum following a Member's request.</p>	* Verbal
14	<p>Impact on Children of Living in Family Circumstances of Domestic Abuse/Domestic Violence</p> <p>To receive an update on the Committee's previously agreed recommendations in relation to this topic.</p>	* Verbal
15	<p>Work Programme 2014/15 & Executive Forward Plan</p> <p>The report provides Members with details of the currently drafted Committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.</p>	* 107 - 110

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, 22 July 2014

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs A Barker (Chairman)
Cllr N B Costin (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:	D Bowater Mrs R J Drinkwater P A Duckett	Councillors:	D Jones R B Pepworth
Parental Co-optees:	Mr J Chapman Mr S Court		
Church of England Co-optee: Roman Catholic Co-optee:	Mr D Morton		
Apologies for Absence:	Cllrs Mrs G Clarke P Hollick Mrs F Image D McVicar		
Substitutes:	Cllrs R D Berry (In place of Mrs G Clarke)		
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs P N Aldis Mrs S Clark A L Dodwell Mrs S A Goodchild M A G Versallion	Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services and Community Services Executive Member for Children's Services	
Officers in Attendance:	Mrs P Everitt Mr R Parsons Mrs R Preen Miss H Redding	Scrutiny Policy Adviser Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning Scrutiny Policy Advisor Assistant Director School Improvement	
Others in attendance	11 members of the public		

CS/14/21. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 June, 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CS/14/22. **Members' Interests**

Councillors declared the following interests in the business to be transacted:-

- Cllr Bowater as Chair of Governors at Leighton Buzzard Middle School;
- Cllr D Jones as Chair of Governors at Hawthorn Community Primary School;
- Cllr Pepworth as Chair of Governors at St. Augustine's Academy and a member of the Ashton Foundation;
- Cllr Duckett as a Governor at Maulden School; and
- David Morton as Church of England Co-optee.

CS/14/23. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the process by which members of the public who had registered to speak would be invited to do so at item 9. The Chairman advised those in attendance that filming and recording of the meeting was not permitted. Those present were also advised that if there was a need to discuss the information contained within the exempt pages the Committee would decide whether to exclude the press and public from the meeting so that the confidential matters could be discussed.

CS/14/24. **Petitions**

None.

CS/14/25. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

The Chairman confirmed that five members of the public and elected Members had registered to speak. Speakers would be invited to speak at the commencement of Item 9.

CS/14/26. **Call-In**

None.

CS/14/27. **Requested Items**

None.

CS/14/28. **Schools in Dunstable**

The Executive Member for Children's Services advised that following the previous Executive meeting it had been agreed the business cases produced by Brewers Hill Middle School, Streetfield Middle School, Ashton Middle CofE VA School would be submitted to the Committee prior to a decision on the proposals being taken by the Executive on 19 August 2014.

The Executive Member clarified that the purpose of the meeting was to consider the responses received by the Council to the statutory consultation which included the viability of each of the three business cases, which had been prepared by the schools as alternatives to closure. Input from Members of the Committee would be invaluable to the Executive prior a decision being made. The Executive Member commented that in his view the business cases were not viable and did not provide a suitable alternative option to closure of the schools. However, the Executive Member had not yet decided upon the final proposal he would make to the Executive, which would be determined after the Committee had challenged and scrutinised the business cases.

In light of the size of the report and the further clarification provided by the schools within their amended business cases Members commented on the inconvenience of receiving late reports. The Assistant Director of School Improvement advised that the schools and officers had been required to work to very short time scales, so this was unavoidable in this instance.

Brewers Hill Middle School

The Chairman invited three speakers to address the Committee in relation to Brewers Hill Middle School. Speakers raised issues that in summary related to the following:-

- The school felt they had presented a financially viable alternative, which would have minimal impact on other age ranges.
- Concerns that the consultation process had not ascertained the views of parents in Dunstable.
- Concerns that the proposal to close the middle school would affect key stage 1 and 2 results.
- Requests that further investment be provided to schools in order to provide greater parental choice.
- Concerns that opening academies in the area had a negative impact.
- The importance of the Executive's decision and the Committee's recommendations ensuring the best outcomes for education and the development of children

In light of the report and the comments raised by speakers in relation to Brewers Hill Middle School Members discussed the following issues in detail:-

- The ways in which the school felt greater pupil numbers could be generated, bearing in mind the different age ranges in schools in Dunstable and whether an increase in pupil numbers would have a negative impact on schools outside Dunstable and Houghton Regis. In response representatives of the school commented the report reflected growth data from Dunstable and Houghton Regis. The forecast growth and housing developments proposed locally had led the school to be confident that surplus school places would be filled as a result of that growth by 2019. The Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning advised the Committee that the schools had been provided with current local data and housing yield information which provided greater confidence in accuracy of forecasts than the demographic data referred to by the school in its business case. There were strong indications that new developments in the

area would provide their own infrastructure for education and data showed that there was already sufficient surplus places. The head of service also acknowledged the challenge regarding the provision of future secondary school places and in predicting parental preference but there was significant data demonstrating that parents were choosing non-catchment schools.

- Whether there had been a dialogue between schools regarding a joint approach. The Acting Head-teacher advised that a joint approach had not been considered due to local demographics and the schools aspiration to change age range.
- Concerns as to whether a broader curriculum could be delivered with the proposed level of teaching staff. The Assistant Director of School Improvement commented that an appropriate teacher/pupil ratio had to be demonstrated by the school. Previous information provided by the school had indicated that they were unable to pay for additional teaching staff. The Assistant Director had previously suggested that consideration be given to teaching staff being shared across other schools in order to spread the cost.
- Concerns that requests for further investment in the school would result in a duplication of funding.
- Whether there had been any conflict of interest for officers recommending closure of the school also supporting the schools to develop their business cases. The Committee were advised that officers had met with the schools individually to discuss what they felt they needed and that all requests had been agreed. This support was commissioned and paid for by the Council, and included education professionals to assist with the preparation of business cases, plus supply cover to support capacity of school staff to complete the work.
- Whether pupil numbers in key stage 3 indicated that there would be an increased demand in the future for school places. The Executive Member commented there were no schools in the area that would feed into Brewers Hill Middle School as other schools were changing their age range to become primaries.

In addition it was clarified that academy status had not been pursued by the school and that the Pupil Premium had been overestimated, which may have been a clerical error. In summary a Member also suggested that the school's business case did not identify adequate provision based on pupil numbers.

Streetfield Middle School

The Chairman invited one speaker to address the Committee in relation to Streetfield Middle School. The speaker raised issues that in summary related to the following:-

- Concerns that Members had not read the report in detail.
- The numbers of responses that had been received from parents to consultations.
- The inclusion of early year's provision in the school's business plan, which was independently funded.
- The importance of focusing on the best way to achieve positive outcomes.
- Benchmarking with other schools in Dunstable, which had been used by the school to determine the financial viability of the business case.

- The nature of the high quality and purpose-built facilities located on the school site.

In light of the report and the comments raised by speakers in relation to Streetfield Middle School Members discussed the following issues in detail:-

- Concerns that whilst the business case provided an exciting and aspirational proposal, there had been a lack of coordination with other schools, particularly Manshead. The School Governor in attendance explained there had previously been a partnership but it had not continued as each school had different objectives. However, the school was keen to achieve a more unified approach in the future.
- Concerns regarding the need to attract pupils from out of the current catchment area and the uncertainty of predictions for future pupil numbers.
- Confirmation of the Chair of Governors (Cllr Pepworth) at St Augustine's School that the school would not enter into a shared governor approach or shared working arrangement as the proposed lyceum suggested.
- Concerns that the pupil premium had been overestimated.
- The close working relationship between the school and the Council with regards to early years provision.

In summary Members concluded that whilst they liked the proposal they felt it was not costed appropriately and posed significant potential financial risks and was not viable.

Ashton CofE VA Middle School

The Chairman invited one speaker to address the Committee in relation to Ashton CofE VA Middle School. The speaker raised issues that in summary related to the following:-

- The school felt the business case laid out exciting proposals that were financially viable.
- Progress on school results had been positive, particularly in relation to Maths.
- Many parents had stated anecdotally that they desired a small faith based school in Dunstable. If the school remained open parents had commented they would have no reason to move their children to other schools..
- The school recognised the seriousness of its current funding deficit, which was a result of changes in the funding system.
- Morale was high within the teaching body and both staff and governors were keen to provide alternative options with regards to education.
- The school felt it was unique in providing a faith based education within the local area.

In light of the report and the comments raised by speakers in relation to Ashton CofE VA Middle School Members discussed the following issues in detail:-

- Concerns that the Pupil Premium had been overestimated and that the projected numbers of pupils were unrealistic.
- Whether the school had entered into discussions with other schools regarding a joint proposal. Representatives in attendance confirmed that they had early discussions with Priory Academy with a view to sharing the curriculum, more formal links were not appropriate due to their faith status.

- Concerns regarding teaching allocation and curriculum delivery. The Deputy Head stated that the school required additional physical education facilities but these could be delivered within walking distance via the local leisure centre. Other subjects would be delivered via the local College.
- The distances from which pupils travelled to attend the school. The Committee were advised that pupils lived both locally and out of the area, 33 pupils lived in Luton.
- Whether the school had used any other small secondary schools as a model for performance. It was conformed that the school had benchmarked against other small secondary schools and were aiming towards those that performed better with approximately 500 pupils.
- Clarity that the Church would not fund a change in the structure of the school, they would be subject to the Council's formula for funding.

In summary several Members agreed that the school's proposal was interesting and that a small secondary school was appealing. It was acknowledged that in 2016 the Council would be commissioning more secondary school places. However, the financial figures and pupil numbers identified in the business plan were disputed and there was a significant risk for the Council in light of the schools current deficit.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the proposal of Brewers Hill Middle School represented significant risk, which had not been addressed in the business case with regards to finances.**
- 2. That the Committee were concerned that future curriculum delivery at Brewers Hill Middle School from reception to year 11, especially for years 9-11, was questionable in such a small school.**
- 3. That predicted future pupil numbers at Brewers Hill Middle School could not be guaranteed.**
- 4. That the proposal of Streetfield Middle School represented significant risk that had not been addressed in the business case with regards to finances.**
- 5. That predicted future pupil numbers at Streetfield Middle School could not be guaranteed.**
- 6. That the Executive recognise the innovative alternative model submitted by Streetfield Middle School, but take into consideration the financial risks.**
- 7. That the Committee were concerned of the impact for other schools in the area on pupil numbers if the alternative model submitted by Streetfield Middle School was implemented.**
- 8. That the model proposed by Ashton CofE VA Middle School was of interest, but the Committee were concerned that the financial risks of implementation had not been addressed in the business case.**
- 9. That predicted future pupil numbers at Ashton CofE VA Middle School could not be guaranteed, however, the school could gain pupils out of catchment area from Luton.**
- 10. That Executive consider the risk attached to the financial deficit in the interim if the proposal of Ashton CofE VA Middle School was approved and the school remained open.**

11. That the Executive consider the scale of additional secondary places, which was acknowledged would be required from September 2016.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 1.50 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated

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Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny
Date: 16 September 2014
Subject: Children's Trust Annual Report
Report of: Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services
Summary: Members are presented with the Annual Report of the Children's Trust which sets out progress in delivering the priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan June 2013 – March 2015.

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

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. The Children and Young People's Plan supports the Council in delivering the following priorities:
 - Improved educational attainment.
 - Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable.

Financial:

2. Prevention and early intervention are key drivers of the plan which are expected to deliver efficiencies in the long term. Work continues with partners to deliver services together in a more integrated way, with all priorities and actions developed within partners' current resources.

Legal:

3. Not applicable

Risk Management:

4. Risk is considered through the delivery planning process for the Children and Young People's Plan. Regular quarterly monitoring of performance supports effective risk management.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. Not applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. The priorities include a number of strategic actions which identify children and young people who are not achieving, who are excluded or in vulnerable circumstances.

Public Health

7. The Children and Young People's Plan sets out the vision of wanting every young person to be 'prepared to take their full place in society as a happy, healthy, contributing and confident citizen'. This is underpinned by priorities and actions aimed at improving children's emotional and physical health.

Community Safety:

8. Not applicable.

Procurement:

9. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to:-

1. **Comment on progress made in 2013/14 in delivering the priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan (Annual Report - Appendix A).**
2. **Record any questions or comments that it would like the Children's Trust to consider.**

MONITORING THE PRIORITIES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN (CYPP)

Background

10. In 2012 the Children's Trust Board agreed to review the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014, with a clearer focus on outcomes for children and young people. As a result the plan was refreshed (Children and Young People's Plan June 2013- March 2015) and this is the first Annual Report against the new plan.
11. The Annual Report (Appendix A) sets out progress to the end of March 2014 against the following CYPP priorities:
 - Improved educational attainment
 - Protecting vulnerable children
 - Early help and improving life chances
 - Being healthy and positive.
12. The report includes:
 - An overview of progress for each of the 4 priority areas; and
 - End of year performance or quarter 4 performance for indicators agreed in the CYPP, where available.

Priority: Improved Educational Attainment

13. Performance against this priority is mixed e.g.
 - There is good performance in respect of the percentage of schools which are good or better. End of year performance shows 83% of schools and colleges are good or better according to Ofsted's overall effectiveness judgements. Ofsted publish a similar indicator which does not include colleges or sponsored Academies which are yet to be inspected and this shows Central Bedfordshire comparing well to statistical neighbours and national averages - as at 31 December 2013, 85% of Central Bedfordshire Schools are good or better, the Statistical Neighbour Average was 79% and England 80%. There is also good performance in respect of early years and childcare settings judged by Ofsted to be Outstanding/Good.
 - There are challenges in respect of the impact of pupil premium on progress, and attainment including Foundation Stage Profile, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. Improving the achievement of vulnerable and disadvantaged children remains an area of focus.
14. In line with recent legislation the Council has moved quickly to appoint a Virtual School Head to champion the rights of looked after children to access to a good education and achieve their potential. The Virtual School works closely with a range of partners within Children's Services and across schools and settings to implement and monitor Personal Education Plans for all looked after children. These plans identify where additional support maybe needed to keep the child/young person attending school and making progress.
15. Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has received information over the past year on the impact of the Teaching School in supporting school improvement.

Priority: Protecting Vulnerable Children

16. Performance against this priority remains mainly good e.g.
 - Child protection cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed remains 100%.
 - A high target (90%) for the percentage of children's social care assessments within 45 days of start reflects ambitious yet realistic expectations. Although this level of performance was not achieved in the provisional outturn (84.4%), this is good performance.
 - Youth Offending performance is good in respect of first time entrants to the justice system, custodial sentences and re-offending rates.
17. 2013/14 performance for percentage of cases where children become subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time where domestic abuse is a factor is just above the target for the year at 66% (Amber rating).
18. In depth discussion took place in February 2014 at Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the impact on children of living in family circumstances of domestic violence and abuse resulting in recommendations being submitted to Executive.

Priority: Early Help and Improving Life Chances

19. Performance against this priority is mixed e.g.
- 74% of under 5 year olds from the most deprived areas are registered with Children's Centres (above 65% target).
 - The number of disadvantaged 2 year olds placed in early education/child care is off track. Actions to address this include reviewing eligibility so that more children can access funding. The position is in line with most other Local Authorities and there is also an uptake campaign planned by Central Government.
 - The Supporting Families Programme (formerly the Troubled Families Programme) has now been embedded within early help services to reflect the expected national direction of travel and focus on intensive and practical support to families displaying early signs of more significant problems which impact future life chances. Identifying enough families that meet the Government's criteria has been a significant challenge which has impacted on starting intervention work and delivering payment by results outcomes in line with Government expectations. However, work through the Programme is having a positive impact on a range of wider outcomes relating to health, education, community safety and economic wellbeing.
20. Local pilots are being rolled out across councils for development checks for 2 year olds to meet national requirements.
21. A new service was launched 1 April 2014 with Children's Social Care, Early Help Service and Family and Youth Information Service becoming the Access and Referral Team, providing "one front door" for referrals to early help and children's social care. The new team ensure that enquiries about support for families and children, services available and safeguarding concerns receive a timely response from the right individual or team so that local children and families get the support they need, when they need it.

Priority: Being Healthy and Positive

22. Performance against this priority mainly good:
- Childhood obesity rates have continued to decrease for both children in Reception (Year R) and Year 6, and prevalence is lower in both year groups, than the national and East of England averages. The focus for 2014/15 is to strengthen the work on obesity and physical activity in school communities, and increase engagement in family weight management programmes in wards of high levels of childhood obesity.
 - The % of mothers smoking at the time of delivery has decreased slightly from 2011/12 to 2012/13, but there remain significant challenges to reduce the % of women smoking at the time of delivery in the south of Central Bedfordshire, who deliver at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital.
 - Breastfeeding rates at 6-8 weeks have shown a slight increase in Central Bedfordshire although the challenge still remains to increase rates in the more deprived wards in the south of Central Bedfordshire. Further strengthened and targeted partnership working between the Midwifery Service and the Health Visiting Service is planned for 2014/15.
 - Under-18 conception rates have continued to fall in Central Bedfordshire in line with the national picture, and there has been a 38.7% reduction in

conceptions occurring in the under 16s between 2011-12. Work will continue locally with a specific focus in wards with high teenage pregnancy rates.

- The percentage of Looked After Children who have had their annual health assessments has increased each quarter throughout the year with 95.4% reported in Q4.
- 90.2% of looked after children were up to date with their immunisations / vaccinations 2012/13 outturn.
- Improved mental health for Looked After Children as measured by the average Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score has improved with 14.2 reported in Q4, however this remains above the target (13 which represents a normal score).

0-5 Healthy Child Programme

23. Responsibility for the commissioning of the 0-5 Healthy Child Programme Health Visiting Service will come to local authorities on 1 October 2015.
24. As part of the Government's National Health Visiting Transformation Programme, by March 2015, there will be 84 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) Health Visitors in place to lead on the delivery of the 0-5 Healthy Child Programme in Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough.
25. The service will take the form of Locality Teams in each local authority, with a named Health Visitor(s) integrated into every GP Practice and Children's/Surestart Centre.

5-19 Healthy Child Programme

26. Commissioning responsibility for the 5-19 Health Child Programme School Nursing Service came to the local authority in April 2013.
27. During 2013/14 the redesign and enhancement of the School Nursing Service began to increase capacity.
28. By September 2015, all secondary school-aged children (aged 11+ years) will be able to access a regular School Nurse 'Drop-In' service for confidential advice, information, signposting and support around all key health and wellbeing issues, including mental health, emotional health and behaviour management. If a mental health issue is identified, the School Nurse can provide immediate advice and/or further assessment or referral to other agencies with interim support.
29. The Children's Trust Board agreed (at its meeting of 13 May 2014) the need to tackle the issue of substance misuse and mental health alongside domestic abuse within the priority 'Protecting Vulnerable Children' in the CYPP.

Cross Cutting Priority: Putting children at the centre of everything we do

30. A key cross cutting priority in the Children and Young People's Plan has been to put children at the centre of everything we do. At the Children's Trust Board meeting of 13 May 2014, Board members were invited to hear about the Youth Audit - the findings of young inspectors who had been invited to inspect and report on local services. The good progress being made in implementing the actions from the Youth Audit was noted.

Conclusion

31. In the first year of the Children and Young People's Plan 2013 - 2015, performance across the set of key indicators is mixed and the detail of the achievements and challenges is set out in the Annual Report. Key challenges include educational attainment, the Supporting Families Programme and the take up of early education / child care places for disadvantaged 2 year olds. Capturing the children and families voice in a systematic way remains a key area for further development.
32. Members are asked to consider the Annual Report and to make comments in relation to the progress of partners in delivering the priorities in the plan.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Annual Report: May 2014 (Central Bedfordshire's Children and Young People's Plan June 2013 – March 2015).

Appendix B - Children's Trust Board Summary of CYPP indicators Quarter Four 2013/14

Background papers and their location:

Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan published at:
www.centralbedfordshirechildrenstrust.org.uk



**Central Bedfordshire
Children's Trust**

Annual Report:

Children and Young People's Plan

June 2013 – March 2015

May 2014

Introduction

This is the first annual report of the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) June 2013 – March 2015. Progress and performance against our key priorities is set out in the pages that follow – with a basket of critical performance indicators attached as Appendix A.

Improved educational attainment

Outcomes

Improved achievement and progress

The right skills to be work ready

Excellent behaviour

Well led and managed schools

Outstanding teaching and learning

**Cross Cutting: Early help for all who need it
Put children at the centre of everything we do
Multi-agency learning and shadowing opportunities to promote shared understanding of work**

What difference have we made?

- Created 300 lower school places for Central Bedfordshire in 2013/14, and are on track to create additional Lower, Middle and Upper places by 2015.
- Spent £16.5 million on providing additional places across Central Bedfordshire and expect to spend a further £46.5 million over the next 5 years, to deliver the New School Places Programme.
- Opened the Academy of Central Bedfordshire (alternative provision free school).
- The most recent Ofsted overall effectiveness judgements (provisional) for schools inspected as at 31 December 2013 suggest 85% of Central Bedfordshire Schools are good or better, Statistical Neighbour Average (79%) and England (80%).
- The proportion of 16 and 17 year olds recorded as participating in apprenticeships December 2013 is 4.8% - higher than East of England (4.2%) and England (3.6%).
- NEETS (16 -18 population) - Central Bedfordshire continues to perform well (4.3%) and is performing better than the National (5.3%) and Regional (5.1%) averages.
- Piloted the 'Achievement for All' programme in schools. Etonbury Academy (one of the pilot schools) successfully met the criteria for the Achievement for All Quality Standards Award.
- Virtual School - a changed approach with regard to attendance and the progress of looked after children. This has resulted in improvements to attendance which is a key factor in improving outcomes.
- Listen to what young people thought about a range of key services. The Council and partners were inspected as part of a Youth Audit by young people. Agencies involved included Central Bedfordshire Council, Health, Voluntary Sector, and Commissioned Providers. An action plan has been drawn up to address young people's recommendations.
- Pupil absence (persistent absence) in secondary schools has reduced from 6.6% in Academic year 2011/12 to 5.4% in Academic year 2012/13.
- Children with special educational needs have been supported to improve their progress.
- Responded to Governors' feedback by publishing 'Governors Essentials' on a more frequent monthly basis.
- Delivered 'Train the Trainer' Safeguarding Awareness training in the majority of schools.

Challenges

- Attainment - Good Level of Development, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 (A level) results.
- Impact of pupil premium on progress and attainment across key stages.
- Achievement of disadvantaged children.

Protecting vulnerable children

Outcomes

Children are happier and safer as a result of help received

Children in care have safe and stable homes

Young people are diverted from offending and anti-social behaviour

**Cross Cutting: Early help for all who need it
Put children at the centre of everything we do**

Multi-agency learning and shadowing opportunities to promote shared understanding of work

What difference have we made?

- Launched the Access hub to provide 'one front door' for referrals to early help and children's social care.
- Developed a new Looked After Children's Service and launched a new Fostering and Adoption Service.
- Improved on the time taken for adoptions and continue to compare well to other local authorities. With more adoptions planned and shorter timescales in most cases we expect to continue to improve in future.
- In Quarter 4, 84.4% of children's social care assessments were completed within 45 days.
- Child protection reviews within timescales continue to achieve the 100% target.
- The number of young people entering the criminal justice system has reduced significantly, year on year, as a result of better identification and targeted early intervention through Triage. The year end position for Central Bedfordshire is an overall reduction of 9.4%.
- The number of young people receiving a custodial sentence is falling nationally. However, it is exceptional that in Central Bedfordshire no young people received a custodial sentence in 2013/14. This is down to better early identification of and earlier intervention with children and young people at risk of offending behaviour through the Triage scheme; more success in reducing re-offending and more willingness amongst the judiciary to consider recommendations from practitioners to deal with young people by way of community sentences.
- The latest validated re-offending data relates to April 2011 to March 2012 when Bedfordshire Youth Offending Service had a re-offending figure of 29.9%. This position is viewed as very positive by the Youth Justice Board and better than both our regional neighbours and significantly lower than the national average of some 35%. (The Ministry of Justice does not split the data according to authority.)
- Co-ordinated, monitored and challenged safeguarding work through the new Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.
- Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board has agreed it's Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy to do everything possible to prevent child sexual exploitation and support victims of this abuse.
- Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board has learnt from audits and case reviews and communicated lessons to key stakeholders.

Challenges

- Tackling the challenges of domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health for children and families.
- Meeting the 80% target for young offenders in employment, education or training (ETE) has been challenged by the current economic climate which adversely affects young people, and in particular those young people who are more challenging. The percentage of young people in Central Bedfordshire in suitable ETE on the last day of their order in 2013/14 was 72.3% - 47 out of 65.

Early help and improving life chances

Outcomes

High quality early years and child care

Positive, confident parents and carers

Young carers identified and supported

High aspirations for young people and their families

Children and young people with disabilities are supported to achieve their aspirations

More families in work and fewer children living in poverty

Troubled families are supported

**Cross Cutting: Early help for all who need it
Put children at the centre of everything we do
Multi-agency learning and shadowing opportunities to promote shared understanding of work**

What difference have we made?

- Launched the new Access Hub to provide “one front door” for referrals to early help and children’s social care.
- Communications, training and advice on Early Help to the professional community has led to an increase in the number of Early Help Assessments carried out.
- Commissioned a specialist service to provide counselling for children with a parent in prison.
- Successfully introduced Children with Disabilities Hubs and a new service model developed in partnership with parents.
- Four Central Bedfordshire Schools were the first in the country to receive the gold School Standards Award from The Children’s Society. The standard shows competence in a number of areas including identification, monitoring and supporting young carers. Central Bedfordshire will now begin a programme of rolling it out. The national scheme will supplement our own local charter.
- A high percentage of early years and childcare setting judged by Ofsted to be Outstanding or Good: Non domestic childcare - 90%, childminders - 85%.
- In Quarter 4 516 of 536 young carers are receiving support (96%). A small number of young carers receive one to support – this element of support offered is being reviewed and developed.
- Delivering parenting support programmes - This year the Parenting Early Intervention Programme Team have delivered 26 programmes across Central Bedfordshire. There has been significant success with the intensive Mellow Babies programme and with the delivery of Parents as First Teachers Programme through outreach work and Children's Centres.
- ASPIRE programme - A high percentage of participants reported improved aspirations and self esteem. This year the commissioned provider has delivered 18 ASPIRE programmes across Central Bedfordshire.
- Children's Centres - Improved use of data and performance management of Children's Centres has resulted in a greater focus on supporting vulnerable families within Children's Centres.

Challenges

- Take up of early education / child care for disadvantaged 2 year olds.
- The Supporting Families Programme (formerly the Troubled Families Programme) has now been embedded within early help services to reflect the direction of travel and focus on intensive and practical support to families displaying early signs of more significant problems which impact future life chances. Identifying enough families that meet the Government’s criteria has been a significant challenge which has impacted on starting intervention work and delivering payment by results outcomes in line with expectations. Interim outcomes data from a sample of families that are still receiving support through the programme and are on the road to achieving sustained improvements show that the programme is having a positive impact on a range of wider outcomes relating to health, education, community safety, economic wellbeing.

Being healthy and positive

Outcomes

Children have the best start in life

Improved mental health for children and their parents

Better health outcomes for looked after children

Fewer young people engaging in risky behaviours

Children and families developing lifelong healthy lifestyles

Cross Cutting: Early help for all who need it
Put children at the centre of everything we do
Multi-agency learning and shadowing opportunities to promote shared understanding of work

What difference have we made?

- The number of pregnant women accessing the Central Bedfordshire Stop Smoking Service has increased since introducing a new, targeted programme to work with pregnant women who smoke in areas of high prevalence – Houghton Regis, Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard. The conversion rate from attendance to quitting has increased significantly, with current figures of 90% women quitting after 4 weeks. Latest figures also indicate an increase in women signing up to the long term Smoking in Pregnancy Programme which will contribute to a reduction in the rate of smoking at time of delivery (SATOD).
- Breastfeeding rates at 6-8 weeks have shown a slight increase in Central Bedfordshire, with a projected outturn of 45.4% for the full year 2013/14.
- Childhood obesity rates have continued to decrease for both Years R & Year 6, and prevalence is lower in both year groups, than the national and East of England averages. The focus for 2014/15 is to strengthen the work on obesity and physical activity in school communities, and increase engagement in family weight management programmes in wards of high levels of childhood obesity.
- Under-18 conception rates have continued to fall in Central Bedfordshire in line with the national picture, and there has been a 38.7% reduction in conceptions occurring in the under 16s between 2011-12. Work will continue locally – with a specific focus in wards high teenage pregnancy rates - to: increase access to Community and Sexual Health (CASH) services; improve the quality of PSHE/SRE in schools; provide support for parents to tackle SRE; provide additional support for young people with learning disabilities, and for care leavers; implement The Family Nurse Partnership.
- Throughout 2013/14 the percentage of children and young people reporting a reduction in alcohol and drugs usage 3 months following the end of an intervention has been monitored to establish a baseline. The focus for 2014/15 will be to build on and increase the average quarterly % for 2013/14 of 78%.
- 95.4 % of Looked After Children have had their annual health assessments (rolling year).
- 90.2% of looked after children were up to date on immunisations / vaccinations 2012/13 outturn – reported Q1.
- Improved mental health for Looked After Children as measured by the average SDQ score has improved from 14.7 last year to 14.2 reported in Q4 - but remains above the target of 13.

Challenges

- The % of mothers smoking at the time of delivery has decreased slightly over 2013/14, but there is still significant progress to be made at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital.
- To increase breastfeeding rates at 6 – 8 weeks in the more deprived wards in the south of Central Bedfordshire, further strengthened and targeted partnership working between the Midwifery Service and the Health Visiting Service is planned for 2014/15.

Item 10 Appendix B to Annual Report

Children's Trust Board Summary of CYPP indicators Quarter Four 2013/14

Performance Judgement			
Direction of travel (DoT)		RAG Score (Standard scoring rules unless the indicator specifies alternative scoring arrangements)	
↓	Performance is reducing	G	Good progress is being made with either no delay in activity or very minor delay which is unlikely to have any adverse impact on outcomes. Targets are being achieved and will be met.
↔	Performance remains unchanged	A	Progress is being made but there is significant delay or underperformance in some activities and this is likely to adversely impact some outcomes if not corrected. Targets have been missed but corrective action is in place to achieve the final target.
↑	Performance is improving	R	Overall progress is well behind schedule and activities are under performing and will have an adverse impact on outcomes. Targets are being missed and there is a high risk of missing final targets.

	Measure name	Previous	Current	Direction of Travel (↓ ↔ ↑)
Improved educational attainment				
1	% of children achieving a good level of development at the Early Years Foundation Stage	Annual Reported Q3	N/A	N/A
2	% achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths	R Annual 2012	R Annual 2013	↓
3	% disadvantaged pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths	New CTB measure	R Annual Reported Q3	
4	% of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	A Nov, Dec Jan 12/13	A Nov, Dec, Jan 13/14	↔
5	% of schools and colleges judged by Ofsted to be Outstanding/Good	G	G	↓
6	Young inspector's survey	NEW	N/A	N/A
Protecting vulnerable children				
7	Average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted	G	A	↓
8	Percentage of referrals of children's social care initial assessments undertaken within 10 working days of referral (cumulative)	Indicator to be deleted		
8	Replacement Indicator: Percentage of children's social care assessments within 45 working days of start (N14 variant) (cumulative)	A	A	↑
9	% of child protection cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed	G	G	↔
10	Percentage of referrals of children in need that led to initial assessments (cumulative)	Indicator to be deleted		
10	Replacement Indicator: Percentage of referrals of children leading to the provision of a social care service (cumulative)	R	A	↑

	Measure name	Previous	Current	Direction of Travel (↓ ↔ ↑)
11	% of cases where children became subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time where domestic violence was a factor	A	A	↔
12	Reduction in the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10-17	R	G	↑
13	% of young people receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody	G	G	↔
14	Re-offending rates amongst young people		N/A	N/A
15	% of young offenders in employment, education or training	A	A	↓
16	Difference in the rate (per 10,000 population) of emergency hospital admissions caused by injuries in children from the 20% most deprived and the 80% least deprived areas	New CTB measure	G 2012/13 (Reported Q2)	↑
Protecting vulnerable children continued				
17	Children's and families views about the difference that key professionals have made, how well they have been treated and how this has fed into the development of the service	NEW	TBC	
Early help and improving life chances				
18	The number of disadvantaged 2 year olds placed in early education/child care	A	R	↓
19	% of identified young carers supported	NEW	NEW	N/A
20	% of children with identified disabilities supported	NEW	N/A	N/A
21	Proportion of children who live in relative low income	A	Reported in Q2	
22	The number of people in employment (aged 16-64)	A	A	↑
23	% of under 5 year olds from most deprived areas registered with Children's Centres	G	G	↑
24	Troubled families programme is achieving annual payment by results targets	R	R	↔
25	% of early years and childcare settings judged by Ofsted to be Outstanding/Good	G	G	↔
26	% of participants reporting improved aspirations and self esteem	NEW	NEW	N/A
27	% of parents reporting improved parenting skills	NEW	Every 6 months Q2 and Q4	N/A
28	Young carers feel supported	NEW	NEW	N/A
29	Children with disabilities views about the support they have received	Every 6 months Q2 and Q4	G Q2	N/A
Being healthy and positive				
30	% of mothers smoking at time of delivery	NEW	N/A	N/A
31	% of mothers initiating breastfeeding	NEW	Disaggregated data not yet available	N/A
32	% of mothers still breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks	New	A	↑

	Measure name	Previous	Current	Direction of Travel (↓ ↔ ↑)
33	Year R (ages 4-5) to achieve a % year-on-year reduction in obesity prevalence	G	G Reported Q3	↑
34	Year 6 (ages 10-11) to achieve a % year-on-year reduction in obesity prevalence	G	G Reported Q3	↑
35	Reduction in the number of conceptions per 1,000 teenage girls (aged 15-17 years)	G	G	↑
36	% of children and young people reporting a reduction in alcohol and drugs usage 3 months following the end of an intervention	NEW	Baseline year	N/A
37	Improved mental health early intervention services measured by the Strengths & Difficulties (SDQ) scores for children and young receiving a direct intervention by the CHUMS Service	G Q2	G Q4	N/A
38	% LAC who have had their annual health assessment	A	A	↑
39	% LAC up to date on immunisations/vaccinations	G 2011/12 outturn	A 2012/13 outturn	↓
40	Improved mental health for LAC as measured by SDQ score	R	A	↑
41	LAC say that the health services they receive are meeting their needs	NEW	TBC	
42	Health and wellbeing of children and young people as measured through the Schools Health Education Unit (SHEU) health related behaviour survey (Balding survey)	NEW	Expected Q1 / 2	

Priority 1: Improved educational attainment											
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn			Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	RAG rating
			National 12/13	Group 12/13	CB 12/13						
1	% of children achieving a good level of development at the Early Years Foundation Stage	H	52% (2013 outturn)	56% (2013 outturn)	49% 2013 outturn	65% refers to old framework			49%		N/A
	Comment	<p>The new Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) was introduced in September 2012 and the first assessments took place this summer. The new Profile's 'emerging', 'expected' and 'exceeding' scale is very different to the previous Profile's 117 point scale and the number of early learning goals has been reduced. This has led to a break in the time series as results will not be comparable between 2012 and 2013.</p> <p>The 2013 EYFSP Central Bedfordshire outturn is 49%, below the National Average of 52% and Statistical Neighbour Average of 56%. Central Bedfordshire is ranked 9/11 against statistical neighbours and 95/152 against all Local Authorities, placing Central Bedfordshire in the 3rd Quartile.</p> <p>The 65% target refers to the old framework and will need to be reviewed. The 2013 EYFSP is however a baseline year and will help to determine the revised target.</p>									
2	% achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths	H	57.6% Central Bedfordshire England Average: 59.4%	59.4% Central Bedfordshire (National ranking position) 91/151	57.7% Central Bedfordshire England Average 59.2%	In top 25% of local authorities					R
	Comment	<p>Final results show that 57.7% of young people achieved 5 or more A* - C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths. This is an increase of 0.1% compared to last year and a drop of 23 places in the ranking of English local authorities. In 2012 our schools were ranked 91 out of 151 and these results rank us at 114 out of 151. The England Average was 59.2%. The highest average within our statistical neighbours group is 67.1% and the lowest is 56.7%. The statistical neighbour average was 62.1%. Within this grouping Central Bedfordshire is ranked 10 out of 11.</p>									
3	% disadvantaged pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths	H	29.7% Central Bedfordshire SN Average: 33.7% England Average: 38.5%	33.7% Central Bedfordshire SN Average: 35.9% England Average: 40.9%	31.1% Central Bedfordshire SN Average: 35.9% England Average: 40.9%	At or Above the national average					R

Priority 1: Improved educational attainment										
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn		Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	RAG rating
			National 12/13	Group 12/13						
			Final figures for 2013 show that 31.1% of disadvantaged children achieved 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths. A red RAG rating has been given as Central Bedfordshire is below the England average. However there has been an increase of 1.4% increase compared to last year (29.7%).							
			The 2013 CBC gap between disadvantaged and other pupils is 31.6% this is higher than the national gap of 26.9%.							
4	% of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	L	5.8%	5.6% Regional	4.6%	4.9%	5.1%	4.3%	*4.3%	A
	Comment	<p>The figure reported in Quarter 4 is calculated annually using the average value for the months of November, December and January combined.</p> <p>Central Bedfordshire continues to perform well (4.3%) and is performing better than the national (5.3%) and regional (5.1%) average.</p> <p>The number of young people who are NEET in Central Bedfordshire has decreased since 2012 in line with the national trend.</p> <p>An Amber rating has been given as the target of being in the top quartile has been missed by 0.2%. Central Bedfordshire remains in the 2nd quartile of all Local Authorities and is currently 43rd out of 152 Authorities. To be in the top quartile Central Bedfordshire needs to be in the top 38 performing authorities.</p> <p>Planned Actions:</p> <p>A NEET Improvement Plan is being implemented throughout 2014 with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing more work to match the needs/aspirations of the NEET group in relation to training, current provision and commissions. • The dissemination of Education, Employment and Training (EET) opportunities to NEET young people in a way that best meets their needs (including website and Twitter alerts). • Improving the information, advice and guidance given over the telephone. • Home visits to target those NEET's that do not currently want support from the commissioned provider. • Tracking and analysis of leavers under the Raising Participation Age agenda. 								
		* Unvalidated data provided by DFE								
5	% of schools and colleges judged by Ofsted to be Outstanding/Good	H	N/A	N/A	80%	79%	82%	84%	83%	G
					Improving trajectory – every school a good school					

Priority 1: Improved educational attainment											
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn			Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	RAG rating
			National 12/13	Group 12/13	CB 12/13						
6.	Young Inspectors Survey - measure title to be confirmed					Baseline Year		See commentary below			N/A
			<p>The major focus of work this year has been to carry out the Youth Audit which was presented to the Children's Trust Board.</p> <p>In line with the Positive for Youth agenda, the Council and partners were inspected as part of a Youth Audit by young people. The Audit concentrated on our 'Youth Offer' and involved reviewing existing strategies, action plans, needs assessments, consultation responses and commissioning specifications. Agencies involved in the Youth Audit included Central Bedfordshire Council, Health, Voluntary Sector, and Commissioned Providers.</p> <p>All partners have submitted their action plans in response to the Youth Audit. These were submitted to the young auditors at the end of March in preparation for re-inspection in June.</p>								

Protecting vulnerable children													
Ref.	Title	Target 13/14	2012/13				2013/14				RAG rating		
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
7	Average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted	Target (Good is Low) Actual	631	624	616	608	593	578	562	547	547	547	A
	Comment	<p>The provisional outturn for the average time from entering care and moving in with adoptive family for the 3 years ending 31/03/14 was 4 days above the nationally set target threshold, 49 days below our 2012/13 outturn and 79 days below the comparator average for 2012/13. Although there has been a small decline in performance in quarter 4 (as some longer term cases come through the system), we have improved on last year and continue to compare well to other local authorities. With more adoptions planned (and shorter timescales in most cases) we expect to continue to improve in future.</p> <p>Our continued performance close to the threshold demonstrates that children are placed in their permanent home without undue delay which is particularly important in enabling very young children to form positive emotional attachments.</p>											

Protecting vulnerable children										
Ref.	Title	2012/13				Target 13/14	2013/14			RAG rating
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Q1	Q2	Q3	
		This indicator was introduced by the Department for Education (DfE) based on a rolling 3 year cohort. Targets are set nationally by the DfE. Because this is a rolling 3 year average the figure includes activity from previous years.								

Protecting vulnerable children continued											
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn			Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	RAG rating
			National 12/13	Group 12/13	CB 12/13						
8	Percentage of referrals of children's social care initial assessments undertaken within 10 working days of referral (cumulative)*	H	N/A	N/A	84.7% Provisional	85%	87.0%	80.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Comment	Following the Munro Review of Safeguarding and publication of Working Together Statutory Guidance we have implemented a single assessment process. Initial Assessments are no longer completed and data for this indicator is no longer being produced. The replacement indicator is below.									
	Replacement Indicator: Percentage of children's social care assessments within 45 days of start (N14 variant) (cumulative)	H	N/A	N/A	N/A	90.0%	N/A	N/A	80.7%	84.4%	A
		Following the Munro review of Safeguarding and the publication of Working Together Statutory Guidance, a new system of single assessment replaces the previously measured initial and core assessments. A high target has been proposed for this indicator, reflecting ambitious yet realistic expectations. Although this level of performance was not achieved in the provisional outturn, this is good performance and the Service is confident of future improvement. Feedback from 6 pilot authorities in 2012/13 returned an average of 78% within 45 days, our performance has exceeded this. Initial and Core assessments have now been replaced with a new single assessment process. This indicator demonstrates that assessments are completed without delay which leads to timely identification of appropriate services for children in need.									
9	% of child protection cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed	H	N/A	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	G
10	Percentage of referrals of children in	H	N/A	N/A	82.3%	75%	79.8%	77.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Protecting vulnerable children continued											
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn			Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	RAG rating
			National 12/13	Group 12/13	CB 12/13						
	need that led to initial assessments (cumulative)										
	Comment	Following the Munro Review of Safeguarding and publication of Working Together Statutory Guidance we have implemented a single assessment process, Initial Assessments are no longer completed and this indicator is no longer recorded in this way or monitored. The replacement indicator is below.									
	Replacement Indicator: Percentage of referrals of children leading to the provision of a social care service (cumulative)	H	N/A	N/A	N/A	75%	N/A	N/A	49.4	72.5	A
		Following the Munro review of Safeguarding and the publication of Working Together Statutory Guidance, a new system of single assessment replaces the previously measured initial and core assessments. This means that new systems have been put in place and referrals are now progressing to a single assessment process. This new process was implemented mid year and early activity with a new format for identifying referrals resulted in recording errors leading to very low reported performance in Quarter 3. All issues identified as contributing to this problem were addressed leading to the provisional outturn close to target. Although defined differently, performance for this new indicator is expected to be similar to the indicator it replaces, so the same target has been proposed.									
		This indicator reflects the proportion of referrals that go on to further social care input, in most cases this will be to start an assessment. Detailed analysis of completed referrals has shown that assessments are started where needed and continue to focus correctly on the right children who need our services.									
11	% of cases where children became subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time where domestic violence was a factor	L	N/A	N/A	N/A	Year on year reduction from 64%	73% (8/11)	62% (5/8)	64% (9/14)	62% (5/8)	A
	Comment	Data relates to the incidence of domestic abuse (either currently or historically within the family context) included by the Conference Chair in their summary of concerns. As such domestic abuse is not the only, nor necessarily the precipitating factor leading to the child becoming subject to a child protection plan on a second or subsequent occasion. Therefore the data needs to be treated with caution in respect of demonstrating performance in relation to the success of interventions.									

Protecting vulnerable children continued											
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn			Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	RAG rating
			National 12/13	Group 12/13	CB 12/13						
12	Reduction in the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10-17	H	TBC	TBC	-31.3%	-5%	-5.3%	-61.9%	30%	2013/14: Reduction 9.4%	G
	Comment	<p>The number of young people entering the criminal justice system in quarter four has risen from 11 in the comparable quarter of 2012/13, to 15. (Q4 38.4%).</p> <p>However, this is an annual target which is subject to quarterly fluctuations. A green rating has been given as the number of young people entering the criminal justice system has reduced significantly, year on year, as a result of better identification and targeted early intervention through Triage. The year end position for Central Bedfordshire is an overall reduction of 9.4%.compared to the target of a 5% reduction.</p>									
13	% of young people receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody	L	TBC	TBC	3.03%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	G
		No young people in Central Bedfordshire received a custodial sentence in 2013/14.									
14	Re-offending rates amongst young people					TBC		32% Validated 2010 /11	Local Data Jan – Mar 13 22.58 %	29.9% Validated April 2011 – March 2012	N/A
		Validated national data in this area is subject to a significant delay. Validated information from YJB for 2011/12 which relates to Bedfordshire confirms a re-offending rate of 29.95 which is the lowest in the eastern region and significantly lower than the national average.									
15	% of young offenders in employment, education or training (ETE)	H	N/A	N/A	N/A	80%	78.57%	75%	73.33 %	64.29%	A
	Comment	<p>The number of young people in ETE this quarter is again reduced in comparison to quarter three and to the same quarter in 2012/13. 14 young people whose order ended in the period were not in ETE; 7 were of statutory school age and 7 were above statutory school age. This is a reflection of the difficult economic climate, particularly for more challenging young people; a significant number of young people have actively resisted all efforts to facilitate progress in this area. BYOS staff continue to work with schools and providers to ensure that young people have opportunities. The end of year position is that 47 out of 65 young people were in suitable ETE on the last day of their order – 72.3%</p>									

Priority 2: Protecting vulnerable children											
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn			Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	RAG rating
			National 12/13	Group 12/13	CB 12/13						
16	Difference in the rate (per 10,000 population) of emergency hospital admissions caused by injuries in children from the 20% most deprived and the 80% least deprived areas	Low	N/A	N/A	(2010/11) 28	Year on year reduction from baseline in 2010/11	N/A	(2011/12) 20.32 (2012/13) 4.78	N/A	N/A	G
	Comment	<p>New measure.</p> <p>In the 3-year rolling average per 10,000 population for 2008-10 in Central Bedfordshire, compared to the 80% least deprived, the rate of emergency hospital admissions caused by injuries was significantly higher among children from the 20% most deprived areas. Actual difference in the rate for 2010/11 was 28. Latest data indicates a significant reduction in the difference in the rates for both 2011/12 and 2012/13. Recent release of Local Super Output Area data will enable more detailed interrogation of the significance and causes of the reduction. Analysis available early May 2014.</p>									
17	Children's and families views about the difference that key professionals have made, how well they have been treated and how this has fed into the development of the service	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Narrative		N/A
	Comment	<p>Whilst audits tell us that there have been improvements in recording the child's views, and identify some excellent examples, practice is not consistent and there are improvements to be made.</p> <p>A questionnaire has been devised to collate the views of young people on the services they have received and to identify what, if any, impact this has had for them or their family. The questionnaire is to be sent out to young people as part of the monthly management audit.</p>									

Priority 3: Early help and improving life chances											RAG rating
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn			Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
			National 12/13	Group 12/13	CB 12/13						
18	The number of disadvantaged 2 year olds placed in early education/child care	H	N/A	N/A	N/A	Revised Target: 556 by March 2014	250		309	364	R
	Comment	<p>Data available termly.</p> <p>Figure reported in Q1: 250 relates to the period 1 April 13 – 31 July 13 Figure reported in Q3: 309 relates to period 1 April 13 – 30 November 13 Figure reported in Q4: 364 relates to period 1 April 13 – 31 March 14</p> <p>DFE now estimate the number of eligible children to be 556. The target for this measure has therefore been revised (from 449 to 556 by March 2014) to reflect this change. (It is expected that future DFE estimates may also impact on this measure).</p> <p>An red rating has been given for two reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A higher target now applies. • Over 600 families have been checked as eligible but take up of places is still slow. When contacted parents are opting to defer the place until their child is slightly older. <p>Planned actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility criteria have been reviewed so that more children can access funding. A self referral process has also been introduced. This has seen a significant increase in the number of families applying for funding. • Looking to gain approval to share the data sent through by Department of Works and Pensions with our commissioned Children's Centres to enable them to directly contact the parents. 									
19	% of identified young carers supported	H	N/A	N/A	N/A	New Measure		94%*	96%	96%	N/A
		Q4: Currently 516 of 536 young carers are receiving support.									
20	% of children with identified disabilities supported	High	N/A	N/A	N/A	New measure					N/A
		Work is in train to develop this measure – see Measure 29.									
21.	Proportion of children who live in relative low income	Low			As at Aug 2010 12.8%	10% by 2020				As at 31 st Aug 2011 12.6%	A

Priority 3: Early help and improving life chances											RAG rating
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn			Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
			National 12/13	Group 12/13	CB 12/13						
22	The number of people in employment (aged 16-64)	H	Sept 12: (70.7%)		Sept 12: 122,700 (74.3%)	5% above national average	Dec 12: 122,600 (74.2%)	Mar 13: 123,500 (74.8%)	Jun 13: 124,800 (75.8%)	Sept 13: 125,200 (76.1%)	A
<p>Comment</p> <p>This indicator is part of the official labour market statistics provided by the Office of National Statistics and is the most reliable data available. However, this indicator uses an average for the year to the close of the quarter and the data is only available at least six months in arrears. There is also a confidence interval of approximately 3% at the local level, which must be taken into account on any findings.</p> <p>The number of working age people in employment has increased by 400 people in Quarter 4. This equates to an employment rate of 76.1%, an increase from the previous quarter. The employment rate of the working age population is higher than England (71.4%), the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership area (SEMLEP) (75.4%) and the East of England region (75.1%). The gap between Central Bedfordshire and England now stands at 4.7 percentage points, slightly below our target of remaining 5 percentage points above the national rate. The gap is continuing to narrow, but the number of people of working age in employment would have to increase by approximately 550 to meet the target.</p> <p>Planned Actions for Qtr 4:</p> <p>Delivery of European Social Fund programmes, Work and Enterprise Clubs, Business Timebank, key business accounts programme and inward investment. Leading activity in new South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership European Structural and Investment Fund plan to steer funding to local needs over the EU plan period 2014-2020. Continue monitoring of employment rate for key groups.</p>											
23	% of under 5 year olds from most deprived areas registered with Children's Centres	H	N/A	N/A	N/A	65%	60.6%	66.9%	69.5%	74%	G
24	Troubled families programme is achieving annual payment by results	H	N/A	N/A	N/A	100% of families	30/305 families	30/305 families	41/305 families	41/305 families	R

Priority 3: Early help and improving life chances											
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn		Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	RAG rating	
			National 12/13	Group 12/13							CB 12/13
	(PBR) targets				worked with by April 2015	9.8%*	9.8%	13.4%	13.4%		
	Comment	<p>This is a new measure which has been established to monitor progress towards the payment by results target. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) communicated in November 2013 their expectation that at least 30% of families are turned around by February 14. In order to claim a family has been turned around, improvements have to have been sustained. For example, education outcomes require 3 full terms' (1 year) sustained improvement to qualify for a PBR claim.</p> <p>Local targets have been re-adjusted to reflect DCLG expectations. This means that the following targets need to be achieved: 30% by February 2014, 60% by September 2014, 100% by April 2015</p> <p>Commissioned providers to support the delivery of our local programme have now been in place since October 2013 and this means that work with families is accelerating.</p> <p>The next PBR claim window is May 2014.</p>									
25	% of early years and childcare settings judged by Ofsted to be Outstanding/Good	H	82%	86%	89%	Improving trajectory – every setting a good setting	91%	94%	92%	90%	G
			74%	77%	79%		83%	83%	85%	85%	
26	% of participants reporting improved aspirations and self esteem	H	N/A	N/A	N/A	New measure	96.2%	100%		85%	New Measure
	Comment	<p>A delay in the start of Q3 programmes after the summer holidays resulted in programmes completing in Q4 (rather than Q3).</p> <p>The overall Q4 percentage represents 56 participants across 5 different schools and is lower than previous quarters. Overall performance is good, however the rates for one particular programme have had an impact. This will be followed up in respect of the individual programme and school.</p>									
27.	% of parents reporting improved parenting skills	H	N/A	N/A	N/A	New measure		92%		See below	
		<p>A new online tool has been developed to make it easier for parents to respond to surveys and this is being tested out in Q1 of 2014/2015.</p>									
28	Young carers feel supported	H	N/A	N/A	N/A	New measure	Reported from Q2	100%	75%	100%	New Measure

Priority 3: Early help and improving life chances										
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn		Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	RAG rating
			National 12/13	Group 12/13						
		The 'percentage of young carers receiving one to one support who report that the 'Carers in Bedfordshire' project was worth going to' is to be used as the measure of whether young carers feel supported. This is one element of support offered.								
		This relates to small number of young carers who receive one to one support. The cohort of young carers that have received this support is lower than the 70 anticipated. This element of support is being reviewed and developed currently.								
29	Children with disabilities views about the support they have received		N/A	N/A	N/A	New measure			Narrative	G
		<p>Q4 update.</p> <p>The focus for Q4 has been on the planning of a project to ensure that we have an effective and meaningful participation for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The project has four key stages: Project Management; Research Phase; Development Phase; Validation Phase: The project management phase is complete and the research phase is currently being progressed.</p> <p>The planned outcome is that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a structure for participation will operate in Central Bedfordshire that will facilitate the effective and meaningful participation of children and young people with SEND in the design and development of services across education, health, social care and leisure a sustainable model will be implemented which will enable children and young people with SEND to be involved in key decisions about the planning and delivery of services which affect their lives. the project is monitored by the Support and Aspiration group which is driving forward the SEND reforms. The reforms are part of the Children and Families Act 2014 where the need to involve children and young people with SEND in the radical redesign of SEND policy and provision is stated. <p>A copy of the project outline can be obtained from Ken.Harvey@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</p>								

Priority 4: Being healthy and positive											RAG rating
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn		Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
			National 12/13	Group 12/13	CB 12/13						
30	% of mothers smoking at time of delivery	L	12.9%	12.8% East of England	BHT: 11.3% L & D: 21.9% Other Hospitals: 8.5%	15%	(Reported Q4) % total at Q3: BHT 12.5% L&D 20.1% Other Hospitals N/A				N/A
31	% of mothers initiating breastfeeding	H	74.7%	75.9% East of England	BHT: 83.4% L & D: 69.0% Other Hospitals: 76.1%	80%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
32	% of mothers still breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks	H	46.9%	48% East of England	44.7%	48%	45.3%	46.9%	43.9%	N/A	A
33	Year R (ages 4-5) to achieve a 0.1% year-on-year reduction in obesity prevalence for the 2011/12 baseline of 7.4%	L	9.3% (Acad Year 12/13)	8.1% (Acad Year 12/13)	6.6% (Acad Year 12/13)	7.3% (Acad Year 12/13) 7.2%	N/A	N/A	6.6% (Acad Year 12/13)		G
	Comment	Due to changes in data collection on a CCG commissioner basis, disaggregated data by hospital trust has only just become available as a % total for Q3, with data still incomplete for 'other hospitals'. The number of pregnant women accessing the CBC Stop Smoking Service has increased since introducing a new, targeted programme to work with pregnant women who smoke in areas of high prevalence – Houghton Regis, Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard. The conversion rate from attendance to quit has increased significantly, with current figures of 90% women quitting after 4 weeks. Latest figures also indicate an increase in women signing up to the long term Smoking in Pregnancy Programme which will contribute to a reduction in the rate of smoking at time of delivery (SATOD).									
	Comment	Due to changes in data collection on a CCG commissioner basis, disaggregated data by hospital trust will not be available until May 2014.									
	Comment	Q1, Q2 & Q3 local data – provided by the Child Health Information (SystemOne) – indicates a slight increase in performance on 2012/13 and places Central Bedfordshire on an Amber RAG rating, as the projected outturn for 2013/14 is 45.4%.									

Priority 4: Being healthy and positive											RAG rating
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn		Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
			National 12/13	Group 12/13	CB 12/13						
34	Year 6 (ages 10-11) to achieve a 0.2% year-on-year reduction in obesity prevalence from the 2011/12 baseline of 15.8%	L	18.9% Acad Year 12/13	17.0% (Acad Year 12/13)	14.7% (Acad Year 12/13)	15.6% (Acad Year 12/13)	N/A	N/A	14.7% (Acad Year 12/13)		G
	Comment Average prevalence of statistical neighbours = 7.08%										
35	Reduction in the number of conceptions per 1,000 teenage girls (aged 15-17 years)	Low	27.7 2012	23.2 (2012) East of England	32.5 (2009)	2013: 30.5 against 2009 baseline (reported Q1 2014/15)	N/A	N/A	N/A	26.7 (2012) ONS data	G
	Comment Average prevalence of statistical neighbours = 14.56%										
	In addition to the slight reduction in the u18 conception rate, between 2011 and 2012 there was a 38.7% reduction in conceptions occurring in the under 16s with rates falling from 6.7 to 4.2. In comparison to its statistical neighbors, Central Bedfordshire had the smallest reduction between 2011 (rate of 27.2) and 2012 (26.7). A Statistical Neighbour Comparative Analysis was completed in Q3 & Q4 which highlighted the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Bedfordshire compares favourably as much of the 'best practice' is being undertaken locally; The key areas of difference were: support for parents to tackle SRE; presence of the Family Nurse Partnership; additional support for young people with learning disabilities, and care leavers. 										
36	% of children and young people reporting a reduction in alcohol and drugs usage 3 months following the end of an intervention	H	N/A	N/A	Q4: 59.3%	Baseline to be set in 2013/14	59.3% (Q4 12/13)	92% (Q1 2013/14)	93% (Q2 2013/14)	67% (Q3 2013/14)	N/A
	Comment Data (time lag of 3 months) is based on the total number of young people in receipt of an intervention/treatment programme for alcohol and/or drugs usage and who achieve all goals set and complete treatment with a positive discharge/exit – provided by the locally commissioned Drug & Alcohol Services (Public Health and Children's Services) for children and young people. The average quarterly % for the past 4 quarters is 78%.										

Priority 4: Being healthy and positive											RAG rating
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn		Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q4	
			National 12/13	Group 12/13	CB 12/13						
37	Improved mental health early intervention services measured by the Strengths & Difficulties (SDQ)scores for children and young receiving a direct intervention by the CHUMS Service	H	N/A	N/A	Q4: 77%	75%		81%		79%	G
38	% LAC who have had their annual health assessment (rolling year)	H	86.3% 2011/12	84.3% SN 2011/12	100%	77.7%	89.9%	94.1%	95.4%	A	
	<p>Comment</p> <p>Performance has improved each quarter but is still below target of 100% set for 2013-2014. The year end performance was above national average and was a significant improvement comparing last year's outturn. Out of area review health assessments* and young people who refused repeatedly to take part in health assessments have been the reasons for not meeting 100% performance target.</p> <p>*Due to difficulties in arranging health assessments where the children and young people are placed outside Central Bedfordshire Council. CBC Clinical Commissioning Group has been made aware of the challenges and remedial actions have been put in place. The position is expected to improve.</p>										
39	% Looked After Children up to date on immunisations / vaccinations	High	83.1% 2011/12	72.0% SN 2011/12	100%	90.2% 2012/13 Outturn				A	
	<p>Whilst the target has not been met, performance is good. From April 2013 immunisations and vaccinations have been recorded within / as part of the health assessment which is expected to contribute to performance improvement.</p> <p>In addition, electronic case files are now used by Children's Services Social Care to enable the closer monitoring of up to date immunisations and vaccinations.</p>										
40	Improved mental health for LAC as measured by SDQ score (average SDQ score)	L	13.8 2011/12	13.7 2011/12	14.7 2012/13 outturn	13	14.2	15.1	14.4	14.2	A
	<p>Comment</p> <p>The average SDQ score has improved but remains above target of 13 for 2013-2014. A multi-agency Task and Finish Group has been set up to address this matter. Children's social care team has undertaken a "deep-dive audit" in order to understand the underlying causes.</p> <p>The completion for SDQ was 100% for 2013-2014.</p>										

Priority 4: Being healthy and positive											
Ref.	Title	Good is	Outturn			Target 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	RAG rating
			National 12/13	Group 12/13	CB 12/13						
41	LAC say that health services they receive are meeting their needs	H	N/A	N/A	N/A	New Measure	N/A	N/A	N/A	87%	N/A
	Comment	<p>The Health Assessment Service User Questionnaire aims to provide feedback from children and young people who are in care and receiving regular health assessments . For children too young or unable for any reason to complete the questionnaire, their foster carer is asked to complete it on their behalf.</p> <p>Questionnaires completed between 9/10/13 and 4/12/13: 42 respondents (87%) reported that they had got the help they needed. (The remaining 13% includes a number that did not respond to this question.)</p>									
42	Health and wellbeing of children and young people as measured through the Schools & Students Health Education Unit (SHEU) Health Related Behaviour & Perceptions Survey (Balding Survey)		N/A	N/A	N/A	New Measure				Expected Q1/2	N/A

Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 16 September 2014
Subject: Annual Report for the Adoption Service and Fostering Service and Private Fostering
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: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Gerard Jones, Assistant Director Children's Services Operations
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

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

The Children and Young People's Plan 2013-2015 Priority – Protecting Vulnerable Children

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

Private Fostering is a statutory service as defined by the Guidance.

Financial:

1. Adoption and Fostering within Children's Services has an annual budget of £8,044,710 million. There are no new financial considerations arising from the annual reports.

Legal:

2. 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:

3. 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):

4. There are no staffing issues in relation to the reports.

Equalities/Human Rights:

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

Community Safety:

6. There are no community safety issues.

Sustainability:

7. There are no sustainability issues.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee comments on the statutory reports.

Background

8. The Children Act 2004, Care Standards Act 2000 and associated Relevant Regulations and National Minimum Standards require Local Authority Adoption and Fostering Services 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.
9. The Adoption, Fostering and Private Fostering services continued to be a shared service with Bedford Borough Council until the end of December 2013. This was hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council. Therefore, the Annual reports contain information activity in respect of both Councils up till the end of December 2013. Thereafter the reports focus on activity as a single Central Bedfordshire Council service.

Adoption Services

10. An Annual Report will be produced by the end of May each year covering the preceding April to March period. In addition, a six-monthly briefing update will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel.
11. In 2013–14, there was an increase in the number of children whose cases were presented to the Agency Decision Maker for a recommendation as to whether adoption should be the plan for the child. This was for 48 children, an increase from 41 from the two authorities in the previous 12 months. 29 households were approved as adopters, an increase from 22 in 2012/13 and matches of 20 children to adopters were made.
12. 10 Adoption Orders were granted in respect of looked after children in Central Bedfordshire Council, with a further 20 being granted Special Guardianship. The number of adoptions was an increase from 6 the previous year, and the overall number of children where a permanent legal option was secured via adoption or Special Guardianship increased from 18 in 2012/13 to 30 in 2013/14.
13. As of 31 March 2014, 12 adopted children and their families were in receipt of support. In addition contact plans were being made on behalf of 92 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.
14. There were 17 referrals from adult adoptees and their birth relatives, a slight drop from 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.
15. As part of the continued 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' on performance for each Council, changes to adopter recruitment processes 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

16. A report to Members is required at three monthly intervals. This is achieved by production of an Annual Report to this Committee in September 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.

17. 224 children were placed in full-time in-house foster placements at the end of March 2014, of whom 85 were looked after by Central Bedfordshire Council. Across both Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council up to December 2013, there were 381 referrals for new or a change of placement, 85 children were placed with carers approved by Central Bedfordshire Council, 109 placed in Independent Fostering Agencies, 8 placed with other Local Authorities and 22 placed in residential units.
18. The number of enquiries from members of the public interested in becoming foster carers dropped in 2013/14 by 29% from 2012/13. All enquiries received prompt information and a visit from a social worker. 164 households made formal application to become a foster carer 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 213 applications received in 2012/13.
19. Over the course of the year 77 training activities were provided for foster carers on 41 topics, 587 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

20. The joint service ended on 31 December 2013. This had little impact on the Central Bedfordshire Private Fostering Service. Raising awareness of private fostering has become more straightforward because there is now a smaller area to cover. Networking with partner agencies and other professionals is therefore less time consuming.
21. The number of notifications has gradually increased since 2006 when the requirement was first enacted and levels are now broadly similar to those of comparator authorities. Awareness- raising activities and advertising campaigns continue and there is a good level of awareness amongst local professionals. However National campaigns have stopped, as have campaigns through BAAF, because of lack of funding. Therefore there is more pressure on Local Authorities to intensify their own campaigns of raising awareness.
22. The new client database in Central Bedfordshire has now been configured to enable referrals to be made easily and to give management information to support timely allocation of work. There are also contingency plans in place if the lead worker is absent for any unplanned reason.
23. Central Bedfordshire has continued 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.

Shared Service Arrangement

24. In March 2012 following the annual review of the Shared Service Level Agreement it was decided to end the Shared Service Arrangement. This decision was subsequently reviewed in detail in Autumn 2012 with the decision being made for the disaggregation of the service to be effective from 1 January 2014. A project board comprising staff in both councils was established to plan the arrangements for January 2014 and beyond. This planning process involved consultation with key stakeholders and staff to ensure that an effective adoption and fostering service that meets the needs of children was maintained and developed.

Appendices:

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

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Appendix A

Adoption Agency

Annual Report

**For the period
2013 - 2014**

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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 This report describes the activity of Central Bedfordshire Council's Adoption Agency during the period 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014, noting their achievements, clarifying the remit and focus of their work and identifying recommendations for the development of the service. It also reflects that during the period of the report, from 1st April to 31st December 2013, the Council's adoption service operated as a shared service with Bedford Borough Council.
- 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.

1.1 STAFFING / SERVICE STRUCTURE

- 1.1.1 The joint Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Adoption and Permanence Support Team was made up of the following staff until 31st December 2013:

- 1 x full time Team Manager
- 1 x full time Deputy Team Manager
- 4 x Senior Practitioners (3 full time equivalent)
- 8 x Social Workers (6.78 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

As of 31st March 2014 the Adoption Team of Central Bedfordshire Council [as a single adoption agency] is made up of the following staffing compliment:

- 1x full time Team Manager
- 3x Senior Practitioners (2 full time equivalent)
- 4x Social Workers (3.5 full time equivalent)
- 2x Social Work Assistants (1 full time equivalent)
- 1x Adopter Stage One Project Worker
- 0.5x Administrator for Letter-box contact
- 1x Administrator

- 1.1.2 The service has remained largely fully staffed this year.
- 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. The team carries out the full functions of an adoption agency, with social workers carrying a range of adoption work, including adopters' assessments, family finding and work with adopted adults and their birth relatives.

1.1.3.1 The adoption agency is supported by specialist staff who work across the Adoption and Fostering service area. While a shared service, these staff included 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. Since the disaggregation, the Adoption and Fostering Service has retained a Resources Team and a newly formed Marketing Team.

1.2 THE ADOPTION PANEL

1.2.1 The adoption panel has for the time being remained a shared panel between Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council with separate decision-makers from each authority.

1.2.2 The Adoption Panel usually meets every month of the year, with extraordinary panels as and when required. There were 5 extra panels during 2013/2014 and the panel therefore met on 17 occasions.

1.2.3 The Adoption Panel considers applications from prospective adopters and makes recommendations as to their approval. Panel also considers the proposed match between all children with adopters, making recommendations on any matters brought before them. On 1st September 2012 amended Regulations determined that where a child’s case was before the Court in respect of Court Proceedings, the adoption panel would no longer consider whether adoption should be the plan for the child, and this decision would instead be made by the Agency Decision Maker without a recommendation from the Adoption Panel.

1.3 ADOPTION PANEL MEMBERSHIP

1.3.1 As at 31st March 2013 the Adoption Panel central list was as follows:

Panel Chair	Independent
Independent	Adoptive Mother
Independent	Adoptive Father
Independent	Birth Parent of an Adopted Child
Independent	Gypsy and Traveller Educational Consultant
Social Work Member	Fostering Team Manager, Bedford Borough
Social Work Member	Team Manager, Children with Disabilities Team (BBC)
Social Work Member	Social Worker, Adoption Team CBC
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 AND AGENCY DECISION MAKER ACTIVITY

- 1.4.1 In 2013/2014 the Adoption Panel met 17 times and considered one plan for a relinquished baby.
- 1.4.2 Between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2014 the Agency Decision Makers decided that adoption should be the plan for 91 children. Of these 48 were from Central Bedfordshire and 43 were from Bedford Borough. This compares to 41 in 2012/2013 and is an increase for the fourth year in succession.
- 1.4.3 In relation to approvals, the Panel recommended that 29 households were suitable to adopt a child. This compares to 22 households in 2012/2013. All applicants attended the panel.
- 1.4.4 In terms of matching, the panel recommended that 48 children should be placed with particular adopters. Of these 20 were from Central Bedfordshire and 28 from Bedford Borough. This compares to 21 children in 2012/2013 from Central Bedfordshire Council.

1.5 PANEL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 1.5.1 The Adoption 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 agenda, it has been a challenge to find time for the 'bite-size' training on panel days. However, a 'bite size session' was held in May 2013 on 'Loving Waters', a technique demonstrated at Preparation Group to adopters as a means of understanding attachment difficulties.
- 1.5.2 All Panel Members had an annual appraisal where their personal training needs are discussed and considered.
- 1.5.3 A full day's training was held in November 2013, which looked at the national reforms to adopter recruitment and planning for children.

1.6 PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON ADOPTION

- 1.6.1 Central Bedfordshire Council has a single point of contact to the service through a local rate telephone line. Following the Statutory Guidance on Adoption published in July 2013, social workers from the team meet to share information with enquirers within 5 working days.
- 1.6.2 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. Since July 2013 these have been held monthly. 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 2013/2014, there were 48 children from Central Bedfordshire referred to the service for adoption. In the same period there were 43 children from Bedford Borough referred to the service .
- 2.0.2 During 2013/2014 a further 58 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. This is an increase from the 30 referrals in 2012/2013.

2.1 OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN WITH PLANS FOR ADOPTION

- 2.1.0 Of the 91 children with plans for adoption in 2013/2014, 48 were from Central Bedfordshire. Of the 48 children, 13 children had been placed with prospective adopters by 31st March 2014, with a further 5 having been matched but not yet placed. The team were still family finding for 14 children, three of whom were likely to remain with their current foster carers. 6 children, representing two groups of three siblings, returned home to the care of their parents, and 8 children were placed with wider family members under an SGO. 2 children's plans were rescinded in favour of long term fostering.
- 2.1.1 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.
- 2.1.2 In 2013/2014, reforms to the Family Justice system began to take effect with the average timescale for care proceedings to conclude showing a marked reduction enabling us to place children in a timely way.

2.2 – PLACEMENTS OF CHILDREN

- 2.2.1 Members of the Adoption Team were active in facilitating the placements of the 48 children from the two authorities placed for adoption in 2013/2014. This compares to the placement of 21 children in the previous year.
- 2.2.2 There were 9 sibling groups placed for adoption during 2013/2014, of which 3 are from Central Bedfordshire.

2.3 – TYPE OF ADOPTION PLACEMENT

2.3.1 Of the 20 children placed for adoption by Central Bedfordshire in 2013/2014, 11 were placed with adopters assessed and approved by Central Bedfordshire. 4 were placed with adopters recruited by Bedford Borough and 3 more were placed with adopters approved by another authority. Two children were placed inter-country with relatives in Ireland

2.3.2 No children were placed under the new 'Fostering to Adopt' regulations. The adoption team has guidelines in place to consider this as an option for children, however it is recognised that this will only be an option for a small number of children in any one year.

2.4 – ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION

2.4.1 Of the 20 children placed for adoption by Central Bedfordshire in the year 2013/2014, 18 were White British, and two were of White/Asian ethnicity.

2.5 – AGES OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION

2.5.1 Of the 20 children placed for adoption by Central Bedfordshire in 2013/2014, 12 were aged 2 years or under, 4 were between 3-5 years and 4 were 5 and above.

2.6 – GENDER OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION

2.6.1 Of the 20 children placed for adoption by Central Bedfordshire, 12 were female and 8 were male.

2.7 – ADOPTION ORDERS / SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS

2.2.1 Adoption Orders were made in respect of 17 children during the period 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014. Of these 10 were for children from Central Bedfordshire and 7 from Bedford Borough. This is an increase in the numbers of adoption orders granted in 2012/2013, which was 12 (6 from Central Bedfordshire).

2.2.2 Special Guardianship Orders were made in respect of 20 children. This is an increase for the third year running, last year's total was 12 children.

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 children from Central Bedfordshire, and to meet the needs of children nationally requiring adoptive families, a range of recruitment activity has taken place during the year. Drop-in sessions were held in July 2013 as well as specific drop-in events during National Adoption Week in November 2013. A social media campaign using twitter and email alerts has been used. Advertising in local newspapers and magazines was used to publicise events.

3.2 – THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS: 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 the Statutory Guidance for Adoption published in July 2013. We have since July successfully implemented the two stage process for adopters which was introduced as part of the Government's Adoption Reform Agenda
- 3.2.2 98 enquiries from prospective adopters were received in 2013/2014. This represents the joint agency from 1st April to 31st December and Central Bedfordshire as a single agency from 1st January. At 31st March Central Bedfordshire had 12 sets of adopters in Stage one of the process and 8 in Stage 2. In total 27 households were approved during the period.

3.3 – ETHNICITY OF ADOPTERS

- 3.3.1 Of the adopters approved 25 households were White British, 2 were Asian, one was White Scottish, 1 was White British/Italian and one was White British/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 team 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 period April 2013 to July 2013 a four day preparation training programme was held. Since the changes to the adoption process in July 2013 a new modular training programme has been introduced. This runs monthly with adopters attending at least three foundation modules during the period of their assessment prior to presentation at adoption panel

3.5.3 The training modules are

The Child
Adoption For Life
The Adoption Process.

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. New legislation about to be published at this time requires all adoptive families to be provided with information about adoption services available locally and how to access them. This practice is already well-established in Central Bedfordshire.
- 4.0.2 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.
- 4.0.3 As of 31st March 2014, the team was working directly with 12 adopted children and their families who were in need of support. This includes 2 families where a social worker from the team trained in Theraplay delivered this intervention to assist the development of attachment in the new families.
- 4.0.4 A number of adopted children and their families were assessed as being in need of therapeutic support. It is expected that this is provided by community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). In a small number of cases this year CAMHS did not have the resources to meet the identified needs of children or deemed that children did not meet their referral criteria.
- 4.0.5 The team have a mailing list of adoptive families 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. Since the disaggregation with Bedford Borough we have continued to provide some of these events as a shared services to families living in Bedfordshire.

- 4.0.6 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.
- 4.0.7 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 92 children many of which have required direct intervention to support all the parties involved in the contact arrangements, i.e. adopted children and young people, their adoptive parents and their birth families. .

4.1 – SERVICES TO ADOPTED ADULTS AND BIRTH RELATIVES

- 4.1.1 Social Workers in the Adoption Team provide an advice and counselling service to adopted people seeking information and access to their birth records. For all residents of Central 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 At 31st March 2014 the Adoption Team were providing support to 17 adult adoptees and birth relatives who were seeking access to records and support in tracing.

4.2 – DISRUPTED ADOPTIONS

- 4.2.1 There no disruptions in 2013/14 of children placed by Central Bedfordshire, meaning that there had only been two disruptions 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.

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 2013/2014 PACT received 4 enquiries concerning inter-country adoption from residents of Central Bedfordshire. No enquirers followed up their enquiry with a request for an initial interview. For the third year running this is a decrease in activity in respect of inter-country adoption.

5.1 – THE ADOPTION CONSORTIUM

- 5.1.1 Central Bedfordshire Council Adoption Agency,(until December 2013 alongside Bedford Borough) 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 CouncilAssociate member: St Francis Children's Society

5.2 – BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR ADOPTION AND FOSTERING (BAAF)

- 5.2.1 Central Bedfordshire Council is a full member 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 During the last 12 months the agency has continued its 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 2013/2014 with ongoing contract reviews to ensure there is maximum support for those accessing the service and to ensure optimum take up by birth parents.

5.4 – THE ADOPTION SCORECARD

- 5.4.1 In 2012 the Department for Education published 'An Action Plan For Adoption: Tackling Delay' in which they outlined the intention to publish Adoption Scorecards for each council outlining performance in relation to numbers and timeliness of adoptions.
- 5.4.2 The scorecard details the average length of time between a child becoming looked after and moving in with their adoptive family and the length of time between the council having court authority to place a child and them moving in with their adoptive family.
- 5.4.3 The scorecards published in November 2012 and January 2014 showed that performance in relation to timeliness of placements was in the upper quartile of all councils and better than the targets set by government.

SECTION 6 CONCLUSION

- 6.0.1 2013/14 was the fourth year of the shared service for Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils. The decision was taken to disaggregate the service and this was achieved in January 2014.
- 6.0.2 There has been a continued increase in activity across all aspects of the service. The increase in looked after children in both councils over the last three years has resulted in a hugely increased number 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 and adoption orders granted. In order to meet continued demand a recruitment target for adopters has been set again for 2014/2015, based on known and likely numbers and needs of children requiring adoption. The target has been set at 24 new approvals in 2014/2015.

6.0.4

The Government's national reform of adoption has continued during 2013/2014. The statutory Guidance for Adoption, published in July 2013, restructured the approval process for adopters, made significant amounts of funding available to Local Authorities and introduced the concept of 'adoption passports' to equalise adoption support services. Central Bedfordshire has used the money provided by the Adoption Reform Grant to embed the new adopter approval process, improve our family finding for children and increase legal and medical advice to Children's Services.

6.0.5

As reported above, in March 2012 following the annual review of the Shared Service Level Agreement it was decided to end the Shared Service Arrangement. This decision was subsequently reviewed in detail in Autumn 2012 with the decision being made for the disaggregation of the service to be effective from 1 January 2014. A project board comprising staff in both councils was established to plan the arrangements for January 2014 and beyond. This planning process has involve consultation with key stakeholders and staff and has resulted in a smooth transition to ensure that our services to children and families remains of a high standard

6.0.6

The Adoption and Fostering Service relocated in March 2014 to Stephenson Court in Bedford. The service now is part of the Corporate Parenting Service under a single Head of Service. It is anticipated that this will further enhance the quality of service delivered by maximising opportunities for joint working with our colleagues in Looked After Children and Leaving and After-care.

Report written by:

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Adoption Team Manager

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

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Appendix B

Fostering Agency

Annual Report

**For the period
2013/2014**



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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 Following a local government re-organisation in April 2009 Central Bedfordshire Council hosted the Fostering Service as a shared one on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council. This report describes the activities of both Councils' Fostering Agencies, up to the end of December 2013. Thereafter it reports on the sole activities of Central Bedfordshire's Fostering Agency.
- 1.0.2 The report will note the Fostering Agencies' achievements, clarifying the remit and focus of its work and identify recommendations for the development of the service. Attached to the report is the Fostering Panel Chair's report.

1.1 STAFFING/SERVICE STRUCTURE

- 1.1.1 The Fostering Service was made up of the following full-time equivalent staff as of 31st March 2014:
- 1 x full time Team Manager
 - 1 x full time Deputy Team Manager
 - 2 x Senior Practitioners
 - 13 x Social Workers
 - 1 x Social Work Assistant
 - 1 x Senior Social Work Assistant
 - 1 x Duty Worker
 - 1 x Training Co-ordinator
 - 1 x Recruitment and Marketing Manager
- 1.1.2 The service is supported by 2 full time administrators.
- 1.1.3 The workforce is diverse and includes staff of both genders, and from different European and black and minority ethnic groups.
- 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 ensure they understand and address issues of diversity when working with foster carers and children in care. Staff are encouraged to embrace and celebrate the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.
- 1.1.5 Most staff have extensive post-qualifying experience, and a programme of induction and 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 Manager, Training coordinator, and the Panel Advisors and Secretaries who support the fostering and permanence panels.

SECTION 2 – THE PANELS

2.1 REPORT FROM FOSTERING PANEL CHAIR

- 2.1.1 The attached Fostering Panel Chair's Report (Appendix 1), includes valuable information and feedback on the function of panel business. Statistical information regarding panel business is attached (Appendix 2).

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 Foster carers 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 2014, there were 7 Family Link carers approved. These carers were supporting 19 children by providing regular short breaks. There was also 1 salaried family link fee-based carer who was linked to 6 children who had complex medical needs.

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 of 31st March 2014, there were 6 approved Youth Care households, caring for 4 children.

SECTION 4 – CHILDREN AND FOSTERING

4.1 CHILDREN REFERRED FOR FOSTERING

- 4.1.1 Between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2014, the Fostering Service received a total of 449 referrals for foster placements of which 323 were for children becoming newly looked after. The remainder of referrals were for a change of placement.

- 4.1.2 Of the 449 referrals received, 219 were Central Bedfordshire children and 230 were Bedford Borough children. 115 of the referrals were for newly looked after children and were placed in house, 4 young people were placed in residential units and 59 children (33 Central Bedfordshire and 26 Bedford Borough children) were placed in an Independent Fostering Agency placement as a result of becoming looked after. 145 of the referrals did not result in a placement. This would have been for various reasons, for example, Section 20 was not agreed on or the Interim Care Order was not granted.
- 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 124 occasions, with 15 children having regular respite as part of their care plan.
- 4.1.5 Of the new referrals for foster placements, 16 came through the Emergency Duty Service, an increase of 5 from 2012/13.
- 4.1.6 As at 31st March 2014 there were a total of 85 children living with in-house foster carers and 109 living in Independent Fostering Agency provision. This represents 56% children placed with IFA carers and 44% with in house carers.

4.2 AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN REFERRED FOR FOSTERING

- 4.2.1 Over 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 | 43 children |
| 6-12 years | 19 children |
| 13-18 years | 19 young people |

From Bedford Borough the age distribution was:

0-5 years	19 children
6-12 years	6 children
13-18 years	9 young people

The age profile of referrals has changed with more children now being referred in the 0-5 age group than in previous years.

- 4.2.2 Of the 81 children referred from Central Bedfordshire, 49 were female and 32 male. Of the 34 children referred from Bedford Borough 20 were female and 14 were male.
- 4.2.3 In terms of ethnicity of the 81 children referred from Central Bedfordshire, 55 were white/British, 7 were white/English, 5 were white/other, 1 was white/Irish, 8 were mixed white/black Caribbean, 1 was Asian, 1 was Chinese, 1 was black British and 2 were recorded as white/traveller. Of the 34 children referred from Bedford Borough, 20 were white/British, 5 were white/English, 1 was mixed white/black Caribbean, 4 were mixed white/Asian, 1 was mixed other, 2 were black African and 1 was black/British.

4.3 SIBLING GROUPS OF CHILDREN REFERRED FOR FOSTERING

4.3.1 There were 30 sibling groups within the children referred for fostering during the year. This comprised 22 sibling groups from Central Bedfordshire and 8 from Bedford Borough. One of the significant criteria for matching children with carers is enabling them to be placed with siblings wherever possible. 4 of the sibling groups comprised 3 or more children. Large sibling groups are more difficult to match with suitable foster placements, particularly when seeking to place them together, which is the aim wherever possible.

4.4 TYPE OF FOSTER PLACEMENT PROVIDED

4.4.1 Of the 174 children placed in foster placements this year, 115 were placed with carers assessed and approved by Central Bedfordshire Council on behalf of both Councils. The advantage of this is that staff in the service had prior knowledge of the children and positive working relationships with the carers, thus enhancing fostering support for these placements.

4.5 CHILDREN IN PLACEMENT AT 31ST MARCH 2014

4.5.1 As at 31st March 2014, there were 85 fostering households with full fostering approval, and a further 12 with temporary Regulation 24 approval pending a full Family and Friends assessment.

4.5.2 A total of 85 children were in these placements, while 109 were in IFA placements.

4.5.3 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 18 preferred providers. After the first year of this arrangement there was evidence that the average costs of placements had reduced and there were clearer expectations in respect of quality and outcome for children.

4.5.5 The number of children in external placements has significantly increased over the past few years. A new fees scheme has been introduced (effective from 1st April 2014) in Central Bedfordshire. It is envisioned that this and the revised recruitment activities will help change this trend.

SECTION 5 – FOSTER CARERS

5.1 FOSTERING ENQUIRIES

5.1.1 In 2013 -14, there were 164 enquiries by people who were interested in becoming Foster Carers compared with 213 in 2012 -13. This is a year on year (YOY) decrease of -29%.

5.1.2 The best 3 months for enquiries were August 2013 with 30, July with 18, then October with 15. The worst month was during the build up to the disaggregation in December, when only 1 enquiry came through.

- 5.1.3 Numbers remained low during January and February 2014 during the transition period and then picked up again in March 2014, with 13. This is only 2 enquiries less YOY than when it was a joint service and should be recognised as an achievement.
- 5.1.4 From April to December 2013, 53 enquiries were from Central Bedfordshire residents, 53 enquiries were from Bedford Borough residents and 11 were from outside of both areas. In January, February and March, 16 enquiries were from Central Bedfordshire residents, 9 enquiries were thought to be from Bedford Borough residents, but they were recorded as unknown, and 4 were from outside of both areas.

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 In July 2013 amendments to the Children Act 1989 brought changes to the assessment process for general foster carers. There is now a 2 stage assessment process and an expectation that the full assessment is presented to fostering panel and a recommendation made about approval within an 8-month timescale. The Fostering Service generally completes all such assessments within a 6 month timescale.

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.

In terms of assessments started between April 1st 2013 and March 31st 2014 there were 103. These assessments would have been a mixture of Regulation 24 assessments, full Family and Friends assessments, assessments on prospective foster carers wanting to provide general fostering or Special Guardianship assessments. During the year there were 58 requests to agree temporary approval of a connected person as a foster carer to allow an immediate placement (Regulation 24 of Care Planning, Placements and Care Review (England) Regulation 2010). 21 of these carers were given temporary approval and went on to be fully assessed as Family and Friend carers. 37 of these Regulation 24 placements were not agreed.

5.3 ETHNICITY OF CARERS

- 5.3.1 At 31st March 2014, 13 out of 85 fostering households included carers from black or ethnic minority groups. At 13.7% this ratio broadly reflects the population in Bedfordshire.
- 5.3.2 Between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2014, the agency approved 27 fostering households. 23 of these were White British, 3 were Asian and 1 was from a Turkish 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 2013/2014, the Fostering Service ran 5 of these courses and they were attended by 29 delegates (16 households) in total. In addition, bespoke preparation training was offered to friends and family foster carers. 5 such courses were organised and were attended by 26 delegates (16 households).
- 6.1.4 As part of the application and assessment process, all applicants must complete an Emergency First Aid course. 7 courses were held during 2013/2014 and these were attended by a total of 123 delegates.

6.2 SONS AND DAUGHTERS

- 6.2.1 During 2013/14, the Fostering Service ran holiday activities for sons and daughters of foster carers which were activity based and aimed to support them with the impact of fostering in their family. This included attendance at an outdoor activity centre (20 attendees) and horse riding (12 children). 35 children also attended a Christmas party in December 2013.
- 6.2.2 A joint workshop for sons and daughters of foster carers and looked after children was also held which included drama and cooking workshops, as well as first aid. 15 children attended this workshop and the feedback was very positive.

6.3 INDUCTION

- 6.3.1 Following approval, foster carers enter their 12 month induction phase into the service and are required to complete Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards. The implementation of the 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.

6.4 THE FOSTERING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- 6.4.1 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 38 subjects held over the year.
- 6.4.2 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.
- 6.4.3 In total, 587 delegates attended training courses held over the year, which is an increase on 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.
- 6.4.4 A total of 58 households have now completed their TSD standards. 15 are still in the process of completing in the required timescale.

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, additional support groups were provided for men, single carers and Family Link carers. A total of 24 support groups ran with 170 delegates. Additional and regular support groups were also provided for Youth Carers. Many of these support groups had speakers on relevant subjects. Although educational, foster carers were also able to enjoy socialising with other foster carers in an informal setting.
- 7.1.2 A support group specifically for Family and Friends carers continued in 2013/2014. The group meets quarterly and is open to foster carers, and those looking after related children subject to Residence Orders and Special Guardianship Orders.
- 7.1.3 Foster Carers Talk Time is organised every 3 months (previously known as the foster carers forum). These meetings give foster carers the opportunity to meet with managers and senior

managers to discuss fostering issues. It also allows the Corporate Parenting Service to update foster carers on developments within the service. Following the Talk Time meeting a newsletter is sent out to all foster carers updating them of areas discussed at Talk Time as well as providing information on a whole host of other topics relevant to fostering.

- 7.1.4 The annual Foster Carers Awards Ceremony and Social Event was held in May 2013 which was well attended by foster carers, their children and children in care. Staff and elected members also attended, including the Directors of Children's Services from Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. 11 long service awards were given out on the evening for those achieving 5, 10,15 and 20 years of service.
- 7.1.5 One set of foster carers also received MBEs in the Queen's New Years Honours.

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 has 3 mentors who have varying experiences of fostering, including age ranges and types of approval. 6 more mentors will be recruited in the forthcoming year.

7.3 THE OUT OF HOURS SERVICE

- 7.3.1 Fostering managers and 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. Outside these hours foster carers can contact the Emergency Duty Team.

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. With the disaggregation of Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough's Fostering Service, Bedfordshire Foster Carers Association still continues and has widened its remit. As well as supporting carers from the 2 Local Authorities they now work closely with carers from I.F.A.'s in the local area too.

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.

7.6 OFSTED

- 7.6.1 Ofsted last inspected the Fostering Service in December 2012 when the service was judged to be good overall.
- 7.6.2 At that time Ofsted made 8 recommendations, an action plan to address the recommendations was drawn up and action completed in respect of all recommendations by 31st March 2013.

SECTION 8 – CONCLUSION

- 8.0.1 We have had another successful year, continuing to deliver a high quality service both as a shared arrangement and as a single agency since January 2014. Although the two authorities have now disaggregated we will continue to work in partnership with Bedford Borough, for example, joint training initiatives. Due to the disaggregation some Central Bedfordshire Council children continue to be in placement with Bedford Borough's foster carers and vice versa. Both authorities continue to work together regarding these placements to ensure children's needs are met and their care is not affected by the ending of the shared service.
- 8.0.2 This year the service has continued to face the challenge 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 large sibling groups where we have struggled to find placements. With the introduction of a fee scheme as of 1st April 2014 it is hoped the pool of in-house carers will increase and we will become less reliant on the use of IFA placements.
- 8.0.3 The increase in numbers of looked after children, and the change in regulations in 2011 concerning Family and Friends foster carers has continued to mean significantly more placements with relatives are subject to fostering regulations. The number of family and friends assessments continues to increase and coupled with changes to the Family Justice system, particularly in relation to timescales have created challenges in completing complex assessments in very tight timescales. Many of these Family and Friends assessments

progress into SGO placements which have provided positive outcomes for those children. There has been a sharp increase in the number of SGOs granted this year compared to previous years. During 2013-14 there were 20 SGOs granted compared to 12 in 2012-13 and 12 in 2011-12.

- 8.0.5 We again reviewed our advertising and marketing campaign to ensure maximum value for money and effectiveness. Since becoming a single agency Fostering Service, we have revised the Marketing and Recruitment Strategy, aiming to increase its presence in the community and promote CBC as the Fostering Service of choice.
- 8.0.6 The service has to be able to respond to the identified needs of children from Central Bedfordshire so that they are appropriately placed with foster 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 20 new fostering households (net gain) in 2014-15 including assessment of Family and Friends carers for children who otherwise would be placed outside their family network.
- 8.0.8 In January 2014 the Shared Service Arrangement between Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council came to an end. This process was completed successfully with minimal disruption to staff, foster carers and the children placed. The Fostering Service successfully moved offices on 17th March 2014. They are now co-located with the Looked After Children colleagues and come under the umbrella of the newly created Corporate Parenting Service. This has already had a positive impact on the service provided to children in care and foster carers. The LAC and fostering service are now working much more closely together in order to ensure the needs of children in care are met in the most effective way.

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

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APPENDICES 1 – REPORT FROM FOSTERING PANEL CHAIR

9.1 INTRODUCTION

9.1.1 From April 2009 to December 2013 Central Bedfordshire hosted the Fostering Services as a shared service for Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough. From January 2014 the two services separated and each Authority became responsible for its own fostering provision. The Panels also reflected this pattern. This Report is considering the period from April 2013 to March 2014. So, during that time two different systems operated. From April 2013 to December 2013 there were two Panels dealing with fostering work – the Fostering Panel and the Fostering and Permanence Panel. Each of these Panels met at least once a month (often more frequently) and each was Chaired by one of two Independent Chairs who liaised closely to ensure that there was consistency and co-ordination. From January 2014 each Authority set up its own Fostering and Permanence Panel. It is still very early days for the new Panels but the current picture seems to indicate that each Panel is likely to need to meet about 18 times a year. This Report will refer only to the Fostering and Permanence Panel for Central Bedfordshire for the time period January to March 2014.

9.2 PANEL MEMBERSHIP

9.2.1 I (Kathy Bird) have chaired the Fostering Panel for Central Beds and Bedford Borough since October 2005. My background is as a qualified child care social worker and Manager since 1976 and I have worked mainly in the areas of Fostering, Adoption, Child Protection, Children with Disabilities and Residential Care. My colleague, Marion Hundleby, Chaired the Fostering and Permanence Panel, also since 2005. Marion is also a very experienced child care social worker and Manager who has specialised in Fostering, Permanence and Adoption work. Both Marion and I have worked as Independent Consultants for over 10 years and have worked with a wide range of local authorities and voluntary organisations. We are both independent of the two Authorities – a requirement of the Fostering Regulations 2011.

9.2.2 From April 2013 to December 2013 there was a Central list of Panel members that each Panel could call upon to be quorate. Panel membership was drawn from the following members:

Social Worker	Senior Practitioner (Adoption) CBC – Vice Chair
Social Worker	Deputy Manager (Adoption) CBC – Vice Chair
Social Worker	Independent – Vice Chair,
Educational Psychologist	CBC
Social Worker	Deputy Manager (LAC) – CBC
Social Worker	Family Group Meetings – Team Manager
Elected Member	BBC
Elected Member	CBC
Foster Care	IFA
Foster Carer	IFA
Health Visitor	BBC
Adoptive Parent	Independent
Gypsy and Traveller Educational Consultant	Independent
Family Group Meeting Co-Ordinator	Independent
Social Worker	Independent

- 9.2.3 All Panel members have shown a very high commitment to attending panels and it is obvious from their contributions that they put a great deal of time, thought and dedication into their roles on Panel. There has never been a problem in getting Panels together that are quorate (minimum of 5 members with Independent Chair and at least one social worker), even when calling additional and extended Panels.
- 9.2.4 Panel members receive their papers 7 working days in advance of Panel. Reading the papers supplied in preparation for discussion is a considerable undertaking as the papers may involve up to five hours of close reading. All members devote a great deal of time and personal commitment to the work of the panel and invariably come well prepared.
- 9.2.5 **Transition to Single Panel**
In October 2013 the formal process began to split into two Panels – one for BBC, one for CBC.
- 9.2.6 I agreed with my colleague Chair and Managers that I would take on the CBC Fostering and Permanence Panel. We then circulated a document to all Panel members to help them decide which Panel they wanted to sit on in the future and where they were needed. Some Panel members such as Elected members and direct employees had no choice as to which Panel they sat on in the future. For the more Independent Panel members the process, in the end, ran very smoothly and most Panel members were able to sit on the Panel of their choice. A number of Panel members have opted to sit on both CBC and BBC Fostering and Permanence Panels.
- 9.2.7 In CBC we now have 11 Panel members on the Central list to call on for each Panel as well as two very experienced and competent Vice Chairs (one CBC Senior Practitioner, one Independent Social Worker).
- 9.2.8 **Areas for improvement**
Getting the balance of Panel members right on any Panel is a constant process of review as Panel Membership changes. It would be useful to recruit some new Panel members who are not involved with other Panels as this will help with availability on extra dates. It would also be useful if any new members had not done direct work in CBC before as this would help with the cases where Panel members are not allowed to sit due to conflicts of interest.
- 9.2.9 **Diversity**
Across the two Panels, and now in CBC, there has been a wide range of background, ethnicity and culture. Panel members are white British, black British, South African, Nigerian, Italian and American. Age ranges go from 33 years to 66 years of age. There are people who are currently fostering and people who have adopted. Some Panel members have very young families of their own, one Panel member was looked after outside their family as a young child, and many Panel members have experience of adoption and fostering in their immediate family. One Panel member is a wheelchair user and many Panel members have experience of disability in their immediate family.
- 9.2.10 **Areas for improvement**
It has always been a difficult issue to recruit enough males to get a balance at Panel and also to get people who are at the younger end of the age spectrum. On occasions Panels have had to go ahead with no males present and on two occasions this has been questioned by the Carers attending Panel. Getting a better balance of age and gender on Panel should be a high priority for the Panel Adviser to assist the Chair with in the year 2014 / 15.

9.3 PANEL SUPPORT

9.3.1 Panel Support

Panel work is supported throughout the whole process by the Panel Adviser. From March 2013 to December 2013 Panel had a very experienced and positive Panel Adviser who worked tirelessly to help us get Panel work as on track as possible. Fortunately for the Team (but unfortunately for the Panel!) that Manager then took over as CBC Team Manager for Fostering where her skills will be well used.

9.3.2 Within CBC presently, the role of Adviser to the Fostering Panel is still not filled permanently and we have so far had two Agency workers in this role. Both Agency workers have worked very hard to do their best to make things work but being new to the role, not knowing the Area or the staff and trying to do this at a time of such change has meant that consistency and follow through of some aspects of Panel work has not been as thorough as we have been used to.

9.3.3 Throughout the whole year Panel has been supported by two excellent Panel Administrators. These two workers have been working for CBC and BBC for many years and have now transferred across to CBC. I cannot speak highly enough of their effort, efficiency, organisational skills and good humour throughout difficult times. CBC is indeed fortunate to have two such dedicated workers and as Panel Chair I value their contribution very highly.

9.3.4 A Medical Adviser to the Panel gives advice in writing in advance of Panel Meetings and on occasions over this year the Medical Adviser has been asked to provide further detail on specific cases or conditions to better inform Panel's decision making.

9.3.5 A Legal Adviser to the Panel gives advice in writing to Panel Meetings, this advice is usually available on the day of Panel.

9.3.6 Areas for improvement

It is imperative that the role of Panel Adviser is permanently recruited to as soon as possible. It is this role which provides the glue which ensures that the work of the Panel is carried through into Management, the teams and into everyday work.

9.4 PANEL ROLES / TASKS

9.4.1 The Panel task includes addressing work presented as follows:

- Applications from prospective foster carers for a range of tasks
- Applications relating to Family and Friends (Connected Persons) carers for children already or about to be placed with them
- Taking a view in Connected Persons cases where an additional 8 week extension to temporary approval is proposed in order for assessments to be completed
- First Annual Reviews of foster carers and other Reviews which discuss continuation of approval, extension of approval or Standards of Care
- Matching of children to long term foster carers
- De-Registration of carers
- Quality Assurance of work presented

- 9.4.2 Panel makes a recommendation on whether to approve prospective carers or re-approve approved carers to the Agency Decision Maker who then either ratifies or rejects the recommendation. Applicants have the right of review through the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) or a return to Panel for the case to be re-heard.

9.5 APPRAISALS

- 9.5.1 The appraisal of all members takes place annually. All involved value this opportunity to consider Panel functioning, outside the day to day work of panel. The Appraisals, conducted by the Panel Chair and the Panel Adviser, reflect on the Panel member's contribution for the year, any comments they have on improving processes and any training they wish to undertake over the next year.

9.6 PANEL TRAINING

- 9.6.1 There have been two full days training offered to all Panel members in the last year.
- 9.6.2 In July 2013 a Training Day was held for Fostering and Permanence Panel Members together with members of the Fostering Team. This day focussed on the child's journey through placement and covered specific sessions on Family Group Conferences, Family and Friends Assessments and Support, Duty and Matching, Resilience and Transitions, Delegated Authority and Internet Safety. It was a very positive and varied day and the day is one of the few opportunities that Panel members and Team members get to meet and talk together in a less formal setting.
- 9.6.3 In November 2013, Fostering and Permanence Panel members were given the opportunity (which a number of members took up) to attend the Adoption Panel Training Day which was looking at the Adoption Reforms 2013. As these reforms include new provisions for fostering to adopt there was a lively and positive exchange of views and everyone learned a great deal and had the chance to work alongside Adoption Panel members and Adoption Team members.
- 9.6.4 As well as these two days both Panels use any time that is left on agenda time whenever suitable to have short sessions of "Bite Size" training. Over the last year this has covered the areas of – The Role of the Health Visitor and The Role of the Educational Psychologist, with particular reference to Looked After Children.

9.7 TRANSPARENCY AND OPENNESS

9.7.1 Carers attending Panel

It is now the usually accepted process for Carers to attend for most of the time their case is heard at Panel. The main exception to this is the time that Panel reaches its recommendation but also a time for any third party information which needs to be discussed. Although Carers are often daunted at the prospect of coming to Panel, many of them find the time much less daunting than they feared and feel included in the process as part of the wider Fostering Team right from the start. Carers always have a social worker with them, and some (often single carers) have chosen to bring a friend with them for support. One or two have even gone as far as to say they enjoyed it! (See section on Feedback below).

9.7.2 **Observers**

Student social workers, members of staff on induction, members of Senior Management and prospective panel members, have all joined panel to observe over the last year and there are few Panels without one observer. Panel welcomes observing at meetings. It is an excellent way to see how Panel works and helps to demystify the process, particularly for those who will, in the future, present cases to Panel for the first time.

9.7.3 **Panel Feedback**

Applicants and social workers attending panel are asked to complete and return an evaluation form - this information is fed back to the next Panel and helps to shape panel direction moving forward. Honest feedback is encouraged and has had a significant effect on how Panels are run.

9.7.4 The most common feedback has been how daunting Carers find it to walk into a room with so many people present. So, over the last year we have tried to cut down Panel membership from the ten previously stipulated to an average of 6 or 7 Panel Members. This gives us a small safety margin to meet the statutory Quoracy of 5 Panel members in case at the last minute anyone is unexpectedly unable to attend or has to declare an interest in a particular case.

9.7.5 Two specific issues have occurred in feedback that Panel have had to think about and make changes:

- One case of foster carers who adopted and then wanted to foster again. The Carers were unhappy that Panel did not agree that they could continue fostering without a break. In this case the Panel Chair and the Team Manager for Fostering met with the Carers, answered their specific concerns and Panel have now asked CBC to draw up guidelines on the issue of foster carers who adopt and then wish to continue fostering.
- Another area of feedback was from a child care worker who was not given a copy of the fostering report before Panel and felt that her views were therefore not represented on paper or fully heard in Panel. This matter is subject to on-going work between child care and fostering and the Panel is looking at wider learning outcomes from this case.

9.7.6 However, comments from most people attending Panel have been largely positive:

- *“Very friendly, welcoming and appreciative”*,
- *“The Panel were open and honest to us. They allowed us time to talk and they listened to what we were saying. It was a very good experience.”*
- *“Constructive and friendly, a positive experience”*.
- *“We left feeling positive and pleased that the Panel were appreciative of our work with fostered children”*.
- *“We both felt very pleased that the Panel approved us as Long Term Carers. When we met A from school the first thing he asked was “Am I staying with you until I am 18?”. We said yes and he was very happy. One very happy little boy and two very happy Carers!”*

9.8 QUALITY ASSURANCE ROLE

9.8.1 Panel covers its Quality Assurance roles at a number of levels:

9.8.2 **Individual Issues**

If there are matters which relate to a specific case these are picked up at the time and fed back to the child care and fostering teams by the Panel Adviser.

9.8.3 Practice Issues

At every Panel the Panel considers whether matters have cropped up which may be affecting more than one Carer / worker which need to be followed through. These issues are taken back by the Panel Adviser to the relevant Team Manager and then the Panel Adviser will feed back to Panel any outcomes. Over the last year examples of matters which have arisen in this category include:

- First Reviews coming to Panel with considerable delay,
- Assessments not providing enough analysis,
- Carers having such a high turnover of child care workers that they have felt unsupported,
- Foster Carers helping looked after children to complete their feedback forms about the placement rather than this being independently supported,
- Foster Carers being asked to do complex tasks without adequate support e.g. returning a baby back to birth parents, visiting a baby in hospital where a potentially violent parent was also present.

9.8.4 Assessments and Reports

Panel will often comment directly to workers and Carers if they have been presented with well written reports. Panel also comment in the feedback section of Panel when Reports received have been particularly good or have been lacking in some way. These matters are taken back to the Team Managers by the Panel Adviser so that staff receive both compliments and requests for improvement via their Team Manager.

9.8.5 Overall, in the year from April 2013 to March 2014 the standard of Report writing has been very good. The weakest area in Reports has on some occasions been “telling the story” of what has happened to Carers or children without providing analysis of this.

9.8.6 Panel Chairs Meetings

Throughout the year the Panel Chairs have met on approximately a 3 monthly basis with the Panel Advisers, the Head of Service and the Agency Decision Makers. This has been of particular importance during the disaggregation of the Fostering service to BBC and CBC. *It remains to be seen what frequency and nature of Panel Chairs meetings will need to be held in 2014 / 15.*

9.8.7 Eastern Region Panel Chairs Meetings

As Panel Chair I have attended all of the quarterly Meetings of the Eastern Regional Fostering Panel Chairs, along with one of the Vice Chairs. These meetings take place in Cambridge and Ipswich and are a time for Panel Chairs to meet together to consider the wider national picture for fostering and to improve practice. All meetings are attended by and supported by BAAF and Fostering Network. These meetings have been extremely useful and a number of matters from these meetings have been fed back into CBC.

9.9 OBJECTIVES FOR 2014/2015

- Firmly establish the new CBC Fostering and Permanence Panel into a strong working team.
- Continue to lobby for the Panel Adviser's role to be recruited to on a permanent basis in order to provide continuity and consistency throughout the whole Panel process.
- Review and extend the diversity of panel membership.
- Work on the liaison between the Panel and the Fostering and Child Care teams to assist with joint working.

- Monitor the Fostering Team's new goals to get all first Reviews to Panel in a timely manner and to monitor Fostering Assessments to ensure the right level of analysis is provided.
- Establish a new pattern within CBC of Panel Chairs meetings with Head of Service and Agency Decision Makers.

Kathy J Bird
Panel Chair – CBC Fostering and Permanence
April 2014

APPENDICES 2 – PANEL ACTIVITY

- 10.1.1 Between 1st April 2013 – 31st December 2013 the Fostering Panel met 9 times and recommended that 13 households should be approved as foster carers.
- 10.1.2 Of the 13 carers newly approved by the Fostering Panel, 3 were approved for the Family Link Scheme, 3 Family & Friends and 12 mainstream carers (one of which was also approved as a Youth Carer).
- 10.1.3 Between 1st April 2013 – 31st December 2013 the Fostering and Joint Permanence Panel met 10 times and recommended that 15 households should be approved as foster carers.
- 10.1.4 Of the 15 carers newly approved by the Fostering and Joint Permanence Panel, 12 were approved for Family & Friends and 3 mainstream carers.
- 10.1.5 From 1st January 2014 – 31st March 2014 the Fostering and Permanence Panel met 5 times and recommended that 2 households should be approved as foster carers. Both of which are Family & Friends.
- 10.1.6 During the year 1st April 2013 – 31st March 2014 30 households were approved as foster carers (which compares with 29 the previous year).
- 10.1.7 Between 1st April 2013 – 31st December 2013 the Fostering and Joint Permanence Panel recommended a Plan for 1 child for permanent / long-term fostering.
- 10.1.8 Between 1st April 2013 – 31st December 2013 13 children were recommended for a match with foster carers at the Fostering and Joint Permanence Panel.
- 10.1.9 Between 1st January 2014 – 31st March 2014 6 children were recommended for a match with foster carers at the Fostering and Permanence Panel.
- 10.1.10 Between 1st April 2013 – 31st December 2013 the Fostering Panel considered first annual reviews for 12 households, 7 of which required changes of approval and 5 of which required no change of approval. In addition there were 7 requests for change of approval and 1 review following allegations/complaint.
- 10.1.11 Between 1st April 2013 – 31st December 2013 the Fostering and Joint Permanence Panel considered first annual reviews for 6 households, 3 of which required changes of approval and 3 required no change of approval. In addition there were 5 requests for change of approval.
- 10.1.12 Between 1st January 2014 – 31st March 2014 the Fostering and Permanence Panel considered first annual reviews for 7 households, 6 of which required changes of approval and 1 required no change of approval. In addition there were 2 requests for change of approval, 1 following an allegation/complaint and 1 review not recommended by Panel.
- 10.1.13 In total 1st April 2013 – 31st March 2014 88 fostering households attended one or other of the panels, this compares with 97 in 2012/2013.

10.1.14 22 fostering households resigned at their request in 2012/13 and 1 household had their approval withdrawn by the Fostering Agency. This total was similar to the 21 in 2011/12. 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 52 during the year, a significant increase on the 30 net gain of placements in 2011/12.



Appendix C

Private Fostering

Annual Report

**For the period
2013/2014**

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SECTION 1 – Introduction

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 may be 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 of 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 stated above, 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;
 - 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, was hosted in Central Bedfordshire Council but provided to both Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council under a Service Level Agreement up to 31st December 2013. It became a single service as of 1st January 2014.
- 1.1.2 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.
- 1.1.3 This annual report is part of the governance of the Private Fostering Provision required by

Regulations.

SECTION 2 – AWARENESS RAISING DUTY

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.

2.0.2 Examples of awareness raising activities included:

- Adverts in local papers and radio advertising;
- 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.

2.1 – AWARENESS RAISING 1ST APRIL 2013 – 31ST MARCH 2014

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

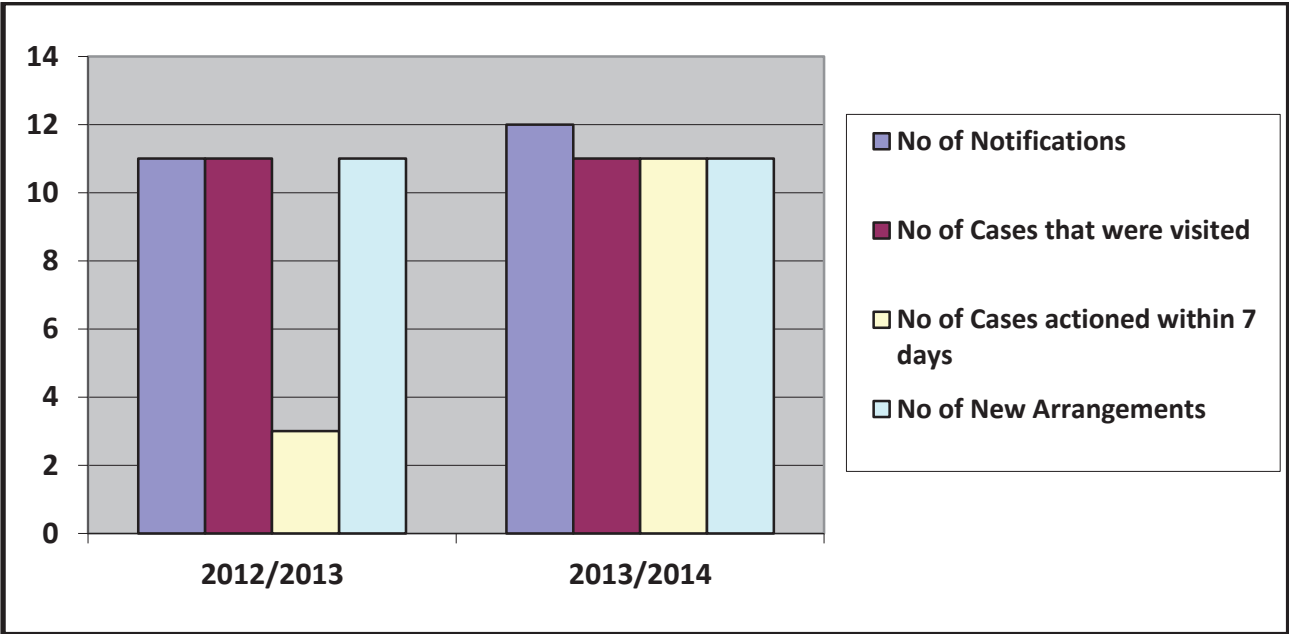
April 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC/BB - Central Essentials – article and posters sent out to all staff. • Mail shot – all GP surgeries/Health Visitors 0-19 Team, Boarder Force – Heathrow/Gatwick/Luton, churches, Bedford Hospital • Intake & Assessment & Family Support Team – team meetings attended to raise awareness • School Governors provided with Private Fostering information for newsletter and posters sent
May 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC/BB - Newspaper Article – Biggleswade Chronicle and Bedfordshire on Sunday • Liaised with Sheila Pembroke (CBC) from CAF Training – explored having a space on the training – information sent to raise awareness, no response from BB • GP surgeries contacted in CBC & BB.
June 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC – Visits to FISS and FYIS Team Meeting, posters and leaflets left • Visit to 0-19 Services Team Meeting (H/V, School Nurses, Family Support and Parenting Workers) Posters and information supplied • CBC/BB – LSCB – Training awareness
July 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC – Central Essentials Article and posters • LSCB Training Awareness
August 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC/BB – Liaised with Bedfordshire Police Public Protection Unit – due to attend meeting – posters supplied
September 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC/BB – Attended team meeting with Bedfordshire Police Public Protection Unit – Sexual Exploitation Unit.
October 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC/BB – Central Essentials article & poster • LSCB Training – delivering awareness
November 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC/BB - LSCB Training – delivering awareness • Team Meeting attended with Children's Centre Manager
December 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSCB Training – delivering awareness • Attended School Admissions Team meeting
January 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC – LSCB Training – delivering awareness • Attended Team Meeting Intake & Assessment & Family Support • Updated CBC website – a newspaper article with a live case study
February 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSCB Training – delivering awareness
March 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSCB Training – delivering awareness

SECTION 3 - PERFORMANCE

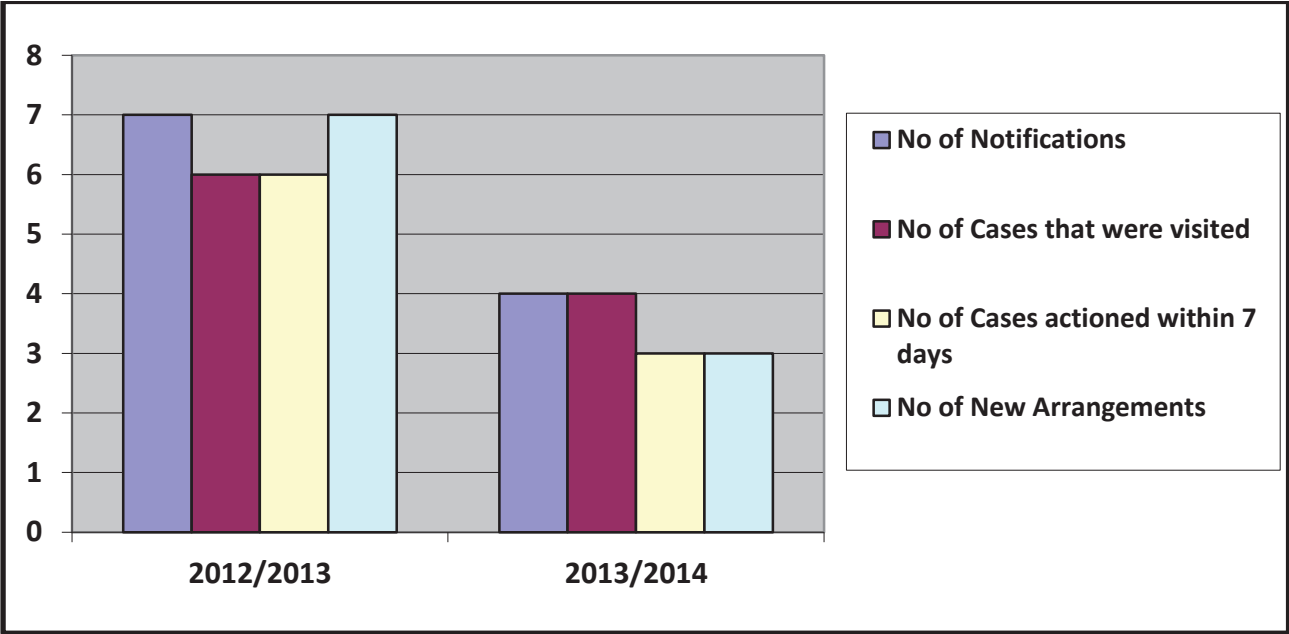
3.0 – STATISTICS

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.

Central Bedfordshire Council

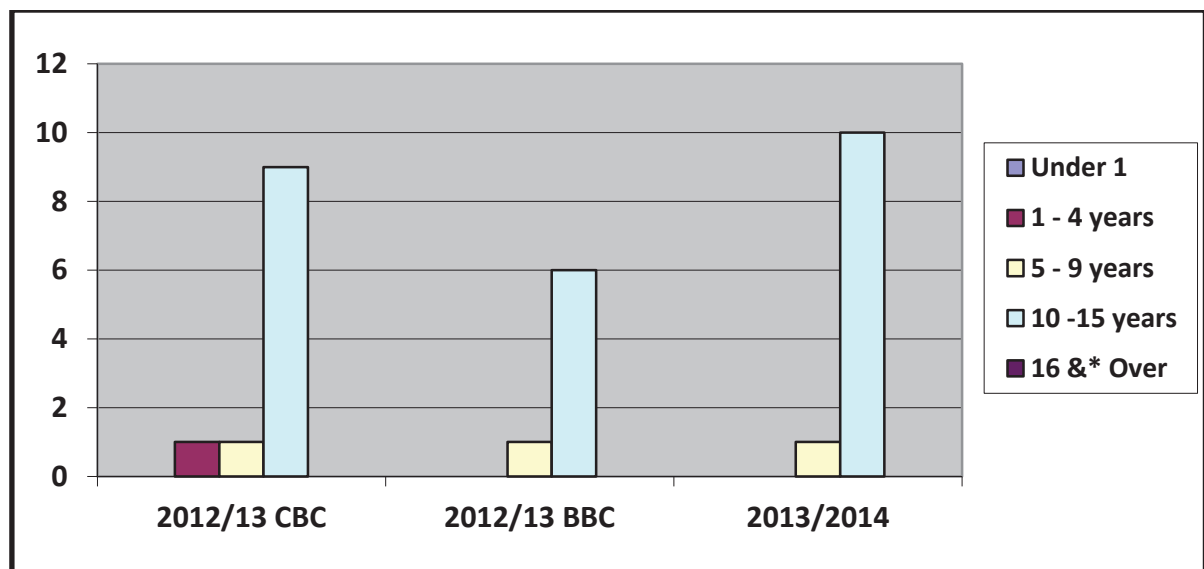


Bedford Borough Council

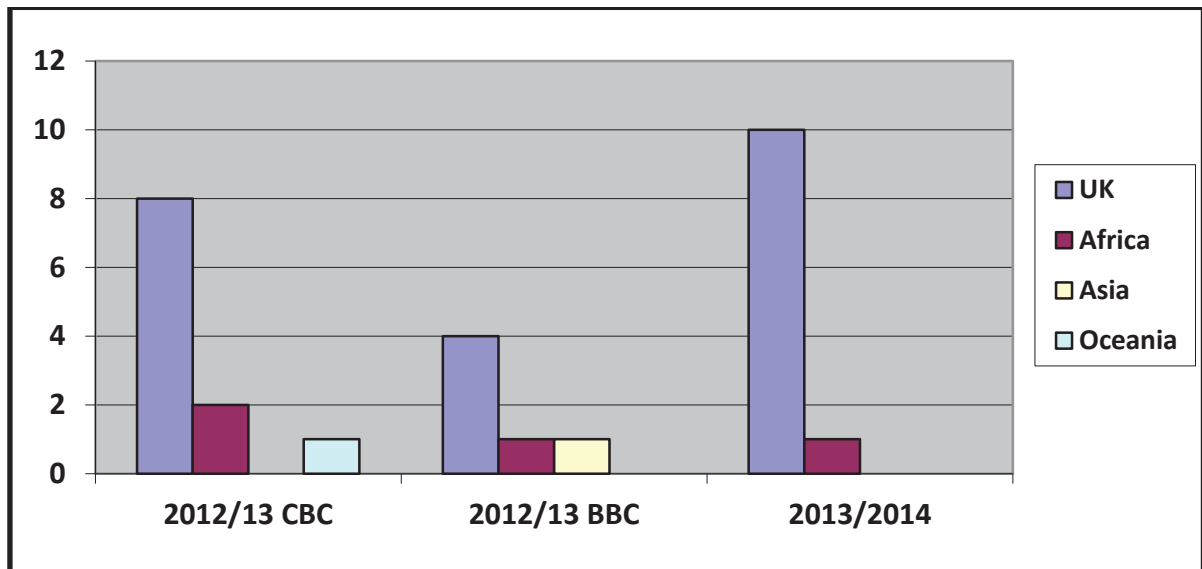


- 3.0.2 Levels of activity across the councils increased overall with more notifications and new arrangements than in 2012-13. However activity in the Bedford Borough Council area declined and activity in Central Bedfordshire increased from the previous year. There is no identifiable reason why this should be the case. Overall numbers remain small, but in line with statistical neighbours.
- 3.0.3 The totals number of private fostering arrangements in the year 2013-2014 was 14. Of these 11 were within Central Bedfordshire Council and 3 arrangements were within Bedford Borough Council. Of the 11 arranged within Central Bedfordshire Council 2 of these were made between January and the end of March 2014 which after the Service was disaggregated.
- 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.

Age



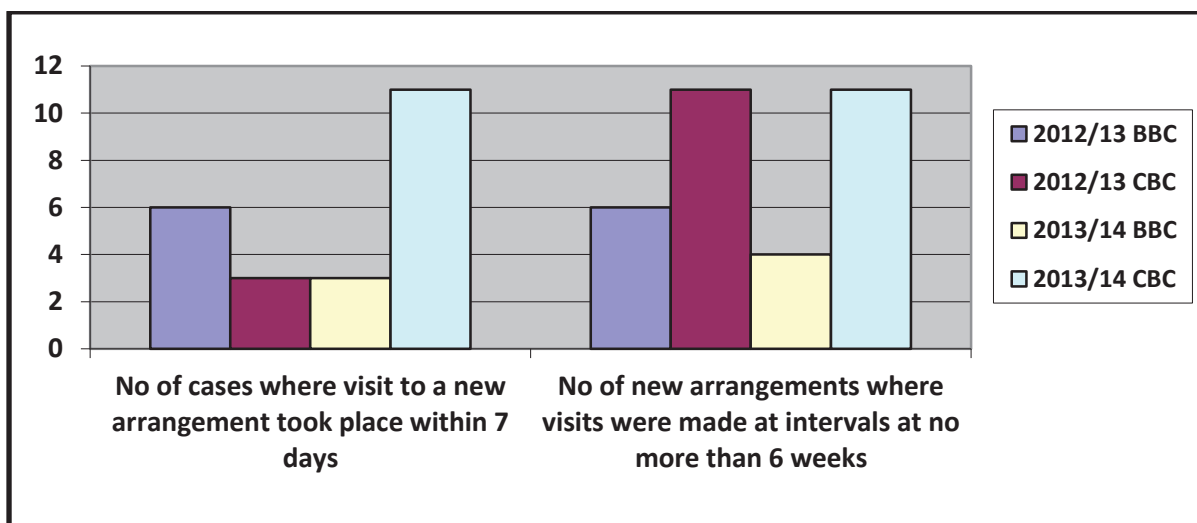
Place of Birth



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 Statutory visits were 100% within timescales. This includes initial visits within 7 days and the weekly assessment visits. It also includes the ongoing completion of the Private Fostering Assessment within 42 days and the ongoing 6 weekly supervised visits.

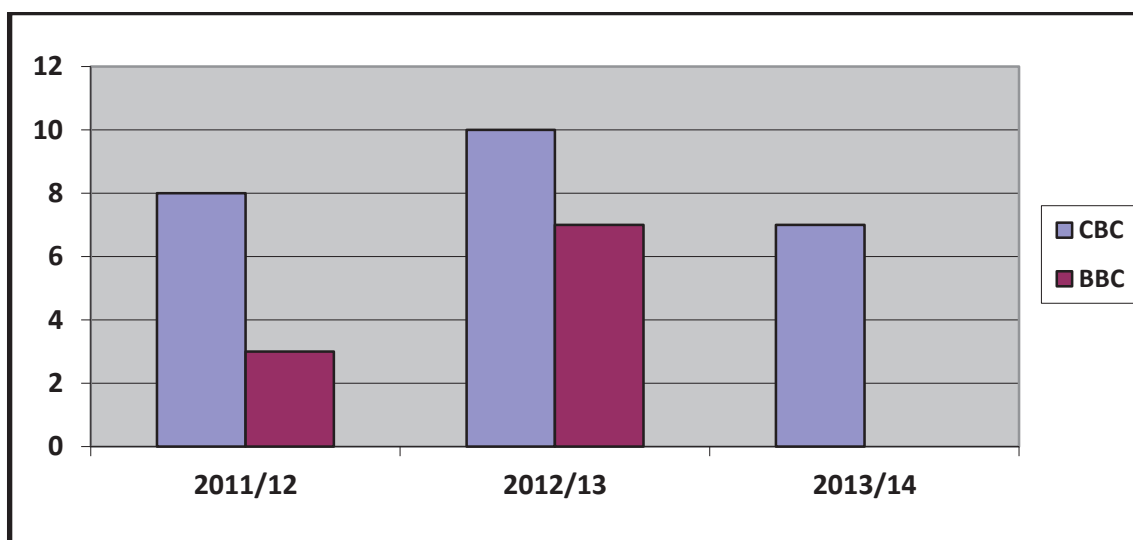
Timeliness of Visits



3.1.3 Records are kept for the reasons that private fostering arrangements end. In 2013-14 the reasons were:

- 4 young people went home to parent.
- 2 young people became looked after
- 1 young person moved out of the area

Numbers of Arrangements Ending In Year



3.2 – SUITABILITY OF ARRANGEMENTS

3.2.1. 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. In two cases there were some concerns about how arrangements could meet the needs of the children involved. This was resolved by the Local Authority intervening and accommodating both young people.

SECTION 4 - SUPPORT TO YOUNG PEOPLE

4.0 – ADVOCACY SUPPORT

- 4.0.1 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 leaflet 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 legal age at which a child is deemed to be no longer privately fostered is 16 (18 if disabled). For some young people it may not be possible for them to remain in private foster care beyond the age of 16. It is the role of the allocated social worker to sign post the young people in private foster care who are approaching their 16th birthday to universal services with regard to accommodation, advice and guidance.

SECTION 5 – SUMMARY & DEVELOPMENTS

- 5.1 The joint service ended on 31st December 2013. This had little impact on the Central Bedfordshire Private Fostering Service. Raising awareness of private fostering has become more straightforward because there is now a smaller area to cover. Networking with partner agencies and other professionals is therefore less time consuming.
- 5.2 The number of notifications has gradually increased since 2006 when the requirement was first enacted and levels are now broadly similar to those of comparator authorities. Awareness- raising activities and advertising campaigns continue and there is a good level of awareness amongst local professionals. However National Campaigns have stopped as have campaigns through BAAF because of lack of funding. Therefore there is more pressure on Local Authorities to intensify their own campaigns of raising awareness.
- 5.3 The new client database in Central Bedfordshire has now been configured to enable referrals to be made easily and to give management information to support timely allocation of work. There are also contingency plans in place if the lead worker is absent for any unplanned reason.
- 5.4 Central Bedfordshire has continued 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.
- 5.5 In March 2012 following the annual review of the Shared Service Level Agreement it was decided to end the Shared Service Arrangement. This decision was subsequently reviewed in detail in Autumn 2012 with the decision being made for the disaggregation of the service to be effective from 1 January 2014.

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

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Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 16th September 2014

Budget Monitoring Q1 – June 2014/15

Revenue

Key points to note (see link to the Executive report for details):

- The 2014/15 forecast outturn is to overspend by £1M.
- The overspend is after the use of £0.777M of Earmarked Reserves brought forward from 2013/14.
- The Year to Date (YTD) spend is £0.31M under budget.
- Total debt for Children's Services is £495k of which £268k is debt over 61 days.

Revenue

Key points to note (cont):

- The Children's Services net budget of £44.793M is a net increase from 2013/14 of £5.242M. The efficiencies of £2.591M are offset by £7.833M of pressures. The pressures reflected in part (£2.486M) for the reduction in Grant income.
- The forecast overspend is partly due to increased costs in the use of Independent Foster Agencies where referrals have not always been able to be accommodated in-house. Special Guardianship Orders have also contributed to the forecast overspend as numbers have been steadily rising with 30 new cases in 2013/14, an increase of 55%, the rise is expected to continue into 2014/15.
- Not currently forecast is the possible risk of non achievement of the agency staff efficiency in Children's Services Operations and the on-going use of agency above that previously forecast. The recruitment drive has not progressed as expected with agency staff covering substantive posts in a number of the operational teams. There has been no permanent recruitment in the last 5 months other than 2 conversions from agency.

Revenue

Key points to note (cont):

- The table below indicates the upward trajectory and pressure on the budget

	Total as at June 2013	Total as at June 2014	% Increase
Number of LAC	254	276	9%
In-House Placements	88	92	5%
Independent Placements	110	108	-2%
Special Guardianship Orders	60	87	45%
Child Protection Plans	266	182	-32%
Children in Need	1,662	1,307	-21%
Number of Referrals (YTD)	588	526	-11%

Slide 3

Revenue Forecast Outturn

	Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance after Use of Reserves
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Director CS	413	412	(1)
AD – CSO	32,213	33,843	993
AD – L & SC	4,403	4,565	74
AD – School Improvement	1,260	1,257	(3)
Transport	7,780	7,780	0
Partnerships	601	653	0
Sub Total	46,670	48,510	1,063
DSG Contribution to Central Support	(719)	(719)	0
ESG contribution to Central Support	(1,158)	(1,208)	(50)
Total Children Services	44,793	46,583	1,013
Schools Individual Budgets	84,878	84,825	0
Supported by DSG/EFA	(84,878)	(82,865)	0
Total Schools	0	1,960	0
Total Children's Services	44,793	48,543	1,013

Slide 4

Capital Position

Key points to note:

- The capital budget for 2014/15 is £25.684m (£0.6m net). The main issues to note are:
- Gross forecast is to spend £30.140M, above the original budget by £4.456M following the capital review process.
- Gross spend to date is £2.968M, slightly below the profiled budget of £3M.
- All but two projects, Schools Access and Temporary Accommodation are funded wholly by grant receipts that have no expenditure deadline.

Capital Outturn

Scheme Title	Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
New School Places	20,201	23,550	3,349
2 year old entitlement	986	686	(300)
Temporary Accommodation	400	400	0
Schools Devolved Formula Capital	470	470	0
Schools Access Initiative	200	200	0
Alternative Secondary Provision (Free School)	-80	80	160
LPSA & LAA Grant payout	139	30	(109)
Schools Capital Maintenance	3,368	4,200	832
Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM)	0	524	524
Children's Services	25,684	30,140	4,456

Slide 6

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Meeting: Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date: 16 September 2014
Subject: Work Programme & Executive Forward Plan
Report of: Richard Carr, Chief Executive
Summary: The report provides Members with details of the currently drafted Committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.

Contact Officer: Paula Everitt, Scrutiny Policy Adviser
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The work programme of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee will contribute indirectly to all 5 Council priorities. Whilst there are no direct implications arising from this report the implications of proposals will be detailed in full in each report submitted to the Committee.

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 relevant items of 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.**

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

1. Appended is the currently drafted work programme for the Committee.
2. The Committee is now requested to consider the work programme attached and amend or add to it as necessary.

Overview and Scrutiny Task Forces

3. 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.

Executive Forward Plan

4. Listed below are those items relating specifically to this Committee's terms of reference contained in the latest version of the Executive's Forward Plan to ensure Members are fully aware of the key issues Executive Members will be taking decisions upon in the coming months. The full Executive Forward plan can be viewed on the Council's website at the link at the end of this report.

Ref	Issue	Indicative Exec Meeting date
1.	Developing the Early Intervention Offer	14 October 2014
2.	Central Bedfordshire Council's Admissions Arrangements and Co-ordinated Scheme	14 October 2014
3.	New School Places in Stotfold	09 December 2014
4.	Central Bedfordshire Council's Admission Arrangements and Co-ordinated Scheme	31 March 2015
Non-Key Decisions		
5.	Q1 Performance Report	14 October 2014
6.	Q2 Budget Monitoring	9 December 2014
7.	Q2 Performance Report	13 January 2015
8.	Budget 2015/16	10 February 2015

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. 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.

Appendix A – Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

Background reports:

Executive Forward Plan (can be viewed at any time on the Council's website) at the following link:-

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/modgov/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=577&RD=0>

Appendix A: Children's Services OSC Work Programme (2014/15)		
OSC date	Report Title	Description
11 November 2014	LSCB Annual Report	To receive the annual report of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
11 November 2014	Annual Resilience Report	To receive the annual report of the schools resilience forum.
11 November 2014	Customer Feedback Annual Report	To receive an annual report regarding customer feedback in relation to the Children's Services directorate.
12 December 2014	Schools Exclusions	To consider a review of the Council's policies in relation to school exclusions.
20 January 2015	Q2 Budget Reporting	To receive a presentation regarding the directorate's capital & revenue budget monitoring information for the second quarter of 2014/15 (to be circulated electronically).
20 January 2015	Q2 Performance Reporting	To consider performance monitoring information for the second quarter of 2014/15 (to be circulated electronically).
20 January 2015	Council's Admission Arrangements for 2016/17	To consider the Council's arrangements for 2016/17
20 January 2015	Draft Capital Programme – 2015/16 to 2018/19	To receive the directorate's relevant budget information.
20 January 2015	Draft Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 – 2018/19	To receive the directorate's relevant budget information.
20 January 2015	Draft Fees and Charges	To receive the directorate's relevant fees and charges information.
10 March 2015	Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring	To receive a presentation regarding the directorate's capital & revenue budget monitoring information for the third quarter of 2014/15.
09 June 2015	Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring	To consider performance monitoring information for the third quarter of 2014/15.

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