

# Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 22 January 2020

Dear Councillor

## CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL - WEDNESDAY, 22ND JANUARY, 2020

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at next Wednesday, 22nd January, 2020 meeting of the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

### Agenda No    Item

- 5    **Children's Social Care Self- Evaluation Refresh 2019/20 (report to follow) (Pages 3 - 42)**

[Louise Haughton, Principal Social Worker, to present report]

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the democratic support team:

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# Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

22 January 2020

<b>Report title</b>	Children and Young people's Social Work Self-Evaluation	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor John Reynolds Children and Young People's Service	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services	
<b>Originating service</b>	Quality and Improvement	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Louise Haughton	Principal Social Worker
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<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Children and Young People's Management Team	28.11.2019

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## Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Scrutiny Panel is recommended to:

1. Support the development priorities for 2019-20 as outlined within the Self-Evaluation of social work practice.
2. Consider and comment on whether the self-evaluation report answers the three questions asked by Ofsted as outlined in the main body of the report
3. Consider and comment on whether there are any important issues that are not addressed within the report findings.

## 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the draft Annual Self-Evaluation of Children's Social Care for the panel to consider and comment upon.

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 Inspecting Local Authorities Children Services is a system of inspection. Under this system, Ofsted use the intelligence and information they have to inform decisions about how best to inspect each local authority. This system includes:

- local authorities sharing an annual self-evaluation of the quality and impact of social work practice
- an annual engagement meeting between our regional representatives and the local authority to review the self-evaluation and to reflect on what is happening in the local authority and inform how they would engage with each other in future
- our local authority intelligence system (LAIS) (which brings data and information into a single record)
- focused visits that look at a specific area of service or cohort of children
- standard and short inspections where we make judgements using our four-point scale
- joint targeted area inspection (JTAI)

- 2.2 This report relates to the annual self-evaluation which was shared with Ofsted in June 2019 and included data for the financial year. Local authorities are asked to share a self-evaluation of social work practice. The self-evaluation should draw on information and documentation that already exists within local authorities and is used to monitor the quality of services provided to children, young people and their families.

- 2.3 The Self-Evaluation should answer three questions:

- What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local authority?
- How do you know it?
- What are your plans for the next 12 months to improve?

## 3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The Self-Evaluation of social work practice presents an improving picture of practice across both the Child in Need/Child Protection Service and the Children and Young People in Care Service.

- 3.2 The service has continued to manage demand well. At the end of March 2019 there were 624 children and young people in care, 328 children who had a child protection plan and 906 children who had a Child in Need Plan. These number have reduced to 588 Children and young people in care, 258 Children who have a child protection plan, 844 Children who have a child in need plan.

- 3.3 There are a whole range of workstreams that contribute to the management of demand, these include; an effective Early Help Service, an effective Specialist Support Service for children who are at risk of entering care, effective management of thresholds in the MASH and at admissions to care. As well as this the service works hard to ensure work with children is progressed in a timely manner through good planning and, regular reviews of the work being undertaken within the service are completed by service managers to ensure children are receiving the right support, at the right level.
- 3.4 Quality assurance activity has continued to show an improving picture of frontline social work practice with more audits being judged as good in each Practice Week.
- 3.5 Recruitment and retention is a key area of improvement, Turnover of social workers was 11% in September 2019 which is below the regional and national average. The West Midlands rate is 15.9%.
- 3.6 There has been a steady increase in the number of children in need who are seen within 5 days of their referral. In September 77.5% of these children were seen within the 5-day timescale compared with 55.3% in March 2019. This is an area that was highlighted as a concern in the previous inspection and the improving picture means that children in need are now receiving a timelier response.
- 3.7 Within Children and Young People in Care there are a number of good news stories, the first is that there are now more children in local authority placements than those placed with independent fostering agencies. This means that more children are being supported to remain local and able to access the support offered by Children and Young People in care Services easily.
- 3.8 Improving placement stability remains a key priority. Stability is now in line with statistical neighbours and national averages, but stronger performance is required. At September 2019, 71% of children in care had been in the same placement for two years and the percentage of children with three or more placements in the past 12 months had decreased from 15% to 10%.
- 3.9 It is excellent that there are currently 31 young people attending university which is 18% of the cohort.
- 3.10 The self-evaluation demonstrates that progress has been made against most of the key priorities and Ofsted recommendations outlined in the 2018-2019 self-evaluation. There is however still more to be done and key priorities are outlined below. The Children and Young People's service also has a detailed strategic plan that outlines work to be undertaken in 2019-20 that will further strengthen the quality and impact of the Councils work with Children, Young People and their families:
- Continuing to Improve workforce retention in order to provide children with greater consistency and establish a skilled and knowledgeable workforce who are fully equipped to help children and families achieve positive outcomes.

- There will be a continued focus on the quality of practice delivered through a Practice improvement action plan. This includes improving assessment analysis and planning, improving the quality of direct work to strengthen the voice of the child and ensuring restorative practice is imbedded within supervision which will promote a focus on the impact of interventions on the lived experience of children and explicitly provide opportunity for critical reflection.
- Embedding 'Practice Weeks' to ensure senior managers have a clear reflection of the quality of frontline practice and continue to use dip sampling both within practice week and in addition too.
- Implementing a single child's record system through Platform for Care, this will bring together recording systems for early intervention and statutory social work and enable practitioners to record the experience and journey of the child well.
- Implementing Wolverhampton's new arrangements for the Safeguarding Partnership.
- Review of governance structures relating to Contextual Safeguarding.
- Implementation of House Project for Care Leavers.
- Improving placement stability through a number of actions including embedding and extending the 'Fostering Families United' approach (a model that enables fostering families to intensively support each other).
- Embedding the Regional Adoption Agency.
- Continuing to embed Restorative Practice across Children's Services.
- The inclusion and support team are leading a project (Culture of Belonging) designed to help schools support greater inclusion and reduce permanent exclusions.

#### **4.0 Questions for Scrutiny to consider**

- 4.1 Comment on whether Scrutiny Panel considers the self-evaluation answers the three questions asked by Ofsted as outlined in the main body of the report
- 4.2 Comment on whether Scrutiny Panel is assured that the Children and Young people's Service knows itself well.
- 4.3 Comment on whether Scrutiny Panel considers there are any important issues that are not addressed within the Self-Evaluation.

#### **5.0 Financial implications**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.  
[MK/17012020/C]

#### **6.0 Legal implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications  
[TC/17012020/V]

## **7.0 Equalities implications**

7.1 Social workers provide support to the whole community including the full range of diverse groups. Excellent quality social work practice will be more attuned to the equality issues experienced by individuals, families and communities. High quality social work will more competently deploy required skill in the practice situation. This annual Self-Evaluation demonstrates the quality of practice being provided to all groups that are supported by statutory services.

## **8.0 Environmental implications**

8.1 There are no environmental implications

## **9.0 Human resources implications**

9.1 There are no human resources implications

## **10.0 Corporate landlord implications**

10.1 There are no corporate landlord implications

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# Wolverhampton Children and Young People's Self-Evaluation 2019-20



## The City Of Wolverhampton

The City of Wolverhampton Council is committed to ensuring children and young people have the best start in life and as such this is a central component of the Council Plan 2019-2024. There are 260,000 people who live in the City, 58,678 of these are children under the age of 18.

The City is home to people from all over the world – one third of the population is from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups and 19% of residents were born outside of the UK. There are around 90 languages spoken in the City.

The number of children receiving formal support has decreased across all areas of Children's Social Care. This report will evidence an increase in good frontline practice, resulting in good outcomes for children. We hope the impact of this is that more families are able to enjoy family life independent of state intervention.

### **Children receiving support as at end of September 2019:**

588 Children and young people in care

258 Children who have a Child Protection Plan

844 Children who have a Child in Need Plan



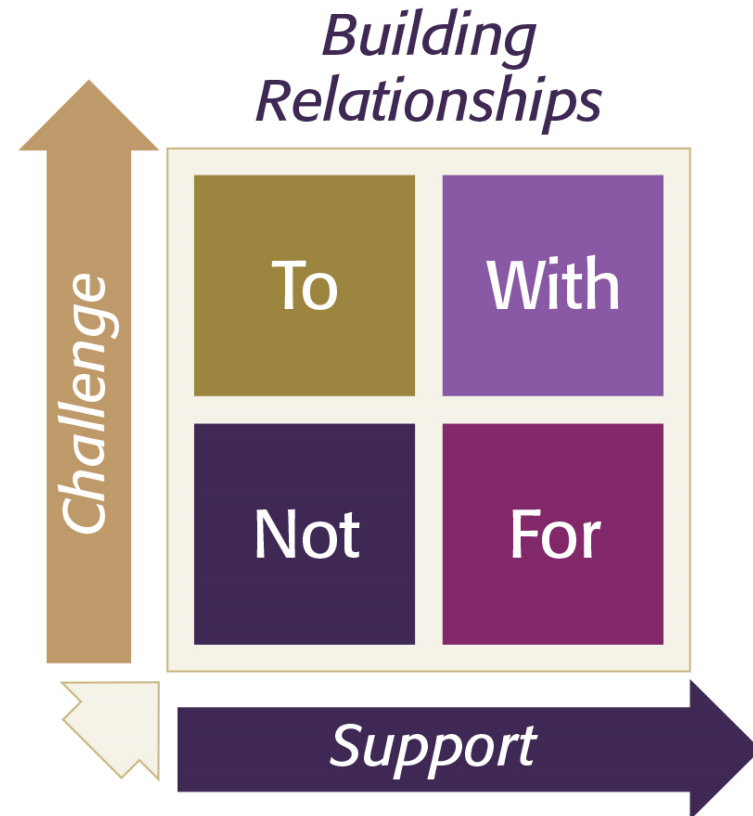
## Our Values for Children Services

- To develop respectful and empowering relationships with children, young people and families
- To ensure children are at the centre of everything we do
- High aspirations, high expectations

The Children and Young People's services began adopting a restorative approach to practice in November 2016. All frontline practitioners receive three days training in the approach.

The approach emphasises the importance of building effective relationships, working With families rather than doing things to them or for them and helping families make sustainable change.

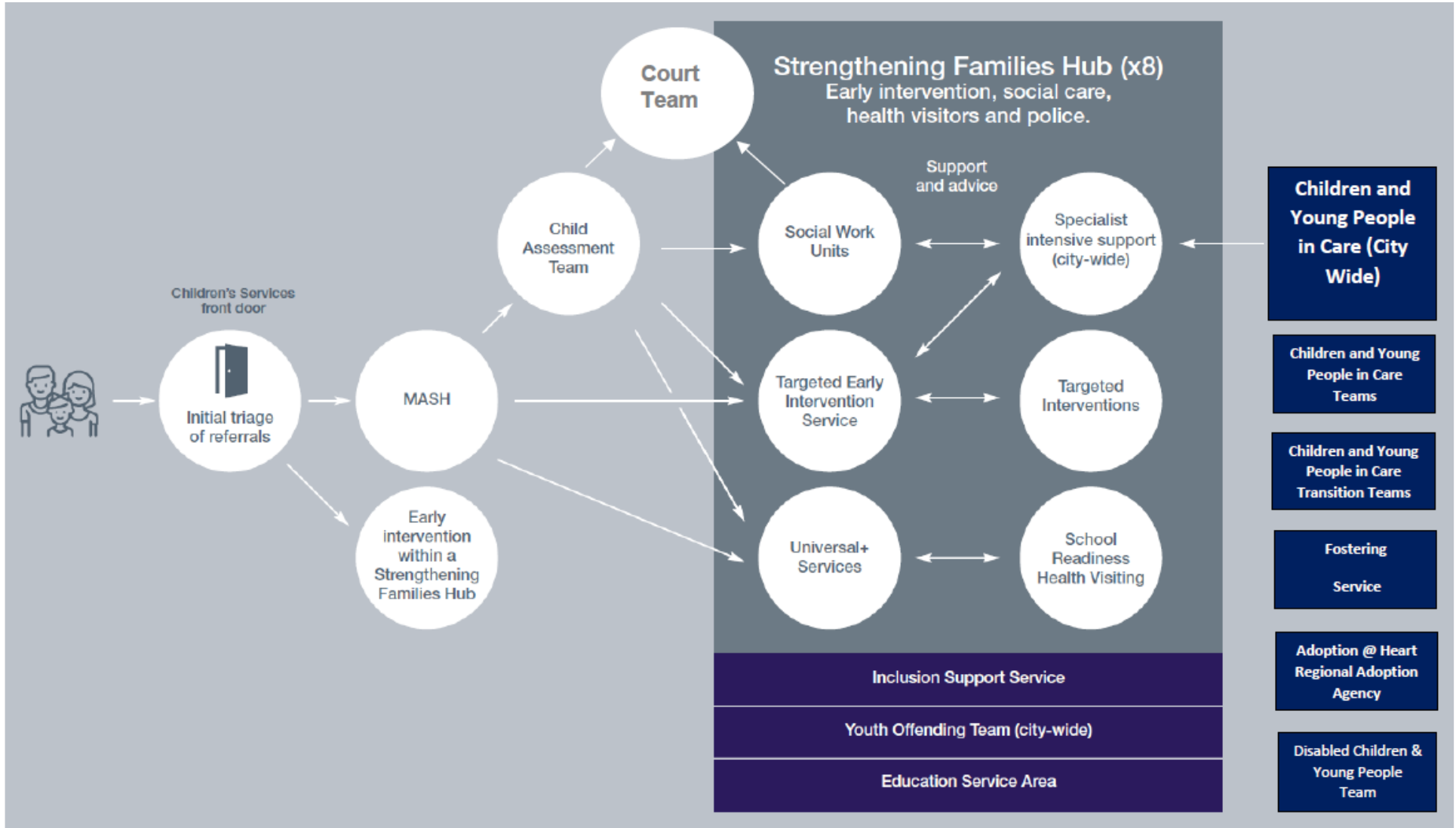
Restorative is a high support high challenge model that supports practitioners to be clear about concerns and set clear expectations whilst providing support to help families achieve these goals.



38 employees have participated in the three day Restorative Practice training between April 2019 and September 2019. There are examples of employees using the approach in family meetings to help family members understand how their actions impact on their loved ones. For some this has been effective in increasing the families motivation to change. Many employees also use restorative solution circles to generate ideas to work creatively with Children and Families where they feel the plan has not been effective in supporting change.

### City of Wolverhampton Children and Young people's Service Operating Model

Page 12



**City of Wolverhampton Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, Report published: 31 March 2017**



**Inspection Findings**

Children’s Services in Wolverhampton are Good

Children who need help and protection	Requires improvement to be good
Children looked after and achieving permanence	Good
Adoption performance	Good
Experience and progress of care leavers	Good
Leadership, management and governance	Good

Since the Inspection an Ofsted focused visit was undertaken in September 2018. This focussed on Assessments and Children in Need and Child Protection Plans. This highlighted the following areas for development; progress against these areas is embedded within the main body of this self-assessment:

1. In locality team hubs, many assessments did not sufficiently describe the changes and emerging needs being experienced by children and families.
2. Plans were not sufficiently effective in reducing needs. They did not adapt to changing circumstances. Actions to address children’s unmet needs not sufficiently clear or specific. Nor did they include achievable actions and outcomes.
3. Social workers in some locality teams experienced excessively high caseloads.
4. While supervision was regular in locality team hubs, and social workers valued the support they received, supervision was not being used effectively to improve practice. Supervision was not sufficiently detailed or reflective.

## Children and Young people get the best start in life

### Strengthening families where children are at risk (Enables children to remain safely within families)

- Continue the successful delivery of the Troubled Families Programme in order to keep children safe and achieve positive outcomes as measured by the maturity matrix to ensure sustainability.
- Develop a sustainability plan that embeds and continues good practice evidenced through the **Headstart** programme
- Continue to embed a restorative approach across children and young people's service to ensure a relational way of working to help families achieve better outcomes.
- Co-produce and deliver a positive engagement strategy for young people
- Ensure effective engagement with national local evaluation to develop an evidence base for what works in supporting children's emotional health and wellbeing.
- Improve the short break offer for children with disabilities across the City.
- Develop an No Recourse to Public Funds Team that provides robust, consistent assessments to appropriately support families.
- Review the existing MASE process with a view to addressing exploitation in its broadest sense.
- Engage MASH partners to improve understanding of thresholds and appropriate referrals with their agency
- Improve transparency of decision making within MASH and communication with partners
- Review MASH structures to ensure effective working across the partnership
- Develop pre-proceedings processes to include multi-agency input
- Increase the use and engagement with family group conferencing to prevent family breakdown and reduce reliance on services. Use family group conferencing as an alternative to initial conference where safe to do so.
- Set up a Specialist Multi Agency Team to use Trauma Informed Practice to support young people at risk of exploitation.
- Support families in a timely manner bringing in relevant and appropriate services where required.
- Implement Working Together 2018 implications for Safeguarding Board
- Develop a governance and delivery framework for the implementation of contextual safeguarding

### Strengthening families where children are at risk (Children experience permanent and stable placements)

- To promote Early identification of vulnerable children likely to be subject to public law procedures to ensure clear plans in respect of early permanence
- Ensure Outline Child Protection plans developed are good quality
- Ensure we have the right young people in care ensuring permanence is secured in a timely manner.
- Improve opportunities for children and young people to live with carers approved by City of Wolverhampton Council to enhance opportunity and support the stability of placements.
- Ensure assessment and planning is of good quality and demonstrates improved outcomes for children
- Ensure children and young people are supported to live in suitable placements or accommodation that meets their needs.
- Strengthen the emotional wellbeing and therapeutic support services available for children and young people in care
- Ensure Sufficiency and Quality of placement for children and young people in care
- Embed a new in-house assessment children's home to reduce number of young people in external residential.
- Prepare for the change in law, from DOLS to Liberty Protection Safeguards, which will now include those **16-17 year** olds, in need of authorised assessments to protect their liberty.
- Ensure good practice is maintained with the implementation of the Regional Adoption Agency
- Demonstrate impact of Quality Assurance and performance management information on services provided to children and young people to meet their assessed needs.

### Strong resilient and healthy communities

- Support migration to Eclipse whilst ensuring we have continued performance information and a fit for purpose electronic recording system
- Work with all children and young people forums to develop a model which will promote a more consistent approach to co-production
- Work with the Department for Education and Future Social to implement the National Accreditation and Assessment System locally and enable 30% of the children's workforce to complete the programme

### Strengthening families where children are at risk (Less children and young people become involved or remain involved in the youth justice system)

- Increase the participation of YOT young people by ensuring their views are heard and used to shape future service provision.
- Increase victim contact and engagement in the Restorative Justice process.
- Implementation of **ChildFirst**. Offender second approach in community referral order panels to reduce the criminalisation of children and young people in care and care leavers.
- Ensure coordination of the partnership response to gangs and youth violence across the City.
- Develop a non-statutory 'prevention' offer within the YOT to reduce the number of first-time entrants into the youth justice system.
- Implement trauma informed practice across the YOT to support young people effected by trauma.

### Education that fulfils potential

- Implement a comprehensive, joined-up approach to identifying and supporting children who are at risk of exclusion or non-engagement in school.
- Improve educational engagement and attainment for children and young people in care, care leavers and young people involved in the youth justice system.
- Improve training and employment opportunities for 16 – 18-year olds children and young people in care, care leavers and young people involved in the youth justice system.
- Improve the integrated approach of assessment and planning for children with disabilities and SEN.
- Develop an improved understanding of our most vulnerable learners in order to inform a clear approach to inclusion and safeguarding
- To review and build on an integrated approach across Inclusion Support and SF Hubs
- To promote awareness and understanding of special educational needs and disabilities to support inclusion and a culture of belonging

Quality Assurance

<u>Audit Period</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>RI</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Overall total</u>
2018-2019	3	37	40 (40%)	43	17	60 (60%)	<b>100</b>
Sept 2019	2	9	11 (40%)	15	1	16 (60%)	<b>27</b>
Sept Dips	7	19	26 (65%)	11	3	14 (35%)	<b>40</b>
Sept 2019 Observations	2	8	10 (91%)	0	1	1 (9%)	<b>11</b>
Trajectory	Continued improvement in the number of outstanding Audits			The proportion of inadequate audits has decreased but the number of RI has remained consistent overall			



The Children and Young People’s service has significantly improved the way in which audit is undertaken across the service. Practice Weeks have been introduced since September 2018. All senior managers including the Director of Children’s Services now spend four days over two weeks undertaking; audits alongside practitioners, observing visits, meetings and practice, spending time with teams. This provides workers with immediate feedback, allows managers to understand how interventions are experienced by children and families first hand and increases the visibility of senior managers.

## Quality Assurance

- **Key areas of strength include;** social workers know their children and families well and can tell their stories, timely permanence for children who can not remain in the care of their parents, there is more evidence of direct work but this needs to be reflected more in plans.
- **Green shoots include;** The timeliness and quality of assessments could be further improved to ensure assessments are leading to effective interventions and improved outcomes for children and young people. Some supervision records evidence excellent practice but greater consistency is required and supervision records need to evidence that supervision is leading to effective social work practice more.
- **Areas for development include;** evidence of the use of specialist assessment tools, although this is starting to improve, family meetings being utilised, quality of PEP's, completion and quality of chronologies, SMART plans which are child focused and include the voice of the child, and greater evidence of different plans like MASE plans being co-ordinated and complimentary. Performance in relation to Voice of the Child and Direct Work decreased in the general audit despite the dip on Direct Work being generally positive. It was notable the some teams performed significant better than others in relation to this. A Practice Action plan is now in development to ensure improvement activity is focused and well co-ordinated

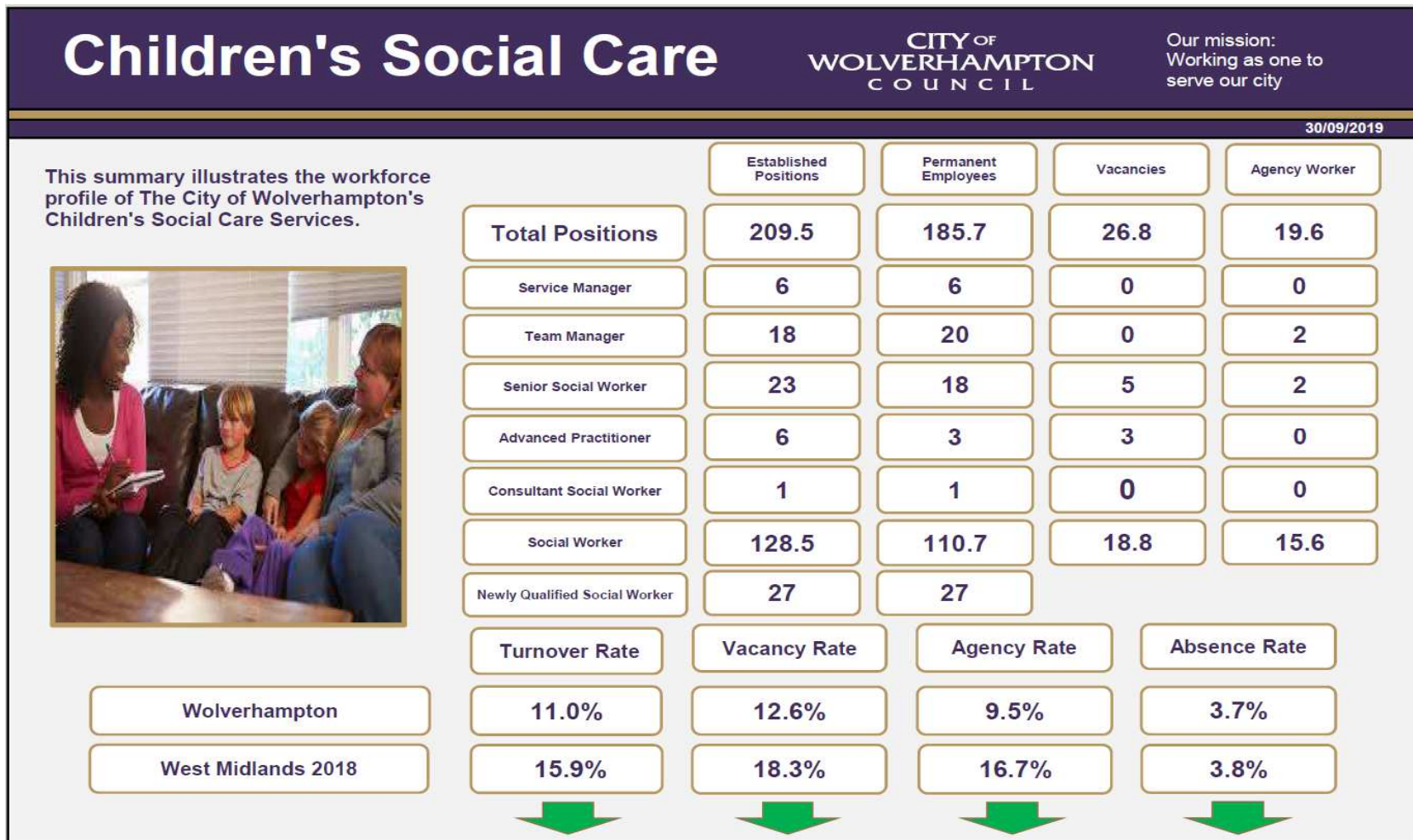
## Action planning

- A Practice Improvement Action Plan is in Development to raise consistency of practice in relation to Voice of the Child, Direct Work and Smart and impact focused planning
- Dip sample for December Practice Week is Voice of the Child
- A Planning Dip sample is also scheduled for December and is being undertaken by social care and the IRO service.



### Workforce

Following a restructure across Children and Young People in November 2018 the social work workforce has begun to stabilise. The service is now fully staffed at service manager and team manager level. This is leading to greater stability for social workers, a greater focus on the progression of work and a reduction in caseloads for social workers holding CiN/CP work. Six additional social work positions have been established within the Children and Young People in Care Service in order to reduce workload inline with CiN/CP and enable good quality support for foster carers.



### School exclusions

Wolverhampton Behaviour & Attendance Team work closely with schools and alternative providers in the city, along with School Admissions and other key partners, to ensure that permanently excluded pupils are referred to alternative provision in a timely manner. Transitions between schools and alternative providers are supported throughout the process and excluded children, and their parents/carers, are enabled to express their wishes and feelings throughout. Exclusion Prevention Meetings are also offered to schools as a proactive means of avoiding exclusion and supporting pupils who are at risk of exclusion.

The graph below shows the numbers of pupils excluded from Wolverhampton schools by academic year. 2018/19 has seen a continued increase in exclusions due to reasons related to drug, alcohol and banned items.

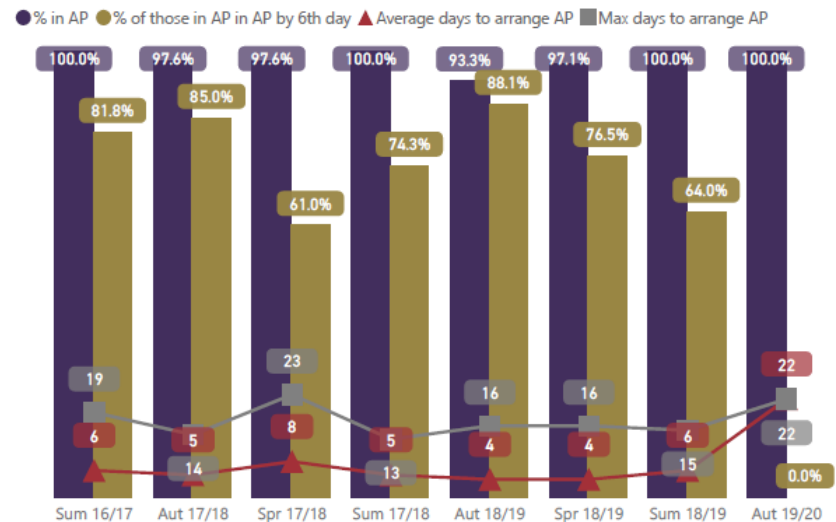
The bottom graph shows numbers and impact of exclusion prevention meetings (EPM) held, by academic year. The use of EPMs has increased and show a high degree of success, with 75% of those who had one not being excluded within 3 months.

Indicator	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Primary (exc. Withdrawn/Overtured/Pending)	14	22	28	21	15	0
Secondary (exc. Withdrawn/Overtured/Pending)	27	67	89	96	89	1
Special/PRU (exc. Withdrawn/Overtured/Pending)	0	3	6	1	1	0
X-City	18	12	7	9	12	0
Withdrawn/Overtured	0/3	5/2	11/7	2/5	4/1	1/0
% of permanent exclusions reported to the DfE by schools	41%	57%	68%	48%	33%	0%
Average number of Days taken to arrange Provision	7	5	8	6	6	12
Fixed Period Exclusions				2323	2781	165

Exclusion prevention meetings	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Meetings Held	89	79	103	5
% Meetings that did not result in Permanent Exclusion within 3 months	78%	84%	88%	100%
% Meetings but still resulted in Permanent Exclusion within 3 months	22%	16%	12%	0%
% Permanent Exclusions with no meeting within 3 months	85%	91%	90%	100%

The number of permanently excluded pupils offered alternative provision, as shown in the graph below, has stayed above 95%. The % of pupils offered provision by the 6<sup>th</sup> day of a permanent exclusion, though generally high, has dropped to 75% in the spring term. This is because of the closure of 'Re-Entry' alternative provision and other potential alternative provision being often full, leading to longer timescales in placing pupils.

Statutory Timeliness for Permanent Exclusions

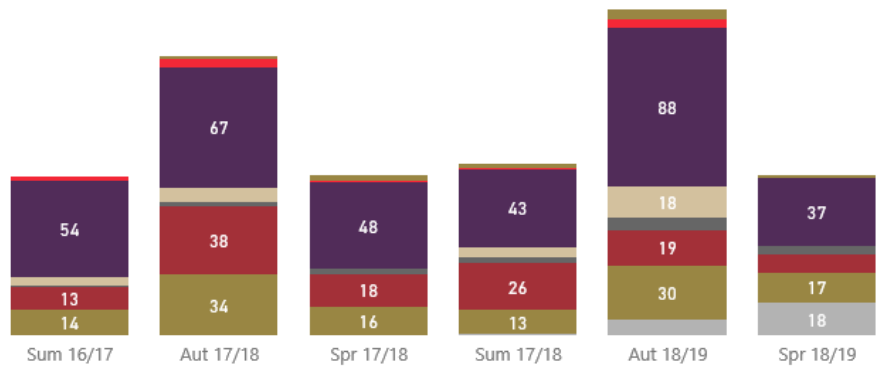


### Children Missing Education and Electively Home Educated

The Behaviour & Attendance Team conduct investigations into all children who are reported as missing from education (CME) in a timely and efficient manner. The bar graph below relates to children who have applied to a Wolverhampton school but have not started at the school after 4 weeks. Additional CME investigations are conducted around children who are reported by other local authorities as having moved to Wolverhampton, but have not yet applied for a school place. School admissions are monitored and supported for these children and School Attendance Orders (SAOs) are issued where appropriate.

Children who are electively home educated (EHE) are all offered support and guidance from a dedicated EHE Officer. Many families take up, and highly value, this support. If any families do not wish to receive our support, they are contacted periodically to offer the support again, should they require it. Wolverhampton had 312 children who are EHE at March 2019. Lifestyle/cultural/religious beliefs is the most common reason for children becoming electively home educated in Wolverhampton

The graphs below illustrate the numbers and outcomes of internal CME investigations by school term, and numbers of children who are EHE by calendar month.



CME Investigation Outcomes

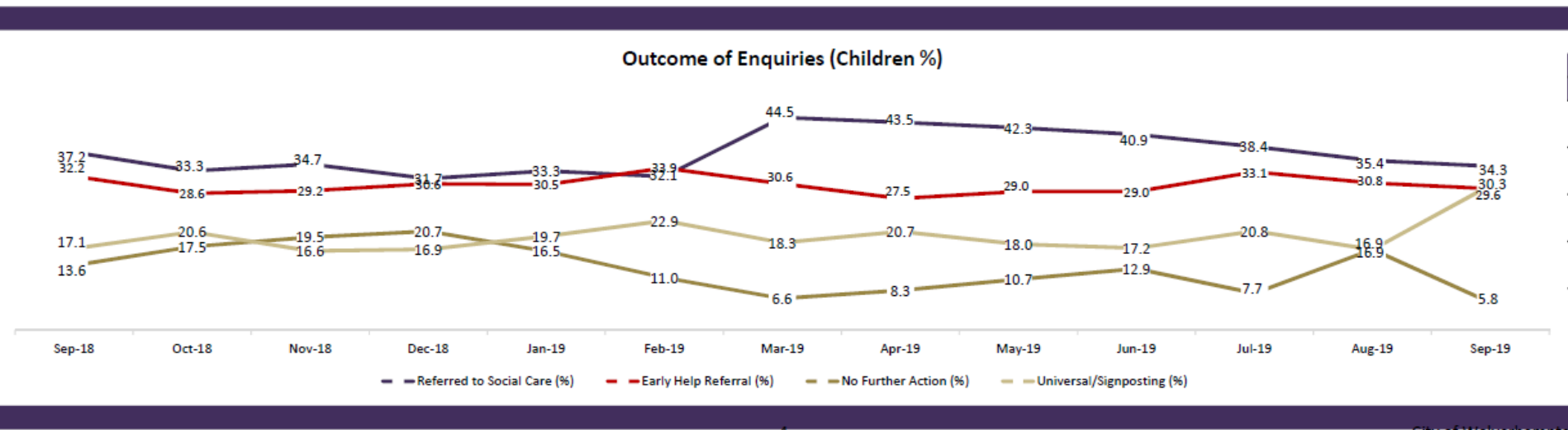
- Outcome ● Pending ● Left City ● Left City Destination Known ● Left City Not Located ● Confirmed CME in City ● Confirmed X-city Education
- Confirmed In-city Education ● Relocation to Wolves cancelled ● Elective Home Ed - Wolves

### Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

The City of Wolverhampton MASH has continued to perform well. It consists of children and adult social care, early help, Police, Wolverhampton Homes, Recovery Near You, Probation Service, Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust and Black Country Partnership Foundation Trust. The service ensures responses to referrals to social care are timely and children who may be at risk of significant harm are safeguarded appropriately.

There are on average 468 enquiries per month. The majority of children go on to be supported by Early Help or Social Care. The numbers of referrals into social care in Wolverhampton are decreasing.

It should be noted that the MASH acts as a single front door for all services for Children and Young People, it is felt that this may be having an impact on the number of referrals and therefore this aspect of functions within the MASH is being reviewed.



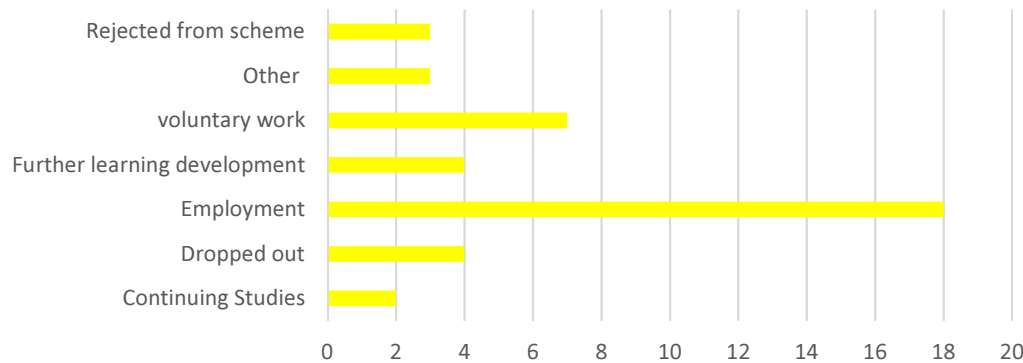
### Early Intervention

Early Intervention is achieved through eight locality based strengthening family hubs. In October 2019 1,283 children were being supported by Strengthening Families workers. Figures also demonstrate that families receive support from a Strengthening Families worker for between 49 – 111 days, this is consistent with the differing needs of the families. Early Intervention is currently working with 227 children that are open to statutory social work services at child in need, child protection and public law proceedings threshold; providing targeted interventions, direct work with children and young people, supporting victims and child witnesses of Domestic Abuse and addressing ‘Troubled Families’ factors that are impacting such as worklessness or school attendance.

**Parent Champions:** Wolverhampton’s Parent Champions is a volunteer, peer to peer model that informs and engages disadvantaged families at the earliest possible point that have not previously engaged with early support services. This is a universal offer overseen by Strengthening Families and identified within the Early Help Strategy. There are currently 51 Parent Champions who have been inducted, 17 of whom are currently actively and have committed 627 volunteering hours in 2018/2019. The current data evidences that the most prevalent outcome is related to employment opportunities which is linked to the Early Help strategy identified outcomes.

#### Destination / progress of

#### Parent Champions:



**McEwan group:** is aimed at:

- mothers of children who have been sexually abused or who are at risk of being sexually abused,
- mothers who have risky partners whom the children are exposed to,
- Grandparents who have custody of their grandchildren because of sexual abuse within the family.

The McEwan is a specialist programme of teaching delivered within the Strengthening Families Hubs and increases the potential safeguarding mechanisms for children and young people from their primary carers whilst maintaining them in the care of their immediate family. Preventing or reducing an escalation into child protection planning, pre-proceedings or care proceedings is a potential impact of this programme as the risk of sexual abuse is reduced and the safeguarding ability of the primary care giver is maximised.

September 2017	April 2018	September 2018	January 2019	May 2019	September 2019
10 referrals. Social Care - 10	13 referrals Social Care – 7 Early Help – 4	9 referrals Social Care - 7 Early Help - 2	12 referrals Social Care – 8 Early Help - 4	8 referrals Social Care – 7 Early Help - 1	15 referrals – ongoing
50% attendance - 5 women attended all sessions	38% - 5 women stayed engaged within the group.	77% - 7 ladies attended the group 6 attended each week and 1 did 4/10 sessions.	42% - 5 ladies DNA, 1 lady completed all sessions	62% - 5 ladies DNA, 1 completed all sessions	

**Freedom programme:** is also delivered within the Strengthening Families Hubs. There are two male workers who deliver the program as well as female workers and the feedback from the females attending the group has been positive about all of the facilitators.

The Freedom Programme examines the roles played by attitudes and beliefs on the actions of abusive men and the responses of victims and survivors. The aim is to help them to make sense of and understand what has happened to them. The Freedom Programme also describes in detail how children are affected by being exposed to this kind of abuse and very importantly how their lives are improved when the abuse is removed.

In the last 12 months there have been 917 women who have engaged with and completed the Freedom programme. The table below breaks this down by locality cross the City.

**Future planning:** Given the success of engagement with the Freedom programme there are enquiries being made about the Freedom Programme for Men to broaden the offer from Strengthening Families regarding domestic abuse within the City.

Locality	01.04.18. - 31.03.19.		March 2019 – October 2019
	One Count	All Sessions	All localities
1	36	133	
2	12	60	
3	24	129	
4	30	159	
5	13	65	
6	12	92	
7	29	151	
8	28	128	
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>917</b>	<b>111</b>

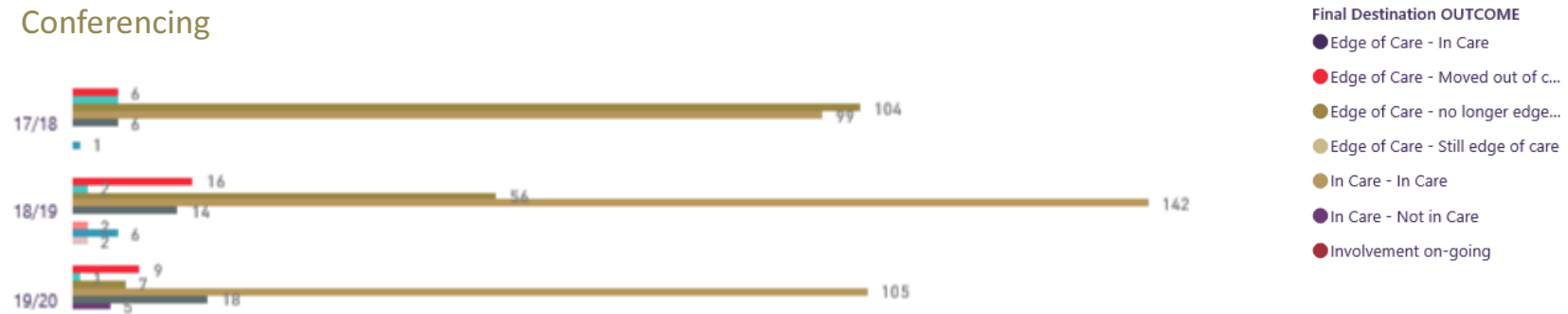
## Specialist Support

The Specialist Support service continues to enable children to remain safely at home through a range of services that help families repair relationships, find solutions to the issues that are affecting children and develop safe, effective boundaries and support parents to make significant lifestyle changes. The service focuses on good quality direct interventions with the City's most vulnerable children and families.

### Intensive Family Support



### Family Group Conferencing

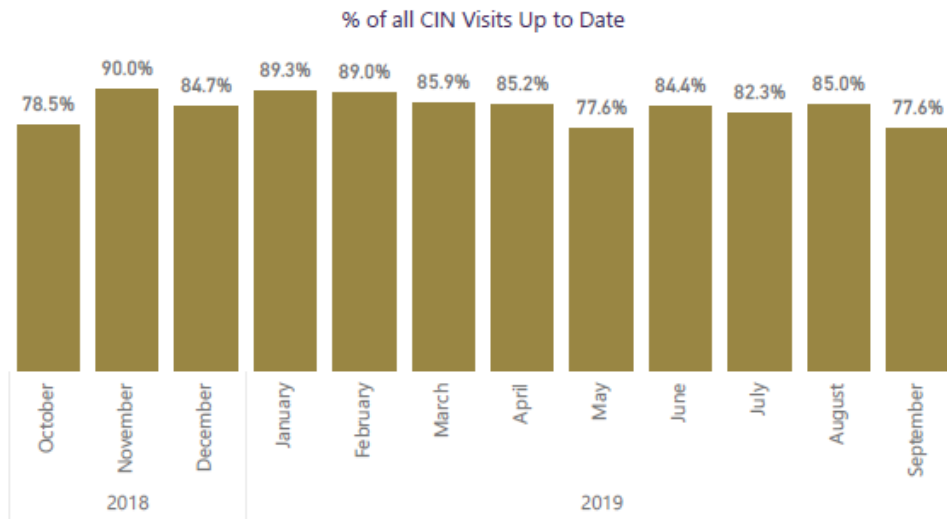




## Children in Need

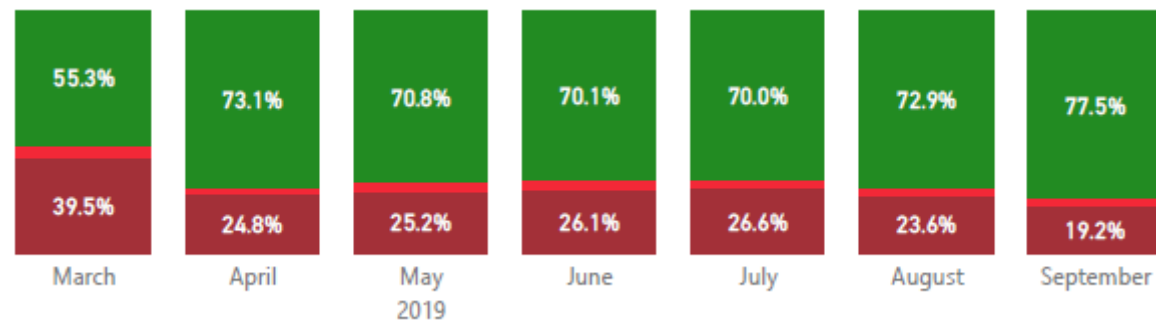
As at September 2019 there were 844 children subject to CiN planning of these 179 are children with disabilities. 78% of children had a visit within the expected times scales which are set at a minimum of once a month. Some children were seen more frequently as per their CiN plan. 80% of assessments are completed within 45 days.

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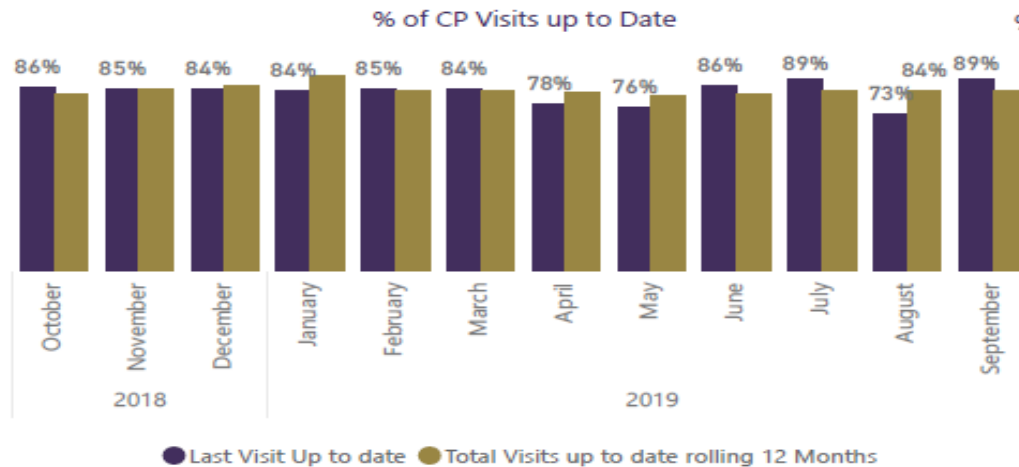
Performance in relation to CiN visits has not been consistent across all teams. CiN visits completed within timescales has increased to above 80% in all but one team and is currently above 90% in most teams. Caseloads have decreased and most social workers are now working with less than 20 children and young people. This should help to improve practice across all areas.

There has been steady improvement in the number of children who are seen within 5 days of referral.



## Child Protection

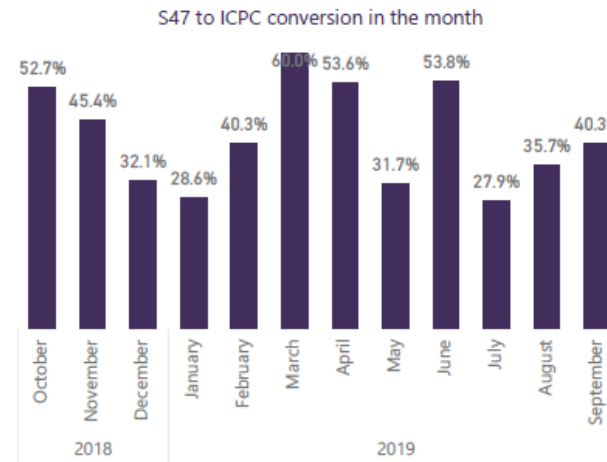
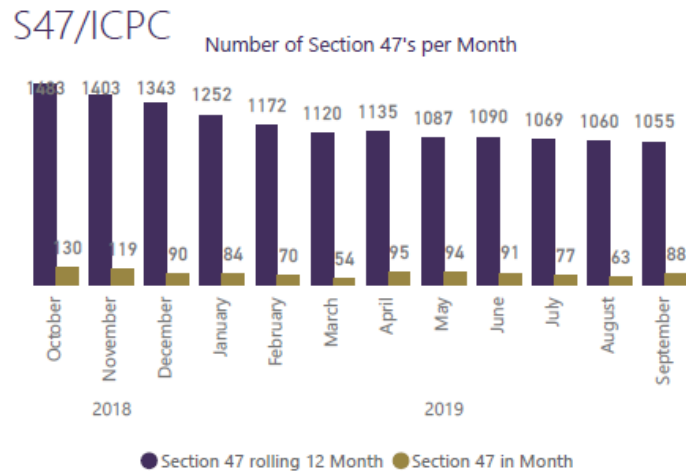
The number of children subject of a child protection plan was 258 in September 2019. The Safeguarding manager monitors child protection decisions and is confident that threshold is being applied appropriately. The number of child protection cases that are repeats within 2 years has dropped slightly from 9% to 6%. This indicates that in the main families are sustaining the changes made whilst children have been subject to child protection planning.



Timeliness of Child Protection visits remains an area of focus. Some locality teams are consistently performing well. There has been a general improvement in localities that were previously consistently failing to see most children within time scales.

Evidence gathered during Practice Weeks indicates the quality of work being undertaken during visits needs to be more consistent. Good or outstanding evidence of direct work was evident in 57% of records audited and good or outstanding evidence of the voice of the child had decreased slightly to 68%. Of 11 observations of practice that took place 10 were judged to be good or outstanding with the remainder being inadequate. Social workers were able to articulate their work with children and families well in 88% of cases. This indicates that improvements are required in relation to writing up visits, assessments and planning documents.

## Child Protection Investigations



Where child protection concerns are raised investigations are undertaken in a timely manner and child protection procedures adhered to well. The number of child protection investigations has decreased in the 12 month rolling period but as at January 2019, only 8% of investigations result in no further action. It is important for children and families that concerns are addressed in a safe and proportionate manner. A range of work is being undertaken to ensure this is the case, including work with partners within the MASH and the adoption of a risk management approach that will enable practitioners to think more reflectively about risk. A DIP sample has been completed of S47's undertaken in the MASH and these were largely felt to be appropriate. Training is being provided to social workers based in locality teams and a further DIP sample is being undertaken of Section 47's undertaken within locality areas.

## Child Exploitation

In Wolverhampton Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is overseen by the Safeguarding Service however, it is a recognised as a child protection issue and is not treated as a stand-alone, or a specialist issue. This enables the workforce to be more confident in identifying and responding to CSE as it is part of everyday practice.

### Local CSE Figures

Quarter	No of YP	At Risk	Significant	Serious
Apr-June 18	139	122	15	2
Jul-Sept 18	140	122	17	1
Oct -Dec 18	131	117	12	2
Jan-Mar 19	132	116	10	6
Apr-Jun 19	99	78	14	7
Jul – Sept 19	98	83	8	7

In April a data cleanse was conducted that involved ensuring young people who were no longer at risk of CSE were removed from the data set. Professionals in Wolverhampton continue to identify young people at risk of CSE and provide preventative intervention through MASE, direct intervention or support from voluntary/specialised services.

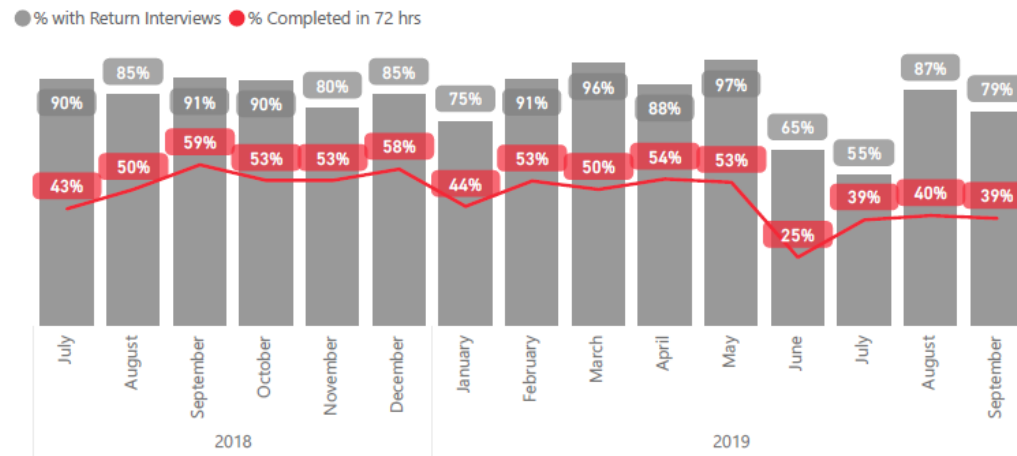
In the last quarter, 85% were identified as being at low risk and therefore are supported in their understanding of risk via early help and Child in Need (CIN) services; this is in keeping with statistical data from others in the combined authority area. The remaining 8% are significant risk and 7% at serious risk young people who are deemed significant to serious risk are in receipt of specialist support usually via Children’s Social Care and/or Intensive Family Support; these young people are also subject of a discreet Multi-agency Sexual Exploitation plan which seeks to protect and reduce their risk. Where risks increase despite intervention plans, alternative protection options are explored; for example, the use of civil injunctions.

Disruption activity is of the utmost importance and the recent Operation led by the police started as drug dealing investigation within the City involving Kurdish males. It then broadened to consider county lines exploitation and/or links to CSE. Four males arrested and three victims identified who are open to MASE and a Sexual Risk Order is being considered for one man.

## Missing

In September 2019, there were 61 missing incidents for 40 young people within the City, 30 incidents related to children and young people in care, six were children in need and five related to children subject to child protection planning. The number of missing episodes has increased steadily over the last few months, due to the police changing their processes regarding missing and absent classification.

Chart 9b - Monthly Breakdown of Completed Interviews, and Completed within 72 hrs



As part of the return interview, the CSE screening tool is always completed to ensure consideration is given to missing young people being at risk of CSE.

The number of missing episodes followed up with a missing return interview is monitored on a monthly basis. Whilst not all of these are completed within the 72 hour timescale there remains a commitment to always persisting in engaging with young people. As a result of this, on average most missing return interviews are completed within 5 days of the young person's return unless the meeting was declined. When interviews were not completed within the 72 hour timescale, this was mainly due to the young person not being able to be contacted or because the young person had gone missing again.

## Tackling Violence and Exploitation

Wolverhampton has taken the bold stance of committing to a fresh approach to address issues of violence and exploitation (V&E) in the city, recognising that the ever-evolving landscape of exploitation requires a more flexible and agile approach across partners and a commitment to tackle violence and exploitation in its entirety.

The complex and exploitative world of organised Crime Groups<sup>1</sup> (OCGs), which are often driven by money, power or control, leaves the door open for adults or children to be enticed or coerced into situations they then struggle to remove themselves from. Our insights into these practices highlight an increasing level of cross-over between crime types that have historically been dealt with separately from one another.

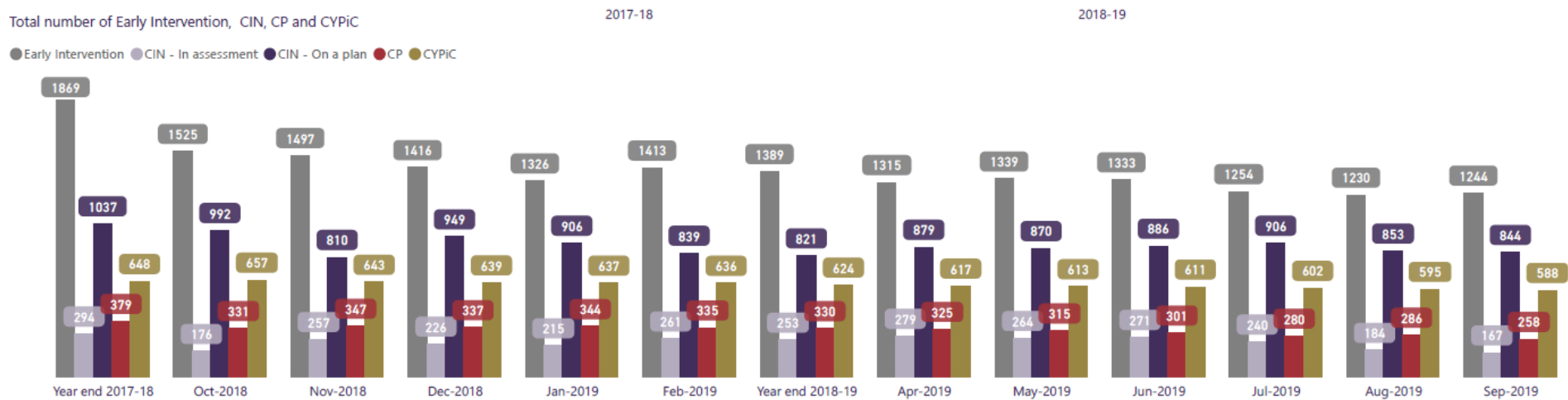
Our ambition is for swifter information flow, earlier identification and support for those at risk, a raised awareness across communities and a lessening of the risks of being forced or lured into these situations. The approach is not solely focused on supporting victims however; strengthening our collective response and the intelligence picture of how OCGs operate will also inform the criminal justice and disruption practices of our enforcement partners.

In collaboration with the West Midlands Local Authorities, WMP, and colleagues in the Safer Wolverhampton Partnership the Safeguarding Service is actively involved in defining the Exploitation agenda, considering Criminal and Sexual Exploitation, and restructuring internal resources to reflect local and regional need. This work is in the early stages but is starting to identify synergies which can be effectively built on.

The region is developing a single exploitation Screening Tool which serves to identify potential indicators which increase the likelihood of young people becoming exploited, is being developed.

## Children and Young People in Care

There is a clear vision that is shared across the Children and Young People in Care service which is focused on achieving permanence and stability for children. The number of children in care in Wolverhampton has been considerably higher than comparator authorities, over the last ten years. The rate increased annually from 2009 until 2014, reaching 807 at its peak. In May 2014, the Families R First Programme was introduced which put greater emphasis on tackling problems within the family unit and offering support at an earlier stage, preventing the need for children and young people to become looked after. This work, together with the co-location of early intervention and statutory social work teams and the introduction of a relational and strength based practice framework has contributed to year on year reductions in the number of looked after children. The number as at the end of September 2019 was 588.

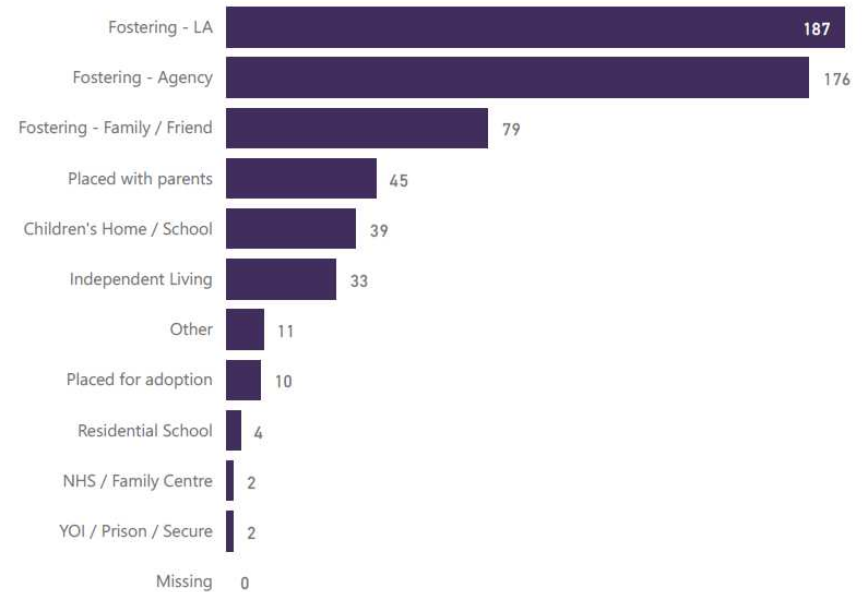


Robust decision-making processes are in place to ensure that when children cannot be cared for at home, their entry into care is planned appropriately ensuring there is a care plan in place that focuses on achieving permanence in a timely manner. Following the admissions to care process, care planning is subject to additional oversight through the Head of Service Permanence Panel. The effectiveness of care planning is evidenced by good timeliness in proceedings and improved timeliness for children with a plan of adoption. Average duration of proceedings is 22.8 weeks and overall adoption timeliness compares favourably against 2018/19 for A1 (457 days from 779 days), A2 (103 days from 160) and A10 (329 days from 357).

## Placements for Children and Young People in Care

In Wolverhampton we believe that wherever possible children should live with families in or close to our City. The Fostering Family Values project is focussing on increasing number of internal fostering households and improving the offer of support to increase the retention of foster carers. The foster carers support has been improved by the introduction of therapeutic caring and restorative practice training, greater use of buddies and effective use of respite. The ambition is to increase the net gain of fostering households approved by the City of Wolverhampton by 81 households by 2020/21. There has been a net gain of 11 mainstream fostering households in the year with 15 mainstream carers and 10 connected persons approved and 4 de-registrations.

Snapshot of Placement Type on last day of month



Improving placement stability remains a key priority. stability is in line with statistical neighbors and national averages but stronger performance is required. At September 2019 71% of children in care had been in the same placement for two years and the percentage of children with three or more placements in the past 12 months had decreased from 15% to 10%. In order to achieve better placement stability plans include:

- Key 2 Inspiration opened in June 2019 (this is a local authority short term children's home that assesses the needs of children with more complex needs and provide targeted intervention that will support children and young people transition into foster homes)
- Fostering families Unites was launched in May 2019, It is in early stages of implementation but appears to have supported Children who have experienced three or more placement achieve a greater level of stability.

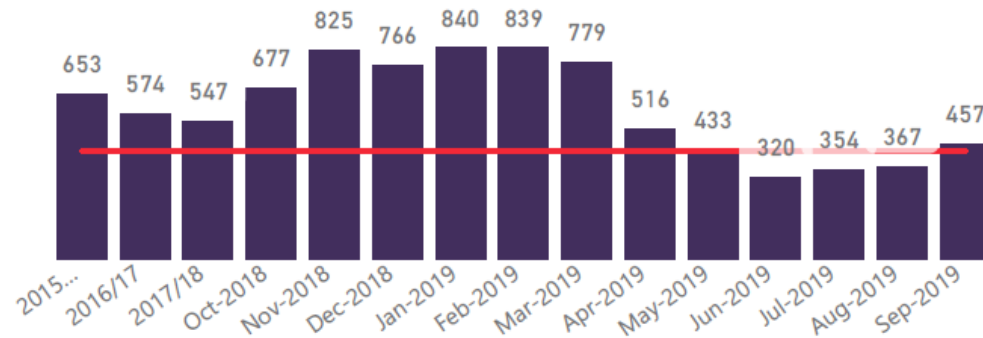


### Regional Adoption Agency; Adoption@Heart

From 1 April 2019 the City of Wolverhampton, Walsall and Dudley local authorities and Sandwell Children’s Trust are operating as one adoption agency, Adoption@Heart. The overriding factors that influenced the four agencies to work together to form a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) were historic relationships, partnership arrangements and geography. It was agreed that the hosted model would be the best option and the City of Wolverhampton Council would be the host authority. Adoption@Heart Regional Adoption Agency was launched on 1 April 2019, all current staff are in situ and have been inducted into the City of Wolverhampton Council.

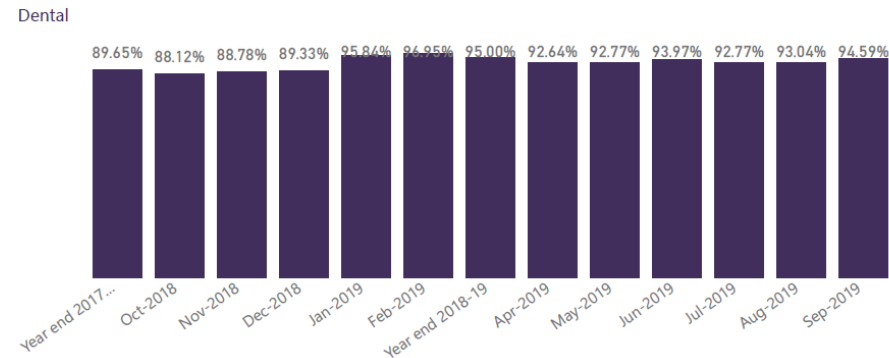
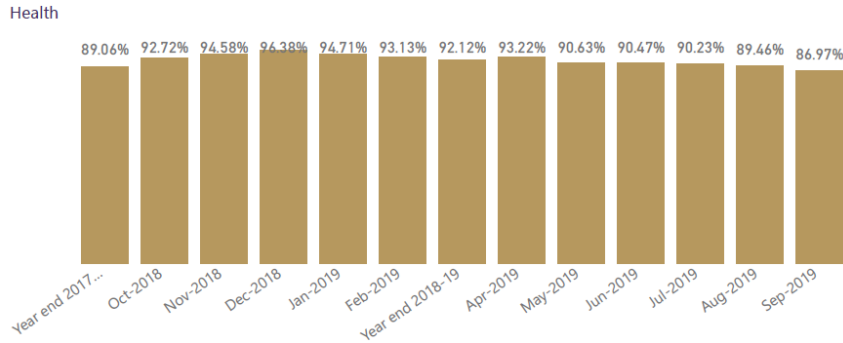
There were eight new adoptions in September 2019 therefore, we have 29 adoptions in the year to date. Overall adoption timeliness compares favourably against 2018/19 for A1 (457 days to 779 days), A2 (103 days to 160) and A10 (329 days to 357).

A1



### The Heath and wellbeing of Children and Young people in Care

Children and Young People in care have regular health and dental checks. All children have Health Passports which have been established with the support of partners in the CCG, ensuring health information is readily available to children and their carers.



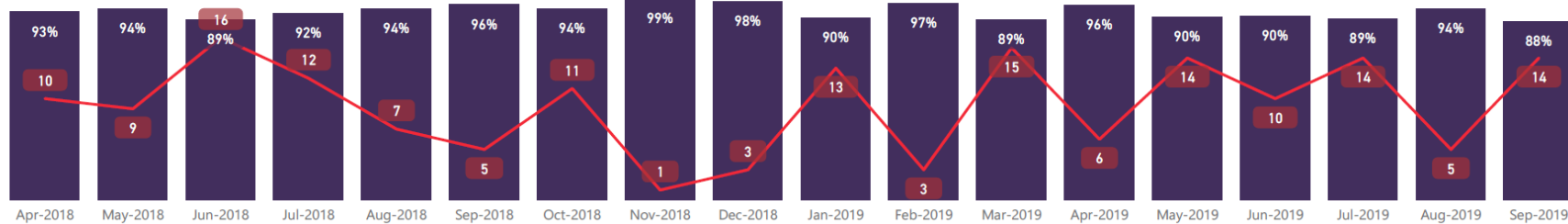
SDQ score of 13.8 gives Wolverhampton an average of 'normal'. This score shows Wolverhampton positively in comparison to regional, statistical and national comparators. Wolverhampton is ranked as the 47th best performing authority in this area. Further to this the percentage of children and young people who completed the questionnaire increased to over 90% in the year.

Emotional and Behavioural Wellbeing - SDQ average scores	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 Provisional
Wolverhampton	12.6	12.3	13.2	14.2	14.4	13.7	13.8
West Midlands	13.7	13.5	13.5	14.1	13.9	13.7	
Statistical Neighbours	14.77	14.51	14.52	15.16	14.26	14.3	
England	14	13.9	13.9	14	14.1	14.2	

## How we work with Children and Young People in Care

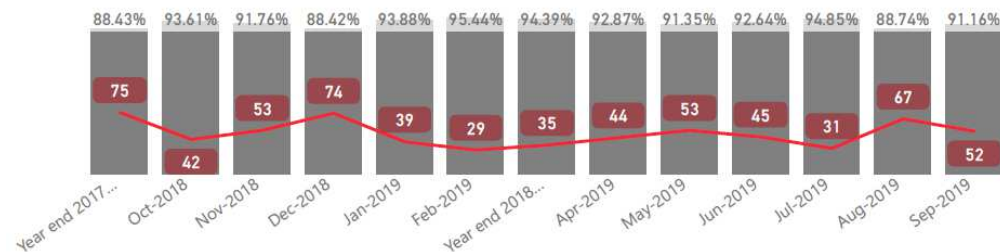
CYPiC Participation

● CYPiC Review Passes ● CYPiC Review Fails



Up to date visits

● Visits in timescale ● Visit Fails

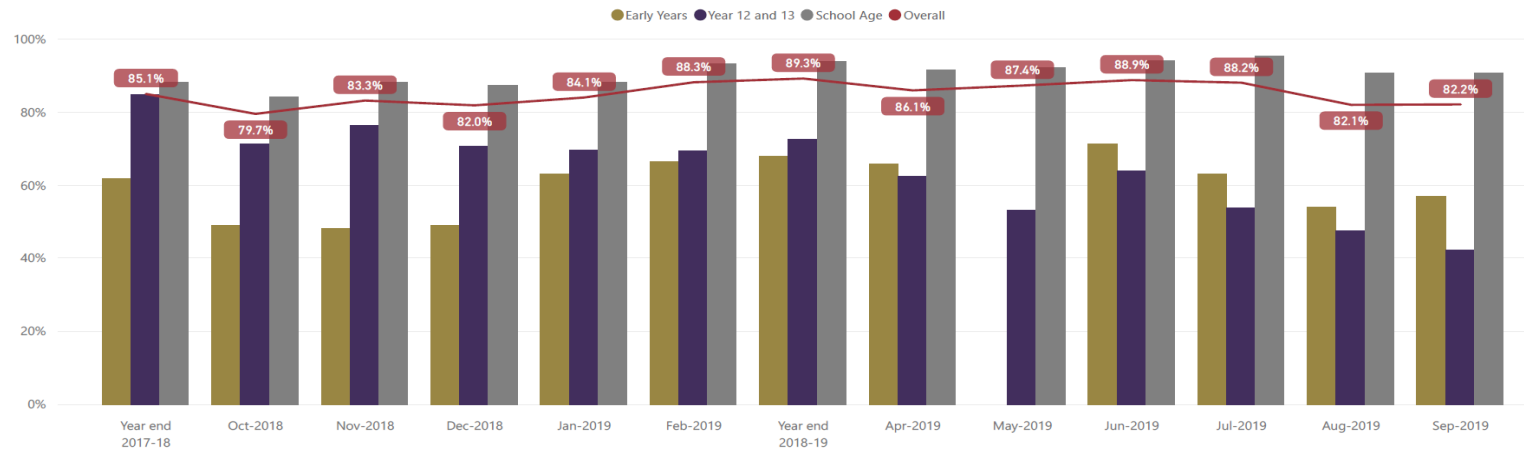


Social work visits to Children and Young People in Care fulfil a range of critical roles and functions to enable the child’s circumstances to be observed and monitored. Visits are carried out at least once every 6 weeks or once every 12 weeks in a stable placement. At the end of September, 92% of Children and Young People in Care had up to date visits. Audits have identified some evidence of excellent relationship building and direct work but this is not consistent enough and plans for children at risk of exploitation need to be better reflected within care plans. There is however, increased evidence of children contributing to their plans and as at September 2019, 88% of children participated in their Children and Young People in Care review, the majority of children participated by speaking for themselves and some children chaired their own review.

### Impact of work with Children and Young People in Care

Audits of files suggest that the work undertaken by social workers alongside other professionals and strategic activity is contributing to improved outcomes for children and young people. Two children have achieved early permanence through foster to adopt placements and disruption rates for children placed for adoption are low. Many more Children and Young People in Care are achieving educationally. Outcomes for the whole cohort at KS1 – 4 are broadly in line with national and regional averages; while the in-city results are generally higher than children and young people in care averages, the Out of City results are lower. A Dedicated Education Support Worker focuses on Out of City Children and Young people in Care. ‘Welfare Call’ have been commissioned to provide daily attendance/exclusions monitoring and termly attainment data for Out of City children. There are currently 31 young people attending university which is 18% of the cohort.

### Percentage of Children with a Personal Education Plan

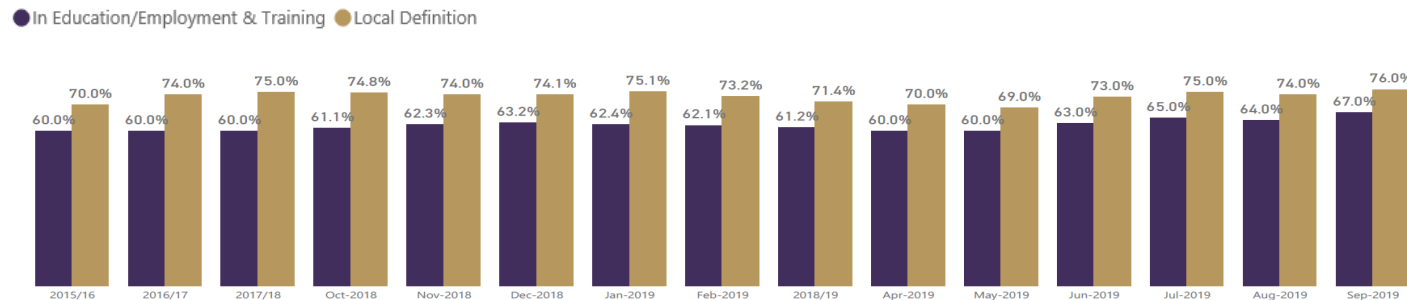


The pupil premium is used effectively to ensure children are achieving. Regular Personal Education Plans (PEP’s) are in place for the majority of children and the recently developed Electronic PEP will support a detailed understanding of progress that children are making in schools as well as identifying areas that require additional support.

## Children and Young People in Care - Transitions

The City of Wolverhampton’s Transition Team’s key purpose is to improve the life chances and achieve the best outcomes for looked after young people aged 14-18 years and care leavers up to 25, by ensuring they have support to achieve their aspirations, meet their health, education, training and accommodation needs.

Co-location of social workers, young people’s advisors, family support workers, housing team and an education, employment and training (EET) co-ordinator facilitates excellent joint working arrangements to support young people through transition. All young people are allocated a personal adviser prior to transition, to support transition planning and the development of a needs led pathway plan. There are good transition arrangements in place for young people accessing post-18 services. Young people are aware of their entitlements. Updated information leaflets and booklets are incorporated into a post-16 transition pack, and the information is on the care leavers’ Facebook page and CYPiC website. The team are committed to increasing partnership working with young people and empowering them to develop confidence and achieve their aspirations.



The variety of EET opportunities available and take up of these are given a high priority within the service and managed via an action plan. Both internal and external partners work closely together to facilitate individual opportunities for young people. Young people have priority interviews for apprenticeships within the council and the offer of apprenticeships has now been extended up to 20 years of age. In total four 16 to 18 year olds are currently in apprenticeships. The recently introduced multi-agency EET panel enables maximisation of opportunity for young people who are not engaging. This has provided opportunities for young people to reengage in education or employment or training.

## Children and Young People in Care - Housing opportunities

Care leavers have a choice of accommodation provision including; supported lodgings, YMCA Social Inclusion pathway with a range of supported accommodation provisions dependent on needs, Children and Young People in care Transitions Housing Support Service including training flats, Staying Put (over 18), Independent Accommodation (over 18) and Private Supported Accommodation Provisions. The housing support service has 33 flats, two crash pads and two training flats. Each young person living in one of these homes has a designated housing support worker (HSW) who remains with them throughout their time in the service, support hours vary but are to a maximum 30 hours per week, as the young person progresses, the number of hours decrease. The HSW draws up an individual support plan.

Since April 2019, 5 young people have moved into independence – all 5 are maintaining their tenancy 6 months on, a further 5 young people have moved into independence within the last 3 months. Currently, the percentage of young people in suitable accommodation is 93%.

In addition, the Children and Young People's Supported Accommodation Service launched a Local House Project in October 2019, working in partnership with the National House Project; this project takes a ground-breaking approach through its commitment to young people's ownership and to enable young people leaving care to achieve successful independence. The House Project was co-designed with young people from the start, and works on cooperative principles through which adults and young people in, and leaving care, work together to refurbish properties that become their homes, developing a long-term community of support, ten young people have already expressed an interest in the opportunity.

There is also a commitment to introduce an internal Supported Lodgings Service which is currently in the development stage. This will compliment the varied range of accommodation options available to children and young people in care.

## Participation of Children in Care Council and Care leavers Forum

The Children in Care Council (CiCC) has 24 members, with 11 males and 13 females. During the year three members became care leavers and moved on to the Care Leavers Forum, the group has met monthly. The average monthly attendance is 15. The Care Leavers Forum has had 13 members, three male and 10 females.

Success for Wolverhampton's Youth Voice in 2018 includes:

- Care Leaver recognised as Young Citizen of the Year with runner up from the Youth Council
- Contributed to the Excellence Equalities Inspection work
- All members of the CiCC and CLF received an I-Award.
- Record turnout for Make Your Mark highest percentage vote in the Midlands
- Youth MP speaking at the House of Commons
- Youth Council and Children and Council recognised as one of the best in the country

Involvement in consultations locally, regionally and nationally, has included:

- Early Help Strategy
- Young Carers
- Library Transformation
- Sexual Health Curriculum with Public Health
- Waste and Recycling Services
- Work Experience and Work Box
- Mental Health green paper
- Children's Commissioner report on Neglect

•CiCC and CLF members are Total Respect Trained and have delivered training to range of agencies in 2018 including West Midlands Police (Frontline and specialist teams),Social Work Students from The City of Wolverhampton University, YMCA, Social Worker, Councillors and Foster Carers .

## Corporate Parenting

The Council believes it is important to invest in children and young people in care and demonstrate this through:

- The Corporate Parenting Strategy is owned by the whole council and is committed to helping Children and Young People in Care to reach their full potential through; education, employment and training opportunities, promoting health and wellbeing, developing social skills and supporting the transition to independence and Improving understanding of the needs of these Children and Young People. The action plan that drives this work is governed by the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board made up of senior leaders from both Council and Partner departments. The Corporate Parenting Board made of up of Local Councillors provides an extra tier of scrutiny and governance.
- The annual 'I awards' event which celebrates the achievements of Looked After Children. This year saw 28% of our Children and Young People attending the event and 64% nominated
- A range of events are arranged to support Care Leavers Week
- Annual Christmas Party
- Hero Training for all Youth Council, Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum members.
- Youth Council are involved in the Scrutiny Process and sit on the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel
- The Care leavers offer was launched in September 2018 and includes;
  - Care Leavers are exempt from paying Council Tax until the age of 25 if they live in the City of Wolverhampton
  - Care leavers have guaranteed interviews for apprenticeship within the Council
  - Apprenticeships are now available up to the age of 20 to assist Care leavers in accessing them
  - <http://win.wolverhampton.gov.uk/kb5/wolverhampton/directory/advice.page?id=hQwRagSPQKE>



## Summary

The self-evaluation demonstrates that progress has been made against most of the key priorities and Ofsted recommendations outlined in the 2018-2019 self-evaluation. There is however still more to be done and key priorities are outlined below. The Children and Young People's service also has a detailed strategic plan that outlines work to be undertaken in 2019-20 that will further strengthen the quality and impact of the Councils work with Children, Young People and their families;

- Improving workforce retention in order to provide children with greater consistency and establish a skilled and knowledgeable workforce who are fully equipped to help children and families achieve positive outcomes.
- There will be a continued focus on the quality of practice delivered through a Practice improvement action plan. This includes improving assessment analysis and planning, improving the quality of direct work to strengthen the voice of the child and ensuring restorative practice is imbedded within supervision which will promote a focus on the impact of interventions on the lived experience of children and explicitly provide opportunity for critical reflection.
- Embedding 'Practice Weeks' to ensure senior managers have a clear reflection of the quality of frontline practice and continue to use dip sampling both within practice week and in addition too.
- Implementing a single child's record system through Platform for Care, this will bring together recording systems for early intervention and statutory social work and enable practitioners to record the experience and journey of the child well.
- Implementing Wolverhampton's new arrangements for the Safeguarding Partnership.
- Review of governance structures relating to Contextual Safeguarding.
- Implementation of House Project for Care Leavers.
- Improving placement stability through a number of actions including piloting of 'Fostering Families United' (a model that enables fostering families to intensively support each other).
- Embedding the Regional Adoption Agency.
- Embedding Restorative Practice across Children's Services.

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