

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** 30 October 2014

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

### **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date & Time

**Tuesday, 11 November 2014 10.00 a.m.**

Venue at

**Council Chamber, Watling House, High Street North,  
Dunstable**

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 B Coleman, Mrs R J Drinkwater, P A Duckett, P Hollick,  
D McVicar and R B Pepworth

[Named Substitutes:

R D Berry, K Janes, B Saunders, N J Sheppard and M A Smith]

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 16 September 2014 and to note actions taken since that meeting.

Also attached for information purposes are the Minutes of the co-convened OSC meeting on 23 September 2014 at which Members discussed the proposed fees and charges schedule.

## 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.

<b>Reports</b>
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<b>Item</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page Nos.</b>
9	<b>Executive Member Update</b>  To receive a brief verbal update from the Executive Member for Children's Services.	* Verbal
10	<b>Annual Local Safeguarding Children's Board Report</b>  To receive the annual report of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.	* 23 - 64
11	<b>Annual Schools Resilience Report</b>  To receive an annual report regarding Schools Resilience.	* 65 - 126
12	<b>Customer Feedback Annual Report</b>  To receive an annual report regarding customer feedback in relation to the Children's Services directorate.	* 127 - 142
13	<b>Council's Schools Admission Arrangements for 2016/17</b>  To consider the Council's arrangements for 2016/17.	* 143 - 188
14	<b>New school places in Stotfold and Leighton Linlade and 2014/15 refresh of the Council's School Organisation Plan and New School Places Programme</b>  To receive a presentation.	* Verbal

15      **Q1 Performance Report**      \*      189 - 196

To consider performance monitoring information for the first quarter of 2014/15.

16      **Work Programme 2014/15 & Executive Forward Plan**      \*      197 - 200

The report provides Members with details of the currently drafted Committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.

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**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 16 September 2014

**PRESENT**

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

Councillors:	D Bowater Mrs G Clarke Mrs R J Drinkwater P Hollick	Councillors:	D Jones D McVicar R B Pepworth
Parental Co-optees:	Mr J Chapman Mr S Court Mr T Hodey		
Church of England Co-optee:			
Roman Catholic Co-optee:			
Apologies for Absence:	Cllrs	P A Duckett Mrs F Image Mr D Morton	
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	P N Aldis  Mrs S Clark  A L Dodwell  C C Gomm 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:	Ms A Craig  Mrs P Everitt Ms D Hill  Mr G Jones  Miss H Redding Mrs J Singh	Fostering Team Manager, Children's Services Scrutiny Policy Adviser Senior Finance Manager - Children's Services Assistant Director Children's Services Operations Assistant Director School Improvement Adoption Team Manager, Children's Services	

Mrs S Tyler                      Head of Child Poverty and Early  
Intervention  
Mr E Wong                        Head of Corporate Parenting

CS/14/29.    **Minutes**

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 July 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

CS/14/30.    **Members' Interests**

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

- Cllr A Barker as a Member of the Corporate Adoption Panel
- Cllr A Dodwell as a Member of the Corporate Fostering Panel
- Cllr D Bowater as a Member of the SEPT Board.

CS/14/31.    **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and paid special thanks to Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services for her services to Central Bedfordshire Council. Thanks were also extended to officers and staff for organising the Member visit to the Children's Disability Hub in Dunstable.

CS/14/32.    **Petitions**

None.

CS/14/33.    **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None.

CS/14/34.    **Call-In**

None.

CS/14/35.    **Requested Items**

None.

CS/14/36.    **Executive Member Update**

The Executive Member for Children's Services provided the Committee with an update on the following:-

- The slight increased to 57.8% in the number of children that had achieved A\*-C GCSEs in English and Maths. This was in contrast to a downturn nationally and tougher marking.
- Attendance at a meeting to discuss expansion plans for Roecroft School in Stotfold.



- Attendance at the forthcoming Fostering and Adoption Awards ceremony.
- Attendance at the official opening of the Disability Hub for Children in Dunstable

The Committee raised several questions to which the Executive Member responded as follows:-

- The majority of children in Central Bedfordshire had been awarded places in the school of their choice
- There was a ranged of apprenticeship schemes and college courses delivered at Bedford and Dunstable Colleges for children who did not achieve their expected results. The Executive Member agreed to report back to the Committee on the opportunities that were made for children and young people with special needs.
- Why there was a disparity between Ofsted results and examination results in schools? The Executive Member advised that schools had demonstrated an improvement in teaching practices to Ofsted, of which examination attainment was a part. It was considered that improved school performance would lead to improved examination results for children.

#### CS/14/37. **Children's Trust Annual Report**

The Executive Member for Children's Services introduced the Children's Trust Annual Report that outlined the progress in the delivering the priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan June 2013 to March 2015. In the first year of the Plan, performance across the set of key indicators was mixed. The main challenges included educational attainment, the Supporting Families Programme and the take up of early education/child care places for disadvantaged 2 year olds.

Members were asked to comment on the plan and were advised that questions and comments would be recorded in the Minutes and provided to the Children's Trust. In light of the report Members discussed the following:-

- The difficulty experienced by one school in allocating their Pupil Premium. In light of the difficulty the Committee supported the development of a guidance note for Governors and teachers of schools and special schools with examples of how this money had been spent in other schools
- Why the number of disadvantaged two year olds placed in early education/child care remained off track. In response the Executive Member advised that capacity issues had been resolved, however, some parents had not wished to take up the place for their child. An update was expected from Central Government in relation to this matter.
- Concern that GCSE exam performance had remained below target. The Executive Member advised that until all examination results had been validated in January 2015 they could not be published.
- Concerns that in light of the enhancement and redesign of the School Nurse Programme there had been an impact on the amount of time taken to refer a specific case that had led to deterioration in that individuals health. The Executive Member advised that work with Public Health colleagues would result in clear pathways for the School Nurse Service and resolve delays in referrals. Cllr Bowater agreed to raise this incident with SEPT colleagues.

- Performance in relation to issuing a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time where domestic abuse was a factor. The Executive Member commented that work was underway to reduce the impact on children, however, if a Social Worker was in any in doubt about childrens' safety they would be put on a protection plan.
- Concern that the number of mothers who smoked at the time of delivery in the south of Central Bedfordshire had not improved, despite attempts to address this.
- Whether the Supporting Families Programme (formally Troubled Families Programme) target had been set too high. The Executive Member advised that Officers would focus on fewer families going forward to improve outcomes for families.

**RECOMMENDED that the comments of the Committee as detailed in the Minutes be referred as appropriate.**

CS/14/38. **Annual Report for the Adoption Service and Fostering Service and Private Fostering**

The Executive Member introduced the Adoption, Fostering and Private Fostering Annual Report and referred to the Joint Adoption Panel Chairman's Report that had been circulated at the meeting. The Executive Member recorded his thanks to the Panel and the service for their hardwork.

In light of the reports and the further clarification provided by the Fostering Practice the Committee commented and discussed the following:-

- The current number of children going through the adoption process and how this compared to other areas. The Adoption Practice Manager explained it was not possible to give an exact number due to the flexible nature of the children's plans.
- The proactive work undertaken by officers on a local and national level help 'harder to place' children that included older children, sibling groups and children with special needs.
- Concerns as to whether a full complement of professional staff was in place following the disaggregation of the service with Bedford Borough Council. The Adoption Practice Manager confirmed all posts were in the new staff structure.

RECOMMENDED that the Fostering, Adoption and Private Adoption Annual Reports be circulated via Central Essentials and the Governor Essentials newsletters for information.

CS/14/39. **Quarter 1 2014/15 Budget Report**

The Executive Member introduced the projected Revenue forecast for 2014/15 for Children's Services and highlighted the continued pressures faced by the Service. The Assistant Director, Children's Services Operations advised that the total debt for Children's Services had improved in comparison to the previous forecast. The number of looked after children had risen leading to additional pressures in Fostering and Special Guardianship Orders. Pressures relating to staff recruitment had also caused delays in the Fostering and

Adoption of children. The Assistant Director reported a successful recruitment campaign for newly qualified social workers which had resulted in the appointment of several social workers and a further similar campaign would be run in November.

The Senior Financial Adviser outlined the Capital forecast and advised that the budget was not overspent and would be adjusted following the receipt of grants.

In light of the report the Committee queried whether there was an increase in the cost of foster care if a carer was contracted to the local authority or an agency. The Assistant Director, Children's Services Operations confirmed that additional fees were incurred by the authority if a foster carer was contracted to any agency and as a result the Council had focused on reducing agency spend in order to achieve better outcomes for fostered children.

In light of the Capital report it was suggested by Members that photographs of capital projects be included in future updates.

**NOTED the report.**

CS/14/40. **Update on Schools' Curriculum**

The Assistant Director, School Improvement introduced a presentation on the changes to the curriculum that also updated the Committee on the changes in assessment arrangements. Primary schools had been given the option to introduce the new curriculum in September, with the freedom to vary the curriculum to meet local needs. The new assessment reforms would include improvement in the consistency of results and teacher assessment.

Steve Gray, Head of School at Redborne Upper School was welcomed to the meeting and explained the secondary curriculum and assessment arrangements.

In light of the presentation the Committee commented and discussed the following:-

- Concern that academies and free schools would be exempt from implementing the new curriculum and that some employers might not understand the changes. In response, Mr Gray advised that academies and free schools were not exempt from the introducing the new curriculum and that employers had been fully consulted on the reforms. Courses such as the farms course at Redborne Upper School which would not count towards the new performance measures, would continue to be run by the school to meet the needs of students and local employers.
- Concern that religious education would be marginalised.
- The extent to which provision had been included in the new primary and secondary school curriculum for physical education (PE). The Assistant Director, School Improvement confirmed that provision was included in both curriculums and a primary schools premium payment was also available.

- The level of support that would be provided prior to assessments of children in Special Schools. The Assistant Director, School Improvement advised that a virtual school for Looked after Children and Children with Special Educational Needs and Disability was available.

### **RECOMMENDED**

1. **That the concerns of the Committee relating to the potential marginalisation of religious education be referred to SACRE.**
2. **That further information be circulated to the Committee in relation to the use of the schools premium for physical education.**

#### CS/14/41. **Impact on Children of Living in Family Circumstances of Domestic Abuse/Domestic Violence**

The Head of Child Poverty and Early Intervention delivered a presentation on the impact on children of living in family circumstances of Domestic Abuse/Domestic Violence and provided an update on the implementation of the Committee's previous recommendations.

The Committee was advised that there had been positive feedback from schools on the successful implementation of the Relay Project. Officers who had been working with the Police had informed schools of incidences of abuse resulting in the provision of additional support and positive outcomes for the victims.

Transformation funding was available to support collaborative working across local authorities, however a tri-borough approach was difficult to achieve with each authority at different stages of development. The Head of Child Poverty and Early Intervention gave a verbal update from a positive report on Transformation from an independent consultant.

In light of the presentation the Committee commented and discussed the following:-

- Whether domestic abuse was reported to schools outside of term time. The Head of Child Poverty and Early Intervention advised that the Relay Team would inform schools once they reopened.
- Concern that current funding for the Domestic Abuse champion would stop. In response the Head of Service advised the role of the Domestic would sit within her team in the Children's Services Directorate.

### **NOTED the update**

#### CS/14/42. **Work Programme 2014/15 & Executive Forward Plan**

The Committee considered the current draft work programme and agreed the inclusion of a briefing on the repercussions of child sex exploitation in Rotherham.

**RECOMMENDED that the work programme be approved subject to the amendment above.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 1.15 p.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....

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**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **CO-CONVENED OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House on Tuesday, 23 September 2014.

**PRESENT**

**Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Cllrs: Barker (Chairman), Duckett and McVicar

Also Present: Mr Chapman (PGR co-optee), Mr Court (PGR co-optee) and Ms F Image (Diocesan representative)

Substitutes: Cllrs Berry (substitute for Cllr Costin) and B Saunders (substitute for Cllr G Clarke)

**Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Cllrs: Duckett (Chairman), Sparrow (Vice-Chairman), Chapman and Coleman

Substitutes Cllr B Saunders (substitute for Cllr Johnstone)

**Social Care, Health & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Cllrs: Drinkwater (Chairman), Berry, Duckett and Goodchild

Substitutes Cllrs McVicar (substitute for Cllr Gomm) and Sparrow (substitute for Cllr Sheppard)

**Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Cllrs: McVicar (Chairman), Bowater, Matthews, B Saunders, Shadbolt and Williams

Substitutes Cllr Chapman (substitute for Cllr Gomm)

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs A R Bastable  
Mrs G Clarke  
N B Costin  
Dr R Egan  
C C Gomm  
Ms A M W Graham  
Mrs D B Gurney  
Mr T Hodey  
P Hollick  
R W Johnstone  
D Jones  
Mr D Morton  
Mrs M Mustoe  
R B Pepworth  
N J Sheppard  
M A Smith  
N Warren  
T Woodward

Members in Attendance:	Cllrs C Hegley	Executive Member for Social Care, Health & Housing
	D J Hopkin	Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources
	M R Jones	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources
	B J Spurr	Executive Member for Community Services
	M A G Versallion	Executive Member for Children's Services
	J N Young	Executive Member for Regeneration

Officers in Attendance:	Mr D Galvin	– Head of Financial Performance
	Mr I Melville	– Head of Business Systems
	Mr J Partridge Ritchie	– Corporate Policy Manager
		– Head of Registration & Coroner Service
	Ms S Templeman	– Senior Finance Manager

Others in Attendance Public 0

**OSC/14/1. Members' Interests**

Cllr Bowater declared an interest in the business as a Member of the Audit Committee.

**OSC/14/2. Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

Cllr McVicar welcomed the co-opted Members of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and advised Members of the procedure for the meeting including the manner in which the discussion would be recorded. Whilst the meeting was a co-convened meeting of four separate Overview and Scrutiny Committees it was noted that any recommendations would be referred to the relevant committee for referral to the Executive.

**OSC/14/3. Petitions**

None.

**OSC/14/4. Questions, statements and deputations**

None.

**OSC/14/5. Fees and Charges**

Cllr M Jones introduced a report that proposed the revised fees and charges for 2015/16 and identified those charges where increases were significantly



different from the 2% advisory increase as per the 2015/16 Budget Strategy. In addition it was highlighted that charges would take effect either from 01 January 2015 or 01 April 2015.

In addition to discussing the specific fees and charges Members commented that the report did not clearly demonstrate which of these were statutory and where there was flexibility to amend proposals. It was suggested that future reports identify the level of service use as a means of providing context for these charges, for example in relation to waste collection it was proposed to increase the charge by £1.00 but it was not clear the extent of the impact of this change. Additionally it was suggested that a more consistent approach to setting the fees and charges was required, for example some directorates provided a 2014/15 comparison and others did not. Members also commented that in the future it was necessary to have appropriate officers in attendance at OSC meetings to discuss the proposed charges and to be able to respond to queries on the nature of specific charges.

In light of the report the Committee discussed the detailed proposed fees and charges and commented as follows:-

- Social Care, Health & Housing (Appendix A1)

Clarity was sought in relation to proposed fees and charges for telecare monitoring services for those who met eligibility criteria and whether VAT had been applied appropriately to these charges. Members also queried whether costs relating to domiciliary care were per hour for each carer.

Members also queried fees and charges for guest rooms and whether it would be appropriate to increase the proposed charge in light of the comparative costs of rooms elsewhere. The Social Care, Health and Housing OSC considered a recommendation to increase the proposed charge but it was considered inappropriate to amend the proposed fee at the current time. It was however agreed that it be reviewed for 2016/17 following a review of the standard of these facilities.

Members queried the nature of immigration survey requests and what these entailed. In light of responsibilities being added to the role of the Council it was proposed and agreed by the Social Care, Health and Housing OSC that this charge be reviewed with a view to the Executive considering whether the proposed charge was sufficient.

Members also queried whether it was necessary to refer to a 'renewal' of a blue badge and whether the weekly price per care home bed for other local authorities was high enough in comparison to our own prices.

**RECOMMENDED by the Social Care Health and Housing OSC to Executive that the comments detailed above be considered and that whilst the Committee supports the proposed fees and charges in Appendix A1 in light of the additional responsibilities on the Council relating to immigration surveys the associated charge be reviewed to ensure they were set at an appropriate level for 2015/16.**

- Children's Services (Appendix A2)

Members noted the charges relating to schools transport and in addition sought clarity in relation to the charges for the music service and the means by which schools could use the pupil premium to fund music lessons. Members also sought clarity in relation to the charges for out of county and non-LEA schools, specifically why there was not a 40 minute lesson for out of county schools and why costs were not increasing for 2015.

**RECOMMENDED by the Children's Services OSC to Executive that the proposed charges in Appendix A2 be supported subject to further clarity being provided in relation to music service charges for out of county and non-LEA schools to ensure that these charges were set at an appropriate level for 2015/16.**

- Community Services (Appendix A3)

Members sought clarity in relation to the purpose of 'definitive statements'. Members also queried why the charges for granting a sex shop/cinema license were the same and whether the fee for granting of a sexual entertainment venue was sufficient. In relation to charges for the Licensing Act 2003 Members queried in general terms whether these fees were high enough.

Members queried the proposed weekly rate for off-street parking in Flitwick and whether it would be appropriate to provide a discount. In response the Executive Member commented this charge was presently being reviewed and further information would be provided at the Executive meeting.

Members queried the proposed charges for Hackney Cabs and Private Hire Licences and sought clarity as to why these fees had not increased. It was agreed that further clarity would be provided at the Executive meeting.

Members also queried whether it was necessary to agree a charge in relation to licensing mobile food vans. The Executive Member agreed to review this charge and whether it was necessary to include a charge, following a consistent approach to the recommendation of a charge for sex shop licences. The Executive Member was also asked to consider whether the charge for collecting fridges and freezers from domestic premises should be reduced or remain at the 2014/15 rate in order to deter fly tipping.

**RECOMMENDED by the Sustainable Communities OSC to Executive that the proposed charges in Appendix A3 be supported but that further clarity be provided in light of the comments detailed above at the relevant Executive meeting.**

- Regeneration & Business Support (Appendix A4)

Members queried why the proposed charges for 2015/16 had been held at 2014/rates. The Executive Member agreed to review the charges prior to the Executive meeting to consider whether it was appropriate to apply a 2% increase.

**RECOMMENDED by the Sustainable Communities OSC to Executive that the proposed fees and charges in Appendix A4 be reviewed to determine whether it was appropriate to apply a 2% increase for 2015/16.**

- Corporate Resources (including registration) (Appendix A5)

The Committee received an update in relation to the proposed fees and charges for the registration service in light of Bedford Borough Council's decision to apply an uplift of 3-3.5%. In light of this increase Members agreed it would be appropriate for Central Bedfordshire Council to negotiate these charges with a view to agreeing a similar uplift to Bedford Borough Council.

In addition Members queried the rationale for not increasing charges in relation to land charges, which it was confirmed was due to the Council not being permitted to make a profit in relation to this service. Members also sought clarity in relation to the charges associated to Freedom of Information requests and the time taken to compile a request.

**RECOMMENDED by the Corporate Resources OSC to Executive that the proposed fees and charges in Appendix A5 be supported subject to a review of the proposed fees and charges for the registration service to bring them in line with the proposed charge for Bedford Borough Council.**

- Building Control (Appendix A6)

**RECOMMENDED by the Sustainable Communities OSC to Executive that the proposed fees and charges in Appendix A6 be reviewed to determine whether it was appropriate to apply a 2% increase for 2015/16.**

- Planning Services (Appendix A7)

**RECOMMENDED by the Sustainable Communities OSC to Executive that the proposed fees and charges in Appendix A7 be reviewed to determine whether it was appropriate to apply a 2% increase for 2015/16.**

- Minerals & Waste (Appendix A8)

**RECOMMENDED by the Sustainable Communities OSC to Executive that the proposed fees and charges in Appendix A8 be reviewed to determine whether it was appropriate to apply a 2% increase for 2015/16.**

- Photocopying (Appendix A9)

**RECOMMENDED by the Corporate Resource OSC to Executive that the proposed fees and charges in Appendix A9 be supported.**

- Marriage fees (Appendix A10)

NOTED the statutory fees and charges proposed in Appendix A10.

- Charges to Schools and Academies (Appendix C)

Members sought further clarity on the process for making schools aware of the proposed charges in relation to statutory and traded services to schools and academies. Members also sought clarity in relation to the process by which these proposed charges were scrutinised before they were implemented. It was also requested that the proposed charges for the following academic year be provided to schools in a timely way so they were aware of charges prior to setting their budget for the following year.

In addition Members queried the costs of psychologists and requested that these be reviewed to determine whether the charges were appropriate. It was also commented that the charges in relation to the music service did not appear to correspond with those included in Appendix A2. Further clarity was also required in relation to the charges for the schools secure network costs.

**RECOMMENDED that further clarity be sought from the Director for Children’s Services and the Executive Members to ascertain the process for scrutinising these proposed charges before they were implemented.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 13.10pm and concluded at 15.35pm)

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**Meeting:** Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny  
**Date:** 11 November 2014  
**Subject:** Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2013 – 2014  
**Report of:** Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services  
**Summary:** Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSBs) are required to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child protection in their local area. The Annual Report of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board sets out the extent to which the functions of the LSCB as set out in statutory guidance are being effectively discharged.

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**Advising Officer:** Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services  
**Contact Officer:** Karen Oellermann, Assistant Director, Commissioning and Partnerships  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Central Bedfordshire Council and LSCB statutory partners

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

1. This report supports the Central Bedfordshire Councils priority to: "Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable" and reports on the Local Safeguarding Children Board's business priorities for 2013 – 2014.

### **Financial:**

2. Key statutory agencies are required by statutory guidance set out in 'Working Together 2013' to contribute towards the costs of an effective working Local Safeguarding Children Board. These costs are set out in Section 6 of the Annual Report which describes Governance and Accountability.

### **Legal:**

3. Working Together 2013 states that the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. This is a statutory requirement under section 14A of the Children Act 2004.
4. This statutory guidance covers:
  - a) the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and
  - b) a clear framework for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to monitor the effectiveness of local services.

**Risk Management:**

5. The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board manages and mitigates risk by regularly reviewing and monitoring a risk log. Reputational and child protection and safeguarding risks would arise if Central Bedfordshire Council, in conjunction with partner agencies, did not ensure that robust arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of harm and that the effectiveness of multi agency arrangements was not appropriately monitored, reviewed and responded to by the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

6. Not Applicable.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

7. 'Working Together 2013' stipulates a child centred approach and refers to the following obligations on partners when working together to safeguard children:
- the Equality Act 20 puts a responsibility on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. This applies to the process of identification of need and risk faced by the individual child and the process of assessment. No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their particular needs; and
  - the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This is an international agreement that protects the rights of children and provides a child-centred framework for the development of services to children. The UK Government ratified the UNCRC in 1991 and, by doing so, recognises children's rights to expression and receiving information.

**Public Health**

8. The work of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Board and it's focus on aligns with and supports the following Health and Wellbeing priorities:
- Giving every child the best start in life
    - Babies have the best start in life
    - Parents or carers are equipped to nurture their child and the impacts of toxic trio are minimised
    - All children arrive at school in a great position to learn
  - Ensuring good mental health and wellbeing at every age
    - Children, young people and adults are emotionally resilient
    - Children young people and adults with mental health illness recover quickly
    - People with poor mental health live as healthily and for as long as those with good mental health

**Community Safety:**

9. Domestic abuse is a community safety priority and the impact of domestic abuse on children was one of the priorities for the Board during 2013-2014. Significant attention was given to this issue during the year with a particular focus on the impact on children who live with it. The Annual report sets out the challenges that the Board highlighted in relation to the sustainable funding for the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service.

**Sustainability:**

10. There are no new sustainability implications arising from the Report

**Procurement:**

11. Not applicable.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Committee is asked to:-**

- note and comment on the achievements and challenges described within the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Annual Report 2013 - 14

**Background**

12. Working Together 2013 states that the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area (this is a statutory requirement under section 14A of the Children Act 2004). The annual report should be published in relation to the preceding financial year and should fit with local agencies' planning, commissioning and budget cycles.
13. The report should be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing board. This report is also submitted to the Children's Trust and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information.
14. The Annual Report should provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It should identify areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action. The report should include lessons from reviews undertaken within the reporting period.
15. The report should also list the contributions made to the LSCB by partner agencies and details of what the LSCB has spent, including on Child Death Reviews, Serious Case Reviews and other specific expenditure such as learning events or training. All LSCB member organisations have an obligation to provide LSCBs with reliable resources (including finance) that enable the LSCB to be strong and effective. Members should share the financial responsibility for the LSCB in such a way that a disproportionate burden does not fall on a small number of partner agencies.

16. This report therefore provides Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny members with a view of the LSCBs achievements and challenges during 2013-2014. This report shows how LSCB partners have worked together and individually to keep children safe, deliver our agreed Board priorities and meet our statutory objectives to:
- coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and
  - ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.
17. The foreword from the Independent Chair provides a summary of the key achievements and challenges.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Central Bedfordshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2013 -2014.



# Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board: Annual Report

31 March 2013 to 31 March 2014

**The effectiveness of partner's work to safeguard and  
promote the welfare of children in Central  
Bedfordshire**



### **Information about this report**

The publication of an annual report summarising the work of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and assessing the state of safeguarding across the partnership is a requirement of the statutory framework within which Safeguarding Boards work.

The annual report should provide rigorous and transparent assessment of performance and effectiveness of local services. It should identify weak areas, causes, remedial action; lessons learned from reviews; and income and expenditure.

The Statutory functions of the LSCB are set out in Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 as:

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

**Date of publication: 2 September 2014**

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## 1. Foreword from independent chair

The last year has again brought a raft of changes for partners to grapple with, whilst retaining a focus on working together to keep children safe.

The year started with the publication of the long awaited Working Together 2013 at the end of March 2013, coming into force on 15 April 2013. The new document continues the reforms identified as part of Professor Eileen Munro's independent review of children protection which puts the child in focus at all stages. This brought with it a range of new requirements for our LSCB, including:

- expectations around developing a learning and improvement process to include Serious Case Reviews so that they form an integral part of our work to improve services to children
- the requirement to monitor the effectiveness of Early Help
- defining the safeguarding responsibilities of LSCB partners, including NHS Commissioning Board, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Police and Crime Commissioners – these include staff induction and child protection
- promoting the involvement of children and young people in the work of the LSCB and for the local authority to take reasonable steps to ensure that the LSCB includes two lay members representing the local community

Membership of the Board has been extended and at our September meeting we welcomed two new lay members, a governor representative, a further education representative and a representative from one of our Academy schools. Our previous representative from Barnfield College who represented all schools has since resigned and schools are being invited to provide representatives to ensure system of representation is complete.

During the year Bedford Borough decided to withdraw from the remaining joint working arrangements with the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Board and at the end of September the Boards formally separated their joint working arrangements. This included disaggregating the business unit providing support to the Board, reviewing the shared multi-agency training functions and disaggregating the joint working arrangements sitting beneath the Board structure. This provided unique challenges for all partners involved, including recruitment of new staff to the newly created business unit, attendance at additional meetings and the review and development of new protocols and strategies. The Training Review reported at the end of December and the only remaining shared function relates to multi-agency safeguarding training; this continues to be hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council.

The period between October and the end of March saw the Board agree and publish a number of key strategies following the disaggregation, this included:

- a revised Thresholds document following a threshold review
- a Learning and Improvement Framework, including a new performance framework

- a Joint Training and Development Strategy with Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board, and
- a Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy

This period also saw the Board focus on its priorities of:

- **Evaluating the impact of Early Help – significant progress and improvement.** This involved reviewing audits of early help cases, communicating the learning and promoting refreshed **Thresholds** and the Early Help offer and process to all key stakeholders. The number of early help assessments has since increased and they now come from a wider range of partners, including GPs. The rate of referrals to assessment is on target and thresholds are understood. The authority reviewed its arrangements for the ‘front door’ and at the end of the year (March 2014) early help services were re-aligned alongside the referral and assessment team to ensure children in need of early interventions are referred swiftly. This is the preparation in Central Bedfordshire towards any future Bedfordshire Multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). Partners have also provided assurance that there is greater stability in key parts of the workforce (social workers, health visitors and school nurses) and that recruitment targets are on track to be met or that a stable agency workforce is covering key vacancies.
- **Evaluating the impact of work undertaken by partners in relation to Domestic Abuse– significant weaknesses and challenges identified.** This involved an in-depth review of the prevalence of domestic abuse and the range of services on offer, seeking assurance from Bedfordshire Police in relation to their response to a negative HMIC inspection report and seeking assurances from partners to provide adequate resources for the Independent Domestic Violence Advisory services. This is one of the key areas of challenge for the Board going forward and a number of actions have been agreed in order to improve strategic leadership, resourcing and support to children and families. To help support this work a specialist social worker and domestic violence worker has been commissioned to review this area of work and a report will be published in the Autumn 2014.
- **Ensuring an effective response to the Sexual Abuse of Children and young people through Exploitation (CSE) – good progress and Pan Bedfordshire arrangements in place. Further work required to evaluate the CSE Panel (formerly known as the SERAC panel).** A CSE Strategy was agreed by Board and awareness has been raised about the issues. A number of actions in relation to the identification and management of child sexual exploitation have also been completed. Ofsted have attended an operational meeting in respect of a group of

young people about whom there have been concerns regarding sexual exploitation. Ofsted expressed no concerns about the way in which these risks were being managed and reviewed. Bedfordshire Police now have a dedicated CSE team and the CSE Panel meetings continue monthly to share information and monitor intelligence in relation to children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation. A Pan Borough strategic group is now formed.

- **Implementation of Working Together 2013 – good progress made and new arrangements defined and in place.** The Board completed a self-assessment as part of its development and arrangements are compliant with the guidance. A Learning and Improvement Framework was agreed and protocols are in place for reviewing cases of concern referred by partners.

In the context of the challenges at Bedford Hospital and the closure of the paediatric services at the end of July 2013, the CCG reviewed all safeguarding arrangements in Bedford Hospital to ensure safeguarding advice and expertise is resourced, appropriate training is provided and a robust transparent quality assurance framework meets the CCG's safeguarding standards.

Looking forward, and taking account of the improvements and challenges identified during the year, the Board has agreed the following priorities for 2014-2015:

- **Ensuring children and families have faster, easier access to early help and safeguarding support through the delivery of a multi-agency support hub (MASH)** – this will involve taking multi-agency working and information sharing around safeguarding to the next level and building on current improvements;
- **Ensuring the effectiveness of safeguarding support for children living with domestic abuse, adult mental health problems and/or substance misuse** – this will involve implementing further actions to improve support for children and families living with domestic abuse and reviewing support for children and families where mental health and substance misuse is an additional risk factor; and
- **Ensuring the effectiveness of the strategy to deal with child sexual exploitation** – this will involve evaluating our SERAC panel and ensuring the Board is sighted on the data and intelligence to assess the effectiveness of the strategy and the support to children at risk;
- **The development of the Board's core functions to ensure it can deliver these priorities** – this will involve reviewing relevant procedures and policies, ensuring we have in place protocols for joint working with other key strategic partnerships, raising awareness about key issues, learning from national and local case reviews and training and development.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Board, particularly the newly appointed lay members who volunteer their time, for continuing to focus on keeping children safe, and for providing challenge and support in equal measure. Additionally I would like to thank all those at the front line who face the daily challenges of keeping children safe. The following pages of our annual report set out in some detail the considerable efforts of everyone.

I hope these highlights give you some idea of our shared effort during the year in rising to the challenges of further change and demand on our resources.

Phil Picton  
Independent Chair  
Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

## 2. Central Bedfordshire in context

Central Bedfordshire has a population of 260,000 people. This is forecast to increase to around 287,300 people by 2021 with a 13.9% increase forecast in children aged 0-15 between 2011 and 2021 and a 35% increase in the number of people aged 65 and over during the same period.

Overall levels of deprivation in Central Bedfordshire are relatively low. Deprivation is measured at small area level known as lower super output areas (LSOAs). Three LSOAs in Central Bedfordshire are in the most deprived 10-20% in England. These are Dunstable Manshead (Downside - 594), Parkside (602) and Houghton Hall/Tithe Farm (618). Analysis of the LSOAs shows that particular aspects of deprivation in Central Bedfordshire are in the most 10% deprived in England. These are:

- Education, skills and training – a particular issue in eight LSOAs in parts of Dunstable Manshead, Dunstable Northfields, Flitwick, Houghton Hall, Leighton Buzzard North, Parkside, Sandy and Tithe Farm wards.
- Crime and disorder – a particular issue in six LSOAs in parts of Dunstable Central, Dunstable Icknield, Dunstable Northfields, Eaton Bray and Parkside wards.

Unemployment is lower in Central Bedfordshire than in England. 2,655 people were claiming JSA in Central Bedfordshire in March 2014, a rate of 1.6% compared to the England rate of 2.8%. The five wards with highest unemployment rates in Central Bedfordshire are Dunstable Manshead, Tithe Farm, Parkside, Houghton Hall and Dunstable Northfields.

Average house prices in Central Bedfordshire (£175,000) are higher than the national average (£166,600), however 73% of people owned their own home and this is greater than the figure for England as a whole (64%).

Central Bedfordshire residents are less likely to have higher level qualifications compared to the England average, and a lower proportion of Central Bedfordshire pupils achieved 5+ A\*-C GCSE including English and Maths compared to the England average. Life expectancy for both men and women is longer in Central Bedfordshire than it is in England as a whole and overall health was slightly better than the England average and children are less likely to be obese.

Central Bedfordshire is less diverse than England as a whole and has a greater proportion of people who are White British. In 2011 89.7% of the population were White British (79.8% for England). The biggest ethnic minority groups in Central Bedfordshire were White Other (not White British, White Irish or Gypsy or Irish traveller) 2.8%, White Irish 1.2%, Indian 1.0% and other 5.3%.

View the online version of key Statistics in Central Bedfordshire [here](#).



### 3. Safeguarding children in Central Bedfordshire

Safeguarding of children in Central Bedfordshire continues to be good and regular rigorous performance evaluation has provided assurance to the LSCB throughout 2013-2014.

This has been provided through quarterly monitoring of key child protection indicators in the performance framework and through in depth reports highlighting particular issues, such as workforce sufficiency, audits in relation to early help and rates of conversion to child protection plans.

The following table shows safeguarding and early help activity with Central Bedfordshire children and families compared to 2012/1/3 including last known comparative data for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

Table 1

	National 12/13	Statistical Neighbour 12/13	Central Beds 12/13	Central Beds 13/14 (provisional)
Number of referrals	2940	2160	2260	2598
Number of early help assessments opened	N/A	N/A	827	1353
Number of early help assessments opened as a result of step down from social care		N/A		171 (10 months)
Number of early help assessments closed		N/A	394	894
Number of children in need	1900	1423	1631	1508
% of referrals of children in need with an outcome of assessment	N/A	N/A	N/A	72.5%
Number of children subject to a child protection plan	217	162	266	196

A gradual improvement in performance with identified challenges is described below. On this, our core business, the council's internal performance evaluation arrangements are central to overall performance and a core indication of multi-agency working.

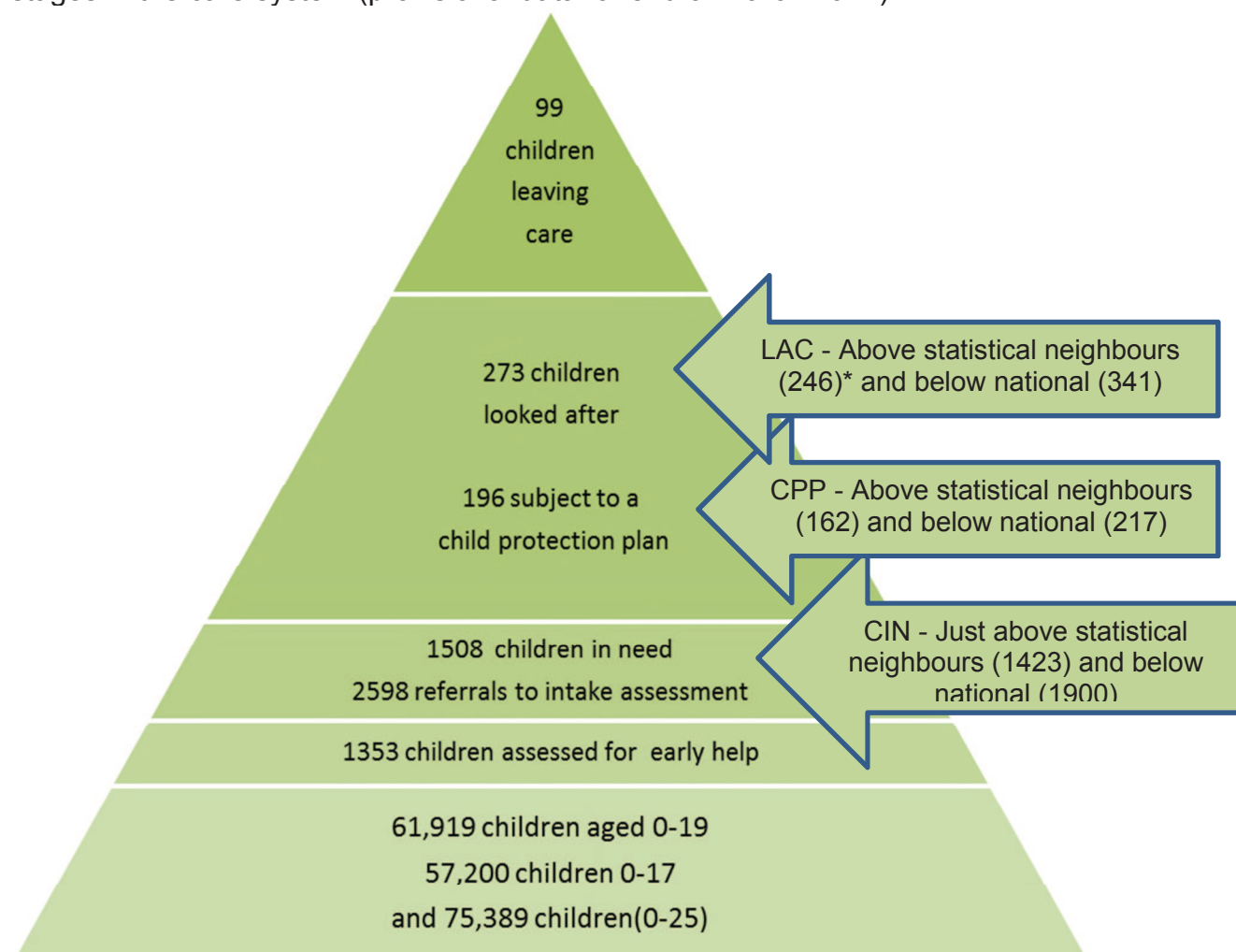
Within social care, a systematic programme of case audit throughout 2013-2014 resulted in practice challenge and review, resulting in a reduction of children with child protection plans and improvements in quality assurance arrangements.

Performance monitoring is a continuing, rigorous and transparent process, with quality control as part of day-to-day practice and supervision. Weekly team and senior management meetings provide appropriate attention to detail. The senior management team is attended by managers from the front

line when appropriate, providing immediate resonance to evaluation and identifying threats to high performance and swift remedial action to ensure long term sustainable improvement. For example, the identification of a high rate of section 47 investigations using statistical neighbour and national comparators resulted in investigation and remedial action which is summarised below. This was reported to the Local Safeguarding Children Board, endorsing social care actions.

### An analysis of the child’s journey in Central Bedfordshire

This section analyses performance using key indicators in relation to child protection. It examines data at key points in decision making from the point of referral through to child protection plans. It aims to help us understand the flow of cases through early help and referral and assessment within the context of multi-agency working. Below are the numbers of children at various stages in the care system (provisional data for end of March 2014).



\* statistical neighbour and national figures have been calculated based on population size to provide population comparisons. These are based on 12/13 outturn figures as 13/14 data is not yet available.

**Early help** was a priority for the LSCB in 2013-2014 and the numbers of early help assessments opened was 1353 in 2013/14, compared to 827 in 2012/13. This is a local measure and there are no national or statistical neighbour

comparators. The numbers of early help assessments show an increase from last year.

**Referral rates** are slightly increased in comparison to the year 2012/13. The rate (454 per 10,000) lies between the England average of 520 and statistical neighbor average of 382.9 per 10,000 population.

A threshold document was revised and widely disseminated by the LSCB and training is being re-modelled to support the new 'one front door' which sees the integration of early help and intake and assessment from 1 April 2014. It is anticipated that referral to an Early Help Assessment will increase compared to those proceeding to formal social care assessments. Every family now receives a service or advice and 'no further action' (NFA) is no longer a category on the case management system.

**Assessment timescales for social care** reflect the changes required following the Munro recommendations. Performance using the old measures has been good and remained stable and initial indicators from the new measurements demonstrate early signs of good performance

**The rate of cases converting to a Section 47 enquiry and to child protection conference** was identified as being higher than our regional comparators. There was a higher conversion rate at each stage of the child protection process from referral to initial child protection conference within Central Bedfordshire compared to others in the region. The rate of progression from referral to Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) in 2012/13 was 1 in 11 nationally, 1 in 10 for our statistical neighbours and 1 in 9 for Central Bedfordshire. Whilst there is very little difference between the rates of referral to Central Bedfordshire Children's Social Care compared with our statistical neighbours there was a higher chance of a Section 47 enquiry progressing to a Child Protection Plan.

A review of decision making at key stages in the journey from referral to child protection plan was carried out. Audits were undertaken and overall an analysis of the children on plans indicated that a proportion could have been managed through alternative strategies using Child in Need processes.

Concerted work and careful scrutiny to raise awareness and enable sound decision making resulted in the following impact;

- Between 1st November 2013 and 31st December 2013 a total of 77 Section 47 enquiries were started averaging 38 per month. This was a reduction of 26% on the average number of Section 47 enquiries over the previous 10 months.
- The progression of cases from strategy meetings to section 47 enquires and initial child protection conference has been kept under close review by operational managers and managers within the Conference and Review Service.
- Initial analysis indicates that as a result families are more appropriately being supported through Child in Need planning than child protection.

- A further audit in January 2014 confirmed the trajectory and further scrutiny will continue in order to embed the learning.

**Length of time on a child protection plan.** From time to time, there will be a cohort of children who need a child protection plan longer than most. The England average for children exceeding 2 years subject to a child protection plan was 5.2%, statistical neighbours were 4.9% (both in 2012/2013). Central Bedfordshire performance was 7.5% in 2013/2014. This is slightly higher than our target rate of 6%.

**Children who became the subject of a child protection plan who had previously been the subject of a child protection plan.** There will always be a cohort of children in need of a protection plan more than once. The England average was 14.9% and, statistical neighbours 15.1% (2012/2013). The Central Bedfordshire rate is 15.8%. This exceeds the target for the year which was in a range between 9-15%. All cases where children have been subject to a second or subsequent child protection plan in less than 2 years are audited jointly by a conference chair and an operational manager in order to identify practice improvements and learning. Careful investigation and monitoring of each individual child indicates that this is appropriate for these children.

**Private fostering** - There are 3 carers caring for 7 children in private fostering arrangements and there is 0.5 FTE social worker allocated resource to raise awareness, carry out assessments and provide appropriate support to carers. Feedback from carers indicates a high degree of satisfaction with the assessment process and support services. Raising awareness is a continuing challenge. Work with schools, children's centres and a range of child care settings involves the distribution of a range of communications materials, including leaflets and flyers. Awareness raising in 2014-2015 will involve increasing collaboration with the Fostering Recruitment Officer to align energy and resources.

**Conclusions.** Early help assessments are increasing, enabling access by more children, earlier and so enhancing the possibility of long term sustainable improvements. Early help is located with the referral and assessment team in readiness for a multi-agency safeguarding hub. Social care has re-modelled internal structures to ensure that teams have manageable caseloads and that there are clear lines of management accountability. Performance Management Teams are run on a monthly basis and there is individual and collective alertness to emerging issues and swift responses to challenges.

Partners regularly assure the LSCB and/or the practice and performance group on routine and emerging performance issues. Overall performance is improving as new organisational arrangements stabilise across the partner agencies in Central Bedfordshire.

Social work alignment to GPs has greatly enhanced partnership working at local level, with improvements in information sharing and communications. A new information sharing tool has been developed for GPs in collaboration with

the Council and the CCG. Systems are in place to effectively ensure that vulnerable families are identified and members of the primary health care team informed.

The LSCB performance framework reflects the priorities set and will continually develop to reflect strategic direction and priorities. The LSCB performance framework gathers data on core child protection, workforce data and the priorities of the LSCB. It is monitored 7 times per year by the Practice and Performance group and 4 times per year by the Strategic Board. The Practice and Performance group will continue developing the performance framework for 2014-2015 to align with the LSCB business plan and produce clear, user friendly data with an analytical.

### **Workforce challenges**

Workforce instability and sufficiency are national challenges that appear locally too, and this is especially relevant for key professional roles working in social care, health and the police. Central Bedfordshire is located within commuting distance of London with its variety of competing offers for front line workers.

The LSCB performance framework started this year to monitor recruitment and retention for a number of professional roles in these key agencies in order to ensure effective risk management results in minimum negative impact on performance and outcomes for children. Children's social care and the NHS Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group have provided reports to the strategic board on areas of concern to assure the board of their risk reduction strategies and Bedfordshire police provide regular input to the performance framework. Reports to the LSCB have assured the Board of the mitigation in place and highlighted the following:

- South East Essex Partnership Trust strategy to recruit to health visitor and school nursing vacancies is showing early signs of success with ambitious targets for filling vacancies and careful regular scrutiny of key performance indicators such as new birth visits and is monitored by the LSCB and by the Health and Well Being Board.
- Partners maintain relentless focus on performance impact, individually and collectively, and regularly assure the LSCB of developments.
- Bedfordshire Police have successfully recruited 60 new officers increasing overall police capacity and have increased capacity for responding to child sexual exploitation and domestic violence.
- Social care's performance improvement programme provides regular assurances on impact on performance and allows for immediate remedial action.
- Many agency staff in social care remain with the local authority for considerable lengths of time which means that the workforce is more stable than might otherwise be expected and this reduces possible negative impacts for children and young people.

### **NHS Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group**

The NHS Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has developed a resilient safeguarding governance structure withstanding the impact of disaggregation of the Local Authorities and LSCB's in Bedfordshire. The Director of Nursing and Quality leads on the comprehensive range of safeguarding responsibilities in the CCG and, with the Designated Nurse represent the CCG on the LSCB. There is demonstrable evidence of this influence at the CCG governing body and the executive team; decisions on resourcing the LSCB budget contribution and the range of safeguarding responsibilities in the CCG are made at this level.

Designated Professionals for safeguarding children and Looked After Children, are experienced and supported, and have access to appropriate training, specialised supervision peer advice. The role of the Designated Professionals are explicitly defined and in line with national guidelines. A regular integrated safeguarding meeting provides a forum for advice, support and professional development as well as a sound network for information sharing. This ensures a swift response to emerging need at the highest levels with immediate "table top" in-house review to fact find on individual cases.

#### **Focus for improvement**

A Central Bedfordshire Academy for Social Work and Early Intervention has been developed and brings together a comprehensive range of learning and development programmes for social workers, enhancing their career prospects, valuing the workforce and making Central Bedfordshire a better place to live and work. Social work salaries have been reviewed and an enhanced Market Rate Supplement has been agreed and implemented in key teams where recruitment of permanent staff has been an issue.

## 4. Progress on priorities in 2013-2014

### Priority 1: Evaluating the impact of work undertaken by partners in relation to domestic abuse

The LSCB carried out a detailed strategic overview of domestic violence in Central Bedfordshire to understand the issues in relation to children and families living with domestic violence. This report informed the LSCB of the incidence and prevalence of domestic abuse and the levels of service provision and resourcing issues and enabled the Board to identify the challenges ahead.

The strategic overview report has identified the persistent nature and prevalence of this problem and has identified challenges relating to service provision and pathways, capacity, resources, governance and leadership - all of which are fundamental to addressing this issue and effective delivery to our growing population.

#### Key facts

- Children are present in 37% of all incidents of domestic abuse attended by Bedfordshire Police
- In 2013 there were 419 children living in high risk domestic abuse situations being dealt with through MARAC
- 56.4% of social care assessments feature domestic violence
- Domestic abuse continues to be a factor in the majority (62%) of cases where children become subject to a child protection plan for the second or subsequent time
- MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) – There are, on average 24 cases referred to MARAC each month with around 36% of these being repeat referrals. This compares to an average of 18 cases per month in 2012 with around 27% being repeat referrals. Repeat referrals were lowest in 2011 at 15%. Referrals to MARAC have been identified as lower than they should be.
- In 2013/13 there were around 12 referrals per month with 31% repeat referrals to specialist case workers/advisors working with victims most at risk of homicide or serious harm. In 2011/12 there were around 18 referrals per month with 32% referrals.

Two **inspection reports** fed into the review conducted by the Board and these highlighted significant concerns in relation to domestic abuse.

**Bedfordshire Police** were the subject of a formal H.M.I.C inspection in November 2013 (HMIC report: Bedfordshire Police's Approach to Tackling Domestic Abuse). An action plan was devised and reported to the Board and immediate steps have been taken to address the key issues. In response to the HMIC findings around Bedfordshire Police's response to Domestic Abuse numerous pieces of work have been undertaken; the most notable being the redesign of Bedfordshire Police's domestic abuse structure and processes. It is a strength that all households where children reside are identified and

subject to further scrutiny and referral. Work continues with other agencies to improve the quality of this information sharing to support the most appropriate signposting to early help for those children affected by Domestic Abuse.

Bedfordshire Police have provided assurance to the LSCB on strategic and operational issues and have delivered on capacity building to improve, including a review of available services for both high and medium risk victims. Bedfordshire Police are working in collaboration with the local authority to deliver on the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to improve swift decision making at the front line. Bedfordshire Police are committed to regular reporting to the LSCB on improvements.

**Bedfordshire Probation services** were the subject of an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP). The report found that Probation involvement in LSCB's in the three Local Authority areas was strong and effective. The report also identified areas for development in relation to safeguarding children, including identification and appropriate referral to social care as well as some concerns about the targeting of resources only to highest risk victims. The Probation Service representative on the LSCB provided an account of these areas and of the Probation service response in full and assured the Board of its risk reduction strategies. The probation service will report to the Board on developments.

#### Focus for improvement

The LSCB has initiated work with leaders of the Community Safety Partnership, the Safeguarding Adults Board, the Health and Well Being Board and the Children's Trust Board to **provide clarity on Pan Bedfordshire leadership in relation to domestic violence** and agreed actions in relation to:

- Accelerating information protocols to improve the quality of information sharing.
- Prioritising domestic abuse pathways for multi-agency working
- Accelerating training for domestic abuse and ensuring co-ordination is improved.

Additionally the LSCB has challenged the community Safety Partnership in relation to the future funding for the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy service (IDVA) and requested a position statement on this.

The LSCB training programme has been re-designed to increase emphasis on domestic violence, adult mental health problems and substance misuse, including the impact on children and young people.

The case audit programme has been re-modelled to enable case audit of children living with these features, engaging practitioners and their managers in the process so that the voice of front-line workers is heard and informs strategic decision making.



As a result of the strategic overview, the LSCB has agreed that domestic violence and the associated risk factors, adult mental health problems and substance misuse, will be a priority for 2014-2015.

As a result of these and other discussions throughout 2013-2014, the Board has also committed to the development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, speeding up access to early intervention and prevention services with domestic violence as a strong feature in taking this work forward.

This will be monitored through the LSCB business plan and the LSCB performance framework during 2014-2015.

## **Priority 2 : Ensuring an effective response to the sexual abuse of children and young people through exploitation (CSE)**

Working in collaboration with Bedford Borough and Luton LSCBs, a Pan Borough strategy for Child Sexual exploitation is in place and this is complemented by a local Central Bedfordshire LSCB strategy agreed by the Board in February 2014. The co-ordination arrangements at a strategic level are managed through a strategic group that has now been established. This Pan Bedfordshire Strategic group supports co-ordinated activity across the county to deliver to the National CSE Action Plan. Further work is to be undertaken in the new year to ensure delivery in this area.

Work undertaken by the Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Boards and the joint Task and Finish Group has contributed to raising awareness, identifying work streams and completing tasks in relation to the identification and management of child sexual exploitation.

Operational arrangements are agreed and in place and local multi-agency arrangements involving the creation of a multi-agency panel have been successfully developed across Bedfordshire – this panel is the CSE Panel (formerly known as the Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Conference - SERAC). The CSE panel meets monthly to share information, referrals and monitor intelligence. Bedfordshire Police have created a bespoke team to prevent and respond to child sexual exploitation. The development of a focussed CSE team has allowed for direct activity around the improvement of CSE intelligence and awareness across all partners and the analysis of that intelligence to support the response to young people who have been identified as being at risk of exploitation.

A CSE Panel is held monthly which supports practitioners in problem solving around complex cases and identifying support options for those identified as a concern. The CSE Panel has heard cases in relation to 101 young people during 2013-14, of these 36 referrals were in relation to children and Young People from across Central Bedfordshire. Additionally there was progression of 69 referrals and 11 intelligence reports.

Ofsted have attended an operational meeting in respect of a group of young people about whom there have been concerns regarding sexual exploitation. Ofsted expressed no concerns about the way in which these concerns were being managed and reviewed.

Multi-agency training is embedded in the LSCB training programme and there is strong commitment from partners to continue to prioritise this throughout 2014-2015.

Information on the arrangements is widely disseminated throughout the professional and volunteer community and has been posted on the LSCB website to ensure visitors are drawn to this information.

### Focus for improvement

An evaluation of the multi-agency CSE panel is being commissioned with specific reference to impact on outcomes for children and young people. The Pan Borough strategic group will oversee this review and recommendations will go to the three Bedfordshire LSCBs.

### Priority 3: Evaluating the impact of early help

Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the impact of early help assessments and intervention has been developed by:

- monitoring the number of early help assessments carried out
- monitoring the quality of training provided to professionals, and
- by developing an impact evaluation tool to assess the impact on lives of children and young people.

Three case audits were completed and reported to the LSCB in December 2013. The main lessons learnt involved the length of time that there were identified needs for children before a practitioner, in these cases within schools, acted. The Early Help Assessment appeared to have been a last resort after failing to be able to successfully make referrals elsewhere. This identified a training need for some schools that have not regularly been using the Early Help Assessment process.

This key learning relating to schools has been communicated through newsletters and through training and workshop sessions at termly headteacher and governor meetings.

Communications, training and advice to the professional community on Early Help has led to an increase in the numbers of assessments carried out and an associated increase in multi-agency meetings to deliver early intervention services. The majority of cases resulted in successful identification of appropriate services and delivery. Where service gaps were identified, resources were identified to commission bespoke services to meet the needs of the children concerned. For example, a number of children with parents in prison were identified as having additional needs. A specialist service was

then commissioned to provide counselling for the children with successful outcomes for them.

Over 660 professionals from all partner agencies received training which includes application of thresholds. This training reached GPs, schools, health and the voluntary sector. Evaluation of this learning has demonstrated that it is of high quality and highly valued by attendees. Further work to align the learning on thresholds, early help and safeguarding in line with the developing integrated referral and assessment work will support professional practice in navigating thresholds and understanding the importance of assessment of need.

Retrospective analysis of early help provision is carried out month by month looking back a year and this is beginning to show early signs of positive impact - this work began in November 2013. So far it is indicating that the majority of children (70-80%) did not require escalation to formal statutory social care provision and those referred because of a risk of school exclusion have had successful outcomes.

An evaluation tool has recently been designed to assess impact of early help provision at the end of an episode of intervention. This is sent to parents, the children concerned and the professionals involved. It is too early to measure impact. Work to ensure a high response rate is underway.

The Council's Early Help Service has been re-aligned so that it operates within the referral and assessment service, in readiness for a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

**Early Years settings** - There are agreements in places with over 108 private, voluntary and independent providers and 110 child minders who are able to receive Nursery Education Funding. They are regulated by Ofsted within the Early Years Framework and supported by the local authority's Childcare Development Officers, e.g. with model policies, telephone help and support at Child Protection meetings if needed. Their arrangements regarding safeguarding training, policy and safer recruitment are regularly reviewed and their continued registration is contingent upon effective safeguarding arrangements in provider units.

The Child Care and Early Years Sufficiency and Quality Officer is the designated lead for safeguarding within this sector. She ensures that safeguarding information is disseminated regularly via a 6 weekly newsletter. Urgent emerging news items such as national research and serious case reviews and information from the LSCB are disseminated immediately to ensure professionals are updated with contemporary national and local evidence.

#### **Actions to improve:**

Ongoing development of early help includes:

- Ongoing training to promote consistency in relation to thresholds, early help and safeguarding children and to ensure schools and early years

settings engagement.

- To refine and develop the evaluation tool used at the end of an episode of intervention to assess impact on outcomes for children and to learn from multi-agency audits.
- To monitor the impact of the inclusion of early help services with the referral and assessment team.
- To develop a Multi-Agency Safeguarding hub incrementally, learning from national and local experience and ensuring a focus on risk assessment and safety is maintained.

#### **Priority 4: Implementation of Working Together 2013 and findings of the Review of Joint Working with Bedford Borough LSCB**

The year started with the publication of the long awaited Working Together 2013 at the end of March 2013, coming into force on 15 April 2013. The new document continues the reforms identified as part of Professor Eileen Munro's independent review of children protection which puts the child in focus at all stages. Alongside existing statutory objectives in relation to co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of the safeguarding work of partners, this brought with it a range of new requirements for our LSCB, including:

- expectations around developing a learning and improvement process to include Serious Case Reviews so that they form an integral part of our work to improve services to children
- the requirement to monitor the effectiveness of Early Help
- defining the safeguarding responsibilities of LSCB partners, including NHS Commissioning Board, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Police and Crime Commissioners – these include staff induction and child protection
- promoting the involvement of children and young people in the work of the LSCB and for the local authority to take reasonable steps to ensure that the LSCB includes two lay members representing the local community

#### **Outcome of review of joint working with Bedford Borough Safeguarding Board**

During the year Bedford Borough decided to withdraw from the remaining joint working arrangements with the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Board and at the end of September the Boards formally separated their joint working arrangements. This included disaggregating the business unit providing support to the Board, reviewing the shared multi-agency training functions and disaggregating the joint working arrangements sitting beneath the Board structure.

This provided unique challenges for all partners involved, including recruitment of new staff to the newly created business unit for Central

Bedfordshire, attendance at additional meetings and the review and development of new protocols and strategies.

As part of this review the Training Review reported at the end of December and key recommendations have been implemented and multi-agency LSCB training is now the only remaining function shared by the two boards - this service continues to be hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council. A Training and Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire has now been agreed and this sits within the wider Learning and Improvement Framework agreed by the Board. This sets out how the LSCB will learn lessons from a range of sources to inform front line practice and multi-agency working.

### **Implementing Working Together 2013**

The LSCB reviewed the Working Together 2013 guidance and the new inspection arrangements. These were used as a framework for self evaluation at the LSCB development day in January 2014. This resulted in an assessment of current activity and an agreement on the LSCB priorities for 2014-2015 as well as areas to improve the functioning of the LSCB. A new business plan for 2014-2015 was agreed and is used at each meeting to measure progress.

The LSCB's role is "to **coordinate** what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area" (Working Together 2013).

In order to deliver on its statutory duties to co-ordinate the safeguarding work of partners, the Board reviewed the following co-ordinating functions:

### **Developing policies and procedures**

The LSCB collaborates with neighbouring LSCB's to maintain shared multi-agency safeguarding procedures and ensure that local protocols and procedures are clearly understood at practice level. These responsibilities include thresholds, multi-agency training, recruitment of staff working with children, investigation of allegations, safety of children privately fostered and co-operation with neighbouring children's services authorities and Boards.

The **Thresholds** for identifying which children needed additional support and intervention were reviewed and agreed in October 2013. These have been widely disseminated to the professional community and are easily accessible on the LSCB website. They are used in the LSCB multi-agency training and early help training programmes, helping practitioners to navigate and understand eligibility and need. In addition, a letter was sent from the Chair of the LSCB directly to the wider professional community drawing attention to the revised threshold document as well as lessons learned from case audits.

**Multi-agency training** - A rigorous training review was carried out across Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire and resulted in a new shared Training and Development Strategy agreed by Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Boards in February 2014. The commissioning arrangements for training have been clarified and agreed.

One training commissioning unit provides a shared service to Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough LSCB's. Training is informed by evidence, using case audits and drawing from the needs identified through partners on both LSCBs. In Central Bedfordshire this has been informed by the learning log created in January 2014. A detailed end of year training evaluation, including quantitative and qualitative analysis, provided a basis for the learning and development programme for training in 2014-2015.

Over 950 days of multi agency training were delivered to 625 attendees across all CBSCB partner agencies, including schools in 2013-2014. Evaluation demonstrated that the training was high quality, interactive and highly valued by attendees. All courses are highly valued by practitioners with 100% indicating that the course met its objectives "completely" or "mostly". The impact of this training was also assessed and positive change in practitioners' responses to improved safeguarding knowledge and understanding was demonstrated. Practitioner feedback is established using end of day evaluations, follow up impact evaluations, (4-6 weeks after a course) and trainers' evaluation. Course evaluations have not been attached to the report however these can be supplied on request.

A total of 779 learners completed on-line e-learning packages over the year. These courses are all very well evaluated and some constitute a prior learning activity for face to face training. Smaller organisations in the voluntary sector and faith groups use the Introductory e-learning level package for Induction purposes and to stimulate further facilitated safeguarding discussions. The completion rate is 75% for the year and of 87% since the e-learning began in 2008.

The 2014-2015 programme will reflect the needs of both LSCB's, the views of practitioners and lessons from case audits and national experience. The training review carried out by both Boards concluded that the new training programme for 2014-2015 needs to be aligned with the priorities of the boards and evidence from audits. Fewer courses of shorter duration and increasing learning opportunities through modular learning will help reach the right staff on the right topic. The 2 day course revision will use a modular approach to learning, enhancing cost effectiveness, and ensuring that training is tailored appropriately to meet the needs of professionals. The programme will meet the needs of individual agencies seeking to develop and enhance practitioners' understanding of multi-agency processes and optimise outcomes for children. The programme will respond promptly to local need and commission specialist training providers in a timely way. A revised pricing structure will further improve completion rates for E-learning.

Members will now determine "reach" i.e. the numbers of staff in each agency who need identified learning opportunities. Members will set targets and

monitor this reach throughout the year. This will result in an improved understanding of global learning saturations levels.

Core Group working has been identified as an area for improvement via local case audits and Agency uptake for this training will increase. Parenting capacity is adversely affected by domestic abuse, adult mental health and parental substance misuse and the programme will continue to offer a variety of learning opportunities thus reflecting the LSCB priorities for 2014-2015.

Early years settings' access to training has already been revised and the emphasis is now being shifted from single sector training to multi-agency training. This means only multi-agency safeguarding training will be promoted to this sector. There is also a wide ranging educational programme for providers and practitioners which ensures competencies in enabling and effectively supporting children's growing understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Practitioners and child minders encourage children to gain an understanding of risk through activities that encourage them to explore their environment and to be able to share their concerns with a trusted adult.

Arrangements for validation and oversight of training offered within agencies (single agency training) will continue and assist in ensuring that local practitioners are clear about individual safeguarding roles and responsibilities

#### Targeted work with schools

Through the Children's Trust Strategic Workforce Development Group, Schools representatives identified a need for safeguarding training in schools and while this is not multi-agency training, a "Training for Trainer" course has been commissioned by Central Bedfordshire Council's Workforce Development Team in conjunction with the LSCB and the Teaching School. The take up to date has been good and so far representatives from over 60 schools have attended the 5 training sessions offered (some schools have sent more than 1 person). Those schools that have not attended will be contacted and encouraged to take this offer up and a further two sessions are being planned before the end of the year.

**Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group** ensures professional development of senior staff and provides encouragement to consider future safeguarding roles, including shadowing and training with a long term view to succession planning. Additionally, the Designated Professionals give clinical advice and specialised supervision in complex cases, to health colleagues and partner agencies as required.

CCGs are not directly responsible for commissioning primary medical care, however BCCG has commissioned a Named GP to work with and support GPs on safeguarding children issues. The named GP for safeguarding children is well established and has dedicated sessions to provide advice and support to GP colleagues as required.

Level 3 multi-disciplinary training is provided in line with the Intercollegiate Document (2010), to GP's with input from various agencies, including the Local Authority. GP's with lead roles in safeguarding children attend the LSCB multi-agency level 3 training with other experienced lead professionals in partner agencies, providing them with the competencies required to effectively lead and support practitioners at a local level. Comprehensive data on GP's and their attendance at training is maintained and regularly reviewed. Each GP practice has a Lead GP for Safeguarding Children and a nominated deputy.

**Bedfordshire Police** - All staff are provided with safeguarding children training and all new recruits are provided with mandatory training at induction. Frontline officers are provided with regular training on safeguarding children with an emphasis on child sexual exploitation, child abuse and domestic abuse. Bedfordshire Police support the delivery of multi-agency training and anticipate an increase in police attendance in the coming year due to a successful recruitment drive and new Police Community Support Officers and a continued commitment to the development of partnership working in practice with an emphasis on Domestic Violence. The force training strategy provides a range of training materials and ensures that officers in key positions are appropriately targeted for safeguarding training.

**CAFCASS** - The core safeguarding training curriculum includes information on the requirements around reporting concerns about significant harm. This is delivered to all new practitioners and to students on placement. Business support staff complete an e-learning programme as part of their induction, which covers how they should report concerns.

All **schools** in Central Bedfordshire have a designated professional for safeguarding children, explicitly defined in job descriptions. Designated professionals attend the LSCB multi-agency level 3 training. Schools are also taking part in the LSCB "Training for Trainers" course so that they can disseminate learning to the whole school and also provide a range of internal training. The new Teaching School gains input from Heads and Partners via a reference group and safeguarding children is part of this agenda.

#### Focus for improvement

The new programme (2014-2015) will reflect the priorities of the LSCB identified through the needs and views of practitioners and partners and lessons from case audits and national experience. Partners have agreed to:

- determine "reach" i.e. the numbers of staff in each agency who need identified training and set targets and monitor this reach throughout the year. This will enable an understanding of whether multi-agency training is reaching the people it needs to.
- participate in training relating to core group working, domestic violence, adult mental health and substance misuse.



**Safer recruitment of those who work with children**

A section 11 audit was completed with all partners taking an active role in auditing their services and safe recruitment has been identified as one of the subjects of this audit. Findings will be provided to the LSCB during 2014.

**Investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children**

During 2013/14 the Allegations Manager responded to 73 concerns and 64 allegations against adults. This compares with 72 concerns and 49 allegations in 2012/13. The LADO provides an annual report to the LSCB and full details are available in this report. The outcomes of allegations during 2013/14 are as follows:

<b>The outcomes of allegations during 2013/14</b>	
Advice / Support / Training	35
Dismissal	6
Final Written Warning	2
No Further Action	9
Case not concluded	7
Resigned	4
Transferred to Other Local Authority	1

The Allegations Manager (**LADO- Local Authority Designated Officer**) continues to provide a single point of contact in Central Bedfordshire for responding to concerns and allegations against adults working with children in an employed or volunteer capacity. The service oversees the process of managing allegations and aims to contribute to good practice in this area and prevent those adults who pose a risk to children from working with them.

The advisory role of the Allegations Manager (LADO) in relation to lower-level concerns is a well-used aspect of the service, making up in excess of half of all contacts to the service. More serious concerns and allegations are responded to by means of a Joint Evaluation Meeting which brings together employers, Human Resources personnel, social workers and the police to plan a response to the reported allegation and the protection of children.

In addition training has been provided during the year to Heads and Chairs of Governors, foster carers, Early Years, independent care providers and the Voluntary sector.

**Co-operation with neighbouring children’s services authorities and their Board partners**

The LSCB collaborates with neighbouring LSCBs on strategic issues and examples of this include the work on Child Sexual Exploitation, the Child Death Overview Panel arrangements and shared policies and procedures. Pan Bedfordshire arrangements are reflected in the governance structures in section 7.

A challenge from partners was presented at the February 2014 LSCB meeting with partners requesting a common Bedfordshire wide form for CAF/Early Help Assessment. Although there have been discussions to move to one form this has not yet been resolved and will require further discussion in 2014.

### **Communicating and raising awareness about safeguarding children**

LSCB communications have prioritised the professional community, ensuring they are updated on developments and receive the training and support they need to operate effectively. For example, a practice note was sent from the chair of the LSCB to the professional community to inform them of lessons learned from recent audits and revisions to thresholds. The Training Commissioning Unit regularly sends communications to the professional community on emerging issues from national and local experience.

For Early years settings, local professional support networks provide for sound partnership working and relationships with health positively support information sharing and response to emerging issues and concerns.

Bedfordshire Police has run an education programme throughout all Schools focussed upon priority issues within particular areas across Bedfordshire. Within this review year the focus has been around the developments of social Media, Online safety advice and Safe relationships. These inputs have been delivered to children and young people of all school ages and have equally been supported by direct delivery to both professionals and parents to support their own children in this developing area.

Communications with schools have included Heads and the Director meet termly and in 2013-2014 safeguarding children, early help, thresholds and information sharing were regularly discussed, clarified and communicated at these meetings. Papers are also disseminated to all schools on these issues through *Central Essentials* the weekly schools' newsletter. For example, a letter from the Chair of the LSCB was disseminated to all schools summarising lessons learned from case audit and the LSCB plans to ensure these lessons impact on practice through training and communications.

A communication strategy and action plan is a priority for the Board in 2014 and this will include the launch of a new website and involving children and young people.

The LSCB's role is to **ensure the effectiveness** of what is done by agencies for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area.(Working Together 2013)

In order to deliver on its statutory duties to ensure effectiveness of what is done by agencies, the Board reviewed the following co-ordinating functions:

### **Learning from practice**

A Learning and Improvement Framework was agreed by the LSCB in February 2014. It describes the LSCB approach to learning from performance data, case audit, case review, training evaluation and national experience and research. Other key actions to ensure the building blocks of a learning strategic partnership are in place include:

- New protocols on case review have been created, using local and national experience and reflecting the LSCB priorities.
- A case audit toolkit has been designed and will be piloted in 2014.
- An LSCB learning log has been created. This is a repository of learning to track impact and ensure lessons learned are used to improve practice.

Learning from **multi-agency case audit** activity took place during a period of organisational change and while these changes slowed progress down, the work nevertheless continued, reaching a conclusion and lessons learned in February 2014. The audits were carried out using a combination of chronology building and facilitated group discussions, using an external consultant who drew together the learning in reports and analyses. 8 cases were reviewed and the following is a summary of lessons learned:

***Neglect*** - Practitioners identified the link between neglect and the pre-disposing factors of domestic violence, substance misuse and/or adult mental health problems. Understanding the cumulative nature of neglect and being able to recognise the problem while having a positive relationship with the family requires practitioners to have a particular skills set. Practitioners need the support of their managers and supervisors to help them work through these complexities. Training on neglect in 2014-2015 will emphasise these pre-disposing factors.

***Thresholds and information sharing*** - The LSCB learned that this remains a continuing challenge for practitioners. Upon recognition that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm there is a straightforward intention to share information. However, putting the pieces of information together to inform the decision to refer can sometimes be challenging. The LSCB identified that understanding thresholds in practice can be challenging when working with families with complex needs. Practitioners and managers identified practice challenges in articulating the problems seen and establishing where to go to get help. The benefits of early intervention are indisputable, but practitioners sometimes find it difficult to comprehend the seriousness of a case and decide on appropriate action and referral. The LSCB has delivered the threshold document through a practice communication from the LSCB chair, posting it on the website and disseminating it through partners internal infrastructures. The document was also disseminated to schools, through newsletters and through the Heads and Directors meeting. The training programme 2014-2015 emphasises thresholds and their application. Further case audit in 2014-2015 will assess impact.

***False and non compliance-*** The LSCB learned from practitioners about their experience of the practice challenges when working with parents who can be

very convincing in their attitude towards interventions. Some will refuse outright, but others will indicate a willingness to co-operate but will avoid interventions which lead to change and positive impact on the child. This issue has been incorporated into the LSCB training programme and is included in the case audit programme.

**Core group working-** The importance of core groups in facilitating information sharing was identified as practitioners need support with practical arrangements to ensure timely and efficient information sharing and core group processes have been revised.

In the light of experience in 2013-2014, a new case audit methodology has been designed. Partners will use an analytical tool to assess cases using agreed practice standards. The audit tool will assess the impact of learning from the findings above as well as information on a range of basic child protection standards. A learning log has been created to capture learning from experience and this will be updated and used as evidence to inform the LSCB priorities and training for 2014-2015. The cycle of learning will be embedded and impact evaluation tools will be reviewed to ensure training is delivering improvement in practice.

**Learning from serious case reviews** - There have been no serious case reviews in Central Bedfordshire in 2013-2014, however learning from those published by other local authorities has been communicated to practitioners.

**Learning from child deaths** - Child death rates are reducing in Central Bedfordshire, although demonstrable links with campaigning activities cannot always be made. The numbers of Sudden Unexplained Deaths in Infancy across Bedfordshire is also decreasing. Numbers are low and therefore it is not possible to draw any conclusions on this.

The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) in Bedfordshire is County wide and is well developed. The CDOP is a statutory function of the LSCB and BCCG hosts the Child Death Overview Panel manager's post ensuring sound links to both the Designated Office for Safeguarding Children & Young People and public health activities to ensure impact. A full account of the CDOP activities is in the CDOP annual report (Bedfordshire CDOP annual report 2013).

Learning from child deaths have been communicated through discussions with health care professionals and campaigns where robust messages are shared. Examples include safer sleeping practices, smoking cessation and weight management of pregnant women:

- A campaign to discourage co-sleeping has also been widely shared in the community following review of child deaths. Infant mortality and morbidity rates associated with deprivation have been identified, with raised awareness among professionals working in these areas.
- Findings from one death by drowning have led to the delivery of a leaflet advising parents on safety issues whilst swimming; this has

been disseminated to all schools and has been posted on the LSCB website.

Additionally, information sharing sessions on the role and function of the child death review process have been delivered over the past year to police, health and social care professionals across the local authority. The aim was to increase awareness of the process and to share learning with them about why babies/children in this area die and what interventions and messages can be given to parents to try and prevent future child deaths.

### **The child's voice and shaping practice**

The voice of children and young people is heard through the work of the police in supporting the Youth forum and work with the police cadets. There is a strong emphasis in case work practice to ensure the child is seen and listened to alone. This applies even to very young children and is recorded in the management log. This is emphasised in training and is assessed via quality assurance and audit.

There is a strong emphasis in social case work practice to ensure the child is seen and listened to alone. This applies even to very young children and is recorded in the management log. This is emphasised in training and is assessed via quality assurance and audit.

The BCCG quality assurance framework provides safeguarding indicators for the BCCG and for providers. Contracts with all providers ensure schedules emphasise duties in relation to safeguarding children and the importance of listening to the child both at case level and in strategic planning.

At a practice level, expectations around direct engagement with children who are subject to court proceedings, and ascertaining their views, needs, wishes and feelings are set out within the Cafcass Operating Framework (2012) and quality.

### **LSCB effectiveness: overall analysis**

The LSCB development day was used as an opportunity for self-evaluation using the Working Together 2013 guidance and the Ofsted Inspection ratings. Below a summary analysis of this self-evaluation.

While the board has experienced some changes during the year as a result of the disaggregation of some of the shared arrangements with Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board, these changes have had no impact on the management and operation of the Board. A continued focus on performance and the safety of children remained high on the agenda for all partner agencies, reflected in their commitment to meetings and their contributions to this report.

Multi-agency performance evaluation of safeguarding children is in development and local performance measures are consistent with

approaches being taken regionally and nationally. Partners are agreed on the need to develop evaluation techniques using analytical models, concentrating on the interpretation of the data more than the data itself. There is a consensus that learning from data and learning from practice experience are incorporated into the agreed Learning and Improvement Framework.

The LSCB has heard the messages from the front line through case audit. They suggest that priorities are further refined to include concern in practice for children living in households where adults and caregivers have problems with substance misuse, domestic violence and/or adult mental health issues. Commonly referred to as the “toxic trio” in practice, these elements, taken individually or combined, demonstrate increasing risks to children. Added to this, the evidence from the data on children with child protection plans demonstrates a high proportion of children with these factors in the household.

The Board has been concerned to improve arrangements for referral and assessment processes and supports the council’s new arrangements to include early help services into the referral and assessment team. The Board is working on a multi-agency safeguarding hub approach that is incremental and learns the lessons nationally. The partners have therefore agreed to work on a model which is appropriate for Central Bedfordshire using best practice from other areas, but not necessarily following them exactly. This incremental approach will ensure the application of sound risk assessment processes at each stage of development and allowing opportunities to ensure robust evidence informed decision making at identified intervals to ensure the safety of children is central to decision making. This preparation does ensure we are in a good position to enter any Bedfordshire wide MASH arrangements.

### **Conclusions**

This LSCB has delivered within the context of organisational change in the Local Authority and partner agencies. A consistent focus on Safeguarding Children as a priority has been sustained by individual members and for the LSCB as a whole. Partners’ commitment is seen through attendance at meetings as well as co-operating with work streams, such as case audit and training evaluation. The board self evaluation process has enabled partners to work together to gain collective insight into the areas of weakness and the challenges ahead. Informed by evidence from the front line, case audit and performance data, the LSCB has a clear set of priorities and monitors them at each meeting. There is effective challenge by partners seen in the examples provided in this report. The LSCB influences other partnerships to focus on safeguarding children. There is good progress on Child Sexual exploitation and early help. Subject to successful recruitment for schools, membership will be compliant with Working Together guidance and there is an agreed budget. The Learning and Improvement Framework is effectively used by the LSCB to gather evidence to inform priority setting and forward planning. The Threshold document has been widely disseminated with plans to assess impact through case audits.

However, impact on the lives of children is the primary focus of the LSCB and our core business. Performance is steadily improving with the numbers of

children with child protection plans reducing. Multi-agency and internal quality assurance systems ensure transparency, speedy management and sustainable improvement.

## 5. LSCB priorities for 2014-2015

The LSCB self evaluation, performance analysis, case audit and overall effectiveness conclusions serve to inform the priorities for 2014-2015 which are to;

- Ensure children and families have faster, easier access to early help and safeguarding support through the delivery of a multi-agency support hub (MASH);
- Ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding support for children living with domestic abuse, adult mental health problems and/or substance misuse; and
- Ensure the effectiveness of the strategy to deal with child sexual exploitation.

In order to ensure the LSCB functions effectively, it has identified the following areas for development;

- Keep governance of the LSCB under review to ensure the two key statutory objectives are being delivered
- The Learning and Improvement Framework drives improvement in practice.
- Implement the training strategy and evaluate its impact.
- Review and revise policies and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose, up to date and effective
- Ensure that the workforce and the general public are aware of key safeguarding priorities and that practitioners have information to drive best practice and outcomes for children.

The LSCB business plan outlines the detailed actions and targets agreed to monitor progress.



## 6. Governance and accountability

**Delivering the LSCB** - The local authority has prioritised the management of transitional arrangements during disaggregation from a joint LSCB with Bedford Borough to a single LSCB for Central Bedfordshire. Interim management arrangements and leadership from the highest level in Children Services has ensured that priority setting and agenda management were not adversely affected by the changes. Recruitment to a full time permanent business manager's post resulted in a successful appointment and the post-holder commenced in post on April 2nd. The 3 year tenure for the independent chair expires in June 2014 and the re-tendering process is under way at the time of writing.

### **Membership**

The membership of CBSCB meets the statutory requirements set out in the Children Act (2004) and the Working Together 2013 guidance. Details of the governance arrangements and full membership and attendance details of the Strategic Board for 2013/14 are set out in appendix A.

Schools were represented on the LSCB by a representative from the Barnfield Academy Trusts and the school governors' representative. This has provided challenge and influence from the schools to the LSCB and information is disseminated from the LSCB to schools through termly meetings with headteachers and governors and through the schools' information bulletins: *Central Essentials and Governor Essentials*. The schools' governor representative also ensures that safeguarding children is high on the agenda at the local school governors' forum which is chaired by the Executive Member for Children's Service who is also a participant observer member of the LSCB. The virtual head teacher is a member of the LSCB practice and performance group and provides regular input and reports on the educational needs of Children Looked After. Schools' representation on the Board needs further development and headteacher representatives will be invited to participate.

CBSCB demonstrates clear priorities through its business plan and specific areas of achievement such as the impact of multi-agency training and improvements in the quality of practice resulting from multi-agency audits. The CBSCB Independent Chair also meets frequently with the Director of Children's Services and has full access to director level representatives from other partner organisations. The Chair also accounts to and meets regularly with the Chief Executive of the Council.

Representatives from the voluntary sector sit on the Board and are actively engaged in a wide range of strategic and operational groups through the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and Children's Trust. They are able to influence the development of services to support children and families.

The Lead Council Member is a participating observer of the CBSCB who routinely attends the Strategic Board and receives all its written reports. The Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services ensures that all Local Authority services engage effectively with the CBSCB and is held to account for the effective working of

the CBSCB by the Chief Executive and challenged where appropriate by the Lead Member. The CBSCB has effective relationships with the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Children's Trust and the Independent Chair of CBSCB is a full member of the Children's Trust and attended all of its meetings in 2013-14. The development of a protocol to confirm the joint working with partner Boards is a priority for development.

**Financing and staffing 2013/14.** The work of the CBSCB is funded through contributions from partner agencies in line with a funding formula agreed by agencies in 2010 and adhered to since that time. The funding arrangements now reflect the disaggregation of the Boards from 1 October 2013 and the contributions to and expenditure from the CBSCB budget for 2013/14 were as follows:

Income 2013/14		Expenditure 2013/14	
Agency	Contribution (£)		Budget (£)
Bedford Borough (share of costs prior to disaggregation)	27,828.73	Staffing costs*	155,521.22
Central Bedfordshire	72,299.10	Cost of Independent chair	45,000.00
Police	25,146.37	Professional services/consultancy	40,142.82
NHS Bedfordshire CCG	69,437.10	General costs - website maintenance, office supplies, equipment.	2846.71
Probation	7,906.10	Training – venue costs, catering, trainers, e-learning licenses, agency administrator	39,856.83
Cafcass	1,100.00	CDOP**	6,761.60
Income - from training, grants, receipts in advance etc.	79,650.18	<b>Total:</b>	<b>290,129.18</b>
CDOP	6,761.60		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>290,129.18</b>		

\* Staffing costs include salaries for the 1.0 FTE Business Manager, 1.0 FTE administrator, 1.0 FTE Training Officer, 0.5 FTE Training Commissioning and Development Manager

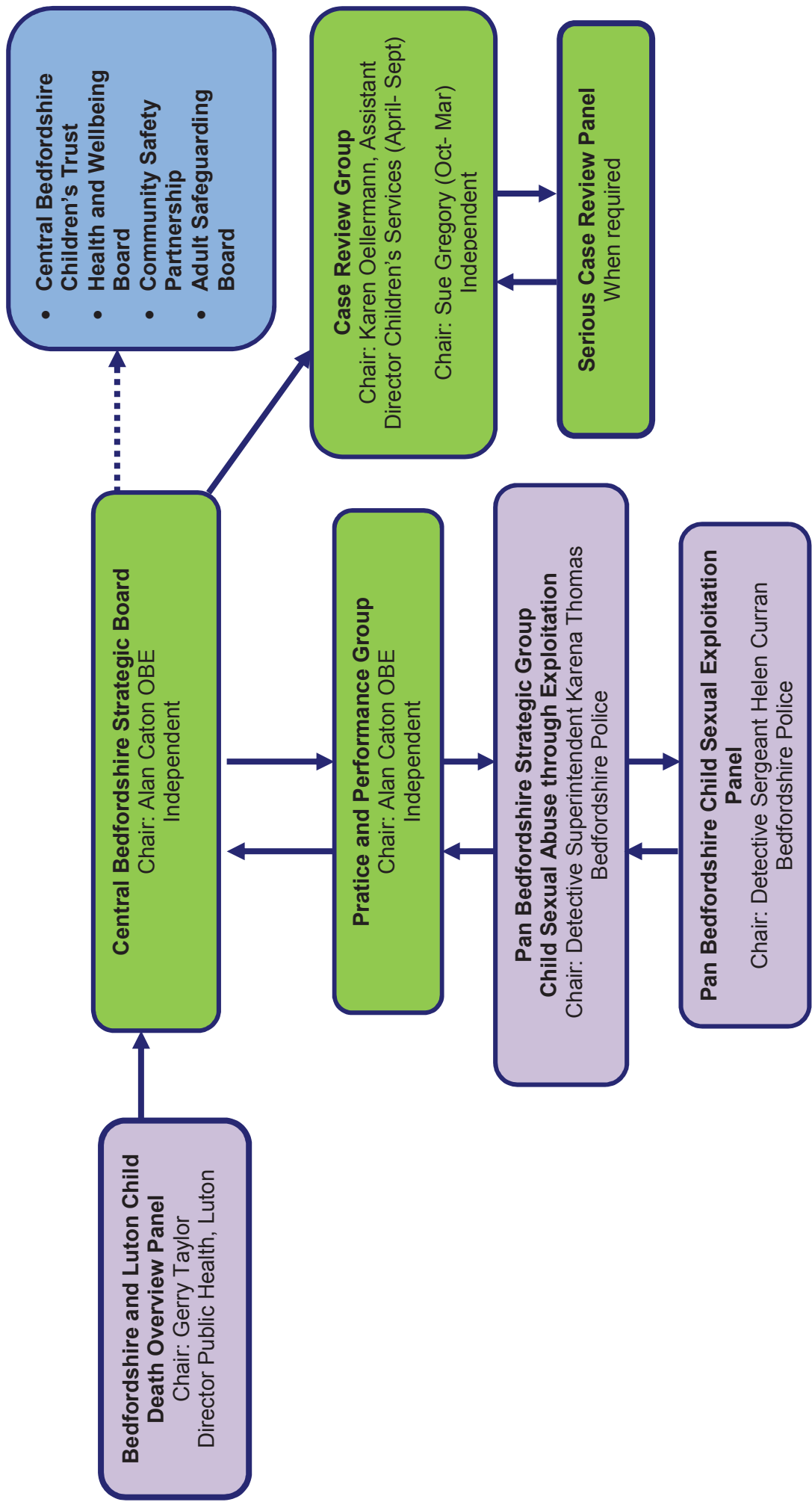
\*\* The total cost of CDOP is £33,808. The CDOP Manager is employed 3 days per week to manage the process. The cost of funding this post is met by the 3 Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Luton Clinical Commissioning Group (LCCG) and Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG).

## Appendix A - LSCB attendance

**Membership and attendance at the four meetings of the Strategic Board for the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board during April 2013 – March 2014** (Meetings held: 17th May 13, 17th Sept 13, 05th Dec 13 and 27th Feb 14).

Agency	Officer	Attendance by Agency
<b>Bedfordshire Police</b>	Nigel Trippett, Assistant Chief Constable or Karena Thomas, Detective Superintendent	4
<b>Bedfordshire and Luton Clinical Commissioning Groups</b>	Anne Murray, Director of Quality & Nursing or Helena Hughes, Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children & Young People	4
<b>SEPT Community Health Service Bedfordshire</b>	Dawn Andrews, Head of Service Safeguarding Children	3
<b>Bedford Hospital</b>	Nina Fraser, Director of Nursing or Lynda Fitzgerald, Clinical Business Unit Manager Women & Children's Services	3
<b>Luton and Dunstable Hospital (joined 11/11/13)</b>	Patricia Reid, Director of Nursing	1
<b>NHS England</b>	Heather Moulder, Director of Nursing & Quality	4
<b>Lead Member for Children's Services</b>	Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services	3
<b>Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services and Youth Offending Service</b>	Edwina Grant, Central Bedfordshire Council	2
<b>Central Bedfordshire Council</b>	David Jones, Interim Assistant Director/ Stuart Mitchelmore, Assistant Director for Adult Services	3
<b>Central Bedfordshire Council</b>	Sue Ioannou, Head of Quality Assurance CRS	
<b>Central Bedfordshire Council</b>	Karen Oellermann, Assistant Director Commissioning and Partnerships	
<b>Central Bedfordshire Council</b>	Gerard Jones, Assistant Director Operations	4
<b>Bedfordshire Probation</b>	Emma Osborne & Linda Hennigan, Chief Executive	3
<b>Cafcass Luton, Herts and Beds</b>	Jane Stuart, Service Manager & Carol Pennington, Senior Service Manager	1
<b>Voluntary Organisations for children, young people &amp; families</b>	Linda Bulled, VOCypf Officer	4
<b>Home-Start Central Bedfordshire</b>	Linda Johnson, Chief Executive Officer	2
<b>Lay Members (Board Membership reviewed after meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2013) joined?</b>	Joan Bailey (CBE)	2
	Linda Hockey	1
	Sue Howley (MBE)	3
<b>Independent Chair for (CBSCB)</b>	Phil Picton	4

**Appendix B - The LSCB governance structure 2014-2015**



## Appendix C - Glossary

ACC	Assistant Chief Constable
BBSCB	Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board
BCCG	NHS Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups
BDAP	Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership
BPT	Bedfordshire Probation Trust
BYOS	Bedfordshire Youth Offending Service
Cafcass	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CAMHS	Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBSCB	Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board
CDOP	Child Death Overview Process
CEOP	Child Exploitation Online Protection
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CQC	Care Quality Commission
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
CTB	Children's Trust Board
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
DA	Domestic Abuse
DARO	Domestic Abuse Repeat Offender
DfE	Department for Education
EHA	Early Help Assessment
GP	General Practitioner
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspection of Prisons
LA	Local Authority
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MST-PSB	Multi Systemic Therapy – Problem Sexual Behaviours
NHSCB	National Health Service Commissioning Board
PPU	Public Protection Unit (Police)
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy
SCIE	The Social Care Institute for Excellence
SCR	Serious Case Review
SEPT	South Essex Partnership Trust
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMART	Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely
SUDI	Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy
TAC	Team Around the Child

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## Contact us...

Për Informacion Per Informazione Za Informacije नारुवारी लयी  
المعلومات معلومات کے لئی তথ্যের জন্য Za Informacja برای اطلاع

by telephone: 0300 300 8000

by email: [customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

on the web: [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

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

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**Meeting:** Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny  
**Date:** 11 November 2014  
**Subject:** Resilience Group for Schools and other Settings  
**Report of:** Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services  
**Summary:** This item details the Annual Report of the Resilience Group for Schools and other Settings covering the period September 2013 – August 2014.

**Advising Officer:** Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services  
**Contact Officer:** Pete Hardy, Compliance and Risk Adviser  
**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 1 – Improved education attainment. Outcome 3 – Well led and managed schools

### **1. Financial:**

There are no financial implications.

### **2. Legal:**

Central Bedfordshire Council has a duty under the Civil Contingencies (2004) to promote Business Continuity Planning.

### **3. Risk Management:**

There is a risk of damage to the reputation of Central Bedfordshire Council caused by:

- inadequate Emergency Planning by one of its establishments
- perceived failure of CBC to have effectively supported a school in its ability to respond to an emergency.

### **4. Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

There are no staffing implications.

### **5. Equalities/Human Rights:**

The work of the Resilience Group affects all sectors of the community.

### **6. Community Safety:**

There are no Community Safety implications.

**7. Sustainability:**

Schools' Emergency and Business Continuity Plans, once created, will need to be reviewed and updated regularly (by individual schools with support, as necessary, from the Council).

**8. Procurement:**

There are no procurement issues.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- That the Committee reviews and comments on the annual report.

**Background**

9. Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Central Bedfordshire Council is classified as a Category 1 Responder and has a duty to:
  - Assess the risk of an emergency occurring and maintain plans for preventing emergencies, reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of an emergency; and taking other action in the event of emergencies
  - Ensure that Business Continuity Plans are in place to maintain Central Bedfordshire Council's critical services
  - Advise the public regarding risks before an emergency and warning and keeping the public informed in the event of an emergency
  - Provide business continuity advice and assistance to the private and voluntary sector
  - Co-operate and share information with other responders.
10. Although most schools are still under Local Authority control, there is no statutory duty placed directly on schools to have:
  - an Emergency Plan in place (beyond that required by the Health and Safety at Work Act)
  - a Business Continuity Plan in place.However, working with schools (local authority, academies, private and independent) to promote Business Continuity and Emergency Planning is essential to delivering the Council's duties under the Civil Contingencies Act.
11. The provision of the Resilience Group's Report enables the CSMT to monitor the Group's work and in turn enables the Group to be fully accountable.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A - Annual Report for the Resilience Group for Schools and Other Settings

**Background Papers:**

Appendix 1: SOS Product Requirement Document



Appendix 2: Pre-School Survey Results

Appendix 3: Schools' Emergency and Business Continuity Planning Survey Report

Appendix 4: Severe Weather Guidance for Schools

Appendix 5: School Lock-Down Procedures

Appendix 6: Guidance to Schools in Respect of Floodwater

**Location of papers:**

Priory House, Chicksands



## Children's Services Operations

# Annual Report of the Resilience Group for Schools and Other Settings (September 2013 – August 2014)

<b>Author(s):</b>	Pete Hardy – Compliance and Risk Adviser
<b>Date agreed:</b>	
<b>Agreed by (e.g. Council):</b>	CSMT
<b>Date to be reviewed:</b>	August 2015

**Resilience Group for Schools and Other Settings  
Annual Report (Sept 2013 – August 2014)**

**CONTENTS**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Executive Summary**
- 3. School Open Status (SOS) System Development**
- 4. Emergency and Business Continuity Planning Support for Pre-School Settings**
- 5. School Survey: Emergency and Business Continuity Planning**
- 6. Severe Weather Guidance to Schools**
- 7. School Lock-Down Procedures**
- 8. Flooding**
- 9. Engagement with Utility Companies**
- 10. Resilience Award Scheme**
- 11. Future Objectives**
- 12. Appendices**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the second Annual Report of Central Bedfordshire Council's Resilience Group for Schools and Other Settings (hereinafter referred to as the 'Resilience Group'), and covers the period from September 2013 to August 2014.
- 1.2 The Resilience Group provides a forum for the relevant, key CBC officers – supported by Headteachers and School Governors – to consider and, as appropriate, recommend and develop CBC support and guidance for educational establishments in relation to Emergency and Business Continuity Planning.
- 1.3 Its membership currently comprises:
- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Nick Carter                | Chair (Academy Member, Linslade School)             |
| Pete Hardy                 | Compliance and Risk Adviser for Children's Services |
| Celia Dawson               | Senior Administrator - Compliance and Risk          |
| Mark Conway                | CBC Emergency Planning                              |
| Lee Butler                 | CBC Health and Safety                               |
| Nick Pearce                | CBC Communications                                  |
| Sue Riley                  | CBC School Transport                                |
| Rob Parsons / Sandra Einon | CBC Children's Services                             |
| Mike Smith                 | School Governor (Caddington)                        |
| Brian Storey               | Headteacher (Church End Lower)                      |
| Steve Kelly                | Headteacher (Arnold Academy)                        |
| Steve Court                | Governor (Ivel Valley School)                       |
- 1.4 In operational terms, the Resilience Group acts as a consultative forum for the Compliance and Risk Adviser who is responsible for ensuring that the recommendations of the Group are implemented in line with other CBC policies and procedures. The Resilience Group meets once a term; and reports annually to the CSMT and to CBC's Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.5 This Annual Report comprises three sections, as follows:
- 1.5.1 **The Executive Summary** - which details the main achievements of the Resilience Group for the period covered by this report. Supporting information is contained within the main body of the report and the appendices section.
- 1.5.2 **Sections 3 to 8** – which cover the objectives which were outlined in the previous annual report, namely:
- 1.5.2.1 *'...To secure the necessary investment to develop the SOS system to its full functionality as identified in the original project plan and detailed in section 6 of the Annual Report....'*

- 1.5.2.2 *'...There needs to be consideration of the extent to which CBC should provide Business Continuity Planning support for independent, private and voluntary pre-school providers. A model plan that fits with the needs of these settings needs to be identified and agreed....'*
  - 1.5.2.3 *'...The Business Continuity Planning survey needs to be repeated (planned for early 2014) in order to identify how useful the 'Managing School Emergencies' templates have been...'*
  - 1.5.2.4 *'...To provide greater schools' resilience in the event of extreme weather, develop and publish a best practice, guidance document....'*
  - 1.5.2.5 *'..Provide examples of good "Lock Down" procedures for schools...'*
  - 1.5.2.6 *'...Consider and identify further areas of concern in which the group could usefully offer guidance and support to educational establishments – potential flooding is one such area...'*
- 1.5.3 **Sections 9 and 10** - which cover any additional areas of work undertaken by the Resilience Group in the period covered by this report.

## 2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 As a Local Authority, Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty under the 2004 Civil Contingencies Act to promote Emergency and Business Continuity Planning. Schools themselves have no such obligations - although it is quite obviously best practice for schools to have in place contingency plans and arrangements to help them deal effectively with any emergencies and their aftermath. Against this background, in January 2012, CBC undertook a survey of all schools in its region in order to assess their then levels of resilience and preparedness. As a means of assessing CBC schools' progress in this area over the intervening two years, this survey has recently been repeated. This time the level of response was disappointing. A brief summary can be found in **section 4** with a full report at **Appendix 3**.
- 2.2 Following presentation of the 2013 Annual Report for the Resilience Group to CSMT, It was agreed to further develop the School Open Status (SOS) system to include alerts to parents when specific school bus routes are unable to run. At the time of writing of this report, Information Assets are in the process of developing this new functionality for the system. It is anticipated this service will be available to parents in November 2014. A brief report can be found in **Section 3**.
- 2.3 In January 2014, an on-line survey was conducted to identify levels of resilience in **pre-school** providers within the Central Bedfordshire area. Because the response to this survey was disappointingly low, the Resilience Group will continue its efforts – using other CBC, internal resources - to obtain a more complete picture of resilience in this sector. The Resilience Group intends this additional information, plus that derived from more detailed planning work currently being undertaken with an individual pre-school, will inform the launch of an Emergency and Business

Continuity Planning template for pre- school settings in January 2015. A brief report can be found in **Section 4**.

- 2.4 In November 2013, the document '**Severe Weather – Guidance for Schools**' was circulated to all schools and academies. This document now provides schools with a single reference point for information related to the management of schools and academies during severe weather. A brief report can be found in **section 6**.
- 2.5 During November 2013, the Central Bedfordshire Guidance '**Lock-Down Procedures- Guidance to Schools**' was circulated to all schools and academies. A brief report can be found in **section 7**.
- 2.6 In February 2012, following the survey of all schools in the CBC region (2.1), an on-line package of resources to assist schools in the development of Emergency and Business Continuity plans - '**Managing School Emergencies**' – was made available to all schools and academies in Central Bedfordshire's region. In the recent survey of schools, 85% of the responders confirmed that they had accessed this guidance; and, of these, 33% posted positive comments about the guidance. See **Appendix 3**.
- 2.7 The Resilience Group proposes that, with the necessary mandate from CSMT, an initiative is launched to recognise schools who have achieved a pre-defined threshold of preparedness in Emergency and Business Continuity Planning. This would be known as the 'Resilience Award Scheme', for which a brief rationale can be found in **section 10**.
- 2.8 With the exception of work concerning pre-schools – on which, however, a start has been made - the Resilience Group is pleased to report that all objectives identified in the previous Annual Report (1.5.2) have been actioned.

### **3.0 SCHOOL OPEN STATUS (SOS) SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1 It was agreed at a meeting of the CSMT in July 2013 that the SOS system should be developed to incorporate 'alerts' from providers of schools' transport when it was not possible for these providers to operate. Funding was provisionally allocated for this purpose.
- 3.2 In November 2013 an extensive review of the functionality of SOS was conducted and a Product Requirement Document produced. **Appendix 1**
- 3.3 In August 2014 work commenced on writing computer scripts to enable the new developments. It is proposed that this new functionality is thoroughly tested in a test environment during the week commencing 27<sup>th</sup> October. At this point a decision will be made regarding the time-scale for making developments 'live' and the roll-out of pre-agreed processes for informing parents and training transport providers.

#### 4.0 EMERGENCY AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING SUPPORT FOR PRE SCHOOLS

- 4.1 In January 2014, all private, voluntary and independent providers of pre-school education in the Central Bedfordshire area were invited to take part in an on-line survey in relation to Emergency and Business Continuity planning. This survey was one of the objectives identified in the previous annual report. (1.5.2.2).
- 4.2 The objectives of the survey were as follows:
- 4.2.1 To establish a clear understanding with regard to the extent of Resilience arrangements in pre-school settings in the Central Bedfordshire area.
- 4.2.2 To provide a self assessment tool for pre-schools. Participation in the survey would raise pre-schools' awareness of any gaps they may have in their Emergency and Business Continuity Planning.
- 4.2.3 To use the information gathered to help inform the creation of an Emergency and Business Continuity Planning template to be made available to pre-schools to support personnel in preparing for unforeseen contingencies.
- 4.3 The response to the survey was poor: only 23 of the approximately 140 pre-schools which were asked to complete the survey did so. A summary of full survey results can be found at **Appendix 2**.
- 4.4 Although the response was limited, there were some positive signs. Those schools which responded consistently reported encouraging levels of emergency preparedness. However, almost one-fifth of the responders reported a lack of lock-down procedures.
- 4.5 Survey results suggest that Business Continuity arrangements are less developed.
- 4.5.1 19 Pre-schools indicated they would be unable to continue to operate if their premises were made temporarily unavailable.
- 4.5.2 8 Pre-schools indicated they would be unable to continue their service if some staff were temporarily unavailable.
- 4.5.3 18 Pre-schools reported not having a Business Continuity Plan.
- 4.6 Whilst the information gathered is useful for informing future priorities, it fails to provide the broad overview desired. It has therefore been agreed with the Council's Child Poverty and Early Intervention Team (CPEI) that they will use their programmed, annual visits to pre-schools to have these establishments complete a survey during the visit, and support the pre-school while doing so. All the information thus collected will be collated into a report to be prepared for January 2015. The final survey results will enable the Resilience Group to:
- 4.6.1 Easily recognise where individual pre –schools have potential gaps in their Emergency and Business Continuity planning.

4.6.2 Through the Council's Compliance and Risk Team, provide targeted support as appropriate.

4.7 It is proposed that a planning template will be made available in January 2015. This is currently being developed with a selected pre-school.

## 5.0 SCHOOL SURVEY: EMERGENCY / BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING

5.1 One of the objectives identified in the Resilience Group's previous Annual Report was the need for a follow-up survey of schools two years after the first such survey (see 1.5.2.1). This was undertaken in early 2014. By this time, in drafting/improving their Emergency and Business Continuity Plans, schools would have had ample opportunity to make use of the on-line package of supporting materials which Central Bedfordshire had launched in February 2012 (2.6), and the Resilience Group hoped to see evidence of this in the overall response.

5.2 Compared with the 2012 survey, the level of response to the 2014 follow-up was disappointingly low. In total, on this occasion, only 45% (61 of 138 ) of schools in Central Bedfordshire responded to the survey. The comparable figures for the 2012 survey were 65% (90 schools). A full summary of responses is at Appendix 3.

5.3 Whilst this degree of response may be considered to have provided a representative picture (of schools' current preparedness in this area), the absence of a response from such a large number of schools makes it difficult to gain an informed overview of the extent to which Central Bedfordshire's on-line materials may have been accessed and utilised. This point notwithstanding, however, the responses to this survey did provide some relevant and encouraging information on the latter point: 85% of the schools which responded (51 schools) confirmed that they had seen these on-line materials; and of these 33% (21 schools) commented positively on these<sup>1</sup>

5.4 It is not easy to understand exactly why the level of survey returns in 2014 was significantly lower than in 2012. However, a combination of the following differences in the methodology adopted, and the changing schools' landscape nationally, may largely explain the disappointing response:

5.4.1 In 2012, all headteachers were alerted to the survey by posted letters. In 2014, however, to save resource effort, it was decided to only promote the survey through the medium of CBC's on-line newsletter 'Central Essentials'

5.4.2 In 2014, less CBC resource than in 2012 was devoted to chasing (by email and phone) outstanding responses

5.4.3 Since 2012, in the Central Bedfordshire region, as elsewhere in England, there has been a significant increase in the number of academies.<sup>2</sup> Results

<sup>1</sup>Comments range from 'helpful' to 'excellent' and in most instances reflect an intent to further their planning for resilience. A full list of comments can be found in **Appendix 3**.

<sup>2</sup> In January 2012, there were 19 Academies in Central Bedfordshire. There were 49 as of September 2014.



from the 2014 survey suggest that Academies are less likely to complete the survey than maintained schools.<sup>3</sup>

5.5 In respect of **Emergency Planning**, the findings from both the 2012 and 2014 surveys are in the same range: in 2014, 80% of the responding schools reported the existence of an Emergency Plan (the comparable figure for 2012 was 87%). The information obtained in 2014 also showed significant increases, over 2012, in the number of schools now having established important elements of their overall Emergency and Business Continuity Plans, as follows:

5.5.1 The proportion of schools using grab-packs rose from 48% of responders (43) to 77% (47)

5.5.2 The proportion of schools with an off-site evacuation facility rose from 62% of responders (56) to 67% (40)

5.5.3 The proportion of schools with lock-down procedures rose from 52% of responders (47) to 64% (39).

5.6 The responses from the 2014 survey also, however, made it quite clear that significant gaps still exist within individual schools in terms of their planning for the effective management of the initial stages of an unexpected contingency, not least in such areas as evacuation and school-closure procedures. This is an area of significant concern, which the Resilience Group is considering how best to address.

5.7 However, in respect of **Business Continuity Planning**, the 2014 survey has brought more encouraging news: in 2012, 33% of the schools responding reported having such a dedicated plan; this time around, the figure has increased to 70%. The most improved elements in this area were:

5.7.1 The proportion of schools identifying their most operationally-critical elements: up from 40% of responders (36) to 64% (39)

5.7.2 The proportion of schools actively considering the impact on their operation of any combination of loss of staff, utilities and resources: up from 46% (41) of responders to 61% (37)

5.7.3 The proportion of schools with arrangements to provide off-site resources: up from 33% (30) to 49% (30)

## 6.0 SEVERE WEATHER GUIDANCE

6.1 Whilst this is an infrequent occurrence, severe weather can, on occasions, jeopardise the ability of individual schools to remain open. On one day alone in January 2013, 88 Central Bedfordshire schools were closed as a direct

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<sup>3</sup> 52% of Maintained Schools completed the 2014 survey (46 of 89) compared to only 31% of Academies ( 15 of 49.)

consequence of bad weather<sup>4</sup>. According to contemporaneous discussions with Headteachers, these closures were mainly due to one of two reasons:

- 6.1.1 Staff late arriving at school because of traffic disruptions, with the result that the school has insufficient staff on site to safely manage pupils in attendance
  - 6.1.2 Health and Safety - related concerns for both staff and pupils, in respect of slips, trips and falls.
- 6.2 In November 2013, in delivering another of the objectives identified in the Resilience Group's last Annual Report (1.5.2.2) Central Bedfordshire Council produced and circulated the document '**Severe Weather- Guidance for Schools**'. A copy of this document can be found at **Appendix 4**. The guidance is intended to help address the concerns identified in 6.1.1 and 6.1.2.
- 6.3 Whilst advice and guidance on coping with severe weather is available from a variety of sources<sup>5</sup>, '**Severe Weather – Guidance for Schools**' serves to provide schools with a single reference source in the event of severe weather. Essential elements include:
- 6.3.1 DfE guidance and expectations of schools.
  - 6.3.2 Snow closure procedures.
  - 6.3.3 Resilience –both personal and community.
  - 6.3.4 Snow and ice clearance guidance (including deployment of volunteers).
- 6.4 For the present, it is not possible to measure the effectiveness of this guidance as the winter of 2013-14 saw no incidence of severe weather.
- 6.5 The document can be accessed via the [Schools' Portal](#).

## 7.0 SCHOOL LOCK-DOWN PROCEDURES

- 7.1 As a result of training sessions delivered to schools' staff in January 2013, it became evident that schools needed more information and guidance in relation to dealing with lock-down scenarios.
- 7.2 In November 2013 – in fulfilling another of the objectives specified in the Resilience Group's last Annual Report (1.5.2.5) – the document '**Lockdown Procedures – guidance to schools and academies**' was circulated to all schools. This document is at **Appendix 5**.
- 7.3 The document can be accessed via the [Schools' Portal](#).

<sup>4</sup> On Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2013 59 Lower , 15 Middle, 9 Upper and 5 Special Schools were closed as a result of prolonged snowfall

<sup>5</sup> Websites for DfE, Highways Agency, CBC, HSE and School' portal

- 7.4 In respect of Lock-Down procedures, the 2014 survey also reveals encouraging news: in 2012, 52% of the schools responding reported having established such procedures; in 2014, the figure has increased to 64%.

## 8.0 FLOODING

- 8.1 On the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2014, a number of flood warnings were received following a period of prolonged and heavy rainfall<sup>6</sup>.
- 8.2 Whilst several schools are in close proximity to effected rivers, only one school has buildings situated on the floodplain, Clipstone Brook Lower School in Leighton Buzzard. Close communication was maintained with this school which experienced extensive flooding of the school field<sup>7</sup>.
- 8.3 Linslade Academy was forced to close because of surface water flooding the school's car park. At the time, the school contacted Emergency Services and the Environment Agency for assistance, but they were over-run with similar requests and were unable to help.
- 8.3.1 In subsequent contact with the school by Central Bedfordshire, the latter confirmed that it had now put in place appropriate contingency plans to respond to a similar event.
- 8.4 The Environment Agency released a bulletin providing safety advice in respect of flooding. This was incorporated into guidance advice for schools. **Appendix 6**

## 9.0 ENGAGEMENT WITH UTILITIES COMPANIES

- 9.1 On 14<sup>th</sup> November 2013, Cranfield and Woburn areas experienced a water outage lasting between 8 and 10 hours. This outage resulted in the closure of 5 schools and severely effected one further school<sup>8</sup>.
- 9.2 The outage followed some overnight routine maintenance undertaken by Anglian Water between 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November, although a link between the two events has not been confirmed by Anglian Water.
- 9.3 In order to best prepare schools for future, unforeseen outages, the Resilience Group invited a representative from Anglian Water to one of its meetings. The Group wished to explore the elaboration of possible appropriate early warning procedures for schools, and gain an understanding of the level of support provided to schools by the water authority.

<sup>6</sup> Flood warnings were received for Clipstone Brook and the River Ouzel in Leighton Buzzard and for the Langford stretch of the River Ivel.

<sup>7</sup> It was estimated that the flood level would need to have risen 30 -40 mm before the building itself was effected.

<sup>8</sup> Cranfield Academy, Holywell Middle , Woburn lower , Aspley Guise Lower and Ridgemont Lower Schools were all forced to close. Husborne Crawley School was effected by low pressure but managed to remain open.

- 9.4 As tasked by this meeting, Anglian Water have released guidance notes to schools. These notes are at **Appendix 7**; and will be incorporated into a revised ***Managing Emergencies in School*** guidance document.

## 10.0 RESILIENT SCHOOLS AWARD

- 10.1 The Resilience Group - in considering how to encourage schools to further improve their Emergency and Business Continuity Planning - have decided, subject to CSMT approval, to explore the development of, and pilot, a resilience award scheme – such awards would be made to schools able to demonstrate pre-defined levels of preparedness for managing effectively unforeseen contingencies.
- 10.2 CBC would use the data obtained through the biennial school survey - henceforth to be re-branded as an ‘audit’ – to assess which schools would be eligible for a ‘Resilient Schools’ award, based on the quality of their Emergency and Business Continuity planning. The Resilience Group hopes that this slight presentational tweak, together with the knowledge that their progress in this area is being monitored by the Council, with a strong performance being ‘acknowledged’ by the ‘Resilience Schools’ award, will encourage not only overall improvement amongst schools and academies in the CBC region but also a more consistently strong response to the biennial audit. It is anticipated that these establishments will – when they have met the required standard – wish to promote the fact publicly, such as on their web-site, letter head etc. The Resilience Group is acutely conscious of the need to manage this scheme with a resource-light touch, and would design this accordingly.
- 10.3 The proposed timescale for taking this initiative forward is as follows:
- 10.3.1 The assessment template will be ready for review by the Resilience Group at its meeting in November 2014.
- 10.3.2 The process will be piloted by three schools (Lower, Middle, Upper) during Spring Term 2015.
- 10.3.3 With the CSMT’s approval, and subject to findings from the pilot phase, it is proposed to promote the Resilient Schools Award during the Autumn term 2015, in preparation for its formal launch in conjunction with the biennial audit in the Spring of 2016

## 11.0 FUTURE OBJECTIVES

- 11.1 To successfully oversee the final phase of SOS development and provide training to commissioned providers of schools’ transport with regard to their use of the SOS system.
- 11.2 To continue to collect pre – school data in relation to Emergency and Business Continuity Planning, in order to be able to establish a clearer and fuller picture of preparedness within Central Bedfordshire’s pre-school sector to manage effectively unforeseen contingencies.

- 11.3 To develop, pilot and launch a 'Resilient Schools' award scheme – drawing on findings from the biennial survey of Emergency and Business Continuity planning in all schools in the Central Bedfordshire region. It is proposed that the evidence required for assessment of awards is collected as part of the existing data collection process which as a result may be subject to a review with regard to timing.
- 11.4 To further develop the '*Managing Emergencies in School*' guidance to:
- 11.4.1 Incorporate the most recent guidance around utility outages.
  - 11.4.2 Provide schools with clear and succinct advice regarding roles and responsibilities of key staff in the immediate aftermath of an incident.
  - 11.4.3 Link with, and cross-reference to, the 'Resilient Schools' Award Scheme

## 12.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: SOS Product Requirement Document

Appendix 2: Pre-School Survey Results

Appendix 3: Schools Business Continuity Planning Survey Report

Appendix 4: Severe Weather Guidance for Schools

Appendix 5: School Lock-Down Procedures

Appendix 6: Guidance to Schools in Respect of Floodwater

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## Product Requirements Document

### SOS - Transport Providers

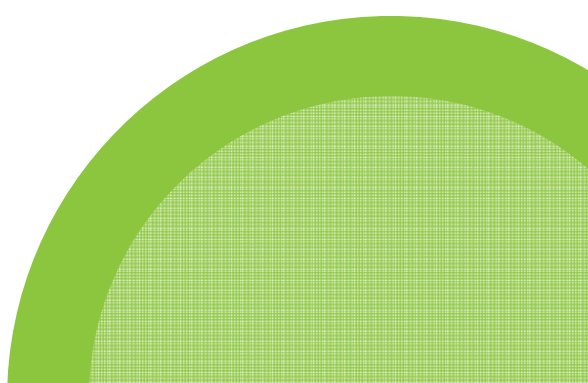
**Author:** Janet Maidment

**Status:** Draft

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## 1. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to identify the requirements to allow Transport Providers to update their route availability in the event of closure and for subscribers to be notified of them. It will also detail any existing issues that are currently outstanding with the SOS web application.

## 2. EXISTING PRODUCT OVERVIEW

The current SOS web application manages information about school closures and notifies members of the public that have subscribed to the service. Schools can login to the system and update their status along with any supporting notices. The web app also allows for users to subscribe to receive all highway alerts and view any information uploaded about Transport providers.

The website provides invaluable information to parents about the status of schools during adverse weather condition and currently has approximately 1800 users subscribed to receive email alerts. The information provided is largely dependent on schools updating in a timely manner although updates can be made by the administrator.

The application has been configured to create accounts for Transport Providers but at present this information isn't used. Notifications are sent via email as it is believed the additional costs incurred to use SMS to provide notifications are too high. Consideration of SMS notifications is outside of scope of this work.

## 3. CURRENT SITUATION

### 3.1 Overview

Currently the SOS application cannot provide notifications about the Transport Providers to those affected by routes being closed. During adverse weather, telephone calls increase significantly between transport providers, schools, parents and CBC all trying to relay or obtain information about whether routes are open and transport is running. Parents phone schools or the CBC transport teams to check on routes and CBC will contact parents directly for those with children at special schools. Each school may have multiple transport providers and each Transport Provider may have multiple routes serving many schools.

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### 3.2 Issues

There are a number of issues with the application in its current state:

- Parents currently can't subscribe to Transport alerts affecting their chosen schools
- Increased phone traffic during adverse weather to obtain Transport updates between schools, transport providers, CBC and parents
- User passwords are visible to admins within SOS creating a security risk
- No ability to pre-date school closures in the event of strike action or polling days
- Administrator function is unfriendly – no ability to search or sort

## 4. SCOPE

The following items have been identified as being within scope or outside:

### 4.1 In Scope

- Amendments to the existing applications to improve functionality and security
- Creation of Transport Providers and their associated routes
- Provision of access to Transport Providers to allow updates to be administered
- The ability for Parents to subscribe to route information

### 4.2 Out of Scope

- Implementation of SMS notifications
- Management of Transport Provider contracts
- Management of Children on specific routes

## 5. REQUIREMENTS

The following table identifies the requirements around the subscription and notification of route availability from Transport Providers. Prioritisation method used is the MoSCoW rule where; M = Must have, S = Should Have, C = Could Have and W = Would like to/won't Have:

No	Requirement	Additional Info	Priority (MoSCoW)	Notes
1.	Transport Providers to be given and/or reminded of their login access to SOS	Access required for the TP's to update information about their routes	M	Access support and training may be required. Additional communications will be required to send to those already on the system
2.	Transport Provider records to be linked to schools via a route association	There needs to be the ability to 'add route' between a Transport Provider and a school and provide details to include route number	M	A single TP may run multiple routes to one school
3.	Transport Providers to be able update the status of their routes	Status examples: Running, Closed, Partially Closed	S	
4.	The ability for Transport Providers to update routes individually or 'update all' in the instance of total closure of all routes	Routes need to be visible along with associated schools to allow one or multiple closures	S	One or all routes should be able to be closed
5.	'Free Text' to be available to add information into when closing any route	This would be added to the notification to provide further detail if required	M	Optional field
6.	Parents to be able to request transport notifications by school	Parents need to be able to receive timely notifications about Transport routes that affect their child(ren) in the case of adverse weather conditions or localised problems with transport	M	Route numbers change each year and therefore to minimise the amount of administration required by parents the subscription needs to be independent of routes
7.	Notifications to be sent out to Schools in the event that a closed route impacts the school	This would be an automated email for information purposes and sent to a nominated email address and include the route number	S	The school will communicate this information further as it sees fit

8.	Notifications to be sent out to subscribed parents in the event of a closed route	This would be an automated email for information purposes and sent to a nominated email address and include the route number	M	For security purposes only route numbers will be provided rather than specific locations
9.	Subscriber passwords to be hidden from admin view	Currently an admin can see the passwords of users who have subscribed to the SOS services.	S	For security purposes passwords should not be visible to admins
10.	Ability for SOS Admins to update route statuses where applicable	Admins will always need to ability to update route statuses as they can school statuses currently	M	This is useful in the instances where TP's can't use the application
11.	SOS Admins to amend/update/remove routes and create the associations between schools	Admins need the ability to manage the route in the application so the relevant information is visible to the Transport providers	M	
12.	Transport providers to receive a notification if an associated school closes	If a school closes via the SOS app and a Transport provider is associated via a route link then a notification should be automatically sent	S	This should not be the only form of communication but support other means
13.	The ability for the administrator to send a communication to all subscribers of the SOS application	There may be an instance when the administrator is required to communicate to all subscribers (e.g. housekeeping purposes to identify active/inactive users)	C	Careful consideration would need to be given before sending a notification to all users
14.	To be able to remove subscribers to the SOS application	This could be based on 'last used' or where duplicates exist	C	General housekeeping
15.	To provide the ability for users to unsubscribe to the alert on each notification that is sent out	Links will be needed to remove users from the application	S	General housekeeping to prevent spam
16.	To be able to pre-date school closures	This allows pre planned closures to be added to the system and notifications to be sent out	C	Currently closures have to be updated on the day they happen
17.	When users have selected to receive notification of 'All schools' this should incorporate any new schools added to the system since their registration	'Register for all schools & services' is an option on the front screen of SOS. New schools should automatically be included in the 'All' list	C	
18.	The ability to filter the front screen of schools by open/closed am/pm	Currently if you're looking for closed schools on the front page you have to scroll through them all	S	

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19.	The ability to search/sort users in the admin part of the system	Currently the only way to find those registered on the system is to scroll through page after page	S	
20.	The creation of different Administrator log ins	Currently Admin logins are split by schools and transport but there needs to be a high level one that accesses both areas	S	Roles and responsibilities matrix at the end of this document

## 6. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The table below identifies the different accounts required within SOS and their access/function.

Function	User Group				
	System Admin	School Admin	Transport Admin	Transport User	Parent/Subscriber (portal)
Create/Update user account	✓				✓
View User account	✓	✓		✓	✓
Create/Update School account	✓	✓			
View School account	✓	✓	✓		
Create/Update Transport account	✓		✓		
View Transport account	✓	✓	✓		
Add/Amend Route Association	✓		✓		
Reset Password (system)	✓	✓			
Reset Password (portal)					✓
Send global email	✓				
Update route status	✓			✓	

## 7. ASSUMPTIONS

This document has been created based on the following assumptions:

- A change to the SOS system to incorporate Transport Providers route statuses does not negate the need for some additional communications. This is an information service and exists to provide timely updates to those effected but shouldn't be relied upon solely
- Changes will not be made in time for winter of 2013
- The management of Transport Providers and the routes awarded to them is outside the scope of SOS and is not administered by the system
- The information about the children on each bus/taxi is not held within SOS
- The number of Transport Providers and associated routes is a manageable number to administer within the system
- That each mode of transport only contains students going to one school and is not mixed. If a route contains pick-ups to multiple schools further consideration will need to be given to allow a link between a route and more than one school

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## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper recommends that the documented requirements are prioritised for development and detailed further where applicable.

A specific recommendation that is made is regarding the subscription by parents to receive route notifications. As routes change on a yearly basis it is felt that parents shouldn't have to administer their SOS account to subscribe to specific routes to replicate these amendments. Therefore it is recommended that parents subscribe to receive transport updates based on the school alerts they sign-up to. Parents may receive information that isn't pertinent to their affected route but this is preferable than to assume they would remember to update SOS on a yearly basis (or when routes change).

## 9. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Further developments in the future may be considered externally to this project. These include (but are not limited to); the creation of a Mobile App to allow push notification alerts along with emails, to extend the SOS system to be a 'Service Open Status' rather than just schools. This may include information relating to libraries, Customer Service Centres, Day Care Centres etc.

**10. DOCUMENT REVIEW****Document Ownership**

Name	Role	Contact Details
Janet Maidment	Document Author	0300 3006834
IA	Document Owner	

**Document Version Control**

Version	Date	Created/Amended By	Details
0.1	21/10/13	Janet Maidment	Creation of Document
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0.3	15/11/13	Janet Maidment	Update after review with Pete Hardy
0.4	18/11/13	Pete Hardy	Review

**Distribution**

Name	Role	Version	Date
Pete Hardy	Compliance & Risk Adviser	0.2	21/10/13
Pete Hardy	Compliance & Risk Adviser	0.3	15/11/13

**Authorisation**

Name	Role	Date Approved



## Emergency Procedures in Pre-School Settings - Survey Results

### Summary

23 Pre-School Settings responded to the on-line survey.

On the basis of the data below, there are no immediate concerns regarding the ability of individual establishments to deal with an emergency except for lockdown scenarios where 4 responses indicate there are no lockdown procedures in place.

Two issues do arise however:

- The low response to this survey (23 of 140+ Private, voluntary or Independent providers of pre-school education).
- The number of providers who would be unable to continue to function in the event of loss of premises.

<b>Does your setting have any of the following emergency arrangements in place?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Agreed emergency roles?	21	2
Are there at least two members of staff on site with access?	22	
Are there arrangements for evacuation of building?	23	
Are there off site evacuation arrangements?	21	2
Do you keep emergency contact details?	23	
Do you have an emergency grab pack?	19	3
Do you have lockdown procedures?	18	4
Do you have emergency closure arrangements?	23	
Are there procedures in place to deal with bomb threats or suspicious packages?	12	11
Are there post Incident support arrangements (for staff and children)?	10	12
Have you incorporated all of your emergency arrangements into an emergency plan?	10	12

<b>Does your setting have any of the following business continuity arrangements in place?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Could your service continue if your premises were temporarily unavailable?	3	19
Could your service continue if many of your staff were temporarily unavailable for work?	15	8
Are your staff trained to take over each others roles if needed?	22	1
Would your key information be available when you need it?	17	6
Do you have arrangements with nearby organisations to help provide resources (other than premises)?	5	17
Do you have access to funds such as 'emergency' cash or Credit / purchasing card?	16	6
Are you resourced to cope with severe weather?	21	2
Have you incorporated all of your business continuity arrangements into a plan?	4	18
If your setting is accommodated on a school site, is it incorporated into the school's emergency arrangements?	11	6

Which of the following emergency closures procedures do you have in place?	
SOS	18
Parent Mail	7
Telephone Tree	8
Social Media	9
Other	9

**Comments**

Having read all the questions we will be putting certain procedures in place, and making a business continuity plan.
I have just set up an action plan to look at all our emergency procedures/policies and bring them all together.
Stompers have a number of procedures that cover aspects of the business continuity and so realise that it would be a good idea to create a business continuity procedure to cover all these areas under one.
The school and Pre school are working on a centralisation of the emergency procedures and business continuity (Spring 2014)
To date we have always been open even in bad weather as all of my staff are able to walk to work if they need to.
We are in the process of creating a disaster recovery plan
We have a number policies which cover emergency situations but don't have one policy covering everything. The questionnaire has highlighted the need for us to put together a plan for business continuity.

**Central Bedfordshire Council**  
**Emergency / Business Continuity Planning in Schools**  
**Survey Results: June2014**

**1.0 Purpose of Survey**

- 1.1 This survey was conducted at the request of the Resilience Group for Schools and Other Settings. There were four aims of the exercise:
- 1.1.1 The survey provides Central Bedfordshire Council with current data regarding the state of readiness of its schools to cope with unforeseen emergencies.
  - 1.1.2 It provides a self assessment tool for schools. Participation in the survey would highlight to schools any gaps they may have in their Emergency and Business Continuity Planning.
  - 1.1.3 The survey supports awareness raising of the Emergency / Business Continuity Planning section of the CBC Schools' Portal. Here, templates and resources designed to simplify the process of writing a comprehensive and effective Emergency Plan in schools, can be downloaded.
  - 1.1.4 The survey will help to assess the impact that the introduction of supporting resources has had upon the resilience of schools and academies.

## 2.0 Response to Survey

**Table 1: Summary of Responses : April 2012**

Responses				Emergency Plan?		BCP ?	
No. of school type <sup>1</sup>	School Type	No. of response	% Response	Yes	No	Yes	No
5	Special	3	60%	2	1	1	2
4	Pre-School	4	100%	4	0	1	3
95	Lower	68	72%	60	8	23	45
24	Middle	11	46%	8	3	3	8
10	Upper	4	40%	4	0	2	2
138	Total	90	65%	78(87%)	12(13%)	30(33%)	60(66%)

**Table 2: Summary of Responses : June 2014**

Responses				Emergency Plan?		BCP ?	
No. of school type <sup>2</sup>	School Type	No. of response	% Response	Yes	No	Yes	No
4	Special	1	25%	1	0	1	0
4	Pre-School	3	75%	2	1	2	1
84	Lower	42	50%	33	6	28	12
13	Primary	2	15%	2	0	2	0
20	Middle	9	45%	7	2	6	3
3	Secondary	0	0%	0	0	0	0
9	Upper	4	44%	4	0	4	0
137	Total	61	45%	49(80%)	9(15%)	43(70%)	16(26%)

- 2.1 The number of schools responding to the most recent survey has dropped significantly from 90 in 2012 to 61 in 2014. The timing and method of data collection need to be reviewed ahead of any future surveys.
- 2.2 45% of schools in the Central Bedfordshire area responded to this survey. Whilst this may be considered a representative sample, the absence of data from 76 schools in this current survey makes assessment of the impact resources have had, difficult to quantify.
- 2.3 With regard to school governance, there is no discernable trend in relation to schools who have not responded to this survey. There appear to be a fair representation of maintained and non-maintained schools amongst the sample.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this survey Academies are included within their respective phase.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this survey Academies are included within their respective phase.

<sup>3</sup> 15 of 61( 25%) schools responding were academies. 36 % of schools in the Central Bedfordshire area are academies who are slightly under represented.

## 3.0 2012 – 2014 Survey Comparison

Table 3: Responses to specific questions 2012 -2014

	Jan 2012	April 2014
Number of schools completing survey	90	61
<b>Schools with an Emergency Plan</b>	<b>78 (87%)</b>	<b>49 (80%)</b>
<i>Including:</i>		
Emergency Contact Details	73 (81%)	47 (77%)
Actions to take on Activation of Plan	69 (77%)	47 (77%)
An Emergency Grab Pack	43 (48%)	47 (77%)
Arrangements for Evacuation of the Building	79 (88%)	47 (77%)
Offsite Evacuation Arrangements	56 (62%)	40 (66%)
Lockdown Procedures	47 (52%)	39 (64%)
School Closure Alert Arrangements	87 (97%)	49 (80%)
Bomb Threat/Suspicious Package Arrangements	44 (49%)	38 (63%)
Post Incident Support Arrangements	47 (52%)	39 (64%)
Schools where individuals have been trained in each others roles	43 (48%)	23 (38%)
Schools that have you tested their Emergency Plan	19 (21%)	18 (30%)
<b>Schools with a business continuity plan</b>	<b>30 (33%)</b>	<b>43 (70%)</b>
<i>Including:</i>		
Identified most critical aspects of day to day operation	36 (40%)	39 (64%)
Considered the impact of loss of staff, utilities etc	41 (46%)	37 (61%)
All staff trained to assume each other's roles	70 (78%)	38 (63%)
Staff know what to do if there was incident and are trained	45 (50%)	26 (43%)
Key information available when needed	73 (81%)	42 (69%)
Arrangements with nearby organisations to help provide resources	30 (33%)	30 (49%)
Access to Emergency Funds	46 (51%)	25 (41%)
Registered for warnings & alerts?	29 (32%)	21 (34%)
Schools with a pre-school on site	35 (39%)	25 (41%)
Preschool provider included in Emergency Plans	17 (19%)	11 (18%)

3.1 Comparative analysis of the data presents some inconsistent findings<sup>4</sup>. These might be attributed to:

<sup>4</sup> E.g, in 2014, nine schools reported they did not have an emergency Plan yet in 2012 they had previously reported that they had!

- 3.1.1 Survey completed by personnel who do not fully appreciate the complexities of Emergency and business Continuity Planning.
  - 3.1.2 Changes in regime or personnel at individual schools where previous incumbents felt contingency plans were all in place, even if not.
  - 3.1.3 A development in understanding of Business Continuity leading to a changed understanding of specific questions.
- 3.2 In the current survey (2014), 9 schools have indicated that they do not have an emergency plan. Of these, in the 2012 survey:
- 3.2.1 One did not respond
  - 3.2.2 Two indicated that they did not have an Emergency plan.
  - 3.2.3 Six indicated that they did have an Emergency Plan.
- 3.3 In the current survey (2014), 16 schools have indicated that they do not have a business continuity plan. Of these, in the 2012 survey:
- 3.3.1 Two did not respond.
  - 3.3.2 Four indicated they they did have a Business Continuity plan
  - 3.3.3 Ten indicated that they did not have a Business Continuity Plan
- 3.4 In 2012, 12 schools reported that they did not have an Emergency plan. Analysis of data provided through the current survey shows that, of these 12:
- 3.4.1 Nine of these now have an Emergency Plan
  - 3.4.2 Two do not have an Emergency Plan (although this is a focus of current work)
  - 3.4.3 One did not respond to this survey.
- 3.5 In 2012, 60 schools reported that they did not have a Business Continuity Plan. Analysis of data provided through the current survey (2014) shows that, of these 60:
- 3.5.1 25 schools reported that they do now have a Business Continuity Plan.
  - 3.5.2 10 still do not have a Business Continuity Plan.

#### **4.0 Emergency / Business Continuity Planning Resources**

- 4.1 In February 2012, a package of resources to support schools in the development of Emergency and business Continuity plans were made available to its schools by Central Bedfordshire Council.
- 4.2 85% of schools (51) responding to the current survey reported having seen the CBC guidance. Of these, 15% (9 schools) reported the resources as being 'very useful'.

4.3 15% (9) of responding schools had not seen the Emergency and BCP resources on the Schools' Portal. Seven of these schools are academies and two are maintained by the Local Authority. Of these 9 schools:

4.3.1 6 reported to have Emergency Plans and 3 did not. In the 2012 survey, all 3 of these schools had previously reported that they did have Emergency plans. Significantly, there has been changes in school leadership in two of these schools since 2012.

4.3.2 5 reported having Business Continuity plans and 4 did not.

### Comments

- Very good. Have used this a lot to do risk assessments and plans
- Very useful - we used the resources for our plan
- Extremely useful reference document; informative and formed the basis of our current plan.
- Helpful but daunting.
- We have used these to support our plan which we will be discussing with all staff in May when we will be closed for elections.
- Hard to find initially, lots of good ideas
- Hard to find initially, lots of good ideas
- Very helpful. A good resource which is clear and, although time consuming, easy to follow. It may not cover every eventuality but it lays down some transferable principles which when discussed and shared become more embedded. If an incident then occurred a school would be in better position than one which had spent little, or no preparation/reflection, time considering such incidents!
- I have found this very helpful in setting up and reviewing our emergency plan. We are in the process of reviewing our plan and the information on the web site has helped us to address areas and actions that we were falling short of. The short power points will help me to address the lack of training / awareness amongst the staff. The plan template has been very helpful.
- Very useful
- Very detailed and helpful in compiling our plans
- We have a critical Incident and School Closure policy as well as a Fire Risk assessment, Adverse Weather policy, and Educational Visits and Journey's Risk Assessment, and we are currently reviewing our these in light of producing an Emergency Plan and Business continuity plan. We have downloaded all the guidance from the website and the information is a lot for a smaller school to go through but the templates are useful
- We found it very useful and have used it extensively.
- It was very useful and we have used it extensively.
- Excellent. We already have a plan in place but I am reviewing it in light of the guidance and will be incorporating some of your suggestions
- It's great - although I've ticked we don't have a plan that's because it isn't complete yet but we are underway. I've also found Pete to be extremely helpful and knowledgeable
- We are planning to use it to review and improve our existing procedures in the next term
- Looks good
- We have a school completed copy of this resource but we feel that we would still find it difficult in an emergency and therefore have not answered all of the questions in this survey as yes.
- A very useful tool
- They have been recently used to draft our Emergency and Business Continuity Plan
- I have looked at it in response to this survey. The resources seem to be useful, and will enable us to update our plans for the future
- Our site is rather complicated which has made completing the template tricky.
- IT's very comprehensive but our challenge lies in the situation of the school and the site itself

SRG Annual Report 2014: APPENDIX 3

- IT's very comprehensive but our challenge lies in the situation of the school and the site itself



Central Bedfordshire Council  
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**Central  
Bedfordshire**

# **Coping with Severe Weather**

## **Guidance to Schools**

November 2013



**Currently, schools and academies receive guidance in relation to their dealing with severe weather from a variety of sources. This document is intended as a single source of information for ease of reference.**

**This document can also be downloaded from the Business Continuity page of the [Central Bedfordshire Schools' Portal](#)**

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## Coping with Severe Weather Guidance to Schools

In Central Bedfordshire, the number of occasions when schools decide to close due to severe weather (normally snow) is very low. However, the impact of such closures on parents, carers and the rest of the school community, even if infrequent, is not to be under-estimated. Accordingly, it is important for all schools to take what steps they can to remain open, whilst recognising that there will be occasions when particular circumstances make closure the only option.

### 1. Department for Education

The Department for Education (DfE) are very clear in their expectations. The following information can be found on the DfE website:

*When it comes to severe weather conditions such as heavy snow, we expect headteachers to keep schools open for as many pupils as possible whenever it is reasonable for them to do so. Closing schools unnecessarily causes disruption to children's education, to their parents and to the economy.*

*It is for individual schools to make any decision to close. They know the local conditions and the contingency possibilities which may allow the school to stay open for some or all pupils. Such decisions should however be based on a common sense approach, having regard to the conditions at the school and the need to continue to provide an education to children whenever feasible.*

#### **What about health and safety – is the school site safe?**

*In most cases the headteacher has day to day responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of staff, pupils and visitors. In severe weather conditions such as heavy snow, we expect headteachers to keep schools open for as many pupils as possible whenever it is reasonable for them to do so. The HSE is very clear that **schools should plan ahead and take a sensible and proportionate approach to managing the associated risks**. Closing a school could be a reasonable decision if pupils or staff would face significant risks of serious injury. But in many cases it will be possible to keep a school open, as happens routinely in other countries with more severe winters than ours. Where roads are impassable it becomes a practical issue of access not health and safety considerations.*

#### **What about the attendance statistics?**

*Headteachers should not be worried about the impact that remaining open may have on their attendance statistics. In September 2010, we amended the relevant regulations so that, when a pupil cannot get in because of severe weather, the school can mark the register using absence code Y, which means that the pupil's absence will not affect the attendance statistics. However, if the headteacher believes that a child could have got to school, then the child should be recorded as code O – an unauthorised absence.*

### ***What if a number of school staff are unable to get in?***

*Schools have the flexibility to work creatively, perhaps bringing together groups and classes with teachers and support staff working together. There are no maximum general pupil-teacher ratios set out in law; with the exception of the infant class size legislation that limits the size of infant classes to 30 or fewer with a qualified teacher for 5, 6 and 7 year olds. The infant class size limit, which includes reception classes, will not apply unless the majority of the children will reach age 5, 6 or 7 in that school year.*

*The infant class size limit does not apply to activities normally carried out in larger groups, for example assemblies, sports and other structured or un-structured activities that the school may choose to provide as part of maintaining a good service.*

### ***Disruption to exams***

*Schools should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning, and ensure that the relevant staff are familiar with these plans. If a headteacher decides to close a school they will discuss alternative arrangements (such as the use for exams of other public buildings nearby) with the relevant awarding organisation. It is the headteacher's responsibility to ensure that parents/carers are kept informed of any decisions.*

*Where a pupil misses an exam because of bad weather the school will discuss contingency plans with the relevant awarding organisations. The action to be taken will aim to safeguard the interests of candidates whilst also maintaining the integrity of the exams. The school is responsible for informing parents and pupils of the actions agreed, which may include the use of alternative venues (e.g. other public buildings nearby); an awarding organisation generating an examination result using evidence of candidates' likely achievement, based on factors such as their performance on other assessments in the same subject; or the opportunity to sit any missed exam later in the year.*

## **2. Communicating School Closures**

If a decision is reached to close a school, it is vitally important to relay this information to parents and to the wider community as soon as is practical. It is therefore essential to have a tried and tested system in place to enable messages to be relayed promptly and efficiently. Most typically, these systems may either be the 'telephone tree' or a texting system such as 'Parentmail'.

Central Bedfordshire schools are also required to communicate any closure via the School Open Status (SOS) system. This is an on line system that all schools are able to access via individual school logins. Exact operational instructions can be found in **Appendix A**.

Registering school closures on the SOS system has the advantage that key agencies are automatically alerted. These include Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), radio stations, the Schools' Transport Team, Communications Team and any parent who has registered for alerts via the CBC website.

School SOS Administrators will need to inform new parents how to access the SOS system and how to register for alerts. A suggested article for the school newsletter can be found at **Appendix B**.

### 3. Community Resilience

The safety of pupils and staff on the school site in icy conditions is a prime concern of any headteacher. Snow clearance and gritting to make pathways safe is a task often completed in isolation by the Site Manager or Caretaking staff. This is usually at the expense of other vital functions within the school. e.g. setting up for assembly or managing the morning cleaning programme. In extreme cases, schools have not opened because of fears for the safety of individuals as there has not been time to make the school site safe.

Until very recently, there were a number of Health and Safety ‘myths’ in circulation relating to an individual’s liability where an accident has occurred on their property, (or property for which they hold responsibility) following snow clearance. Central Bedfordshire Council provides guidance to its own establishments (which include corporate premises and community/voluntary controlled schools). ‘Snow and Ice Clearance at CBC Establishments’ can be found at **Appendix C**. It includes a generic risk assessment which may be easily tailored to schools’ own arrangements. Non-maintained schools might also wish to follow this guidance.

Schools might like to consider monitoring the readiness of grit boxes in the immediate vicinity of the school. These enable members of the community to salt public roads and paths where there is a particular problem. If you would like to [request the installation of an additional box or the replenishment of an existing box](#), this can be done via the CBC website where you will be asked to create a user account before registering your request.

Schools might also consider the following two ways in which their Site Agent can be supported in making footpaths safe:

#### Parent / Friend Volunteers

Schools might want to consider inviting parents, governors or members of the PTFA to form a snow clearance team. Whilst this prospect may seem daunting, the process is straight forward.

Essentially, a snow clearance team are volunteers and may be managed in the same way as any other volunteers by following this process:

1. Compile a list of parents in advance of winter and formally designate them as volunteers. Volunteers need to be treated in exactly the same way as other members of staff performing the same task (i.e. briefings, provision of equipment etc). Volunteer status will also afford them cover under the employer’s liability insurance.
2. Volunteers are issued with guidelines and procedures (e.g. **Appendix D**). They will need to adhere to any snow clearance guidelines in the same way as an employee.
3. On a snowy or icy day, volunteers are registered, briefed and issued with the same equipment as other employees engaged in similar tasks.
4. It is anticipated that no safeguarding issues will arise as a result of this arrangement as snow clearance will usually take place before children arrive. Should clearance work continue into the school day then this will need to be managed in the same way as other on-site volunteers.

5. It would be prudent to confirm arrangements with your school's insurers if insurance is not arranged through Central Bedfordshire Council.

Please note, for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools the employer is Central Bedfordshire Council. The measures described above, correctly managed, are recognised by the Council as 'proportionate and sensible risk management'. The governing bodies of Academies and Voluntary Aided schools would have to be willing to take on and manage the risks associated with volunteers working on their school's grounds.

## Community Emergency Response Teams ( CERTs)

The Bedfordshire and Luton Local Resilience Forum (BLLRF) have recently initiated a programme to encourage communities to develop resilience. As a result, many of our communities in Central Bedfordshire are now looking to set up Community Emergency Response Teams. CERTs have several objectives. One of these is the development of a snow clearance capability using local volunteers. The programme is still in its early stages but to view a list of established CERTs please go to the [BLLRF website](#).

***Please note, if you are able to recruit volunteers through your local CERT, then you must follow the same management procedures listed in the 'Parent / Friend Volunteer' section.***

## 4. Personal Resilience

One of the major reasons for school closures is travelling difficulties encountered by school staff. The following advice is intended to maximise your chances of being able to reach your destination but should be considered in conjunction with reports of local prevailing conditions at the time the journey is undertaken.

- Allow extra time for inevitable delays
- Research your route carefully and be aware of which routes are gritted. Have alternative routes planned as a back up. [A map of local gritting routes](#) can be found on the CBC website
- Be aware of hills or even inclines where bottlenecks frequently occur. Try to avoid these
- If snow is forecast the following day, be prepared to park near to a gritted road in preparation for the journey if access to your own home is likely to be difficult in ice and snow.
- Be equipped for the journey:
  - Road map
  - Additional warm clothing
  - Flask of hot drink and snacks
  - Shovel

Further advice in relation to personal resilience can be found on the '[Severe Weather Advice](#)' page of the CBC website and on the website of the [Bedfordshire and Luton Local Resilience Forum. \(BLLRF\)](#).

For more detailed information please visit the [Highways Agency](#) website.

## APPENDIX A

**School Closure Arrangements**

Winter rapidly approaches and with it the threat of disruption caused by bad weather. Now is a good time to rehearse your emergency procedures in relation to unplanned school closures and in particular, re-familiarisation with the SOS (School Open Status) System including the checking of passwords and usernames.

Could I therefore urge headteachers or their delegated member of staff to check that:

1. Staff are able to login at:  
<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/webApps/SOS/Admin/Login.aspx> A link to the SOS Administration section, together with a guidance document for School Administrators can now be found on the CBC Schools' Portal in the 'Emergency' section under the Administrators tab. If you are unsure of your username and password, please e-mail [sos@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sos@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)
2. Contact details for staff and school (including e-mail and website addresses) are correct and that former staff accounts are disabled.
3. Staff are familiar with the routine needed for changing your school's status.
4. Arrangements have been communicated to parents (details below).

***Please note that if carrying out a practice of procedures then the 'MORNING / AFTERNOON' tickbox should not actually be unticked as this will automatically send out alerts to recipients including parents and radio stations!.***

**School Closure Procedures**

Usually, schools will register their decision to close via the SOS System. This will automatically alert the radio stations, parents (who have registered for alerts) and transport providers of the disruption. Some schools will have additional communication procedures (Parentmail, telephone tree etc). However in the event of an emergency or service disruption where you are **unable to login to SOS** ( e.g you have a power cut or else the internet is down), you will need to:

1. Telephone Radio Stations. You will be asked for a password. (This was circulated to schools in 2012 . If you require a reminder of your radio station password, please contact [pete.hardy@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:pete.hardy@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) .)
  - HEART Radio - 01582 676264 or 01582 676240
  - Three Counties Radio - 01582 637444
2. Notify your transport providers directly
3. Notify Central Bedfordshire Council's Schools' Transport team - 0300 300 8167

***Please note that the SOS system refreshes at 5.00pm every day at which point the status of all schools will default to 'open'. Do not attempt to change the status for your school to 'closed' before 5.00pm on the preceding evening.***



## Suggested article for school's newsletter

### Communication with parents

*Could schools ensure that parents are informed (e.g. via your newsletter) with regard to:*

#### 1. Using SOS to register to receive alerts.

In order to receive an e-mail alert via the Central Bedfordshire Schools' Open Status (SOS) system, you will need to register:

- Click on the following link: <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/webApps/SOS>
- Click on 'register for updates' and fill in the text boxes
- Click on 'submit'

You will then receive an email which contains instructions on how to 'activate' your account which will include a 'one off' activation code:

- Click on the link: <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/webApps/SOS/>
- Go to 'Log in to edit your details' and type in your email address and the activation code.
- The next time you want to edit your details (e.g change the names of schools you wish to receive alerts for), type in your email address and password.

2. **Contact with radio stations.** Please can you also stress to parents **NOT** to try to ring the radio station to find out if their school is closed. Telephone lines will be busy and they may prevent a vital call reaching the News Centre. They need instead to listen to the radio or access the website.

3. **Lost passwords.** If a parent has an existing account but has lost their log – in details they will need to send an e-mail to [sos@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sos@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) to have these details refreshed.

*For more detailed information, please follow the 'User Guide' link on the SOS homepage*



## **Snow and Ice Clearance At CBC Establishments**

October 2013 edition, 23.10.2013

***The following document has been written by Central Bedfordshire's Corporate Health and Safety Team. It is a requirement that Community and Voluntary Controlled schools adhere to this advice. The governing bodies of non-maintained schools ( academies, voluntary aided and foundation trusts) may chose whether to adopt this advice.***

## 1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 During winter each year, many staff and members of the public may be at increased risk of personal injury as a consequence of slipping and falling on ice and snow.
- 1.2 The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Occupiers' Liability Acts of 1957 and 1984 place a responsibility upon the employer, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the means of access and egress from its premises are maintained in a condition that is safe and without risk to either its employees or other persons.
- 1.3 The approved code of practice which supports the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 states that "Arrangements should be made to minimise risks from snow and ice. This may involve gritting, snow clearing and closure of some routes, particularly outside stairs, ladders and walkways on roofs."
- 1.4 It is a popular misconception that an occupier cannot be held liable for failing to clear snow / ice, but can be held liable once an attempt at clearance has been made and then someone is injured. The true position is that an occupier can be held liable for 'failing to act reasonably' in order to prevent accidents.
- 1.5 Heads of establishments are responsible for ensuring that the means of access to their premises is safe for both employees and visitors and that adequate arrangements are made to ensure that the risks from snow and ice are minimised. It is recognised that it is not possible to immediately all snow or ice. It does, however, require those responsible for premises to exercise careful judgement and prioritise de-icing and salting of key access routes.
- 1.6 All reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that the establishment remains open as normal.
- 1.7 Establishments should follow the guidance for severe weather events on [http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/uk/ee/ee\\_forecast\\_weather.html](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/uk/ee/ee_forecast_weather.html) that culminate in closure.

## 2.0 **RISK ASSESSMENT AND PREMISES SNOW AND ICE PLAN**

- 2.1 Premises managers must ensure that a risk assessment is in place, which covers the hazards associated with snow and ice on their premises. A generic risk assessment covering snow and ice is provided in section 4.
- 2.2 A premises-specific snow and ice plan should be prepared to outline how snow and ice will be dealt with on the premises. The following recommendations are provided as a guide to typical arrangements which should be in place. The premises manager is responsible for reviewing and revising the arrangements.
  - Staff to be aware of their duties and responsibilities. It may be necessary for site staff to start work earlier on a particular day to commence the gritting and snow/ice clearance plan.
  - Adequate equipment and materials should be available (including salt /grit and equipment to safely spread them).
  - Determine which access routes are the most used / important.
    - Clear a path 1 metre wide from the site entrance to the main building entrance. Pathways leading from car parks to buildings, slopes and steps on route should be regarded as a priority.

- Treat cleared paths with salt/grit to maintain a clear pathway especially where temperatures remain below freezing.
  - As time permits, other pathways to entrances and between buildings should be cleared and gritted.
  - Appropriate checks should be made to ensure continued safety.
  - Identify any particularly dangerous areas which require extra care and should be checked / treated more frequently e.g. steps, slopes, gullies which may be hidden etc.
  - Consider the needs of any visitors with particular needs (older people, disabled people etc.)
  - Ensure that fire evacuation routes from the building are cleared.
- 2.3 Where the premises manager has concerns over the safety of certain external pathways, circulation routes, etc, it may be appropriate for affected areas to be taken out of use. If this is the case this must be marked clearly using signs/cones/tape to ensure everyone is made aware.
- 2.4 All staff should be aware of the risk assessment in place for snow and ice and take responsibility for following the designated paths and access routes when such conditions exist.

### 3.0 **SNOW AND ICE CLEARANCE METHODS**

There's no law stopping anyone from clearing snow and ice on the pavement in public spaces or on their own premises. It's unlikely you'll be sued or held legally responsible for any injuries on the path if you have cleared it carefully. Follow the snow code when clearing snow and ice safely.

#### **Prevent slips**

- Pay extra attention to clear snow and ice from steps and steep pathways - you might need to use more salt on these areas.
- If you clear snow and ice yourself, be careful - don't make the pathways more dangerous by causing them to refreeze. But don't be put off clearing paths because you're afraid someone will get injured.
- Remember, people walking on snow and ice have responsibility to be careful themselves. Follow the advice below to make sure you clear the pathway safely and effectively.

#### **Clear the snow or ice early in the day**

- It's easier to move fresh, loose snow rather than hard snow that has packed together from people walking on it. So if possible, start removing the snow and ice in the morning. If you remove the top layer of snow in the morning, any sunshine during the day will help melt any ice beneath. You can then cover the path with salt before nightfall to stop it refreezing overnight.

#### **Use salt or sand - not water**

- If you use water to melt the snow, it may refreeze and turn to black ice. Black ice increases the risk of injuries as it is invisible and very slippery. You can prevent black ice by spreading some salt on the area you have cleared. You can use

ordinary table or dishwasher salt - a tablespoon for each square metre you clear should work. Premises should arrange for suitable stocks of salt or grit to be available, however. Don't use the salt found in salting bins on public roads - this will be needed to keep the roads clear.

- Be careful not to spread salt on plants or grass as it may cause them damage.
- If you don't have enough salt, you can also use sand or ash. These won't stop the path icing over as well as salt, but will provide good grip under foot.

**Take care where you move the snow**

- When you're shovelling snow, take care where you put it so it doesn't block people's paths or drains. Make sure you make a path down the middle of the area to be cleared first, so you have a clear surface to walk on. Then shovel the snow from the centre of the path to the sides.

**4.0 GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT**

A generic risk assessment is provided overleaf.

You may **review and tailor** the contents of the generic risk assessment to meet the individual circumstances of your activities and workplace. Please note:

- The assessment provides suggested general precautions for a range of issues which will not suit all circumstances but may help you to formulate a suitable approach.
- The generic assessment assumes that you have all recommended precautions in place. Actions that you determine are required but which are not yet in place should be moved from the 'What are you already doing?' column to the 'What further action is necessary?' column and action to complete them assigned to an appropriate manager or member of staff.
- Delete out hazards and precautions which do not apply and include any additional hazards and precautions required.

<b>RISK ASSESSMENT</b>		What are you risk assessing? Put in brief outline of the task/activity.	
Snow and Ice Clearance		Snow and ice clearance arrangements	
<b>Establishment:</b>	<b>Assessment by:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
	Generic assessment provided by CBC Corporate Health and Safety Team, included as part of snow and ice clearance guidance of 23 October 2013.	Generic prepared 8.10.2013	
<b>Risk assessment number/ref:</b> Add reference no. if you wish>> <b>RA-xxx</b>	<b>Manager Approval:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	

Use this form to record the significant findings of your risk assessment and detail any action required to reduce risk further, where existing actions (control measures) are insufficient.

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Management of snow and ice build up on premises	Staff, visitors and contractors could fall due to slippery surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Person(s) identified who will be responsible for the management of snow and ice clearance and they are suitably briefed and trained as required.</li> <li>Person responsible for the building is aware of the limits of the property, including restrictions on shared premises, public rights of way etc.</li> <li>Responsible person is aware and understands CBC snow and ice guidance (located in the Health and Safety section of the CBC intranet and schools portal).</li> <li>Specific snow and ice plan for the premises is in place, identifying areas and routes required to be cleared to ensure safe access and operation of the premises.</li> <li>Resources identified and available to ensure the snow and ice plan can be implemented.</li> <li>Areas and routes to be 'out of bounds' are cordoned off (for example, areas beneath overhanging roof eaves where snow might fall, hazardous walkways etc).</li> <li>Cleared areas for use by pedestrians or vehicle access and are frequently reviewed for any changes in condition.</li> <li>Snow and ice cleared to suitable locations, avoiding</li> </ul>				

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Working in cold and slippery conditions whilst gritting and/or clearing snow and ice	Staff, visitors and contractors could fall due to slippery surfaces or suffer physical injuries from manual handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>obstructions and blockage of drains.</li> <li>Adequate stocks of salt/grit obtained in preparation for snow and ice clearance activities.</li> <li>Weather forecast is checked and salt/grit applied prior to a predicted freeze.</li> <li>All staff are encouraged to wear appropriate flat soled and sturdy footwear and to carry as little as possible when walking in the building's grounds and car park.</li> <li>Mats are used in entrance ways.</li> <li>Any water trodden into the buildings by staff, visitors and contractors is monitored/mopped up to prevent slips and falls.</li> <li>Arrangements are communicated and made available to all staff, contractors and visitors as appropriate.</li> </ul>				
Manual Handling and working in proximity to	Staff - risk of back injuries, falling over or being hit by a moving vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The overall wellbeing and physical capabilities of the person(s) gritting or clearing the site are sufficient for the task in hand.</li> <li>Suitable warm clothing is worn (coat, gloves, trousers), along with suitable sturdy footwear and high-visibility vest/jacket.</li> <li>The time spent on activities is limited to a reasonable duration - regular breaks taken, several people assist rather than just one etc.</li> <li>Warm drinks available during breaks.</li> <li>Working in extreme weather conditions is avoided e.g. if snowing heavily at the time.</li> <li>Working alone avoided where practicable and if not possible, their work location known and regular contact maintained.</li> <li>Manual Handling risk assessment in place and all staff aware of it.</li> <li>Staff are aware of correct manual handling techniques</li> </ul>				

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
vehicles		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for handling rock salt, shovelling snow etc.</li> <li>Vehicle areas such as car parks are cordoned off from vehicle access when being cleared (cordon by section being gritted or cleared if unable to complete prior to start of working day).</li> <li>High-visibility jackets are worn and staff to remain constantly vigilant of vehicle movements.</li> <li>Building users made aware of areas 'out of bounds' / not being cleared of snow.</li> <li>Building users reminded to drive safely, to clear car windows fully for visibility and to switch on headlights.</li> </ul>				
Work equipment – faulty, inappropriate for task or incorrect use	Staff could injure themselves if equipment is faulty or they are not properly trained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate equipment is provided, e.g. snow shovels and equipment for spreading grit, such as spreading trolleys. If buckets and hand shovels are used, buckets are not overloaded so that they may be lifted safely.</li> <li>Staff trained to use equipment as appropriate.</li> <li>A competent member of staff visually inspects and assesses the materials and tools being used to confirm they are in good condition, fit for purpose and appropriate for the task in hand.</li> <li>Equipment is in good condition and maintained in line with manufacturers' instructions.</li> </ul>				
Hazardous substances	Dermatitis or skin damage arising from contact with rock salt / grit or ill health effects arising from incorrect use of other chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gloves worn when handling rock salt and grit.</li> <li>Other substances (such as de-icers) if determined as required are subject to appropriate and proportionate level of 'COSHH' assessment and control before use.</li> </ul>				
Volunteers assisting with snow and ice clearance	Members of the public such as parents, school children and other service users at risk as per other hazards in this assessment. Safeguarding of children and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All volunteers to be provided with site induction and formally recorded as a volunteer for the purposes of snow and ice clearance.</li> <li>Premises to confirm their employer and public liability insurance covers them for the use of volunteers.</li> </ul>				



What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
	vulnerable adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment to implement appropriate safeguarding protocols for children and vulnerable adults as appropriate.</li> <li>All precautions identified in this risk assessment to be applied to volunteers in the same manner as for staff.</li> </ul>				

**Assessment review date: [dd / mm / 20yy]** (usually within one year, or earlier in the event of incident, a change in conditions or if more frequent review is warranted)  
**Health and safety guidance and information is available on the Intranet**

## Volunteer Briefing Notes

***Schools might like to consider issuing briefing notes to their volunteers. These should reflect the specific risk assessment undertaken by the school. (See Appendix C). Your briefing notes might be similar to the example included below but please note this is a generic example applicable to a broad spectrum of organisations and not a definitive list for school volunteers.***

### Volunteer Health and Safety Brief (Generic)

Anyone clearing snow on behalf of the town or parish council would be covered under the terms of Central Bedfordshire Council's insurance for public liabilities providing volunteers have registered with their town or parish council, and read and understood the following health and safety points.

Anyone clearing snow from outside their own property or someone else's property would only be liable for an accident if their efforts actually made the pavement less safe than it was with the snow and ice undisturbed and as a result somebody is injured.

Volunteers spreading salt / grit for clearing snow from the highway at times of severe weather should:

- Wear a high visibility long sleeved vest or jacket. A vest can be worn over normal clothing. A jacket can be worn in place of a normal coat.
- Wear warm clothing and stout footwear which will provide a good grip. Physical work will warm up the body so be prepared to shed layers, but remember that your body will quickly cool down once you cease working.
- Ensure that someone is aware that you have gone out to carry out this work and how long you intend to be there for. Remember also to advise that person of your return.
- Assess the location before commencing work. Do not attempt to work if you feel conditions would make this unsafe - for example, if visibility is poor, traffic flows are too high or conditions are so severe that you would be placing yourself at risk of falling or extreme cold.
- Always be aware of approaching traffic. Remember the conditions may mean that traffic will have difficulty stopping. Try to work in pairs so that someone can observe the traffic.
- Use the grit sparingly and thinly. Spread a small amount on a shovel and sprinkle gently. The material in the grit bins is a mixture of salt and grit. The salt will help to speed up the process of thawing snow and ice. The grit is intended to provide grip on the surface of compacted snow or ice.

### APPENDIX D

- When spreading salt/grit on the pavements it is better to remove most of the snow and then spread the salt/grit mixture.
  
- If shovelling snow, use a shovel with the widest blade available. Make a line down the middle of your path first so you have a safe surface to walk on. Then you can simply shovel the snow from the centre to the sides.
  
- Care should be taken to avoid blocking access points to properties, driveways, paths (especially at pedestrian crossings and drains). The cleared snow should be deposited in the verge or areas that are non-trafficked.
  
- Use salt or sand – not water. If you use water to melt the snow, it may refreeze and turn to black ice. Black ice increases the risk of injuries as it is invisible and very slippery. If salt is not available from the grit bins, you can use ordinary table or dishwasher salt - a tablespoon for each square meter you clear should work. But avoid spreading on plants or grass.
  
- Do not be put off clearing paths because you are afraid someone will get injured. Remember, people walking on snow and ice have a responsibility to be careful themselves.
  
- Pay extra attention to clear snow and ice from steps and steep pathways – you might need to use more salt on these areas.
  
- Clear the snow or ice early in the day. It's easier to move fresh, loose snow rather than hard snow that has been packed together from people walking on it. So if possible, start removing the snow and ice in the morning. If you remove the top layer of snow in the morning, any sunshine during the day will help melt any ice beneath. You can cover the path with salt before nightfall to stop it refreezing overnight.

This guidance was produced by Central Bedfordshire's 'Resilience Group for Schools and other Settings'. If you need to make contact with regard to its content please send an e-mail to [pete.hardy@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:pete.hardy@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

## Contact us...

Për Informacion Per Informazione Za Informacije नारुवारी लयी  
المعلومات معلومات کے لئی তথ্যের জন্য  
Za Informacja برای اطلاع

by telephone: 0300 300 8000

by email: [customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

on the web: [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

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

# **Lockdown Procedures**

Guidance to schools and academies

(November 2013)

**It is advisable that all schools should have effective lockdown procedures and that they are regularly practised. This guide is intended to be used both by schools which already have lockdown plans, to inform their development as necessary and by those schools where no such plans currently exist.**

**This document can also be downloaded from the Business Continuity page of the [Central Bedfordshire Schools' Portal](#)**

## Guidance for Schools on Creating Lockdown Procedures

All schools should consider the need for robust and tested **school lockdown procedures**.<sup>1</sup> Lockdown procedures should be seen as a sensible and proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of staff and pupils in the school. Procedures should aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils and staff. Lockdown procedures may be activated in response to any number of situations, but some of the more typical might be:

- A reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school)
- An intruder on the school site (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils)
- A warning being received regarding a risk locally, of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc)
- A major fire in the vicinity of the school
- The close proximity of a dangerous dog roaming loose

It is not possible to prescribe generic details of a school's lockdown plan as there are a number of variables that will dictate exactly how an individual school responds to those situations identified, for example:

- Access to school bell controls to raise an alarm in an emergency
- Other means of internal communications - messenger, two-way radios, mobile phone, internal e-mail, texts etc
- School site plan eg the layout of buildings and their proximity to one another
- Age of students
- Geographical location – urban/rural, presence of secure perimeter fence

Nonetheless, many schools have found it helpful to incorporate the following basic principles in their plans:

- Staff are alerted to the activation of the plan by a recognised signal, audible throughout the school
- Pupils who are outside of the school buildings are brought inside as quickly as possible
- Those inside the school should remain in their classrooms
- All external doors and, as necessary, windows are locked (depending on the circumstances, internal classroom doors may also need to be locked)
- Once in lockdown mode, staff should notify the office immediately of any pupils not accounted for (and instigate an immediate search for any missing)
- Staff should encourage the pupils to keep calm
- As appropriate, the school should establish communication with the Emergency Services as soon as possible
- Central Bedfordshire Council should be notified via the 'School Emergency' phone number

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<sup>1</sup> According to a survey conducted of Central Bedfordshire schools and academies in January 2012, only 58 of 108 schools responding confirmed they had Lockdown Procedures. The vast majority of these (39) were lower schools

- If necessary, parents should be notified as soon as it is practicable to do so via the school's established communications system
- Pupils will not be released to parents during a lockdown
- If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the fire alarm will be sounded
- Staff should await further instructions

It is of vital importance that the school's lockdown procedures are familiar to members of the senior management team, school administrators, teaching staff and non-teaching staff. To achieve this, a lockdown drill should be undertaken at least once a year. Depending on their age, pupils should also be aware of the plan. (Regular practices will increase their familiarity). Parents too should know that the school has a lockdown plan, and a copy should be placed on the school's website.

It would also be good practice to:

- 1 Conduct a number of table top exercises with the senior management team to test the procedures against various scenarios
- 2 Rehearse lockdown arrangements with all staff and pupils
- 3 Display lockdown drill information in every classroom alongside information relating to fire drills

## Lockdown Arrangements

Lockdown arrangements should be determined by schools on an individual basis, as they will be dependent to a large extent on local circumstances such as premises design and layout, class arrangements, resources available, etc. An example of a lockdown procedure could be:

### 1 Partial Lockdown

#### **Alert to staff:** 'Partial lockdown'

This may be as a result of a reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school. It may also be as a result of a warning being received regarding the risk of air pollution, etc.

#### **Immediate action:**

- All outside activity to cease immediately, pupils and staff return to building. (There need to be a means of communicating the alert to duty staff at break times)
- All staff and pupils remain in building and external doors and windows locked
- Free movement may permitted within the building dependent upon circumstances

All situations are different, once all staff and pupils are safely inside, senior staff will conduct an ongoing and dynamic risk assessment based on advice from the



Emergency Services. This can then be communicated to staff and pupils. 'Partial lockdown' is a precautionary measure but puts the school in a state of readiness (whilst retaining a degree of normality) should the situation escalate.

In the event of an air pollution issue, air vents can be closed (where possible) as an additional precaution. Emergency Services will advise as to the best course of action in respect of the prevailing threat.

## 2 Full Lockdown

### **Alert to staff:** 'Full lockdown'

This signifies an immediate threat to the school and may be an escalation of a partial lockdown.

### **Immediate action:**

- All pupils return to base (classroom, tutor room or other agreed location eg sports/assembly/dining hall)
- External doors locked. Classroom doors locked (where a member of staff with key is present). Windows locked, blinds drawn, pupils sit quietly out of sight (eg under desk or around a corner)
- Register taken -the office will contact each class in turn for an attendance report

Staff and pupils remain in lock down until it has been lifted by a senior member of staff / emergency services. At any point during the lockdown, the fire alarm may sound which is a cue to evacuate the building.

During the lockdown, staff will keep agreed lines of communication open but not make unnecessary calls to the central office as this could delay more important communication.

Examples of discreet communication channels might be:

- Where staff have access to an internal e-mail system then they could access their account and await further instruction. In practical terms, staff would need to be familiar with accessing their account through a variety of means eg laptop, smartphone or tablet
- Where a school uses 'Parentmail' then staff could be put into a defined user group. This could then be used to communicate instructions via text message in an emergency

## Communication between parents and the school

School lockdown procedures, especially arrangements for communicating with parents, should be routinely shared with parents either by newsletter or via the school website. In the event of an actual lockdown, it is strongly advised that any incident or development is communicated to parents as soon as is practicable. It is obvious that parents will be concerned but regular communication of accurate information will help to alleviate undue anxiety.<sup>2</sup>

Parents should be given enough information about what will happen so that they:

- Are reassured that the school understands their concern for their child's welfare, and that it is doing everything possible to ensure his/her safety
- Do not need to contact the school. Calling the school could tie up telephone lines that are needed for contacting emergency providers
- Do not come to the school. They could interfere with emergency provider's access to the school and may even put themselves and others in danger
- Wait for the school to contact them about when it is safe for you to come get your children, and where this will be from

*The communication with parents part of the plan needs to reassure parents that the school understands their concern for their children's welfare and that everything that can possibly be done to ensure children's safety will be done. However, it may also be prudent to reinforce the message '**..the school is in a full lockdown situation. During this period the switchboard and entrances will be un-manned, external doors locked and nobody allowed in or out...**'*

## Emergency Services

It is important to keep lines of communication open with Emergency Services as they are best placed to offer advice as a situation unfolds. The school site may or may not be cordoned off by Emergency Services depending on the severity of the incident that has triggered the Lockdown. Emergency Services will support the decision of the Headteacher with regarding the timing of communication to parents.

In the event of a prolonged lockdown or more severe scenario, Central Bedfordshire Council has the capacity to provide humanitarian assistance by establishing a Reception Centre for friend and family outside of the cordoned area.

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<sup>2</sup> Research evidence suggests that panic and anxiety are far less likely where those associated with an incident are fully informed of the facts. '...Information about dangers should be disseminated and not withheld because of a fear that people will panic...' (Dynes, Quarantelli and Kreps 1972).

### **Central Essentials: Advice to Pupils Regarding Floodwater**

Following the recent period of bad weather a number of areas within Central Bedfordshire are experiencing areas of flooding and surface water.

Whilst the sight of floodwater may prove exciting and an enticing arena for play for some children it is important that children are made aware of the dangers. Floodwater is often contaminated with water from flooded drains and sewers and contact should therefore be avoided where possible because of the inherent risk of infection.

The Environment Agency have released the following advice to be promoted through schools:

*Avoid walking or cycling through flood water.*

*Be aware that flooding can cause manhole covers to come off.*

*Keep out of floodwater and watch out for submerged debris.*

*Don't walk on riverbanks.*

*Take care or avoid crossing bridges when water levels are high.*

*Take care crossing culverts or drains as they are dangerous when flooded.*

*Look out for other hazards such as fallen power lines and trees.*

*Wash your hands thoroughly if you touch floodwater as it may be contaminated.*

If you require further information or advice please e-mail  
[pete.hardy@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:pete.hardy@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

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**Meeting:** Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 11 November 2014  
**Subject:** Customer Feedback – Complaints, Compliments Annual Report  
**Report of:** Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services  
**Summary:** This report fulfills the statutory duty to produce an annual report for Children's Social Care (Appendix A). The report provides statistics on the number of complaints received; complaint outcomes (upheld/not upheld); performance; issues complained about; and learning and improvements resulting from complaints for 2013/14.

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**Advising Officer:** Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services  
**Contact Officer:** Sonya Branagan – Customer Relations Manager  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Council

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

The annual report for noting links to the priorities

- Creating safer communities
- Supporting and caring for an ageing population

### **Financial:**

1. Effective management of complaint issues focuses resource on resolution and reduces the risks of financial remedies being paid. The complaints procedure provides for conciliation meetings which are used as an effective alternative to costly independent investigations

### **Legal:**

2. The production of an annual report is a statutory requirement and should be made available to anyone on request. The report will be posted on the council's web site.

**Risk Management:**

3. Complaints are assessed at the point of receipt to ensure risks are managed for example; child protection issues, risks to reputation. Effective complaints management ensures service failings are identified and remedied, thereby reducing the risk of public reports from the Local Government Ombudsman. There were no public reports about children's social care complaints.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

4. There are no staffing issues arising from the report

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

The report contains statistical analysis of monitoring information where information has been recorded.

**Community Safety:**

5. To support children and families to feel safe it is important that they know how to complain about services they receive; feel heard when they raise complaints; and that action is taken. The report evidences that service users have been able to complain, where complaints have been upheld failings are identified and improvements put in place.

**Sustainability:**

There are no sustainability issues arising from the report

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- **That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the content of the report.**

**Introduction**

6. The Council's Customer Relations Team, based in the Director of Improvement and Corporate Services directorate, manages the Council's customer feedback procedures. There are three procedures. Two of the procedures are statutory and are governed by Regulations relating to Adult Social Care Services and Children's Services respectively. The third procedure covers all other Council services.
7. The feedback procedures are the means by which customer compliments, comments and complaints are handled. Customer Relations provides a point of contact for customers wishing to complain via email, telephone or in writing. This provides confidence to those customers who may have lost faith in the services to respond to their issue.
8. The Council is required to monitor statutory complaints procedures and prepare an annual report. The Children's Social Care complaints report must be made available to any person on request.

### **Purpose of this report**

9. This report provides an overview of the key issues in complaint handling and the effectiveness of the complaints procedure for Children's Social Care for the period 2013/14.

### **Children's Social Care customer feedback report**

10. The Regulations require that the annual report should include; the number of complaints at each stage including those considered by the Local Government Ombudsman; the type, timescales and outcomes of complaints, which customer groups made complaints; learning and service improvements and summary equality monitoring data.
11. The annual report addresses the requirements above and covers:
  - The Council's procedure for handling children's social care complaints.
  - Equality and Diversity Monitoring.
  - Summary Statistics including; number of complaints received; number referred to the Local Government Ombudsman; services most complained about; number well founded.
  - Performance.
  - Service improvements resulting from complaints.
12. To address the need to make the annual report available to anyone requesting it the report will be posted on the 'Feedback' pages of the Council's website. The feedback pages contain information on how to provide compliments, comments and complaints.

### **Complaints handling practice in 2013/14**

13. There was an increase in the number of complaints recorded, compared to last year, from 82 to 104. The number of complaints suggests effective recognition and recording customer of complaints by service teams.
14. Complaints were seen as important customer feedback and a means of identifying how practices may be changed for the better. Services were receptive to customers' views and complaints, with 66 complaints either upheld fully or in part.
15. As well as the statutory annual report, weekly and quarterly reports on customer feedback have been provided based on the Director's requirements for performance reporting. This meant that senior managers had the opportunity to monitor customer feedback for their services.
16. The service worked with customer relations to identify cases suitable for conciliation. This good practice focusses on resolution of complaints through face to face meetings and was successful in remedying five cases without the need for lengthy formal investigations.

**Key themes from complaints**

17. The main cause for complaint over the year was care management in the Family Support Service, the three top causes for complaint were alleged poor communication or poor customer care; the conduct/attitude/professionalism of staff; services not provided or delayed.
18. Whilst individual complaints were resolved with case specific remedies, Section 4 of Appendix A, Annual Report, details actions to improve the wider service.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A - Annual Report 2013/14.

**Location of papers:** Priory House, Chicksands



# **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES**

## **CUSTOMER FEEDBACK:**

**COMPLAINTS  
COMPLIMENTS**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2013/14**

## INTRODUCTION

This report fulfills the statutory duty to monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure and produce an annual report for Children's Services Social Care complaints. The report will be presented to staff, the relevant local authority committee and will be made available on the Council's website.

The report provides statistics for 2013/14 on the number of complaints received including those considered by the Local Government Ombudsman; which customer groups made complaints including some analysis of statistical diversity data; complaint outcomes (upheld/not upheld); performance; and learning and improvements resulting from complaints.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Children's Services Complaints Procedure

The effectiveness of the complaints procedure is regularly monitored. Status reports are reviewed by senior managers to support timely resolution. Quarterly reports, on the number of complaints received, outcomes, learning and service improvements that result from complaints, are also reviewed by the senior management team.

The procedure has three stages:

- Stage 1, Local resolution by manager – 10 working days, up to 20 for complex cases.
- Stage 2, Investigation by someone outside of the service area complained about – 25 working days, up to 65 working days.
- Stage 3, Independent Review – panel to be set up in 30 working days
- Alternative Dispute Resolution - offered as an alternative to the complaints procedure. Conciliation meetings are used to resolve complaints without the need for protracted investigations. A complainant can opt back into the complaints process at any time.

### Effectiveness of the Complaints Procedure

There were 104 new complaints received for the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014 compared to 82 reported in 2012/13. The services most complained about were the Family Support Services and Intake & Assessment services.

84 stage 1 complaints concluded, 57 of them were resolved in 20 working days or less.

Six conciliation meetings were held remedying five complaints without the need for further escalation to stage 2. Two stage 1 cases progressed to stage 2 investigation. Therefore, whilst some cases took longer than the set timescales, the action taken and work to resolve cases meant 98% of new cases were resolved at local level.

Complaints were seen as important feedback and a means of identifying how practices may be changed for the better. Services were receptive to customers' views and complaints, with 78% of complaints either upheld fully or in part. Whilst individual cases had specific remedies put in place, wider services improvements were also identified in a number of cases.

There were also 28 formal compliments recorded compared to 12 the previous year. The activity in the period shows that the complaints procedure has been effective at resolving customer complaints at a local level. Learning from customer experience through complaints has led to improvements to practices. These are detailed in Section 4.

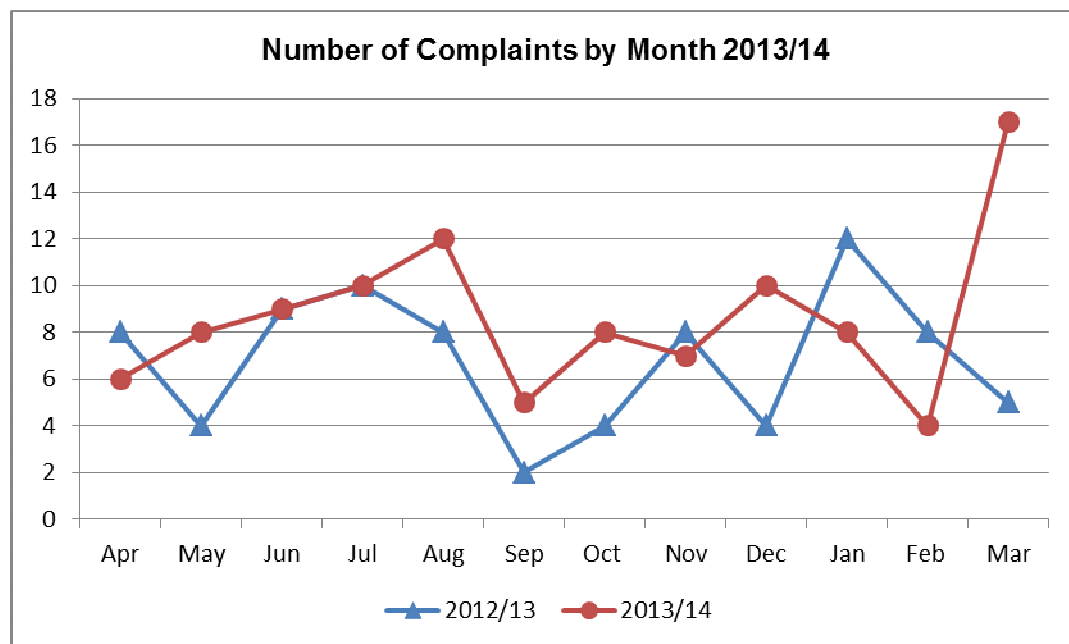
# 1 SUMMARY STATISTICS

## 1.1 Headline Data for Customer Feedback

New Cases Received 2013/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals
Complaints	23	27	25	29	104
Compliments	9	6	6	7	28

1.1.1 In 2013/14 there were 3513 records of children loaded for Children's Social Care Services. There were 104 new complaints received, seven of which were made by children and young people. Last year 82 new complaints were recorded.

## 1.2 Spread of Complaints Received



1.2.1 There were a few similarities in the number of monthly complaints received over the last two years. June, July and November had the same/similar number of complaints received.

1.2.2 There was a significant drop from August to September for both years. September has been one of the quieter months over the last three years.

December and March saw the largest difference in numbers received year on year. In the previous year both months saw below average numbers of complaints. There was no single cause for the rises this year with complaints spread across services.

## 1.3 Alternative Dispute Resolution

1.3.1 Customer Relations offered alternative dispute resolution to those who requested independent investigation of their complaints. Conciliation meetings are more likely to rebuild confidence and improve communications between the complainant and service. There are also significant cost savings by remedying cases without the need for externally commissioned investigators.

Six complainants took up the offer of conciliation in the period which led to five cases being actioned without escalation to the next stage. The recipe for success appeared to be; an apology; rebuilding a breakdown in communication; engaging in discussion about remedies; providing information and explanations. This resulted in better outcomes for complainants by resolving complaints without the need for protracted investigations.

**1.4 Stage 2 & 3 Complaints**

1.4.1 There were two cases that progressed to stage 2 during the period. There were no stage 3 complaints.

**1.5 Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Complaints**

1.5.1 The LGO referred ten new cases to the Council and concluded one case that had been raised in the previous reporting year:

4 cases - no further action was taken as they were outside of the jurisdiction of the LGO;

1 case was premature and concluded through the Council's complaints procedure;

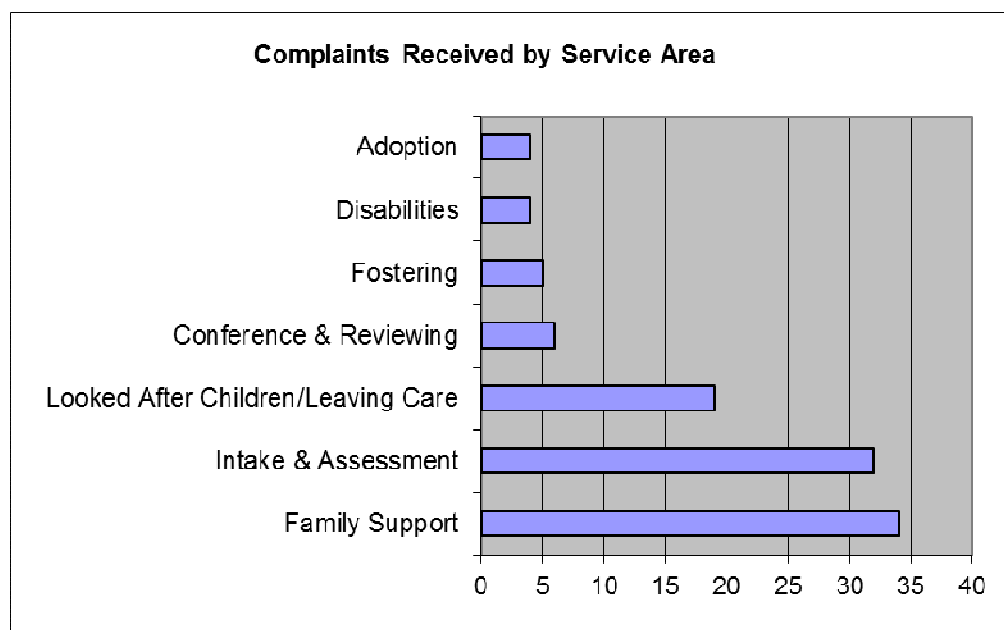
2 cases concluded as the LGO was satisfied with the Council's complaint response;

2 cases were investigated and concluded that there was no fault on the part of the Council;

2 cases are pending decisions from the LGO.

**1.6 Trends - Services Most Complained About**

1.6.1 The area most complained about, receiving 34 of the 104 new complaints was the Family Support Services. The three top causes for complaint were alleged poor communication/poor customer care; the conduct/attitude/professionalism of staff; service not provided/ delay providing services.



- 1.6.2 The Intake and Assessment Service saw the most significant rise in complaints compared to last year and the second highest number of complaints by service. The service received 32 new complaints compared to 18 recorded the previous year. The three top causes for complaint were allegations of; poor communication and customer care; the accuracy of files/reports; and the conduct and professionalism of staff.
- 1.6.3 Managers of the Intake and Family support services received a refresh on the quality assurance aspect of complaint responses to support resolution. In order to ensure good customer care the service will work with the Customer Relations Team to develop guidance on risks and strategies for managing cases more effectively where staff experience difficult communications with customers.
- 1.6.4 Seven young people raised their own complaints. They were about the Family Support Services (4), the Looked After Children and Leaving Care Team (2), and the Children with Disabilities Service (1) and complained about;
- ~ not feeling listened to;
  - ~ having social care involved in their life;
  - ~ not allowing a parent to attend meetings;
  - ~ conduct of the social worker;
  - ~ not knowing who would be at a meeting;
  - ~ timing of support: and
  - ~ not enough social work visits

## 1.7 Outcomes from Concluded Complaints

- 1.7.1 92 complaints received at Stage 1 were concluded in the period. Eight were either withdrawn; put through another more suitable process; or not considered suitable for the complaints process. This left 84 cases to be responded to as stage 1 complaints.

20 stage 1 cases were upheld. A further 46 were partly upheld. This meant a total of 66 (78%) investigated stage 1 complaints were deemed to be well founded in full or in part.

- 1.7.2 Of the 84 stage 1 complaints investigated and concluded:

28\* cases involved the Family Support Services. 21 of the 28 (75%) complaints had an upheld or partly upheld outcome.

21 cases involved the Intake and Assessment Services, 20 of the 23 (87%) complaints had an upheld or partly upheld outcome.

15\* involved the Looked After and Leaving Care Services and 12 (80%) complaints had an upheld or partly upheld outcome.

*\*One case crossed the Family Support Services and the Looked After Children & Leaving Care Services.*

- 1.7.3 Three stage 2 complaints concluded in the period and two were partly upheld.
- 1.7.4 Remedies were put in place for individual complaint cases. Section 4 details the wider learning and improvements from complaints.

## 1.8 Compliments

1.8.1 28 compliments were recorded relating to good customer care and the quality of responses to children and families issues. Service users, including young people, thanked workers for their help and support and professionalism including; good communication; being helpful, thoughtful, focussed, passionate and nice. External professionals expressed thanks for clear, excellent information; and excellent practice.

1.8.2 The spread of compliments was:

15	Looked After Children & Leaving Care Service
7	Family Support Services
4	Intake & Assessment Service
1	Adoption
1	Conference & Review

## 2 PERFORMANCE IN COMPLAINTS HANDLING

2.1 The procedure allows for 10 working days for completion of a stage 1 complaint, up to 20 working days if the complaint is complex.

2.2 One stage 1 case that had been closed in the previous period was reopened to consider a stage 3 request, a response was sent declining the request. 84 stage 1 cases were responded to, of these 57, (68%) were completed in 20 working days or less:

Timescale for Stage 1 Complaint Response				
Working Days to Respond	0 - 10	11 -20	21 - 30	30+
Number of Cases	27	30*	14	13

\*included a case coordinated by Health. The social care information was provided to health in 16 days, but the overall response from Health took longer than 20 working days.

2.3 Of the 27 cases that went beyond 20 working days, four were subject to conciliation meetings following the initial response. Therefore, whilst the approach was successful the overall timescale to resolve these complaints took longer than the standard stage 1 timescale. A further case went overdue due to delays by the service.

The remaining cases involved complex or detailed issues that required more time to achieve resolution. For example issues relating to; legal matters; data protection; competing priorities for complainants; more issues being added part way through the investigation process.

## 3 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY MONITORING

### 3.1 Monitoring

3.1.1 The purpose of capturing data on the characteristics of service users is to monitor access to the complaints procedure; to ensure services are appropriate for all service user groups; and to check whether any issues relating to discrimination have been raised. Customer Relations record data about the **service user** for complaints.

In complaints the service user can also be a parent who is engaged with social care services where the complaint issue relates to their direct involvement with a service. A person may make more than one complaint in the period.

- 3.1.2 In 2013-14 there were 3513 child records in Children's Social Care Services. During the period 104 new complaints were registered.
- 3.1.3 There are 'unknowns' in the returns for complaints as data is collected at the first point of contact in a complaint. 66% of cases were received via letters and emails which does not generally contain monitoring data information. When data is not available the record in the complaint database is 'unknown'. Unknowns may mask representations from minority groups. Low or no representations from minority groups reduced the opportunity for reassurance that access to complaints about services was provided in an equitable manner.
- 3.1.4 In 2014/15 work will take place to set up an option for complainants, or their representatives, to log their own complaints online which will include the option to record details of a person's 'protected characteristics'. For example, age, race, sex. It is hoped that this will improve the capture of important data so that we can better understand who is able to access the complaints process and who is affected by complaints.

### **3.2 Accessibility to Complaints**

#### **3.2.1 Receipt Method for Complaints**

By having a range of contact options for complainants to make their complaints the Council aims to meet the needs of its service users in accessing the complaints procedure. People can make complaints in person; face to face or via telephone (including a direct line to Customer Relations), in writing; via email, letter, or complaint form. A complaint form specifically designed for young people is also available. Young people can have the support of an advocate to make complaints.

104 complaints were received.

41% by email	17 % by telephone	2 % personal visit
25% by letter	14 % by complaint form	

*%age numbers total 99% due to rounding.*

#### **3.2.2 Young People**

Children's Services Social Care delivers services to address the needs of children and young people. The majority of the 104 complaints made about the service were from adults complaining about their interactions and experience, or on behalf of children. Seven young people raised complaints in their own right about issues affecting them; their complaints were received via complaint form (5), telephone (1) and a meeting with a social worker (1).

### **3.3 Gender**

- 3.3.1 In order to make some broad comparisons data gathered for new complaint cases received in 2013/14 has been considered alongside the provisional data on the gender of people who were referred to children's social care throughout the year.
- 3.3.2 For complaints we recorded the gender of the child in most cases.

Where a complaint is made by an adult about their own experience of intervention the adult's gender was recorded. This gives us the gender of complainants affected by complaints. Figures do not total 100% due to rounding.

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Not known</b>
Service user affected by complaints	36%	47%	18%
Gender in Children's Records loaded by the social care service	51%	48%	1%

- 3.3.3 Service users of both genders are represented in the complaints procedure. Where information was known in complaints, more females were affected by complaints than males. Fewer females accessed social care services than males.
- 3.3.4 Whilst there were some 'unknowns' for the service receiving the highest number of complaints (Family Support Service), issues of complaint affected 20 female service users compared to 11 males. The issues affecting males also affected females. Complaints affecting female service users but not males included not feeling listened to: and the support in a case of domestic violence.
- 3.3.5 Broadly, both genders were affected by similar issues. However, adult females were more likely to raise complaints about Adoption Services (three out of the four complaints).

### **3.4 Ethnicity**

- 3.4.1 In most complaints the ethnicity of the complainant was recorded as not known. Where information was recorded service users affected by new complaints were recorded as 'White British'. 81% of service users accessing social care services were 'White'. The last census on population by ethnic origin (2011) showed that 89.7% of the population of Central Bedfordshire were 'White British' and 10.3% classified as 'Other'.
- 3.4.2 With most cases with 'unknown' ethnicity it is likely that complainants with other ethnic backgrounds were also represented in complaints. However, it is not possible to identify the issues affecting service users with minority backgrounds.

### **3.5 Age**

- 3.5.1 Of the 104 complaints;
- 61 affected people under the age of 18
  - 7 affected people 19 – 64
  - 30 cases age unknown
  - 6 no service user was identified

This meant that whilst the service users affected were all children/young, people of all ages were able to access the complaints procedure either directly or through a representative.

- 3.5.2 The majority of complaints affected children and young people but were made by adults and crossed all services. The main trends for complaint are set out in Section 1.6.
- 3.5.3 Seven young people made their own complaints which related to a range of services. Six young people raised more than one issue in their complaint.



The complaints were about; not feeling listened to (3); not wanting social care involved; unacceptable language or remarks used by a social worker; not seeing a social worker for some time; completing a plan during exam period; not being told unknown people would be at a meeting; and errors in a report;. Adults also raised complaints about errors in reports. Young people making their own complaints were offered the support of an advocate

### **3.6 Disability**

- 3.6.1 The majority of complaints were recorded as 'not known' in relation to disability.
- 3.6.2 There were six complaints related to children with disabilities services. The issues of complaint from parents of children who had a disability ranged from dissatisfaction with the standard of care; delay assessing needs; poor engagement with the child; disagreement with closure of the case; standard of driving. A young person supported by children with disabilities complained about not feeling listened to. Children without disabilities also raised this as an issue.

## 4 SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS RESULTING FROM CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

Where a service identified a fault from a complaint (upheld/partly upheld), case specific remedies were put in place. Managers also considered what they could do to improve the service generally and the actions taken are detailed below:

<b>4.1 Family Support Services</b>	
YOU SAID	THE SERVICE DID:
There was delay progressing a child protection plan. A referral for input to another agency was not prioritised by them as they were unaware children were subject to child protection plans.	Future referrals to outside agencies will be clear on the status of the case and any need to prioritise support.
Too short notice for child protection meeting.	The team were reminded of the importance of sending out invite lists to the conference and reviewing service more promptly. The aim is to enable participation of partner agencies and ensure all partners are consulted and are aware of the dates and venues of meetings.
A Child in Need (CIN) Meeting went ahead without the parent in attendance.	Workers notified to ensure parents attendance at CIN Meetings, and where parents are not able to attend, meetings should only go ahead with parental consent.
<b>4.2 Intake and Assessment</b>	
YOU SAID	THE SERVICE DID:
Communication fell short when a worker went off sick and the family were not informed.	The Head of Service sent a communication to set out clear expectations for the service that families should be kept informed if a worker has unplanned absence or leaves the organisation.
Actions and timescales in the child protection plan were not met.  Working agreement was not put in place as agreed	Staff were reminded: - to meet child protection timescales & plans, and if they cannot be met reasons should be recorded in the Core Group Meeting minutes.  - about the importance of completing tasks that have been agreed with families, or to be explicitly clear if a decision has been made resulting in a change in case direction where a working agreement is no longer required.
Poor response to referral from a parent – the service conducted follow up enquires but the parent was not kept informed.	Staff were reminded of the importance of maintaining contact with families in these circumstances.
Accuracy and quality of assessments was challenged in a number of complaints.	Reminder sent to staff to proof read reports. The manager of the service commented that she would ensure reports are checked more thoroughly.
Delay in case being allocated	Social workers make contact with families within a day and a decision as to whether an assessment will be undertaken is made within 24 hours. With the implementation of new Assessment Teams and the Access and Referral Hub, social workers will now have an opportunity to make appointments and meet with families and children more quickly than they did before.

Failure to respond to; customer enquiries to an email admin account; letters; and a complaint.	Staff monitoring the email inbox will load any enquiries into the case record which will then alert the worker automatically. Customer Charter distributed to staff. Head of Service discussed with her managers the importance of responding to customer letters in a timely manner.
Service user commented that the report for conference did not include strengths, just negatives	The Head of Service reported that managers are now more aware of how important it is to identify family strengths as well as needs, and are working with their teams to implement this.
Assessment completed without involving the children, in part due to a change of worker part way through the assessment process.	Team structures have been changed and three teams with a core purpose of assessment have been developed. This should mean a reduction on the need to reallocate work, and therefore for children and their families to experience fewer changes of Social Worker.
Information was shared with a family regarding the content of a referral. The referrer believed the way the information was shared allowed the family to identify them as the source.	Social Workers were advised to tell informants that the concerns will, in most cases, be shared with the family in full, and some of the detail may mean they know who has complained to social care. Also social workers have been advised on the approach to take when discussing the details with families to avoid directly identifying an anonymous caller.

#### 4.3 Conference & Review Services

YOU SAID	THE SERVICE DID:
Delay sending out review minutes	The service has reviewed the process to reduce delays and ensure greater efficiency. A new electronic data recording system is in place which includes monitoring timescales for completion. An agreed escalation process has been introduced for cases where problems arise.
Parent travelled some distance with their 'supporter' to attend a child protection conference. They were advised on the day that the 'supporter' could not attend the meeting. This conflicted with the information in the leaflet for parents.	The service redesigned the information for parents to better inform them of the role of the Conference Chair and the importance of the communication between family members and the service in advance of a conference regarding planned attendance by family members and supporters.
Parent telephoned to speak with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) but was unable to as Customer Services were unable to access contact details.	The Head of Service sent a statement re LADO role to the manager of Customer Services for distribution to staff and contact details have been put on the Council's web pages.

#### 4.4 Looked After Children & Leaving Care Services

YOU SAID	THE SERVICE DID:
Foster parents shared concerns that the impact a Special Guardianship Order would have on them was not considered.	The service will take forward learning both in terms of explanations provided to potential carers regarding the process, and sharing of reports prior to submission.
Young person complained about lack of support and visits, and the timing of pathway planning.	The service held group supervision to share the learning from the complaint on pathway plans which included refreshing responsibilities.  The team operate a tracking sheet for frequency of visits monitored weekly by managers.

Wider family member was not considered as a potential carer.	Learning from this complaint was shared in a team meeting. Practice was refreshed with a reminder to staff to consider family members that had previously been excluded when circumstances in the case change.
Letter to parent about future plans for her son was insensitive and suggested a decision had been made regarding adoption when this was not the case	The template decision letter regarding plans around adoption was reviewed and improved to make it clearer for parents.
Concerns raised by foster carer about a disclosure of her personal details to the birth family.	Legal Services have provided assurances that they will scrutinise documents prior to circulation. All social workers within the service were reminded of the importance of any breaches regarding Data Protection and subsequent impact.
Transition discussions were held in front of a child causing distress.	Social workers were advised that children should not be present during meetings regarding transitions.

<b>4.5 Fostering</b>	
<b>YOU SAID</b>	<b>THE SERVICE DID:</b>
Carers did not receive timely and open communication in respect of the completion and the outcome of the assessment.	A letter will now be sent out to applicants to inform them of the outcome of the recommendation of the Head of Service regarding the Regulation 24 assessment.
<b>4.6 Children with Disabilities Services</b>	
<b>YOU SAID</b>	<b>THE SERVICE DID:</b>
Driver of minibus caused another driver to brake heavily and this caused distress.	Officer advised of the complaint and the expected standards and behaviours whilst driving.

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**Meeting:** Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 11 November 2014  
**Subject:** Consultation on Admission Arrangements for 2016/17  
**Report of:** Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services  
**Summary:** Attached at Appendix A is a report which was considered by the Council's Executive on 14 October 2014 who approved the consultation to the Council's admission arrangements for 2016/17. The related appendices to the Executive report are attached as appendices.

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**Advising Officer:** Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services  
**Contact Officer:** Karen Oellermann, Assistant Director – Commissioning & Partnerships  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Executive

<b>CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS</b>
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<b>Council Priorities:</b>
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- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The Council's admission arrangements and co-ordinated admissions scheme supports the Medium Term Plan priority to improve educational attainment.</li></ol> |
|--|

<b>Financial:</b>
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- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Not applicable</li></ol> |
|---|

<b>Legal:</b>
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- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. Regulations contained within the School Admissions Code set out the requirement for the Council to have a co-ordinated admissions scheme for the area. Admission Authorities must also determine their admissions arrangements by the 15th April each year, for implementation in September of the following year. If an Admissions Authority proposes to make amendments to their arrangements they must consult between the 1 November and the 1 March for a minimum of 8 weeks of the year before the arrangements apply.</li></ol> |
|---|

4. The Council will fulfil its statutory responsibilities by consulting within the timescales set out above and conducting a consultation with the relevant parties on changes to admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. Feedback from all consultees will be reported to Executive in February 2015 when the admissions arrangements for September 2016 will be determined.

**Risk Management:**

5. This report sets out the statutory requirement for the Council to have a co-ordinated admissions scheme in place for the area. The risk of not having a co-ordinated scheme in place for Central Bedfordshire would entail the following key risks:
- Failure to discharge statutory duty
  - Failure to provide an admissions process which allows parents to state preferences and apply by the national closing dates.
  - Failure to allocate school places for the normal year of entry by the national offer dates.

All of the above would incur a negative perception of the Council which would be a reputational risk.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

6. Not Applicable.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

7. The School Admissions Code sets out the duty on Local Authorities and Admission Authorities to produce admission arrangements which are fair, clear and objective, which can be easily understood by parents. Admission arrangements must comply with regulations and legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.
8. Public authorities have a statutory duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. As part of the development of the Admissions Arrangements the Council will carry out an equality impact assessment to check that the proposed changes do not have a disproportionate or negative impact on vulnerable groups.

**Public Health**

12. Not applicable

**Community Safety:**

13. Not Applicable.

**Sustainability:**

14. Not Applicable.

**Procurement:**

15. Not applicable.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

1. **The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the content of the report and support the following:**
  - **Central Bedfordshire's co-ordinated admissions scheme**
  - **The admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools for the academic year 2016/17**

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Executive Report of 14 October 2014: Consultation on Admission Arrangements 2016/17

Appendix B – Lower, Primary and Middle 2016/17 co-ordinated admissions scheme

Appendix C – Secondary and Upper 2016/17 co-ordinated admissions scheme

Appendix D – Proposed Community and VC schools Admissions policy and PANs 2016/17

Appendix E – Russell Lower School - proposed catchment area from September 2016.

Appendix F – Schools affected by proposed removal of nursery/preschool criterion

Appendix G – Revised wording on the Council's admission arrangements

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**Central Bedfordshire Council**

**EXECUTIVE MEETING:** 14 October 2014

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**Consultation on Central Bedfordshire's Admission Arrangements  
2016/17**

Report of Cllr Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services  
(mark.versallion@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Children's  
Services  
(edwina.grant@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

**Key Decision**

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**Purpose of this report**

To seek approval of the Council's Executive to commence consultation on the proposed Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for the academic year 2016/17 and of the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the academic year 2016/17. Final approval is to be sought from the Council's Executive on 10 February 2015

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Executive is asked to:**

- 1. Approve the commencement of consultation for Central Bedfordshire's proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the academic year 2016/17 noting specific changes to existing admission arrangements including:**
  - i. Revised wording on the Council's admission arrangements to make it clearer how places for pupils with a statement of Special Education Needs are allocated, how the Fair Access Protocol works, and the addition of foster siblings in the sibling definition.**
  - ii. In response to the recommendations made in the annual report of the Chief Schools Adjudicator published in November 2013, the removal of nursery, pre-school and other childcare criteria from those school admission policies which currently contain them.**
  - iii. A revised catchment area for Russell Lower School in Ampthill.**

**2. Approve the commencement of consultation for Central Bedfordshire's co-ordinated admissions scheme for the academic year 2016/17.**

**The Council's statutory duties regarding school admissions**

1. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that admissions are co-ordinated for all admission authorities in their area for all children being admitted into the normal year of entry and only one offer of a school place is made. The Council publishes a Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for each academic year to fulfil this requirement, setting out the timeframes for processing admission applications. The Scheme for 2016/17 must be the subject of consultation before final approval by Executive in February 2015.
2. In addition, as the Council is the admission authority for Community and Voluntary-Controlled schools, it must also undertake consultation on its own admission arrangements where changes are proposed. The admission policy for these schools sets out the criteria in which applications will be considered if the school is oversubscribed. This report explains the rationale for a number of proposed changes to existing admissions criteria for some Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in 2016/17.
3. These changes include:
  - Revised wording on the Council's admission arrangements to make it clearer how pupils with a statement of Special Education Needs are allocated a place at schools in the co-ordinated admission rounds ahead of those with a statement. The purpose of the Fair Access Protocol is explained and how it is operated to make this clearer and the addition of foster siblings in the sibling definition to make this criterion more inclusive for families in Central Bedfordshire.
  - In response to the recommendations made in the annual report of the Chief Schools Adjudicator published in November 2013, the removal of the priority given to children attending a nursery, pre-school or a child care setting from the 16 admission policies of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools which contain these,
  - The revision to Russell Lower School's catchment area from September 2016 to include the area known as the Warren Farm housing development which the school is being expanded to serve.

Academies, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools are their own admissions authorities and are therefore responsible for their own admission arrangements and for consultation on proposed changes to them for 2016/17.

**Central Bedfordshire Council's Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme  
Academic Year 2016-17**

4. Legislation contained within the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires Local Authorities to have a co-ordinated admissions scheme for their area where parents can apply on a common application form for a place in the normal year of entry at a school or an academy. The Council is required to co-ordinate the admissions for children in their area so that only one offer of a school place is made per prospective pupil. The co-ordinated admissions scheme must be formulated by 1 January in the relevant determination year and must be consulted on with the relevant bodies.
5. Central Bedfordshire's Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for the academic year 2016/17 sets out the scheme and timetable in which applications will be processed. The scheme details the processes and procedures that the Council and other admissions authorities need to work to in order to process the applications by the offer date for the normal year of entry at a school or academy.
6. The Council acting as the local authority must have a co-ordinated admissions scheme in place for all maintained schools and academies in the area.
7. Admissions for the normal year of entry for Secondary schools (which in Central Bedfordshire includes Upper and Secondary schools) are subject to a national closing date of 31 October for receipt of applications and a national offer date of 1 March.
8. Admissions for the normal year of entry for Primary schools (which in Central Bedfordshire include Lower, Primary and Middle schools) are subject to a national closing date of 15 January and a national offer date of 16 April.
9. The co-ordinated scheme is attached for Lower, Primary and Middle at Appendix 1 and the co-ordinated scheme is attached for Secondary, Upper and the University Technical College at Appendix 2.

**The Council's admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary  
Controlled schools for the Academic Year 2016/17**

10. Regulations require Admission Authorities to consult on their admission arrangements if changes are proposed and they must do so for a period of 8 weeks, commencing no earlier than 1 November, with consultation concluding by 1 March. Arrangements then must be determined by 15 April to take effect from the academic year

following the next (i.e. arrangements will be determined by 15 April 2015 to take effect from the academic year of 2016).

11. Admission arrangements are the procedures and processes that determine how children will be admitted to any given school and include the admission criteria which will be applied if more applications are received than there are places available.
12. Appendix 3 entitled 'Proposed Community and VC Schools Admissions Policy and PANs 2016-17', details the Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in the Central Bedfordshire Council area and the proposed admissions criteria and published admissions number for admissions from September 2016. This document has been slightly revised from the previous year's to amend wording to explain further on Fair Access Protocol, allocation of places to children with a statement of special educational needs and include foster siblings in the sibling definition (see Appendix 6).

**Removal of nursery, pre-school and child care criteria from the admission policies of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools**

13. Central Bedfordshire Council is the admissions authority for Community and Voluntary controlled schools, of which there are 58 schools in total, with 55 being Lower and Primary Schools where children enter at the Reception year (Year R) and continue until Year 4 in the case of a Lower school or Year 6 in the case of a Primary school.
14. Sixteen of these Lower and Primary schools currently prioritise children who attend a nursery, pre-school or child care setting as part of their admissions criteria and are the following schools:
  - Aspley Guise Lower School
  - Dovery Down Lower School
  - Dunstable Ickniel Lower School
  - Dunton VC Lower School
  - Everton Lower School
  - Greenleas School, Derwent Road
  - Hockliffe Lower School
  - Houghton Regis Primary School
  - Lancot Primary School
  - Linslade Lower School
  - Ramsey Manor Lower School
  - Silsoe Lower School
  - Studham Lower School
  - Thomas Johnson Lower School
  - Thornhill Primary School
  - Wrestlingworth Lower School

15. Each year the Chief Schools Adjudicator from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) publishes their annual report, usually in November, to comment on the effectiveness of admission arrangements in England and recommends actions to ensure admission authorities comply with the legislation within the School Admissions Code which is to ensure fairness.
16. The last OSA annual report was published in November 2013 and one of the main findings was that the practice of some primary schools giving priority for admissions to the reception year to children who have attended a particular nursery provision was deemed to be unfair to other local children.
17. The report commented that over 20 objections had been received concerning the prioritisation of children who attend a particular nursery provision and all objections were upheld. The Chief Schools Adjudicator commented that, ‘...the current Code is silent on priority for admissions to the reception year for attending named nursery provision. Silence means neither permissions nor prohibition, but does mean that the arrangements must therefore be tested against the general requirements of the code...’.
18. These general requirements of the code, when considering if a certain criterion within an admissions policy is unfair or not compliant could include that admission to the nursery was on the basis of arrangements that would not be lawful if used for admission to the reception year. For example if the child gained a place in the nursery on a first come first served basis or gained a place due to the virtue of their date of birth (i.e. being born in Autumn/Winter could give the child priority for a nursery place) this would be unlawful and therefore unfair that a child could gain a place in the Reception year at the beginning of their statutory schooling based on the decisions used for nursery admission.
19. The report highlighted that “action is required to ensure fair access to all children on reaching Reception Year in order that children are not disadvantaged by any decisions their parents make about the care of their children prior to compulsory school age or by access to specific child care.”
20. The Council needs to ensure its admission arrangements for all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools are lawful and fully compliant with the School Admissions Code and be responsive to the recommendations made by the Chief Schools Adjudicator whereby Local Authorities were urged in the most recent OSA report to ensure fair access to schools for all children reaching compulsory school age.

**Extension of the catchment area for Russell Lower School, Ampthill from September 2016.**

21. From September 2015, Russell Lower School will be a three form entry Lower School with a published admissions number of 90. This follows its expansion by the Council to accommodate a new housing development in Ampthill known as Warren Farm which is off the Flitwick Road.
22. The school was previously a two form entry lower school and in the summer of 2013, the Council conducted a statutory consultation proposing to expand the school. The decision to expand the school was made by the Council's Executive in December 2013 and this is due to be completed in September 2015 when the school will take its first three form entry cohort into the Reception Year.
23. At the public consultation in the Summer of 2013, where it was proposed to expand Russell Lower School, queries were raised by consultees as to why the catchment area for the school was not being amended to incorporate the housing development on the former Warren Farm into the school's catchment area.
24. The catchment area issue has now been reviewed as Russell Lower School was being expanded in order to accommodate a new housing development, which wasn't in the school's catchment area and located in The Firs Lower School's catchment area and this has created confusion for those residents moving into the new housing development.
25. Following consultation with both the Headteacher's and Chairs of Governors of Russell Lower School and The Firs Lower School in Ampthill it was agreed to consult on amendments to remove the Warren Farm housing development from the catchment area of The Firs Lower School and placing this in the catchment area of Russell Lower School.
26. The Firs Lower School is an Academy and therefore independent of the Local Authority and responsible for its own admission arrangements. The Firs Lower School has indicated that it too will consult on this amendment to remove the Warren Farm housing development from its catchment area to provide consistency across the lower school catchment areas in Ampthill as a whole.
27. It is therefore recommended that the Council consult on this change to the catchment area of Russell Lower School to include the Warren Farm development as depicted in Appendix 4.

## **Published admission numbers**

28. In line with the regulations contained within the School Admissions Code, any proposal to decrease a published admissions number is required to be consulted upon during the admissions consultation timeframe, before being determined on the 15 April for admissions in the academic year before they apply.
29. Although an admission authority is not required to consult on any proposed increases to a school's published admissions number (PAN), the following are to be noted as changes to admissions arrangements from September 2016:
- Edward Peake Middle School – increase to PAN from 120 to 150, following a one form of entry expansion to the school from September 2016.
  - Roecroft Lower School – increase to PAN from 60 to 90, following a one form of entry expansion to the school, subject to approval by Executive on 9 December 2014.
  - Silsoe VC Lower School – increase to PAN from 27 to 45, following a half form of entry expansion to the school from September 2016.

## **Method of Consultation**

30. Admission authorities are required to consult on their admission arrangements if changes are proposed and to conduct this for a period of 8 weeks commencing no earlier than 1 November, with the consultation concluding by 1 March. It is proposed that the consultation period will commence from 3 November 2014 and conclude on 19 January 2015, permitting over 8 weeks to allow for the Christmas school holiday break. This will provide time for analyses of the responses before Executive approve the admission arrangements on 10 February 2015 for the admission arrangements to be determined by 15 April 2015.
31. Central Bedfordshire Council is the admission authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools and therefore must conduct its consultation in line with legislation, with the following parties:
- a) Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen
  - b) Other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admissions authority have an interest in the proposed admissions
  - c) All other admission authorities within the relevant area
  - d) The Governing Bodies of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools
  - e) Adjoining neighbouring local authorities
  - f) The body or person representing religious denomination schools.

32. The Council will publish the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme and the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools on the Central Bedfordshire Council website and advertise the consultation as widely as possible to the relevant parties in order to gather their views. The Council will contact the Governing Bodies of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, all other admission authorities in the area, neighbouring local authorities and the Church of England and Catholic diocese with details of the consultation and how they can contribute their opinion.

### **Reasons for decision**

33. To enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations to consult on admission arrangements.

### **Council Priorities**

34. The Council's admission arrangements and co-ordinated admissions scheme supports the Medium Term Plan priority to improve educational attainment.

### **Corporate Implications**

### **Legal Implications**

35. Regulations contained within the School Admissions Code set out the requirement for the Council to have a co-ordinated admissions scheme for the area. Admission Authorities must also determine their admissions arrangements by the 15th April each year, for implementation in September of the following year. If an Admissions Authority proposes to make amendments to their arrangements they must consult between the 1 November and the 1 March for a minimum of 8 weeks of the year before the arrangements apply.
36. The Council will fulfil its statutory responsibilities by consulting within the timescales set out above and conducting a consultation with the relevant parties on changes to admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. Feedback from all consultees will be reported to Executive in February 2015 when the admissions arrangements for September 2016 will be determined.

### **Financial Implications**

37. Not applicable



### **Equalities Implications**

38. The School Admissions Code sets out the duty on Local Authorities and Admission Authorities to produce admission arrangements which are fair, clear and objective, which can be easily understood by parents. Admission arrangements must comply with regulations and legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.
39. Public authorities have a statutory duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. As part of the development of the Admissions Arrangements the Council will carry out an equality impact assessment to check that the proposed changes do not have a disproportionate or negative impact on vulnerable groups.

### **Conclusion and next steps**

40. The Department of Education have recently conducted a public consultation on a small number of amendments to the current School Admissions Code. The outcome of this is expected in early December 2014, and the results of this will be considered for the admission arrangements of 2017/18.
41. The next steps are for the Council to undertake the consultation within the statutory timeframes engaging with all the relevant parties to ascertain views on the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools of which the Council is the admissions authority for. Responses to the consultation will then be considered and reported back to Executive in February 2015. Following this meeting the Council's admission arrangements will then be determined before 15 April 2015 as required by legislation.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Lower, Primary and Middle 2016/17 co-ordinated admissions scheme

Appendix 2 – Secondary and Upper 2016/17 co-ordinated admissions scheme

Appendix 3 – Proposed Community and VC schools Admissions policy and PANs 2016/17.

Appendix 4 – Russell Lower School - proposed catchment area from September 2016.

Appendix 5 - Schools affected by proposed removal of nursery/preschool criterion

Appendix 6 - Revised wording on the Council's admission arrangements

**Background Papers:**

1. Equality Impact Assessment

**PROPOSED CO-ORDINATED SCHEME FOR ADMISSIONS TO:  
LOWER, PRIMARY AND MIDDLE ACADEMIES AND SCHOOLS**

**ACADEMIC YEAR 2016/2017**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and supported by The School Admission (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, requires Local Authorities to formulate a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools in their area. Academies are required to participate in the co-ordinated scheme.
- 1.2 A school is here defined as any academy or maintained community or voluntary controlled school or foundation, trust or voluntary aided school in the Central Bedfordshire Council area.
- 1.3 Central Bedfordshire Council, acting as the Local Authority is the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools. The admission authority for academies is the academy trust. For foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools, the admission authority is the governing body.
- 1.4 This scheme will apply to all lower, primary and middle academies and schools for admissions in the Central Bedfordshire Council area from September 2016.
- 1.5. Any reference to Central Bedfordshire is a reference to the administrative area of the unitary authority.
- 1.6 Central Bedfordshire Council uses the equal preference system to process admission applications, as outlined below:
  - 1.6.1 Stage 1

All first, second and third preference applications are considered equally against the admissions criteria. At this stage the Council does not distinguish between first, second and third preference applications. For example, if the school has 120 places and there are 150 first, second and third preference applications all are considered equally against the admissions criteria.

### 1.6.2 Stage 2

If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school the parent's highest ranked preference (i.e. first or second preference on the parent's application form) will be offered, and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded. For example a parent's first and third preferences might both qualify for a place, in which case the parent would be offered their first preference, leaving the place at the third preference school available for another pupil.

## 2. The Scheme

- 2.1. This scheme is for admissions in the normal year of entry for:
  - a) Lower Academies and Schools
  - b) Primary Academies and Schools
  - c) Middle Academies and Schools
- 2.2. There will be a standard form known as the Common Application Form (CAF) available for parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire to apply online or by completing a hard copy application form.
- 2.3. The CAF will be used for the purposes of admitting children into the first year of a:
  - Lower or Primary academy/school (Year R), or
  - Middle academy/school (Year 5).
- 2.4. The CAF will enable parents/carers to:
  - express a preference for up to 3 academies/schools
  - rank their preferences
  - give reasons for their preferences
- 2.5. Information will be provided on the admissions process in the form of the admissions booklet and will contain information on:
  - a) the academies and schools in Central Bedfordshire
  - b) dates of open evenings (where applicable)
  - c) published admission numbers and admissions criteria
  - d) how to complete an application
  - e) how places are allocated
  - f) timetable for the application and allocation process
  - g) school transport
  - h) who to contact for advice
- 2.6. **Admissions for the normal year of entry into a Lower or Primary Academy/School (Year R):**
  - 2.6.1 Parents of all children born between **01/09/11 and 31/08/12** and living in Central Bedfordshire will be able to apply for an academy or school place online or by completing a hard copy of the Common Application Form (CAF). The CAF will be available from any local lower or primary

academy/school, from the School Admissions Team or it can be downloaded from the Council website.

- 2.6.2 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire who wish to apply for a primary or lower academy/school in another Local Authority must apply online or complete the hard copy of the CAF.
- 2.6.3 Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire but who wish to apply for a place at a Central Bedfordshire school or academy must make their application to their home Local Authority.
- 2.6.4 **Deferred Entry:** Parents of children offered a place for admission in the reception year are offered a full time place to commence in the September following their child's fourth birthday. However parents may defer the admission of their child until later in the academic year or until their child becomes of statutory school age or request that their child takes up their place part time until they reach statutory school age. A place cannot be deferred beyond statutory school age nor beyond the academic year for which the place was offered. Therefore the following will apply, according to the child's date of birth for deferring entry to the Reception year:

<b>Child born:</b>	<b>Term which place can be deferred until:</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> September – 31 <sup>st</sup> December	Spring term (January)
1 <sup>st</sup> January – 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Summer term (April)
1 <sup>st</sup> April – 31 <sup>st</sup> August	Summer term (April)

**2.7. Admission into the normal year of entry into a Middle Academy/ School (Year 5)**

- 2.7.1. Parents of all children living in Central Bedfordshire and attending a lower academy/school in the Local Authority area will receive the details about the transfer process and how to apply.
- 2.7.2. Parents of children attending a lower academy/school, in Central Bedfordshire who do not live in the Local Authority area must make their application to their home Local Authority.
- 2.7.3. Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire but not attending a lower academy/school, in the Local Authority area and who wish to apply for a middle academy/school place may make their application online or obtain a hard copy of the CAF and the Admissions booklet from the School Admissions Team. The CAF and booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.

**3. Timetable for admissions into Lower, Primary and Middle academies and schools**

**Lower/Primary:**

Appendix B

- 3.1. In **September 2015**, the Local Authority admissions booklet and the CAF will be available to parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must apply to their home Local Authority.
- 3.2. Completed online applications and CAFs are to be submitted to the School Admissions Team by **15 January 2016**. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

**Middle transfer:**

- 3.3. In **September 2015** information is sent to parents of all children in Year 4 attending a lower academy/school in the Local Authority area. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be advised to contact their home Local Authority in order to make their application.
- 3.4. Completed online applications are to be submitted and hard copies of the CAF are to be returned to the School Admissions Team by **15 January 2016**. If the child is attending a lower academy/school in Central Bedfordshire a hard copy CAF can be returned via the lower academy/school who will forward it to the School Admissions Team. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

**Lower, Primary and Middle admissions**

- 3.5. By **12 February 2016** all preferences will be logged on the database and the School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each foundation, trust school or voluntary aided school and academy of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools are sent to those authorities.
- 3.6. By **11 March 2016** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust or voluntary aided school will consider all applications, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.
- 3.7. The School Admissions Team will process the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other academies and schools nominated and:

where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child.

where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference

Appendix B

- 3.8. Between **17 March 2016 and 24 March 2016** information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.
- 3.9. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the academies or schools that still have vacancies, after the allocation process. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.
- 3.10. On **14 April 2016** all middle academies and schools will have access to details of the pupils to be offered places via the web based School Admissions Module.
- 3.11. On **18 April 2016** (as this is the next working day after the national offer day of 16 April) the School Admissions Team will notify parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire of the outcome of their application, including those who have applied for a place in another Local Authority academy or school. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be notified by their home Local Authority.
- 3.12. By **3 May 2016** parents are to notify School Admissions Team of their rejection of the place offered if this is no longer required. If parents do not respond by this date it will be assumed that they have accepted the place.
- 3.13. By **3 May 2016** parents who have applied on time and want to change their preference from their original offer need to have submitted a change of preference by this date.

#### **4. Late Applications**

- 4.1. The national closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **15 January 2016**. Applications received after this date will be considered late and will be processed after the initial allocation of places.
- 4.2. Late applications received from 16 January until 18 April will be processed as part of the initial late allocation round and will be logged onto the database by **3 May 2016**.
- 4.3. The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school by **3 May 2016**.

Appendix B

- 4.4. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies or schools will be sent to those authorities by **3 May 2016**.
- 4.5. By **17 May 2016** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school will consider all their initial late applications for their academy or school, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.
- 4.6. The School Admissions Team will process the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other academies or schools nominated and:
  - where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child
  - where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference
- 4.7. Information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.
- 4.8. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the academies or schools that still have vacancies, after the allocation process. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.
- 4.9. On **6 June 2016** the School Admissions Team will post letters to parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire notifying them of the outcome of their applications, if part of the initial late allocation round, including those who have applied for a place in another Local Authority academy or school where the result of this decision has been received by the timescales outlined above.
- 4.10. Late applications received on or after the 19 April will be processed from **7 June 2016**.

## 5. Waiting Lists

- 5.1. Pupils not offered a place at their highest preference academy or school or at any of their preferred academies or schools are kept on a waiting list maintained by the admission authority to be re-allocated if places become



available. Waiting lists will be maintained until **the end of the academic year for 2016/17** for Community and Voluntary controlled schools. Waiting lists for academies and schools who are their own admission authority (foundation, trust and VA) may operate different waiting list arrangements. Allocation will be on the basis of the published oversubscription criteria. Priority will not be given to children based on the date their application was received or their name was added to the list. Looked after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol, must take precedence over those on a waiting list.

**6. In-year Admissions (applications received on or after 1 September)**

- 6.1. An in-year admission is an application made for a child to be admitted outside of the co-ordinated admissions scheme for the normal year of entry or for another year group within an academy/school.
- 6.2. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications for community and voluntary controlled schools as the admission authority for those schools.
- 6.3. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications made for academies and own admission authority schools (Foundation, Trust and Voluntary-Aided schools) who opt-in to the local authority's scheme for in-year admissions.
- 6.4. The Local Authority will make an application form available to enable parents to apply for an in-year place at any academy or school within the Local Authority area, which will enable parents to express a preference for up to 3 academies or schools and to rank their preferences. The form will be available on the Local Authority website as an e-form or can be downloaded or a hard copy can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.
- 6.5. The application will be dealt with by the local authority for those schools which are community or voluntary controlled schools or those academies and own admission authority who have opted in to the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme.
- 6.6. Any application received by the School Admissions Team for an academy or own admission authority school who has opted out of the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be forwarded to that academy or school to process.
- 6.7. All Academies and own admission authority schools who deal with their own in-year admissions (i.e. opted out of the in-year co-ordination scheme) will be required to determine the child's application and notify the parent and local authority of the outcome.
- 6.8. Pupils not offered a place at a community or voluntary controlled school or at an academy or own admission authority school which has opted in to

the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be kept on a waiting list which will be maintained for the academic year of admission. Academies and own admission authority schools who have opted out will have their own waiting list arrangements. In all cases where a place cannot be offered parents will have the right of appeal.

- 6.9. If all of the preferred academies and schools are full and the pupil lives in Central Bedfordshire, a place will generally be offered at the nearest academy or school with places available, unless the child is already attending a local school or academy.
- 6.10. Any place offered is usually expected to be taken up by the child within 4-6 weeks or by the start of the next school term.
- 6.11. Details of the community and voluntary controlled schools and those academies and own admission authority schools who have opted-in to the in-year co-ordination scheme and those who have opted out can be obtained from the School Admissions Team at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions).

**Timetable for Co-ordinated Admissions to:  
Lower, Primary and Middle Schools and Academies for academic year 2016/17**

<b>September 2015</b>	Information about the starting school and middle transfer process issued.
<b>15 January 2016</b>	National closing date for receipt of applications.
<b>12 February 2016</b>	By this date details of applications to be sent to academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies and schools sent to those authorities.
<b>11 March 2016</b>	By this date, academies and foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools provide the School Admissions Team with ranked lists of applicants.
<b>17 March – 24 March 2016</b>	Between these dates information to be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers.
<b>14 April 2016</b>	Information on pupils to be offered places will be available to schools and academies via the School Admissions Module.
<b>18 April 2016</b>	Notification to be sent to parents living in Central Bedfordshire on the offer made to their child.
<b>3 May 2016</b>	Date by which parents reject the offer of a place if not required.
<b>3 May 2016</b>	Late applications received between 16 January and 18 April 2014 will be logged onto the database by this date.
<b>3 May 2016</b>	The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that school or academy and applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools will be sent to those authorities.
<b>17 May 2016</b>	By this date, academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools provide the School Admissions Team with ranked lists of applicants in the initial late allocation round.
<b>6 June 2016</b>	Notification to be posted to parents living in Central Bedfordshire who have submitted a late application that qualifies for consideration in the initial late allocation round.
<b>7 June 2016</b>	Late applications received on or after 19 April will be processed from this date.

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**PROPOSED CO-ORDINATED SCHEME FOR ADMISSIONS TO:  
SECONDARY AND UPPER ACADEMIES AND SCHOOLS AND THE  
UNIVERSITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

**ACADEMIC YEAR 2016/2017**

**Section 1**

**Introduction**

- 1.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and supported by The School Admission (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, requires Local Authorities to formulate a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all academies and maintained schools in their area. Academies are required to participate in the co-ordinated scheme.
- 1.2 A school is here defined as any academy or maintained community or voluntary controlled school, foundation, trust, or voluntary-aided school in the Central Bedfordshire Council area.
- 1.3 Central Bedfordshire Council, acting as the Local Authority is the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools. The admission authority for academies is the academy trust. For foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools, the admission authority is the governing body.
- 1.4 This scheme will apply to all secondary and upper academies and schools and the University Technical College in the Central Bedfordshire Council area from September 2016.
- 1.5 Any reference to Central Bedfordshire is a reference to the administrative area of the unitary authority.
- 1.6 Central Bedfordshire Council uses the equal preference system to process admission applications, as outlined below:
  - 1.6.1 Stage 1

All first, second and third preference applications are considered equally against the admissions criteria. At this stage the Council does not distinguish between first, second and third preference applications. For example, if the school has 120 places and there are 150 first, second and third preference applications all are considered equally against the admissions criteria.

### 1.6.2 Stage 2

If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school or academy the parent's highest ranked preference (i.e. first or second preference on the parent's application form) will be offered, and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded. For example a parent's first and third preferences might both qualify for a place, in which case the parent would be offered their first preference, leaving the place at the third preference academy or school available for another pupil.

## Section 2

### The Scheme

- 2.1. This scheme is for admissions in the normal year of entry for:
  - a) Secondary Academies and Schools
  - b) Upper Academies and Schools
  - c) University Technical College (UTC)
- 2.2. There will be a standard form known as the Common Application Form (CAF) available for parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire to apply online or by completing a hard copy application form.
- 2.3. The CAF will be used for the purposes of admitting children into the first year of a:
  - Secondary academy/school (Year 7), or
  - Upper academy/school (Year 9), or
  - University Technical College (Year 10)
- 2.4. The CAF will enable parents/carers to:
  - express a preference for up to 3 academies/schools
  - rank their preferences
  - give reasons for their preferences
- 2.5. Information will be provided on the admissions process in the form of the admissions booklet and will contain information on:
  - a) the academies and schools in Central Bedfordshire
  - b) dates of open evenings (where applicable)
  - c) published admission numbers and admissions criteria
  - d) how to complete an application
  - e) how places are allocated
  - f) timetable for the application and allocation process
  - g) school transport
  - h) who to contact for advice

**2.6. Admission into the normal year of entry into a Secondary academy/school (Year 7)**

- 2.6.1 Parents of all children living in Central Bedfordshire and attending a primary academy/school, in the Local Authority area will receive the details about the transfer process and how to apply.
- 2.6.2 Parents of children attending a primary academy/school, in Central Bedfordshire who do not live in the Local Authority area must make their application to their home Local Authority.
- 2.6.3 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire but not attending a primary academy/school, in the Local Authority area and who wish to apply for a secondary academy or school place may make their application online or obtain a hard copy of the CAF and School Admissions booklet from the School Admissions Team. The CAF and booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.

**2.7. Admission into the normal year of entry into an Upper academy/school (Year 9)**

- 2.7.1 Parents of all children living in Central Bedfordshire and attending a middle academy/school, in the Local Authority area will receive the details about the transfer process and how to apply.
- 2.7.2 Parents of children attending a middle academy/school, in Central Bedfordshire who do not live in the Local Authority area must make their application to their home Local Authority.
- 2.7.3 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire but not attending a middle academy/school, in the Local Authority area and who wish to apply for an upper academy or school place may make their application online or obtain a hard copy of the CAF and School Admissions booklet from the School Admissions Team. The CAF and booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.

**2.8. Admission into the normal year of entry into a University Technical College (Year 10)**

- 2.8.1 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire and who wish to apply for a place at the University Technical College may make their application online or obtain a hard copy of the CAF and School Admissions booklet from the School Admissions Team. The CAF and booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.

### **3. Timetable for admissions into Secondary and Upper academies and schools and the University Technical College**

#### **Secondary:**

- 3.1. In **September 2015**, information is sent to parents of all children in Year 6 attending a primary academy/school in the Local Authority area. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be advised to contact their home Local Authority in order to make their application.
- 3.2. Completed online applications and hard copies of the CAF are to be submitted to the School Admissions Team by **31 October 2015**. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

#### **Upper:**

- 3.3. In **September 2015** information is sent to parents of all children in Year 8 attending a middle academy/school in the Local Authority area. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be advised to contact their home Local Authority in order to make their application.
- 3.4. Completed online applications are to be submitted and hard copies of the CAF are to be returned to the School Admissions Team by **31 October 2015**. If the child is attending a middle academy/school in Central Bedfordshire a CAF can be returned via the middle academy/school who will forward it to the School Admissions Team. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

#### **University Technical College:**

- 3.5. Completed online applications and hard copies of the CAF are to be submitted to the School Admissions Team by **31 October 2015**. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

#### **Secondary, Upper and University Technical College transfer admissions**

- 3.6. By **4 December 2015** all preferences will be logged on the database and the School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust school or voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools are sent to those authorities.
- 3.7. By **8 January 2016** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust or voluntary aided school will consider all applications, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria.



All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.

- 3.8. The School Admissions Team will match the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other academies or schools nominated.

where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child.

where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference.

- 3.9. Between **29 January 2016 and 12 February 2016** information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.
- 3.10. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the academies or schools that still have vacancies. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.
- 3.11. On **26 February 2016** all Secondary and Upper academies and schools and the University Technical College will have access to details of the pupils to be offered places via the web based School Admissions Module.
- 3.12. On **1 March 2016** the School Admissions Team will notify parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire of the outcome of their application, including those who have applied for a secondary or upper academy/ school place or a place at a University Technical College in another Local Authority. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be notified by their home Local Authority.
- 3.13. By **15 March 2016** parents are to notify the School Admissions Team of their rejection of the place offered if this is no longer required. If parents do not respond by this date it will be assumed that they have accepted the place.
- 3.14. By **15 March 2016** parents who have applied on time and want to change their preference from their original offer need to have submitted a change of preference by this date.

#### 4. Late Applications

- 4.1 The national closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **31 October 2015**. Applications received after this date will be considered late and will be processed after the initial allocation of places.
- 4.2. Late applications received from 31 October until 1 March will be processed as part of the initial late allocation round and will be logged onto the database by **15 March 2016**.
- 4.3. The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school by **15 March 2016**.
- 4.4. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools will also be sent to those authorities by **15 March 2016**.
- 4.5. By **24 March 2016** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school will consider all their initial late applications for their academy or school, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.
- 4.6. The School Admissions Team will process the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other schools or academies nominated and:
  - where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child.
  - where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference
- 4.7. Information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.
- 4.8. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the academies or schools that still have vacancies, after the allocation process. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.

- 4.9. On **26 April 2016** the School Admissions Team will post letters to parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire notifying them of the outcome of their applications, if part of the initial late allocation round, including those who have applied for a place in another Local Authority academy or school where the result of this decision has been received by the timescales outlined above.
- 4.10. Late applications received on or after the 2 March will be processed from **27 April 2016**.

## **5. Waiting Lists**

- 5.1. Pupils not offered a place at their highest preference academy or school or at any of their preferred academies or schools are kept on a waiting list maintained by the admission authority to be re-allocated if places become available. Waiting lists will be maintained until **the end of the academic year for 2016/17** for Community and Voluntary controlled schools. Waiting lists for academies, foundation, trust and Voluntary aided schools may operate different waiting list arrangements. Allocation will be on the basis of the published oversubscription criteria. Priority will not be given to children based on the date their application was received or their name was added to the list. Looked after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol, must take precedence over those on a waiting list.

## **6. In-year Admissions (applications received on or after 1 September)**

- 6.1. An in-year admission is an application made for a child to be admitted outside of the co-ordinated admissions scheme for the normal year of entry or for another year group within an academy/school.
- 6.2. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications for community and voluntary controlled schools as the admission authority for those schools.
- 6.3. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications made for academies and own admission authority schools (foundation, trust and voluntary aided) who opt-in to the local authority's scheme for in-year admissions.
- 6.4. The Local Authority will make an application form available to enable parents to apply for an in-year place at any academy or school within the Local Authority area, which will enable parents to express a preference for up to 3 academies or schools and to rank their preferences. The form will be available on the Local Authority website as an e-form or can be downloaded or a hard copy can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.

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- 6.5. The application will be dealt with by the local authority for those schools which are community or voluntary controlled schools or those academies and own admission authority schools who have opted in to the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme.
- 6.6. Any application received by the School Admissions Team for an academy or own admission authority school who has opted out of the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be forwarded to them to process.
- 6.7. All academies and own admission authority schools who deal with their own in-year admissions (i.e. opted out of the in-year co-ordination scheme) will be required to determine the child's application and notify the parent and local authority of the outcome.
- 6.8. Pupils not offered a place at a community or voluntary controlled school or at an academy or own admission authority school who has opted in to the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be kept on a waiting list which will be maintained for the academic year of admission. Academies and own admission authority schools who have opted out will have their own waiting list arrangements. In all cases where a place cannot be offered parents will have the right of appeal.
- 6.9. If all of the preferred academies and schools are full and the pupil lives in Central Bedfordshire, a place will generally be offered at the nearest academy or school with places available, unless the child is already attending a local school or academy.
- 6.10. Any place offered is usually expected to be taken up by the child within 4-6 weeks or by the start of the next school term.
- 6.11. Details of the community and voluntary controlled schools and those academies and own admission authority schools who have opted-in to the in-year co-ordination scheme and those who have opted out can be obtained from the School Admissions Team at:  
[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions).

**Timetable for Co-ordinated Admissions to:  
Secondary and Upper Academies and Schools and the University Technical College for  
academic year 2016/17**

<b>September 2015</b>	Information about the admission process issued.
<b>31 October 2015</b>	National closing date for receipt of applications.
<b>4 December 2015</b>	By this date details of applications to be sent to academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools. Applications for places in other Local Authority schools and academies sent to those authorities.
<b>8 January 2016</b>	By this date academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools provide the School Admissions Team with ranked lists of applicants.
<b>29 January – 12 February 2016</b>	Between these dates information to be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers.
<b>26 February 2016</b>	Information on pupils to be offered places will be available to academies and schools via the School Admissions Module.
<b>1 March 2016</b>	Notification to be sent to parents living in Central Bedfordshire on the offer made to their child.
<b>15 March 2016</b>	Date by which parents reject the offer of a place if not required.
<b>15 March 2016</b>	Late applications received between 1 November 2015 and 1 March 2016 will be logged onto the database by this date.
<b>15 March 2016</b>	The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that school or academy. Applications for places in other Local Authority schools / academies will be sent to those authorities.
<b>24 March 2016</b>	By this date academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools provide the School Admissions Team with ranked lists of applicants in the initial late allocation round.
<b>26 April 2016</b>	Notification to be sent to parents living in Central Bedfordshire who have submitted a late application that qualifies for consideration in the initial late allocation round.
<b>27 April 2016</b>	Late applications received on or after 2 March will be processed from this date.

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**Community and Voluntary Controlled schools  
Proposed Admission Arrangements for Academic Year 2016/17**

**Central Bedfordshire Council - Standard Admissions Policy**

- 1) All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
- 2) Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
- 3) Children living in the catchment area
- 4) Other children with siblings at the school
- 5) Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the child's home address

**The Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools listed below operate the above standard admissions policy:**

<b>School</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Published Admissions Number (PAN)</b>
Aspley Guise	Lower	27
Beaudesert	Lower	55
Caldecote VC	Lower	24
Campton	Lower	22
Chalton	Lower	15
Clipstone Brook	Lower	45
Doverly Down	Lower	30
Dunstable Icknield	Lower	60
Everton	Lower	10
Fairfield Park	Lower	60
Flitwick	Lower	60
Greenleas (Derwent Road)	Lower	60
Greenleas (Kestrel Way)	Lower	60
Hawthorn Park	Primary	60
Haynes	Lower	24
Heathwood	Lower	30
Hockliffe	Lower	15
Houghton Conquest	Lower	20
Houghton Regis	Primary	45
Husborne Crawley	Lower	12
Kensworth VC	Primary	15
Kingsmoor	Lower	45
Lancot	Primary	60

Appendix D

Lawnside	Lower	60
Leedon	Lower	60
Linslade	Lower	45
Maulden	Lower	30
Ramsey Manor	Lower	58
Ridgmont	Lower	15
Roecroft	Lower	90*
Russell	Lower	90
Shefford	Lower	90
Shillington	Lower	30
Silsoe VC	Lower	45
Slip End	Lower	24
Southcott	Lower	60
Southill	Lower	15
Stanbridge	Lower	24
St. George's	Lower	30
Stondon	Lower	30
St. Swithun's VC	Lower	30
Studham VC	Lower	15
Swallowfield	Lower	58
Templefield	Lower	60
The Mary Bassett	Lower	60
Thomas Johnson	Lower	18
Thornhill	Primary	30
Tithe Farm	Primary	60
Totternhoe	Lower	29
Watling	Lower	30
Woburn	Lower	12
Burgoyne	Middle	90
Caddington Village	Lower/Middle Combined	Year R = 60, Year 5 = 15

The following Community and Voluntary Controlled schools operate a variation to the standard admissions policy above and their admissions criteria is detailed below:

<b>Dunton VC Lower School</b>	<b>PAN: 15</b>
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
3.	Children living in the catchment area
4.	Other children with siblings at the school
5.	Children, one or more of whose parents/carers have, at the time of application, shown commitment to the Church of England or another Christian church by attending a service at least once a month for the year prior to an application being made*.
6.	Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the child's home address



<b>St. Andrew's VC Lower School</b>		<b>PAN:</b> 150 (West = 90, East = 60)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> </ol>	<p>All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'</p> <p>Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school</p> <p>Children living in the catchment area</p> <p>Other children with siblings at the school</p> <p>Children, one or more of whose parents/carers have, at the time of application, shown commitment to the Church of England or another Christian church by attending a service at least once a month for the year prior to an application being made*.</p> <p>Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the child's home address</p>	

<b>Wrestlingworth VC Lower School</b>		<b>PAN:</b> 13
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> </ol>	<p>All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'</p> <p>Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school</p> <p>Children living in the catchment area</p> <p>Other children with siblings at the school</p> <p>Children, one or more of whose parents/carers have, at the time of application, shown commitment to the Church of England or another Christian church by attending a service at least once a month for the year prior to an application being made*.</p> <p>Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the child's home address</p>	

<b>Edward Peake VC Middle School</b>		<b>PAN:</b> 150
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> </ol>	<p>All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'</p> <p>Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school</p> <p>Children living in the catchment area</p> <p>Other children with siblings at the school</p> <p>Children, one or more of whose parents/carers have, at the time of application, shown commitment to the Church of England or another Christian church by attending a service at least once a month for the year prior to an application being made*.</p> <p>Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the child's home address</p>	

<b>Leighton Middle School</b>		<b>PAN:</b> 120
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> </ol>	<p>All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'</p> <p>Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school</p> <p>Children living in the catchment area</p> <p>Other children with siblings at the school</p> <p>Children who have spent a significant time (3 years or more) in a Leighton Buzzard/Linslade/Hockliffe school, i.e. Beaudesert, Clipstone Brook, Doverly Down, Greenleas, Heathwood, Leedon, Linslade, Mary Bassett, Pulfords, Southcott, St. Georges, St. Leonards, Stanbridge and Hockliffe Lower Schools.</p> <p>Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the child's home address</p>	

\*A Christian Church is defined as one which is a member, or is eligible for membership, of Churches Together in England or the Evangelical Alliance. Applications in this category will need to ask their priest or minister to complete the relevant section of the local authority common application form.

**Notes:**

**Pupils with a Statement of Special Education Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan.**

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, children with a Statement of SEN or Education, Health and Care Plan are required to be admitted to the academy/school named in the Statement or Plan and will be allocated a place ahead of those without a Statement of Special Education Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan in the allocation process. Thereafter the admissions criteria for each academy/school will apply to those children without a Statement of Special Education Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan. After allocations have been made, if an application is made late or is received as part of the in-year process, pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan are required to be admitted to the school which is named on the statement or Plan, even if the school is full.

**Fair Access Protocol**

All Local Authorities must have a Fair Access Protocol which operates outside of the arrangements of co-ordinated admissions (i.e. those children being admitted to the point of entry at an academy/school) to ensure unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable are offered a suitable school place. Pupils identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will be admitted even if the school is full.

**Admissions Criteria**

The admissions criteria will be applied separately and sequentially until all places are filled. Priority is not given within each criterion to children who meet other criteria. The distance criterion will be used as a tiebreaker in each criterion where required to determine the allocation of places. In the event of (a) two or more children living at the same address point (e.g. children resident in a block of flats) or (b) two addresses measuring the same distance from the school, the ultimate tie-breaker will be random selection, using the Tribal Admissions database to allocate the place.

**Definitions of Admissions Criteria:**

**'Looked after' children**

A 'looked after' child is a child in the care of a local authority as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. In relation to school admissions legislation a 'looked after child' is a child in public care at the time of application to a school.

**Previously 'looked after' children**

A previously 'looked after' child is a child who was 'looked after', but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or a special guardianship order.

### **Catchment area**

A catchment area is a geographical area from which children are given priority for admission to the particular school. Please see [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions) for more information on school catchment areas.

### **Sibling**

A sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, step brother or sister, adopted brother or sister or fostered brother or sister where foster care has been arranged by a Local Authority or the child of the parent / carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission.

### **Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the pupil's home address**

The distance the pupil lives from the school which is measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. The Local Authority will measure the distance from the address point of the pupil's home to a point on the school site agreed with the governing body of the school.

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Ordnance Survey 100049029.  
Central Bedfordshire Council.  
Cities Revealed aerial photography copyright  
The GeoInformation Group, 2010

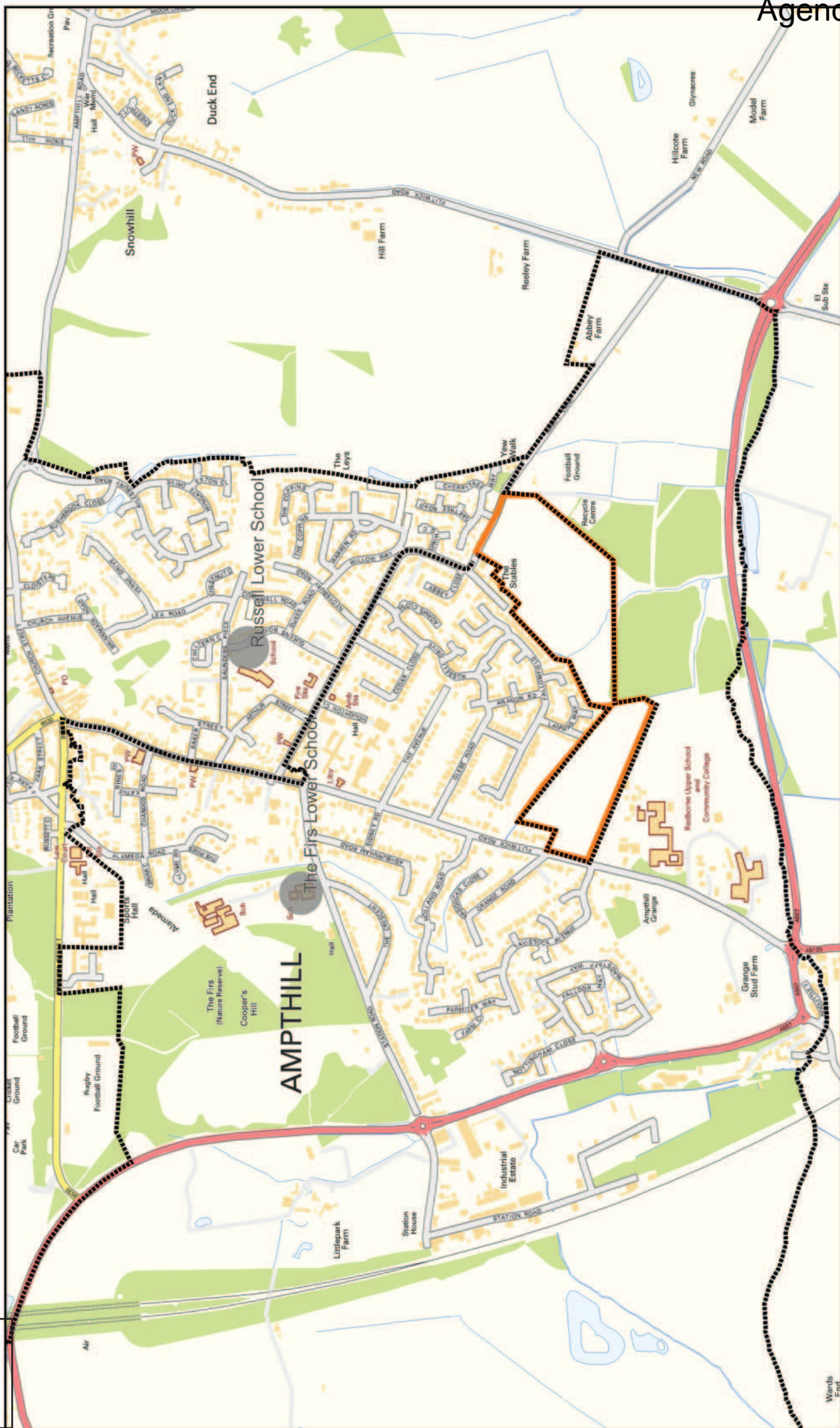
Russell Lower School Proposed Catchment Area from September 2016  
(Orange extent depicts Warren Farm development which is currently in The Firs  
Lower School catchment area for which the school is currently being expanded  
to accommodate).

Central Bedfordshire Council  
School Admissions Team

Scale 1:11595



Appendix E



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Appendix F – Schools affected by proposed removal of nursery/preschool criterion

Amendments to admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Central Bedfordshire are therefore proposed for the following schools with regards to removing nursery/preschool criterion:

Aspley Guise Lower School	Removal of: 'Children attending the Aspley Guise Pre-School', from the admissions criteria.*
Doverly Down Lower School	Removal of: 'Children attending The Acorn Pre-School' from the admissions criteria.*
Dunstable Ickniel Lower School	Removal of: 'Children who have attended the Nursery at Dunstable Ickniel Lower School', from the admissions criteria.*
Dunton VC Lower School	Removal of: 'Children attending Dunton Pre-School' from the admissions criteria.*
Everton Lower School	Removal of: 'Children attending the Evertots Pre-School' from the admissions criteria.*
Greenleas School (Derwent Road)	Removal of: 'Children attending Greenleas Nursery Unit' and 'Children attending Willows Pre-School in the Greenleas School site', from the admissions criteria.
Hockliffe Lower School	Removal of: 'Nursery aged children attending Hockliffe Lower School' and 'Children attending Little Bluebells Playgroup at Hockliffe Lower School', from the admissions criteria.*
Houghton Regis Primary School	Removal of: 'Children attending the nursery at Houghton Regis Primary School', from the admissions criteria.*
Lancot Primary School	Removal of: 'Children currently attending Lancot Nursery Unit', from the admissions criteria.*
Linslade Lower School	Removal of: 'Children currently attending Linslade Lower School Nursery', from the admissions criteria.*

Ramsey Manor Lower School	Removal of: 'Children in long term (12 months or more) registered child minding situations, being cared for in the school catchment area', from the admissions criteria.*
Silsoe Lower School	Removal of: 'Children who attend Silsoe Pre-School', from the admissions criteria.*
Studham Lower School	Removal of: 'Children who attend Studham Pre-School', from the admissions criteria.*
Thomas Johnson Lower School	Removal of: 'Children currently attending the nursery unit', from the admissions criteria.*
Thornhill Primary School	Removal of: 'Children attending the nursery at Thornhill Primary School', from the admissions criteria.*
Wrestlingworth VC Lower School	Removal of: 'Children attending Wrestlingworth Pre-School', from the admissions criteria.*

\*Admissions criteria are detailed in Appendix 3 – Proposed Admission Arrangements for Academic Year 2016/17.



Appendix G – Revised wording on the Council’s admission arrangements

1. Pupils with a Statement of Special Education Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan). The explanation has been broadened from the current wording to make it clear that children with a Statement of Special Education Needs or EHC Plan are allocated places at academies and schools in Central Bedfordshire ahead of those without a statement and before the allocation of places in accordance with the admissions criteria applies. The current wording is: ‘Pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs are required to be admitted to the school which is named on the statement, even if the school is full.’
2. The proposed revised wording is, ‘In accordance with the Education Act 1996, children with a Statement of SEN or Education, Health and Care Plan are required to be admitted to the academy/school named in the Statement or Plan and will be allocated a place ahead of those without a Statement of Special Education Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan in the allocation process. Thereafter the admissions criteria for each academy/school will apply to those children without a Statement of Special Education Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan. After allocations have been made, if an application is made late or is received as part of the in-year process, pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan are required to be admitted to the school which is named on the statement or Plan, even if the school is full.’
3. 2) Fair Access Protocol  
The explanation has also been broadened to explain the protocol and how it is operated. The current wording is: ‘Pupils identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will also be admitted even if the school is full. The proposed wording is, ‘All Local Authorities must have a Fair Access Protocol which operates outside of the arrangements of co-ordinated admissions (i.e. those children being admitted to the point of entry at an academy/school) to ensure unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a suitable school place. Pupils identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will be admitted even if the school is full.’
4. 3) Definition of sibling  
The Office of the Schools Adjudicator recently upheld an objection raised against Hertfordshire County Council’s admission arrangements for 2015 regarding the lack certainty in their sibling definition concerning foster siblings. The adjudicator ruled that the lack of certainty was a breach of the Admissions Code and that the Council must include foster relationships within the sibling definition as to do otherwise would be unreasonable as it would “disadvantage unfairly in terms of priority for places at a school, a birth child living in the same family home as an older foster brother or sister already on roll at the same school.” They concluded that not to include the foster siblings within the definition would be a breach of the Code on two counts; as the admission arrangements would not be fair (paragraph 14) or reasonable (paragraph 1.8).

5. The current definition of siblings in the admissions criteria does not make reference to fostered brothers or sisters. Although the current wording does include children of a parent/carer's partner this does not currently include fostered siblings. The definition has therefore been revised to include children who are fostered, where foster care has been arranged by a Local Authority. The proposed wording is: 'A sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, step brother or sister, adopted brother or sister or fostered brother or sister where foster care has been arranged by a Local Authority or the child of the parent / carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission.'

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**Meeting:** Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny  
**Date:** 11 November 2014  
**Subject:** Quarter 1 2014/15 Performance Report  
**Report of:** Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services  
**Summary:** The report highlights the Quarter One performance for the Children's Services Directorate.

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**Advising Officer:** Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services  
**Contact Officer:** Karen Oellermann, Assistant Director, Commissioning and Partnerships  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Council

<b>CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS</b>
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<b>Council Priorities:</b>
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- |   |
|---|
| 1. The quarterly performance report ensures that progress on the delivery of the Council's priorities is monitored. |
|---|

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

<b>Legal:</b>
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- |                    |
|--------------------|
| 4. Not applicable. |
|--------------------|

<b>Risk Management:</b>
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- |   |
|---|
| 5. Areas of ongoing underperformance are a risk to both service delivery and the reputation of the Council. |
|---|

<b>Staffing (including Trades Unions):</b>
--

- |                    |
|--------------------|
| 6. Not applicable. |
|--------------------|

<b>Equalities/Human Rights:</b>
---------------------------------

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

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

**Public Health**

9. The report includes performance against measures which contribute to Council priorities including the following:
- promote health and wellbeing and protect the vulnerable.

**Community Safety:**

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

**Sustainability:**

11. Not applicable.

**Procurement**

12. Not applicable.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Committee is asked to:**

- **note and review Quarter One performance.**

**Background**

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

**Quarter One Performance Summary**

15. Published Ofsted inspections show that 86% of schools and colleges are good or outstanding, which is good performance. Ofsted publish a similar indicator which does not include colleges or sponsored Academies which are yet to be inspected. This shows Central Bedfordshire compares well to statistical neighbours and national averages - as at 31 March 2014, 85% of Central

Bedfordshire Schools are good or better and the Statistical Neighbour Average was 79% and England 80%.

16. Performance data across children's safeguarding measures is good at the end of Quarter 1, 2014/15. Child protection reviews completed within timescales continue to achieve the 100% target.
17. The new Access and Referral Hub has added greater stability to the referral process and 81.7% of referrals have led to the provision of a social care service - achieving the 75% target. This indicator reflects the proportion of referrals that go on to receive further social care support, 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.
18. The ambitious target for 90% of assessments to be completed within 45 days has been achieved. The Q1 figure 92.8% demonstrates that performance is good. The new processes are now well established with, good performance expected to continue through 2014/15.
19. Children are placed in their permanent home without undue delay which is particularly important in enabling very young children to form positive emotional attachments. The average timescales from entering care and moving in with an adoptive family for the 3 years ending 30 June 14, was 533 days which is one day above the nationally set target, 9 days below our 2011/14 outturn and 97 days below the comparator average for 2012/13. There has been further improvement on last year and Central Bedfordshire continues to compare well to other local authorities. With more adoptions planned and shorter timescales in most cases it is expected that improvements will continue.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Performance Report Appendix A Quarter One 2014/15

**Background papers and their location:** (open to public inspection)  
Executive (Quarter One Performance Report)

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# Performance Report Appendix A Quarter One 2014/15

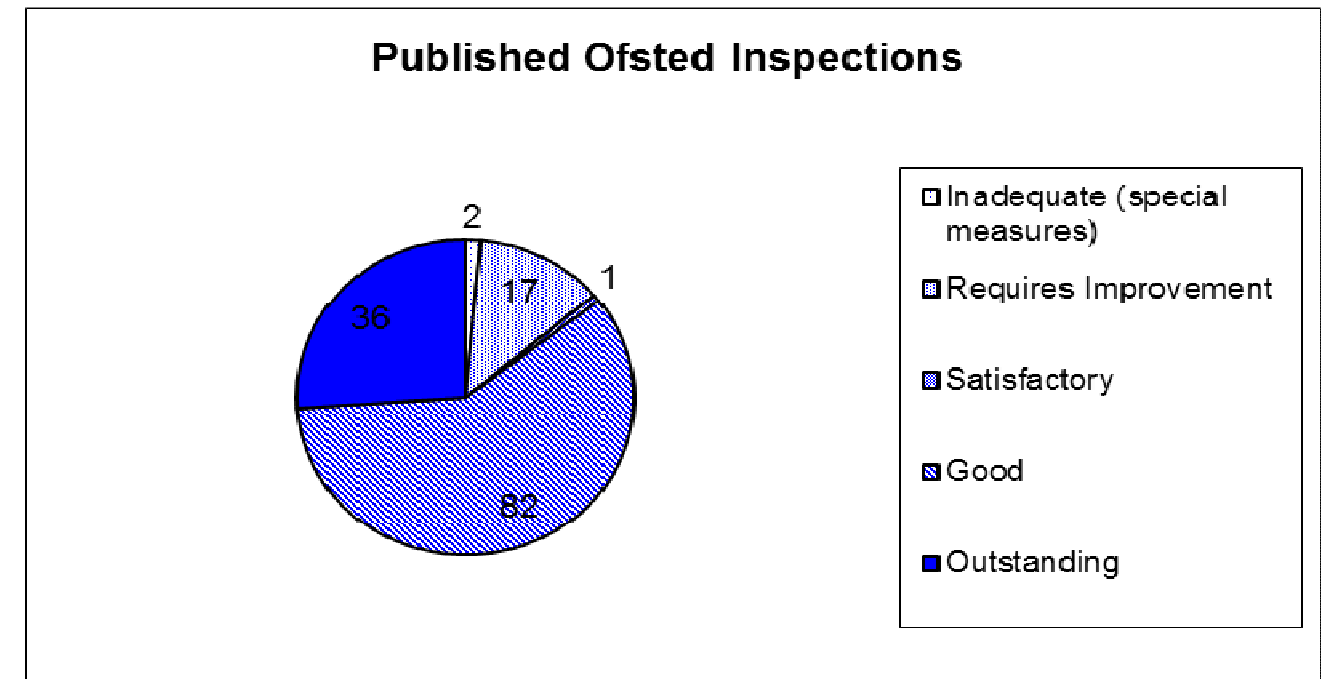
## Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny

Ref	Indicator	Performance will be reported:	Performance information being reported this quarter		
			Time period	Performance	
<b>Improved educational attainment</b>					
<b>B4 MTP</b>	Published Ofsted school and college classifications	<b>Quarterly</b>	Quarter 1 2014/15	æ	<b>G</b>
<b>Promote health and wellbeing and protect the vulnerable</b>					
<b>C8a MTP</b>	Percentage of referrals of children leading to the provision of a social care service	<b>Quarterly</b>	Quarter 1 2014/15	æ	<b>G</b>
<b>C9a MTP</b>	Percentage of children's social care assessments within 45 working days of start	<b>Quarterly</b>	Quarter 1 2014/15	æ	<b>G</b>
<b>C10 MTP</b>	Percentage of child protection cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed	<b>Quarterly</b>	Quarter 1 2014/15		<b>G</b>
<b>C11 MTP</b>	Average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted	<b>Quarterly</b>	Quarter 1 2014/15	æ	<b>A</b>

Report comparison - Depends on the nature of the indicator		Performance Judgement			
		Direction of travel (DoT)		RAG score (Standard scoring rules unless the indicator specifies alternative scoring arrangements)	
<b>Seasonal</b>	Compared to the same time period in the previous year		Performance is reducing	<b>R</b>	RED - target missed / off target - Performance at least 10% below the required level of improvement
<b>Quarter on quarter</b>	Compared to the previous quarter		Performance remains unchanged	<b>A</b>	AMBER - target missed / off target - Performance less than 10% below the required level of improvement
<b>Annual</b>	Compared to one fixed point in the previous year	æ	Performance is improving	<b>G</b>	GREEN - Target achieved or performance on track to achieve target

## Improved Educational Attainment

B4 MTP Published Ofsted school and college classifications* (Published inspection outcomes during the quarter as shown by the figure in brackets)															
Ofsted category	Unit	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15				Latest comparator group average	N/A	Report comparison	Quarter on quarter	Performance Judgement	æ	G
		Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4 / Outturn							
<b>Total</b>	Number	<b>140</b> (33)	<b>Schools:</b> 137(8) <b>College:</b> 1(0)	<b>Schools:</b> 136 (10) <b>College:</b> 1(0)	<b>Schools:</b> 137 (8) <b>College:</b> 1(0)										
<b>Outstanding</b>	Number	<b>37</b> (3)	<b>38</b> (1)	37(1)	36(0)										
<b>Good</b>	Number	<b>67</b> (16)	<b>73</b> (3)	77(5)	82(6)										
<b>Satisfactory</b>	Number	<b>34</b> (13)	<b>21</b> (0)	4(0)	1(0)										
<b>Requires Improvement</b>	Number	-	<b>5</b> (3)	18(4)	17(1)										
<b>Inadequate</b>	Number	<b>2</b> (1)	1 (1- Special Measures )	1 – Special Measures (0)	2 – Special Measures (1)										
<p><b>Comment:</b></p> <p>Overall the proportion of schools being classified as good or outstanding has remained stable over the last three years. In Quarter One published inspection outcomes show that 86% of schools and colleges are either 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.</p> <p>Central Bedfordshire University Technical College (UTC) has been inspected for the first time, taking the total number of educational institutions included up to 138. It has been judged by Ofsted to require special measures.</p> <p>Sandy Upper School (inspected on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2013 and judged to require special measures) is making good progress.</p>															





Promote health and wellbeing and protect the vulnerable

C8a MTP		Percentage of referrals of children leading to the provision of a social care service (Cumulative)																			
Unit	Good is	2012/13	2013/14						2014/15						Latest comparator group average	New	Report comparison	Quarter on quarter	Performance Judgement	æ	G
		Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4	Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4	Outturn							
%	High	New	75	N/A	N/A	49.4	72.5	72.5	75	81.7											
<p><b>Comment:</b></p> <p>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 were put in place in 2013/14 and referrals are now progressing to a single assessment process. On 01 April 2014 an Access and Referral Hub was created which has added greater stability to the way in which the need for services are established, it is expected that the target will be achieved through the coming year. 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.</p>																					

C9a MTP		Percentage of children's social care assessments within 45 working days of start (N14 variant) (Cumulative)																			
Unit	Good is	2012/13	2013/14						2014/15						Latest comparator group average	New	Report Comparison	Quarter on quarter	Performance Judgement	æ	G
		Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4	Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4	Outturn							
%	High	New	90.0	N/A	N/A	80.7	84.4	84.4	90.0	92.8											
<p><b>Comment:</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>A high target exists for this indicator, reflecting ambitious yet realistic expectations. The introduction of the Access and Referral Hub in April 2014 has helped ensure that the right cases are promptly passed for assessment which has supported improved performance, our target was achieved in Quarter 1.</p> <p>Feedback from 6 pilot authorities in 2012/13 returned an average of 78% within 45 days, our performance has consistently exceeded this. Analysis of 2013/14 results, where more local authorities completed these assessments, is expected to be available in late autumn.</p> <p>This indicator demonstrates that assessments are completed without delay which leads to timely identification of appropriate services for children in need.</p>																					

Chart not produced. New indicator so no comparative information from previous years for Central Bedfordshire or Statistical Neighbours.

Promote health and wellbeing and protect the vulnerable continued

C10 MTP		Percentage of child protection cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed																	
Unit	Good is	2012/13	2013/14					2014/15					Latest comparator group average	97.7 NFER (2012/13)	Report comparison	Quarter on quarter	Performance Judgement		G
		Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4	Outturn	Target (Outturn)	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3							
%	High	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100										
<p><b>Comment:</b></p> <p>Performance remains on target. Reviews are a key element in delivering Child Protection Plans and effective reviews should ensure the provision of good quality interventions to keep children safe and protected. This target should remain on 100% and graphical representation is not relevant.</p>																			

C11 MTP		Average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted																
Unit	Good is	2012/13	2013/14				2014/15				Latest comparator group average	630 NFER (2012/13)	Report comparison	Quarter on quarter	Performance Judgement	æ	A	
		Outturn	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4 / Outturn	Qu 1	Qu 2	Qu 3	Qu 4 / Outturn								
Days	Low																	
	Target	608	593	578	562	547	532	517	502	487								
	Actual	600	539	476	548	542	533											
<p><b>Comment:</b></p> <p>The target has been reduced further reflecting the national aspiration for shorter adoption timescales. Our performance has improved and is on track to achieve target by the year end. There are a number of adoption order applications in process, and these are expected to lead to adoptions in the near future, which will have a positive impact on this indicator. However, the new Court of Appeal Guidance in Adoption cases has led to birth parents responses being considered in more detail and delays impact on this measure too.</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> <p>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.</p>																		

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**Meeting:** Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 11 November 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.

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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.	New School Places in Stotfold	09 December 2014
2.	Central Bedfordshire Council's Admission Arrangements and Co-ordinated Scheme	31 March 2015
Non-Key Decisions		
3.	Q2 Budget Monitoring	9 December 2014
4.	Q2 Performance Report	13 January 2015
5.	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 Childrens Services OSC Work Programme 2014-15

OSC Date	Report Title	Description
<b>12 December 2014</b>	<b>Meeting Cancelled</b>	
20 January 2015	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	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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