

# Wolverhampton Children and Young People's Self-Evaluation 2021-22

EMMA BENNETT  
ALISON HINDS

Director of Children's Services  
Deputy Director, Children's Social  
Care



# Executive Summary

- 2021 was a year that required flexibility and adaptability in the way we worked to continue to work with our children, young people and families alongside managing the effects of the Covid19 pandemic
- Our workforce responded positively and remained committed to ensuring relationships with children young people and families continued, and children in the city were safeguarded
- We worked closely with partners, strengthening our already solid relationships to safeguard our vulnerable children in the city
- We have experienced the benefits of a strong stable social work workforce during this period with only 4.5 social work vacancies at the end of March 2021. The social work health check was positive with social workers feel well supported and committed to continuing their careers in Wolverhampton
- We were able to flex and respond when demand increased. We did not see in the City of Wolverhampton an unusual big spike in referrals as was expected as schools reopened. This was in line with the regional and national position.
- We have maintained our focus on ensuring we work with families at the earliest opportunity, utilising the powers of state intervention only at the appropriate level and for the length of time required
- Children in care have experienced even better placement stability this year with continuing good outcomes.
- We have implemented and embedded three new areas of work: A local House Project for care leavers, a Social Work in Schools DfE funded pilot project, and a multi agency Missing and Exploitation Hub, all of which are demonstrating difference and positive outcomes for young people

# Executive Summary continued

## In 2021/22 we will:

- Evaluate support services to young parents and adapt the service delivery model
- Develop a programme of intervention and support to work with parents who do not have the care of previous children to support children living in their families
- Further expand of the use of Family Group Conferencing to strengthen opportunities for children to live within their families
- Progress all aspects of our Aiming for Excellence Improvement Plan, to include ensuring all reflective discussions and supervisions are recorded on children's records, ensuring consistent good quality records are kept for all children with the voice of children and young people is strong throughout all records
- Ensure we have consistent good quality robust care plans and pathway plans for all children and young people
- Ensure children in care regularly attend the dentist and have an up to date health assessment so that we can be confident we are meeting their health needs
- Embed the Emotional Wellbeing and the Specialist Family Therapeutic Support Services to support children, young people and their families

## 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 263,357 people who live in the City, 62,276 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 incrementally decreased across all areas of Children's Social Care over the last 5 years. In order to achieve this the Children and Young People's Service has embedded its early Intervention offer, and there has been a focus on relational practice making a difference through restorative practice. Additionally, robust management oversight ensures the right children are received into care and once in care, plans for permanency are progressed with a sense of urgency.

### Children receiving support as at end of March 2021

547 Children and young people in care  
243 Children who have a Child Protection Plan  
715 Children who have a Child in Need Plan



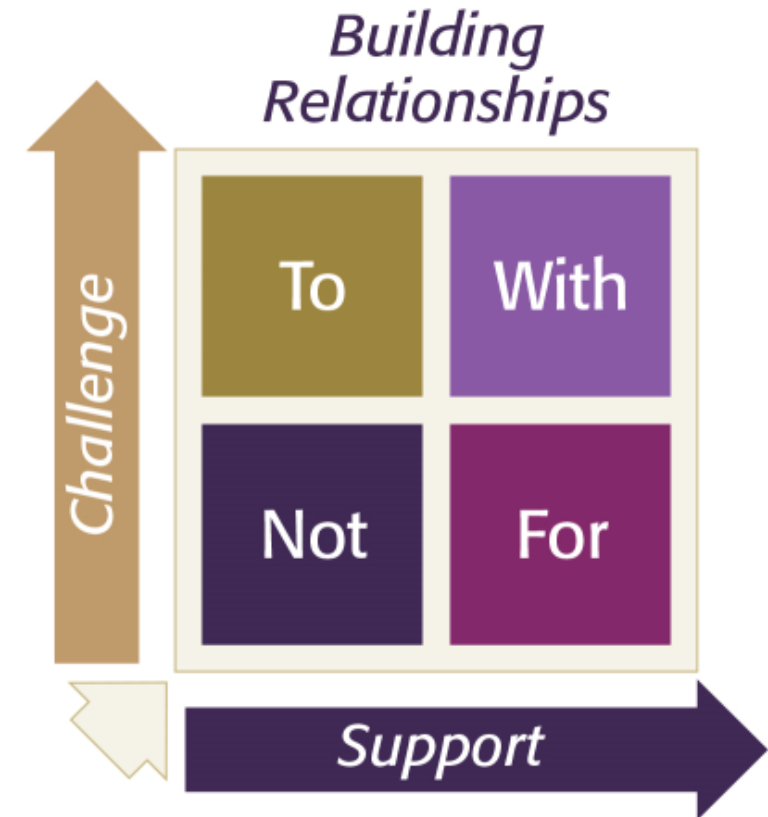
## Our Values for Children Services

- 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 practitioners are trained in the approach.

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

Restorative Practice 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.



There are good examples of employees using the approach to help family members understand how their actions impact on their loved ones. For some this has been effective in increasing the family's 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.



# 2020-2021- An Exceptional Year

- We believe we have continued to deliver good quality services to children and families throughout the year, whilst evolving and adapting in line with restrictions enforced by Covid-19
- We quickly moved to an agile way of working utilising only virtual methods to continue to work our children and young people . This was supported by utilising our existing equipment and technology.
- We have been creative in our approach and responded to the changing need and environment
- Our core value and principles remained strong; developing and maintaining respectful and empowering relationships with children, young people and families
- Despite the restrictions of Covid -19 we are proud of our workforce who have remained motivated and shown strength and resilience continuing to put children at the centre of all they do
- We have continued to work with children and young people to support them in achieving their expectations and aspirations through our relationship-based approach. Examples include improved stability of children in care, improved educational outcomes for children in care, and a reduction in reoffending rates for young people in the city
- We have built on our strong relationships with internal and external partners by responding to changing need as a partnership. Examples being the implementation of the Partnership Missing and Exploitation Hub, the implementation of the Social Work in Schools project, the detached youth work provision delivered with our partner Base 25, and the embedding of our Local House Project
- We have ensured that all colleagues feel supported embedding flexibility, trust and confidence in our new way of working which has contributed to the stability of our workforce and our low social work vacancy rate
- On our journey to Relighting our City we will continue to learn, adapt and co-produce on our approach and will be thoughtful in what we do and how we do it to best meet the needs of children and families and our workforce
- We will take with us the things that have worked well and be informed by consultation with staff and our children and young people.

# Impact of Covid-19 on Referrals

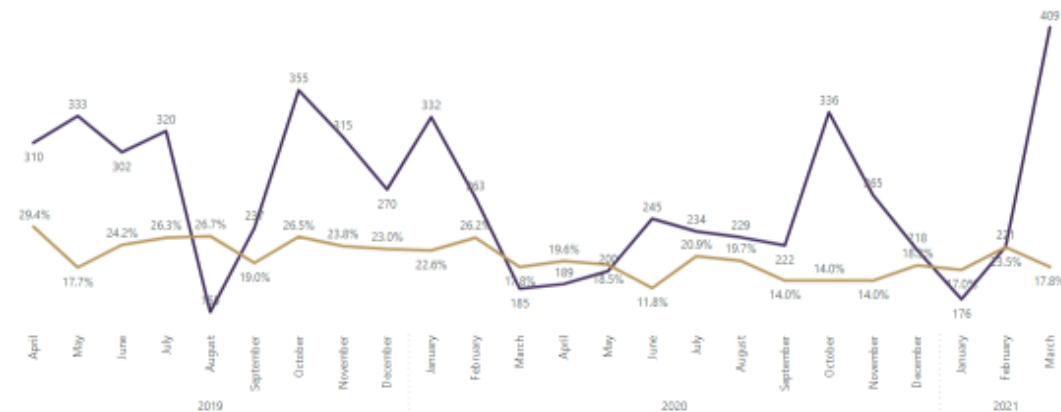
Referral rates are 481 per 10,000 which is below the England average. There was a reduction in referral rates between March and July 2020. Since that time referral rates began to return to normal levels. They were, however, above normal levels in March 2021. Head teachers have reported that as children have started to settle back into schools' they have been talking more about events that may have taken place during lockdown. This has resulted in an increase in Early Help and Children in Need assessments.

Work has been undertaken to understand the nature of referrals. Workers initially reported feeling that work was more complex during lockdown but analysis found that the percentage split for each category of need has not significantly changed.

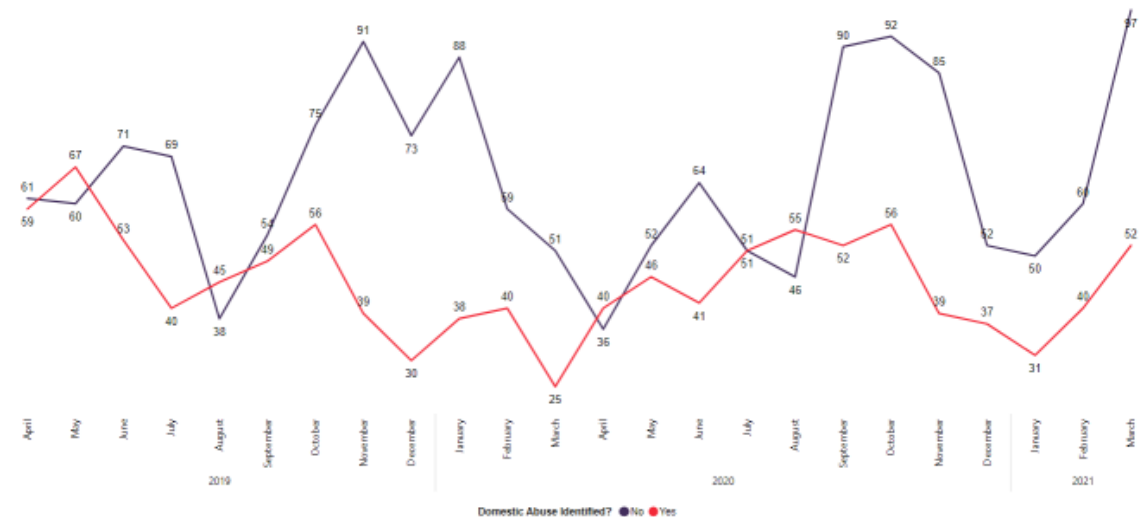
- When schools returned in September 20 there appeared to be an increase in peer –on - peer sexual abuse
- In March 2021 there was an increase in young children being referred for physical abuse
- Managers feel there has been an increase of referrals regarding child mental health
- Wolverhampton have not seen an increase in referrals around CSE or exploitation

Referrals Started and re-referrals

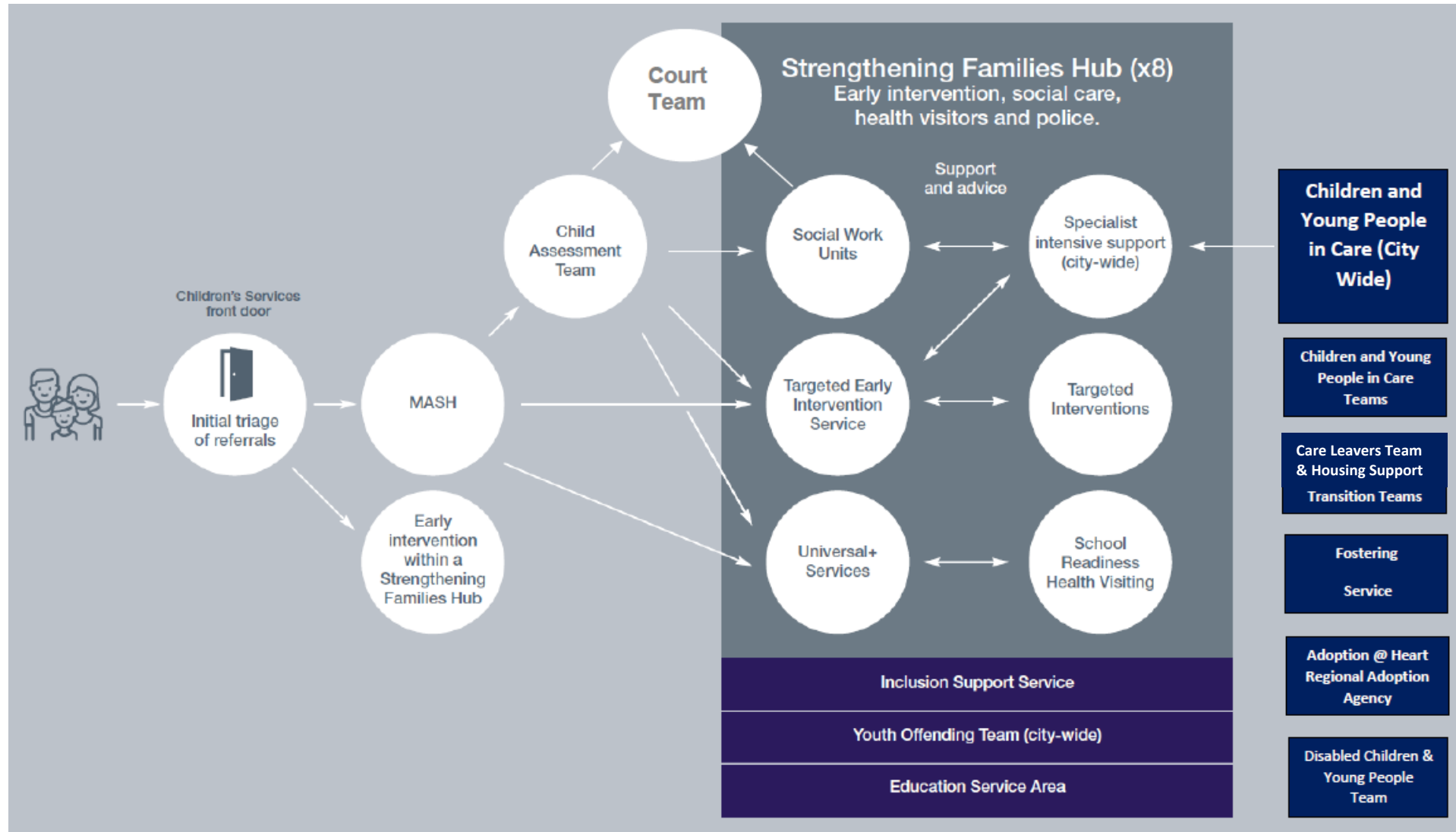
● Number of referrals ● % of referrals repeat in previous 12 months



Number of Contacts into MASH with Domestic Violence Identified with an outcome of refer to Social Care or Strategy Discussion



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





# 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

In September 2018, a Focussed Visit was undertaken focussing on assessments and Children in Need and Child Protection Plans. The following areas for development were noted.

1. 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, they were not sufficiently clear or specific and did not include achievable actions and outcomes.
3. Social workers experienced excessively high caseloads.
4. Supervision was not being used effectively to improve practice. Supervision was not sufficiently detailed or reflective and was not being used efficiently to improve practice.

Through a performance improvement plan we have upskilled social workers and managers to enable improvement in practice in the above areas. Through our QA process we continue to monitor practice and the impact on outcomes for children and young people. We have seen an improvement in the quality of assessments and plans but recognise that we need to see this consistently on all records. Average caseloads for social workers are now significantly lower at 22 for Strengthening Families social workers and 18 for Children and Young People in Care social workers.

## Quality Assurance

Audit Period	O	G	Total	RI	I	Total	Overall total
2018-2019 (audits)	3	37	40 (40%)	43	17	60 (60%)	100
April 2019 – March 2020 (Audits) (Sept, Dec 2019 & Feb 2020 Practice Weeks)	9	38	47 (57%)	33	2	35 (43%)	82
April 2019 – March 2020 (Observations)	7	32	39 (92%)	2	1	3 (8%)	42
April 2019 – March 2020 (Dips)	11	50	61 (67%)	27	3	30 (33%)	91
April 2020 – March 2021 (Audits) (Dec 2020 & Feb 2021 Practice Weeks)	2	22	24 (72%)	7	2	9 (28%)	33
April 2020 – March 2021 (Dips) (Feb 2021 Practice Weeks Dip)	2	10	12 (86%)	2	0	2 (14%)	14
Trajectory	A increase in the number of good/outstanding audits when comparing year on year for 2019/20 with 2020/21.			The number of inadequate and RI audits has reduced when comparing year on year with 2019/20 and 2020/21.			



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. We review the model after each practice week to ensure we are getting the best from it. All senior managers including the Director of Children's Services now spend up to four days over two weeks undertaking audits alongside practitioners, observing visits, meetings and practice, and 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. From the start of the pandemic, we have been working flexibly and our approach to practice weeks has also been delivered virtually. Undertaking the number of audit and observations has been a challenge during Covid, particularly due to limited opportunities to observe in a safe way and minimise risk to families and staff. From June 2021 as part of our Quality Assurance process we will be engaging parents, carers and young people to provide more detailed feedback to us via electronic surveys, incorporating feedback from compliments and complaints and linking learning from local reviews, peer audits and performance information and analysis.

## Quality Assurance feedback from practice weeks

### Key areas of strength as identified through audit in practice weeks during 20/21 :

- Practitioners know the children and families they work with well.
- Assessments are timely, of good quality and help to make things better for the child or young person.
- Direct work through the establishment of relationships is linked to sustained changes.
- Family meetings are regularly taking place increasing family resilience and helping us to build relationships with families.
- Collaborative working is strongly evidenced on children's records reflecting a good multi agency approach to our work.
- Social workers feel they receive good supervision and direction.
- Permanency planning is a strength and outcomes are improved for our children and families.
- Social workers are considering the diverse needs of children and young people we are working with.
- Children we work with are safe, demonstrating our intervention and support is appropriate and is making a positive difference.

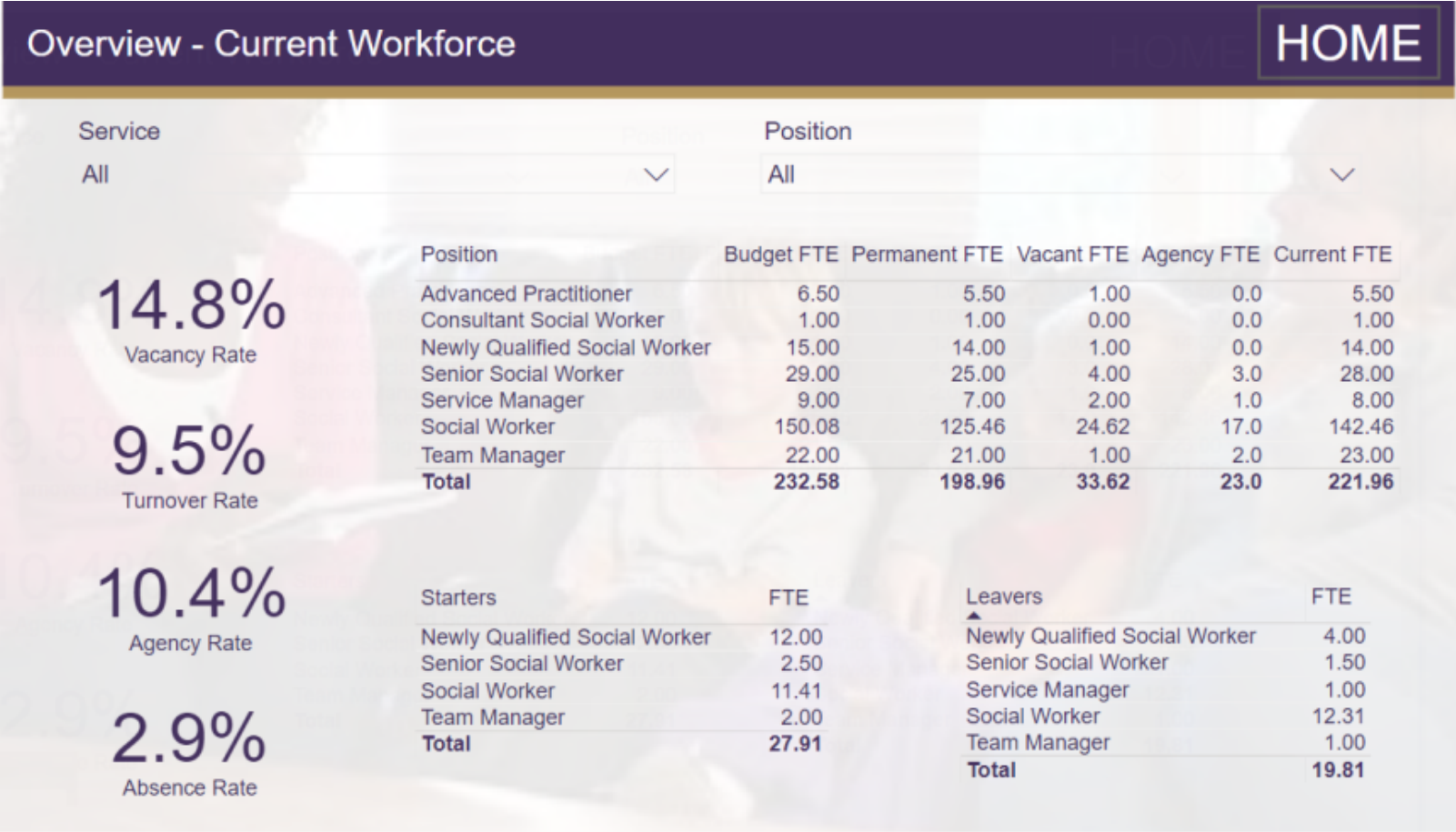
**Our Practice Improvement Plan for 21/22, Excellence in Practice** is in place and will be utilised as a tool to support our continuing improvement journey. The plan will be reviewed regularly by colleagues across the service at a range of leadership tiers.

This self-assessment demonstrates that through our strength based relational approach to our work we are making a difference to the outcomes for children and young people across the city. Over the next 12 months our key priority is to embed consistency of excellent practice across all areas. We are committed to our restorative approach to practice and will continue to embed this in all our interactions. We are intending to work closely with all colleagues in Social Care to develop a positive culture which incorporates the need for good quality written records to be regarded as an essential integral part of the excellent work we do with children and young people and their families. The impact of reflective discussions and supervisions will form part of children's records.



# Workforce

The City of Wolverhampton Council is bucking the national trend in the recruitment and retention of children’s social workers. In Wolverhampton, the picture is positive, and the numbers of permanent social workers is heading in the right direction. Wolverhampton’s vacancy rate now stands at just 14.8%. . This marks a significant improvement on March 2019 when 28% of children’s social work posts locally were unfilled. The majority of vacancies have been created by secondments and recent analysis evidenced that there were just 4.5 true vacant positions to be filled.



\* Data as at 29/03/2021

## Children Receiving Statutory Support

The number of children receiving statutory support has reduced incrementally between 2016 and 2021.

The main areas to see a sustained decrease in the last 12 months are children subject to Child Protection Planning and Children and Young People in Care. Quality Assurance activity seems to evidence that this is due to the services' success at embedding a relational approach to practice that enables families to remain safely together wherever possible. Most audits and observations of practice are good and evidence skilled social work intervention, strong relationship building skills and that the lived experience of children has improved. There have been no concerns raised by auditors around the level of support being provided.

During the pandemic both the Early Intervention Service and Specialist Support Services have continued to work with families to reduce potential for escalation of family difficulties.

Team managers and service managers undertake CiN reviews bi-monthly. This ensures children are supported at the right level and provides challenge with regards to whether families should step up to Child Protection Planning remain subject to Child in Need Planning or be supported by the Early Intervention service.

Service managers also review children who have been open to child protection planning for more than 15 months to ensure progress is being made and the lived experience of children is being improved.

There was an independent review of the work being held by the Early Intervention service in 2019 and no children were identified as being held at the wrong level. This exercise was refreshed internally in 2020, again no children were identified for whom it was felt statutory services would have been more appropriate.

There has been a decrease in the number of Children in Need during the pandemic, but early indicators suggest that these numbers are beginning to rise as schools return to business as usual.

## Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

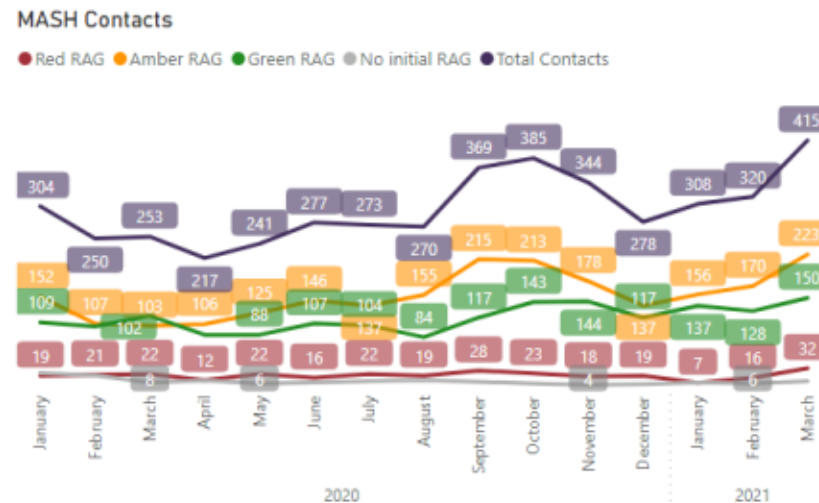
The City of Wolverhampton MASH continues to perform well. It consists of Children and Adult Social Care, Early Intervention, Police, Wolverhampton Homes, Recovery Near You, Probation Service, Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, Black Country Partnership Foundation Trust and Education representation. Since March 2020 the MASH has continued to work virtually and partners in the MASH are all working well as a team remotely.

The Children's MASH service ensures that all referrals are triaged by managers in a timely manner and threshold decision is applied. Children who may be at risk of significant harm are safeguarded appropriately and there are positive links with the Child Assessment Team.

Between March and August 2020 there were an average of 255 contacts into MASH, this is a reduction in the average number of contacts when compared to the same period the previous year (Avg. 299). This reduction is likely to have been significantly affected by Covid-19 Pandemic.

September 20 saw an increase to 369 which was higher than the same month the previous year (320), this increase was to be expected in September but also indicated that contacts were resuming after the reduction in the summer. Since April 2020, the largest number of contacts into the MASH have been from the Police (26%), this is partly due to the closures of schools. A similar expected increase in referrals has been experienced since schools reopened on 8 March 2021.

MASH have taken steps to become very visible within other agencies to help and discuss the contact process. Visits have been made to health services, including the 0-19 year old service, midwives, and mental health services. DSL events have taken place on a quarterly basis, and meetings regularly take place with Wolverhampton Homes, Police and Recovery Near You. This has helped to build positive relationships whereby threshold conversations can happen as required. Circular review systems are in place to consider any contacts which are not accepted to ensure that the family receive the right help at the right time. MASH have been working closely with the Early Intervention teams and the Early Help Navigators to help ensure that there is support in place for partner agencies completing the Early Help Assessment to build confidence not only in the computer systems, but also in talking to parents and offering support. An Early Help Navigator for Health has been appointed to extend this good practice.





## Supporting through Early Intervention

Early Intervention (EI) services are offered through eight locality based strengthening family hubs. At the end of March 2021, 1234 children were being supported by Strengthening Families workers. Early Intervention is currently working with 266 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.

Both audit activity and performance data indicate that Strengthening Families workers make a difference. At the end of an intervention and period of working with us most families are closed because sustained progress has been achieved and just 3.6% of families were stepped up to social work locality teams.

The reduction in the number of children open to Early Intervention across the year is due to a combination of factors including; roll out of Early Help training for partners, the appointment of Early Help navigators and a reduction of referrals in March 20 due the Covid 19 pandemic. There has been a reduction in the number EI referrals in the past twelve months (Avg. 273 per month) when compared with the previous year. (Avg. 367 per month). However, referral rates have continued to increase since September 2020. The overall number of children open to Early Intervention is now in line with 2019 numbers and closer to what would be expected without the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Year	2020											2021		
Outcome	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	
Referred to Early Help	65	54	45	65	67	64	70	85	90	84	92	87	109	

## Early Intervention achievements

- Covid- 19 has brought about an unprecedented change in our interactions, routines and daily lives. Consequently, staying in isolation during the crisis has been a real challenge for many families. In order to meet the changing needs of families the Early Intervention Service quickly implemented an online parenting programme. This enabled families to access parenting support as and when and formed part of our Stay Safe Be Kind Covid-19 support for vulnerable families in the City.

Parents can either self serve by accessing an online course or they can take part in a virtual group.

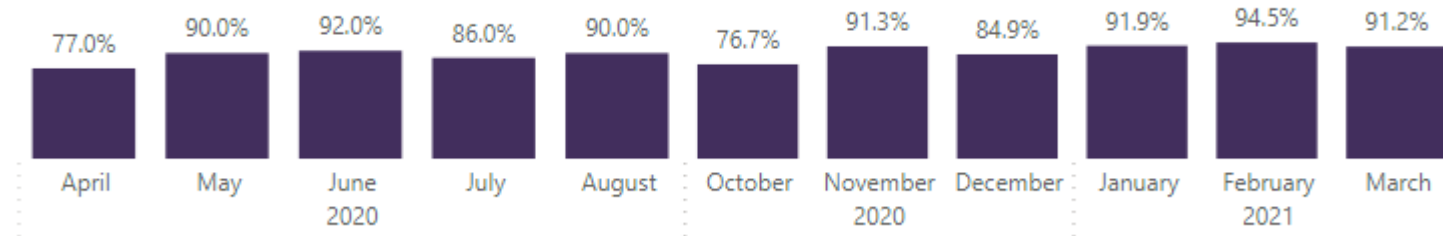
- The Play Workers continued to provide opportunities for young people to engage in a range of positive activities across the City. Alongside increased detached youth work provision through our partner Base 25 they have helped to divert young people who may have been at increased risk of criminal exploitation and have worked well with hub officers and other partners to engage young people and reduce youth violence.
- Strengthening families workers have delivered the Freedom Programme and McEwan Programme virtually on a one to one basis for women affected by Domestic Violence or families affected by sexual abuse to ensure this crucial work continued during lockdown.
- Adult Education is now delivered from within the Strengthening Families Hubs. This includes ESOL courses, helping families who do not have English as their first language access language courses in their own area.
- The service has continued to support robust parenting assessments in order to ensure Court work was not delayed.

## Working with our Children in Need

As at the end of March 2021 there were 885 children open as CiN. 91% of children had a visit within the expected timescales as at the end of March 21, which are set at a minimum of once a month. Some children were seen more frequently as per their CiN plan. The September 2020 data was impacted by the migration to Eclipse and is unavailable. There was a decline in relation to timeliness of CiN visits in April 20 as teams transitioned into a different way of working due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

An average of 81% of assessments were completed within 45 days.

CiN Visits Timescale

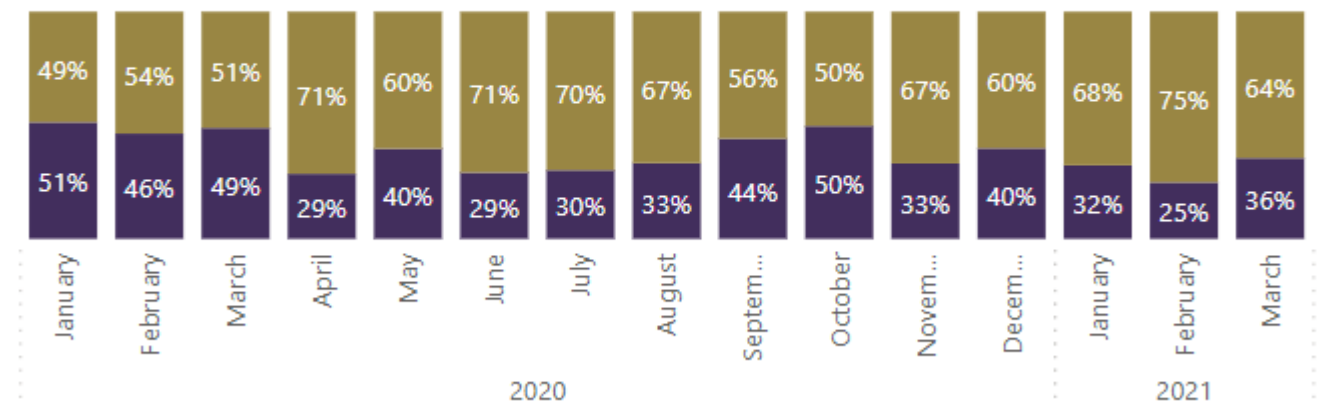


Performance data and some QA activity indicates that social workers alongside partners achieve positive outcomes with families through CiN planning. Most CiN plans are closed within 12 months of starting as improvements have been achieved and risks have reduced for children.

The service believes it is important to see children quickly once a referral has been accepted in order to ensure children are safe and to enable support to be delivered in a timely manner. This reduces the risk of needs and concerns escalating. There has been steady improvement in performance in the number of children who are seen within 5 days of referral over the year and most children are seen within 7 days. An assessment of their circumstances is usually completed within 10 days and where a CiN plan is required the first meeting is completed within 4 weeks.

Initial Visit (Visit within 5 working days of referrals form start)

Initial Visit Pass/Fail ● Fail ● Pass

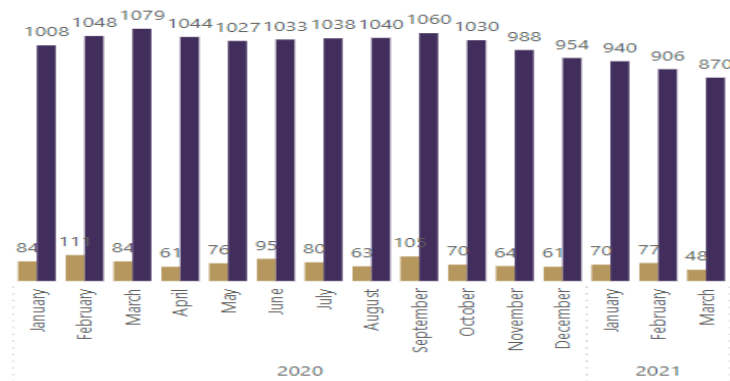




# Child Protection Investigations

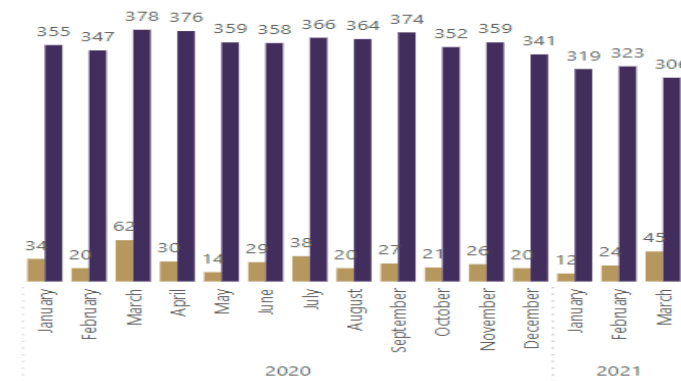
Number of Section 47 Starts (With completion date)

● S47 in Month ● S47 in last 12 months



Number of ICPC Starts (With completion date)

● ICPC in Month ● ICPC in last 12 months



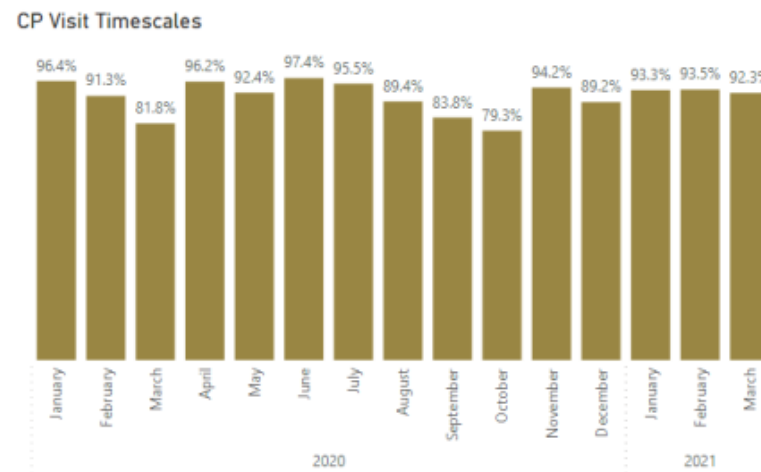
S47 to ICPC Conversion



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. As at March 2021, an average of 41% of section 47 investigations completed within the previous 12 months result in an ICPC. 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 peer challenge of S47's between team managers to increase challenge and learning. Following a dip in conversion rates, a DIP sample was completed of S47's undertaken in the MASH and strengthening family teams. The outcome of this was that we were reassured that the section 47's completed were largely felt to be appropriate.

# Safeguarding our Children in Need of Protection

There were 243 children subject of a child protection plan in March 2021. 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 over the rolling 12-month period has decreased to 12% from 14% in April 2020. In the main, families are sustaining the changes made whilst children have been subject to child protection planning. An analysis of the children who have become subject to repeat child protection planning within two years has taken place. This found that in the majority of cases children were subject to repeat child protection planning due to their experience of neglect and/or domestic abuse. A strategic partnership approach to understanding the impact of neglect on children is being developed, alongside a review of our response to supporting children and families experiencing domestic abuse.



Timeliness of child protection visits remains an area of focus. Although there was a reduction in the performance in September and October 2020, this was due to the migration to Eclipse. Visits were taking place, but due to an inaccurate method of recording these visits, some were showing as out of timescale. Guidance was issued to all social workers and managers and improved performance has stabilized. This good performance needs to be consistent across all teams to improve this performance further.

Core groups take place regularly and have continued to be well attended by partners utilising virtual meetings in TEAMS during Covid-19 restrictions. Services such as Intensive Family Support, Power2 (a multi-professional service to support teenagers at risk of multiple factors) and Partnering Families (a health service to support new parents who have previously had children removed from their care) are well utilised and help children to remain safely within their birth families.

## Working with schools to support children and their families at the earliest opportunity

The Wolverhampton Social Workers in Schools (SWIS) project started in November 20 and is part of a larger scale evaluation (21 local authorities and around 300 schools across England) led by: -

- a) Department for Education (DfE)
- b) What Works for Children's Social Care
- c) The Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre (CASCADE, Cardiff University)

Six social workers are based within the school environment of six schools to develop early relationships and a partnership approach with school staff, young people and their families.

The social workers are currently working with 98 young people supported by Child in Need, Child Protection planning and in assessment. Social workers complete the majority of Section 47's and start working with families from initial point of referral - they are able to talk with school before referral and signpost to early help or community services if appropriate at the earliest opportunity.

The SWIS team have been able to work closely with children and families and other professionals to help families improve their circumstances and reduce concerns about children's wellbeing and safety. So far there has been no children stepped up to Child Protection and the team have not needed to receive any of the children they are working with into care.

Early feedback from schools is very positive. One Head Teacher stated that she cannot imagine not having a social worker in her school again, another Head Teacher from a large school in a particularly deprived area of the City has stated that he would like more than one. Schools have reported a greater understanding of the social work role and feel that communication is much better.

## Our partnership approach to tackling violence and exploitation

Wolverhampton has adopted a new approach to address issues of violence and exploitation (V&E) in the City, as set out in our Strategy. It is recognised that the landscape of exploitation requires a more flexible and agile approach across the partnership and a commitment to tackle violence and exploitation in its entirety.

In order to improve how we work together to identify and protect young people at risk of or experiencing exploitation in all its forms, we have redesigned our whole system to ensure that support is joined-up and effective. This has included a revised threshold document to clearly identify the extra familial risks associated with exploitation and an updated exploitation screening tool to ensure it supports the identification of all forms of exploitation. Training via a suite of online modules is also available to all staff across the safeguarding partnership.

In February 2021, the Partnership Exploitation and Missing Hub went live. All referrals supported by a completed screening tool are now risk assessed within the MASH, including information and intelligence from the newly established Partnership Exploitation and Missing Hub. All young people identified at risk (even where risks are low) receive support from either Early Intervention or Social Care. Daily partnership briefings are being held to discuss all young people and vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation.

Since the launch of the Exploitation Hub on 22 February until 31 March 2021:

- Daily briefings are attended by Police, Children and Adult social care, YOT, Missing Return Officer, Early Intervention, Education, Community Safety Partnership and the Violence Reduction Unit
- 197 young people have been discussed
- 31 Exploitation screening tools have been received and discussed
- Review of missing young people is embedded into the daily briefings
- Timely response to concerns from a wide range of professionals
- Co-ordinated information sharing/ intelligence gathering – developing a profile of activity across the city to inform prevention and disruption activity



## Our response to Child Exploitation

In Wolverhampton, the response to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is well embedded and there is a CSE Problem Profile produced on an annual basis.

### Local CSE Figures 2020-2021

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
At Risk	80	77	82	89	86	94	88	97	101	105	107	116
Significant	13	12	13	9	10	10	12	12	8	7	8	8
Serious	4	4	4	3	3	4	1	2	3	3	3	5
3 Month Monitoring	19	16	17	23	25	28	32	30	31	20	18	10
Case Closed	15	9	8	3	7	12	9	4	11	17	14	12
<b>Total Young People</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>151</b>

The response to wider forms of exploitation is being developed through the recently launched Partnership Exploitation and Missing Hub. It is recognised that the gathering of data and intelligence is key to understanding the levels of exploitation across the city. The Hub has a dedicated information analyst post to focus on this. As at the end of March 2021, the breakdown of young people known to be at risk or involved in exploitation; 111 CSE, 19 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), 6 County Lines (CL), and 8 Modern Day Slavery (MDS). Some young people are involved in more than one form of exploitation. Currently 22 young people have National Referral Mechanism (NRM) status as a result of being involved in modern day slavery/ trafficking.

The referral pathway for exploitation has been strengthened to ensure that all young people identified as being 'at risk' will receive an offer of support, thus ensuring that no referrals get NFA'd. Multi-agency Child Exploitation meetings (MACE) are held for all young people identified at significant or serious risk of all forms of exploitation. Young people identified as low risk are referred to Early Intervention. Emerging operational themes and areas of concern are escalated to the Child Exploitation and Missing Operational Group (CEMOG) and exploitation remains a priority for the Wolverhampton Safeguarding partnership.

## Supporting our Vulnerable Adolescents at Risk of Exploitation

The Power2 team was established in December 2019 as a pilot project funded for 2 years, to work with young people aged 11-17 at risk of exploitation. During 2020-2021, additional funding was identified through a PCC grant and additional contributions from the CCG / local authority, to extend the remit up to the age of 25. The team is multi-disciplinary with social workers (children and adults), speech and language therapist, educational psychologist, substance misuse worker, play/ drama therapist and keyworker support commissioned from the voluntary sector. Young people and their families receive an intensive service for 6-12 months, using trauma informed practice to take adverse childhood experiences into account (ACEs). Funding for the team has been extended until the end of March 2022 to allow for a detailed evaluation to be undertaken.

### **Power2 work with :**

- Young people aged between 11 and 25 years of age who are at risk of exploitation;
- Young people where there is current or recent escalation in high risk-taking behaviours;
- Young people where there has been support and interventions implemented to decrease risk, which have not proved effective;
- Young people transitioning into adulthood who would not ordinarily meet the adult social care criteria for support.

### **Early indications of positive outcomes:**

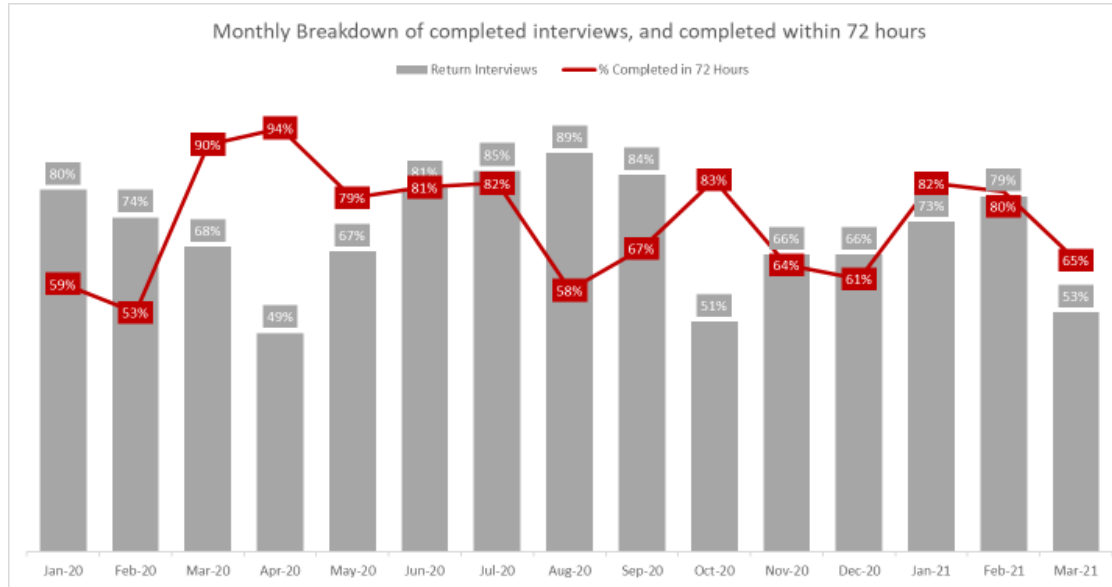
- Reduction in CSE risk
- Reduction in number/ length of missing episodes
- Step down from child protection to child in need
- No further offending behaviour

### **Next steps:**

- For an evaluation to be produced that considers quantitative/ qualitative outcomes and cost benefits. This will inform future funding discussions.

## Our response to children who are missing

The number of missing episodes saw a dip at the start of the lockdown period in April 2020. However, from July 2020 onwards there has been a steady increase, and the numbers of missing episodes per month has returned to pre-covid figures.



As part of the return interview, the exploitation screening tool is always completed to ensure consideration is given to missing young people being at risk of exploitation. All screening tools are considered by the Exploitation Hub to ensure all young people identified at risk are offered support.

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 persist in engaging with young people.

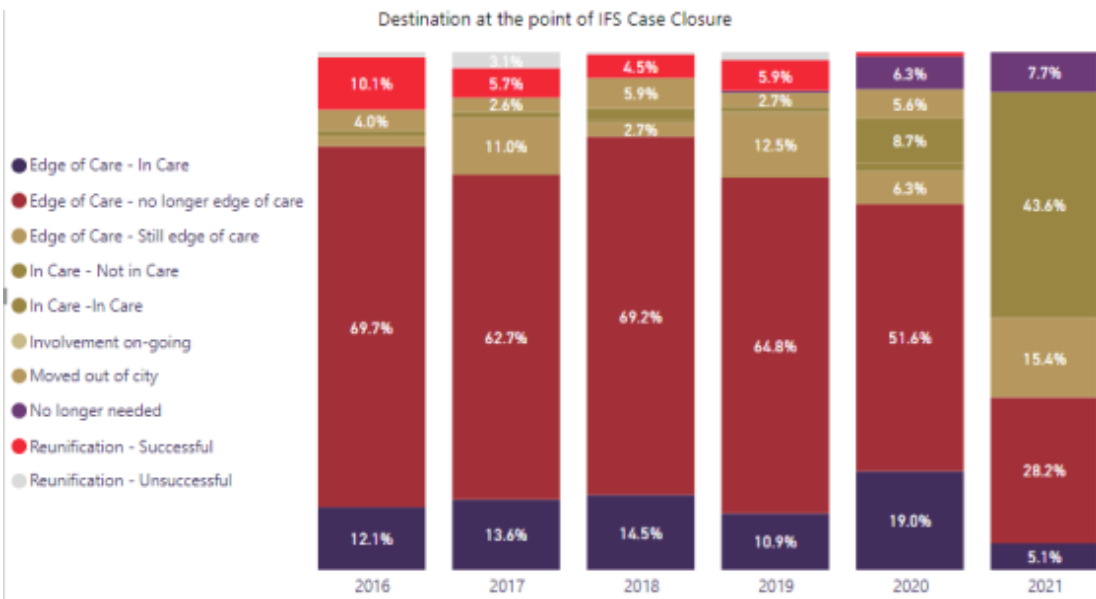
The Missing Return Officer has been having a daily missing triage with Police Locate officers during 2020-21. This has provided an opportunity to review all missing young people, review risk levels and share intelligence.

From February 2021, the daily review of missing young people has been incorporated into the work of the Exploitation Hub.

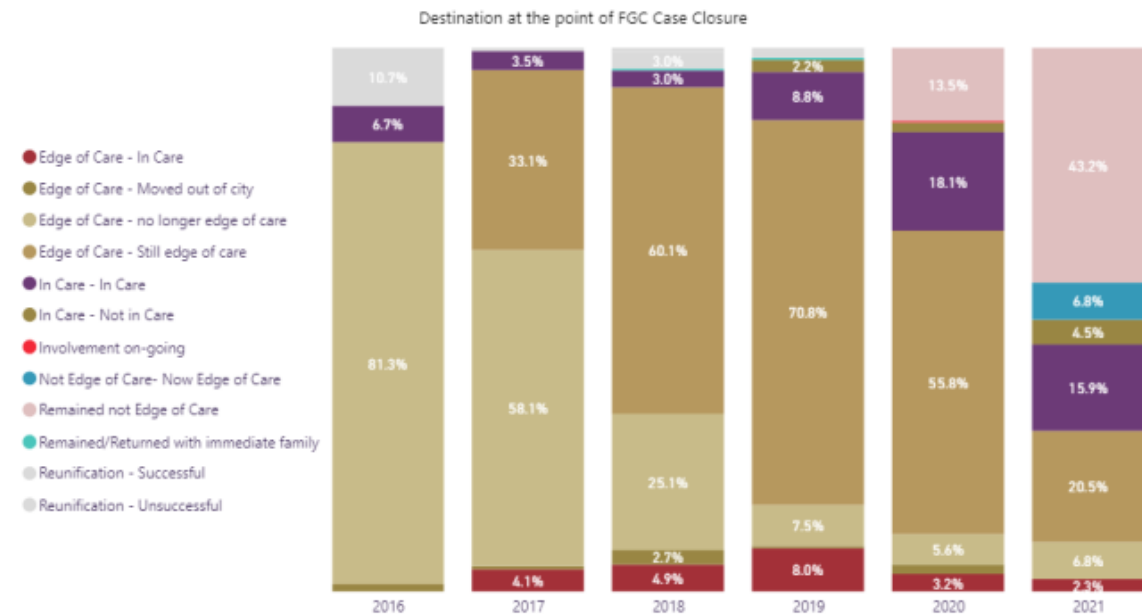
# Strengthening families through specialist support services

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, develop safe, effective boundaries and support parents and carers to make significant lifestyle changes. The service focuses on good quality direct interventions with the City’s most vulnerable children and families. The service offer includes Family Group Conferencing and mediation which forms part of our early intervention and edge of care offer. Sustained outcomes 12 months after intervention show 84% of young people’s social care status had either remained the same (22%) or stepped down (62%).

Intensive Family Support



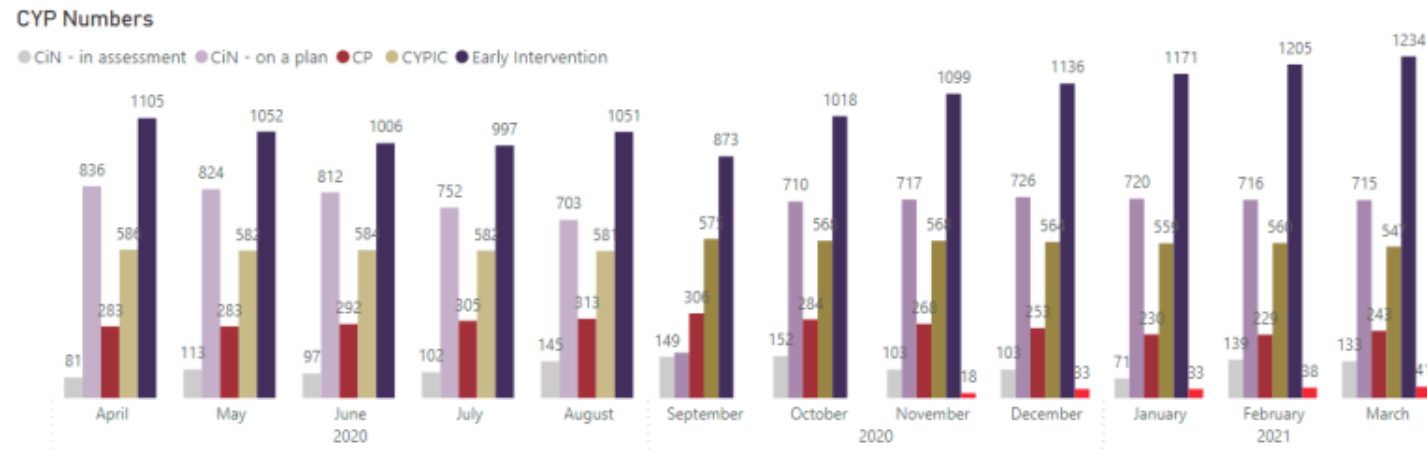
Family Group Conferencing





## Children and Young People in Care

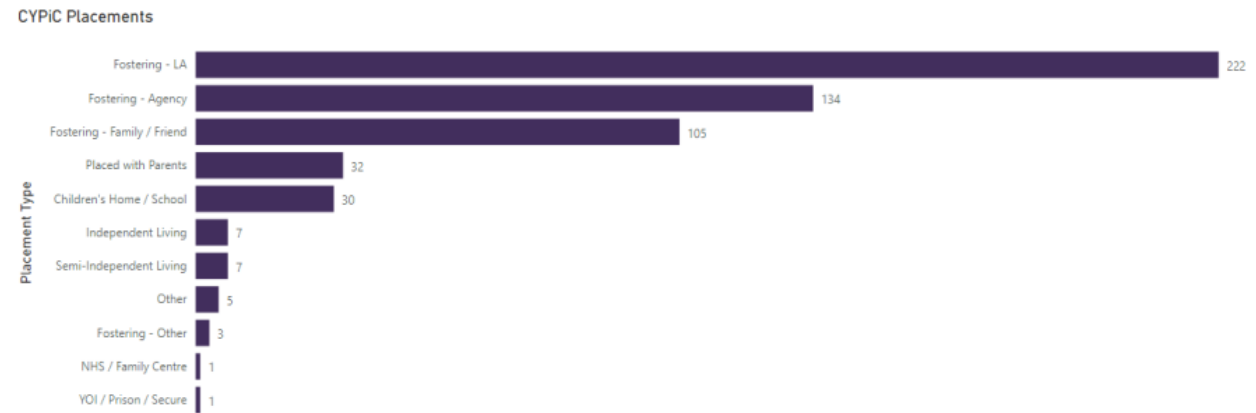
There is a clear vision that is shared across the Children and Young People in Care service which is focused on achieving permanence and stability for children. The number of children in care in Wolverhampton has historically been considerably higher than comparator authorities, over the last ten years. There now is greater emphasis on tackling issues 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 children in care. The number as at the end of March 2021 is 547 (89.4 per 10,000), this is an in year 7 % reduction of 41 from 588 C&YPiC (94 per 10,000).



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. The effectiveness of care planning had been evidenced by good timeliness in proceedings and improved timeliness for children with a plan of adoption. However, during 20/21 we did see a detrimental impact on timeliness of care proceedings due to the impact of the pandemic on the functioning of the Court.

## Stability for our 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 Family Values project focusses on increasing the number of internal fostering households, and improving the offer of support to increase the retention of foster carers. The foster carers support has been enhanced by the introduction of therapeutic training, peer support for foster carers through Fostering Families United, the use of buddies, and restorative practice training. The ambition is to increase the net gain of fostering households approved by the City of Wolverhampton by 81 households by July 2021.



Mainstream foster carer approvals have increased year on year since the start of the Family Values programme. In 2020/2021 31 new foster carers were approved, with 14 of these mainstream carers and 17 family and friends carer approvals. We had an overall net gain of 23 carers. This enables us to place many more of our children with our own internal carers. The gap of placements of children in external placements and those in internal placements continues to widen.

At the end of March 2021, of the 461 children placed in foster homes 327 are with internal carers. This is almost three quarters experiencing the benefits of being placed with our own carers.

The average time to assess and approve foster carers was an average of 157 days in 2020/21. This is 10 days longer than 2019/21 however this is still an achievement given the additional challenges with the pandemic.

## Supporting our carers to provide stable placements

- Continuing to improve placement stability remains a key priority. Placement stability is now better than statistical neighbours and national averages. In March 2021 72% 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 9% to 6% since 2020. Both of these indicators continue to demonstrate strong performance. In order to achieve even better placement stability, plans include:
  - Fostering Families United - a support mechanism which offers foster carers a community of support and access to therapeutic advice. Launched in May 2019, the aim of the pilot was to support the stability of placements. Foster carers work together in small teams supported by an experienced foster carer team leader. Foster carers have found the support invaluable, and this has enabled them to care for children with some complex care histories. Due to the success of the pilot team, there are now 3 Fostering Families United Teams in place with a plan to continue to expand this delivery model to all carers. It is expected that during 2021/22 3 additional Foster Families United Teams will be developed.
  - A therapeutic training programme delivered to all foster carers. Fostering staff have all been trained in this model to ensure consistency of support, advice and consultation. Weekly support sessions continue to take place for foster carers and staff to discuss and reflect on their experiences.
- Children placed in foster care have continued to experience strong secure foster placements during Covid-19 pandemic with foster carers showing strong resilience and support to our children in care

## Achieving permanence through adoption

Year 2 of A@H has seen a successful year with increased numbers of adopters approved, and children placed, despite the impact of Covid-19. The partnership between the three local authorities and the Children's Trust in the Black Country has embedded further over the year.

Overall adoption timeliness in 2020/21 has improved compared to 2019/20 with children coming into care and being placed for adoption (indicator A1) in an average of 508 days; a reduction of 51 days. However, A2 has seen a slight increase from 306 in 2019/20 to 313 in 2020/21 and A10 has also increased from 386 in 2019/20 to 435 days in 2020/21.

Wolverhampton continues to be appropriately optimistic when planning for adoption for children who are unable to live with their birth family. This includes children who may be regarded as harder to place and hence may take longer to identify a suitable adoptive family.

A reduction in Adoption Orders granted this year is a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure and backlog in the courts. The courts are now issuing hearing dates for adoption applications.

A@H has approved 69 adopters (an increase of 18 since 19/20) and received 117 Registrations of Interest to Adopt (an increase of 53 since 19/20).

- 124 (an increase of 24 children since 19/20) children were placed across the region and 26 children were placed via Foster for Adopt.
- 38 Wolverhampton children have been placed with their adopters (an increase of 15 since 19/20)
- 9 Wolverhampton children were placed via Early Permanence under Fostering to Adopt regulations
- It is positive to note that despite restrictions experienced through the lockdown period children have continued to move into their adoptive families with introductions planned creatively and subject to risk assessments.





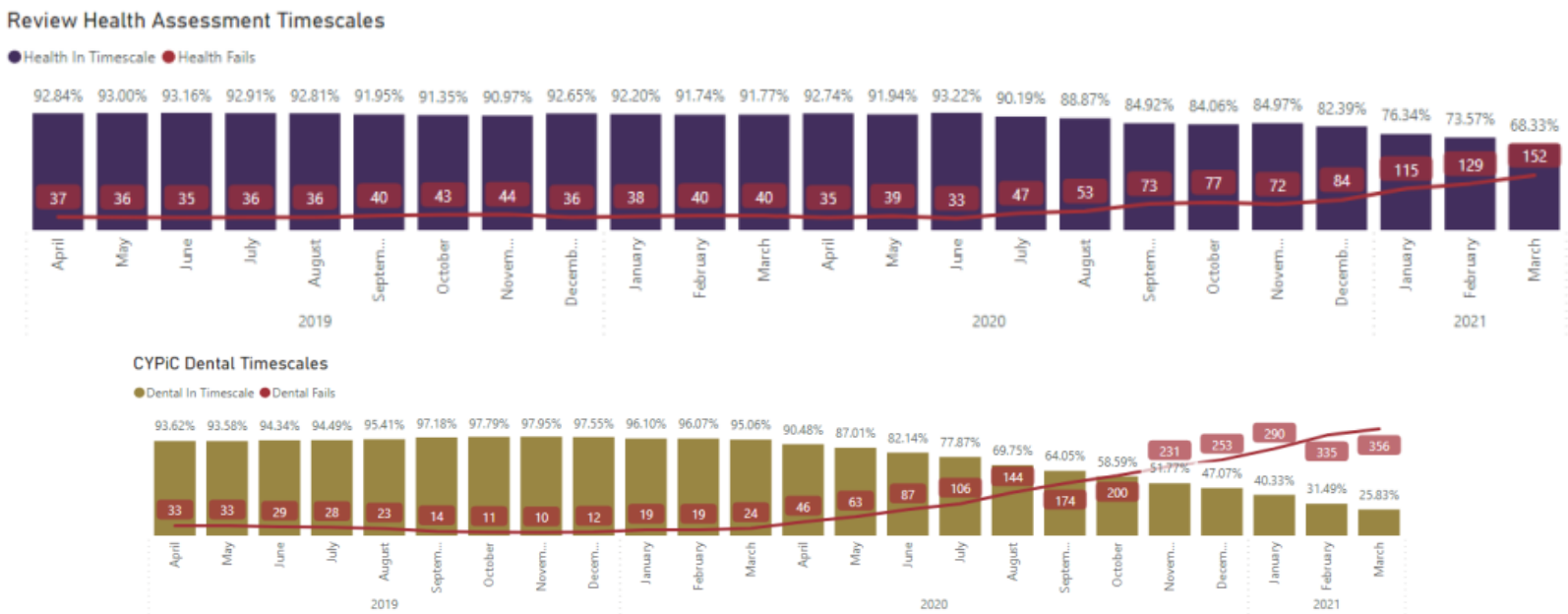
# Achieving good health and wellbeing for our Children and Young people in Care

## Physical Health

The health and wellbeing of C&YPiC is a priority. All new children into care 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.

The percentage of dentals completed in timescales has seen a considerable dip since April 2020 and is directly linked to the pandemic. This is an area of concern for the local authority and representation has been made to regional dental providers to prioritise appointments for children in care.

All C&YPiC have health assessments unless they have refused to attend. However, the timeliness of review health assessments has been declining since July 2020 with performance since September 2020 being impacted upon by the migration to Eclipse. We continue to work closely with health colleagues to ensure we have strong systems in place to avoid delay in completion.



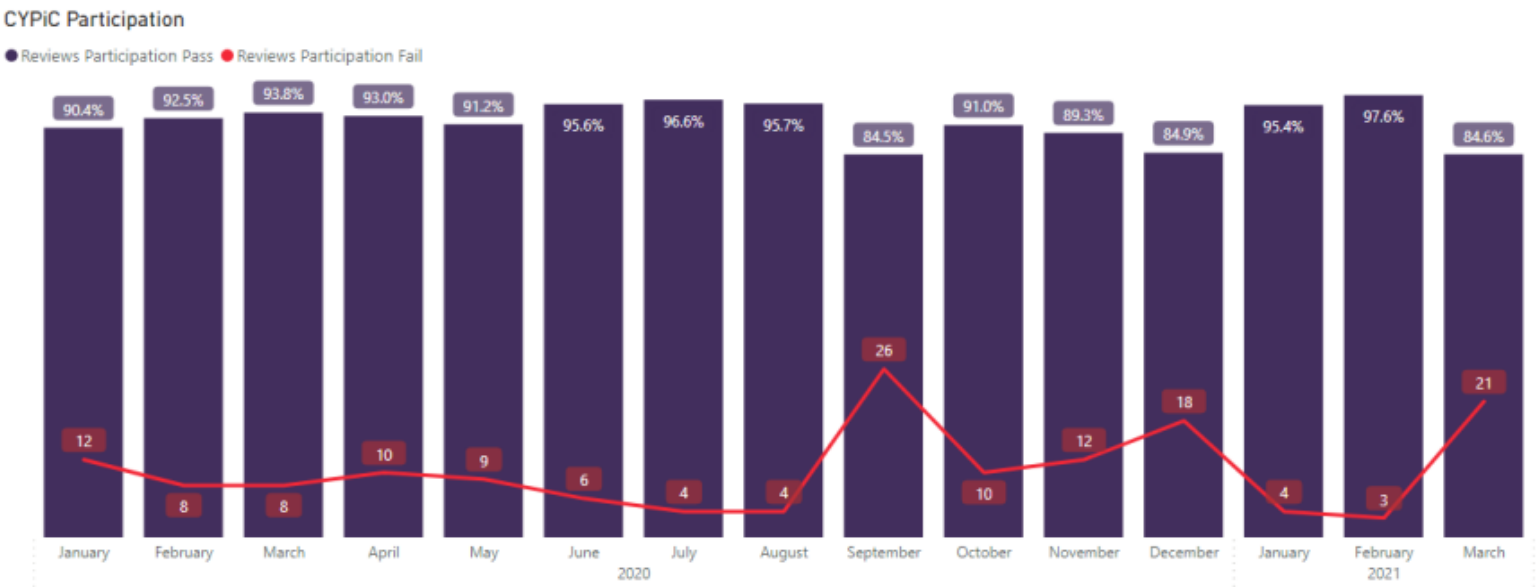
## Emotional Health and Wellbeing

At the end of year March 2020 the SDQ score of 13.4 gives Wolverhampton an average of 'normal'. This score shows Wolverhampton positively in comparison to statistical and national comparators and year on year improvement since 2016. Wolverhampton is ranked as the 44th best performing authority in this area. Furthermore, the return rate for 2019/20 was extremely positive at 99%. This helps us to understand and meet the needs of all our children and young people in care.

<b>Emotional and Behavioural Wellbeing - SDQ average scores</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Wolverhampton</b>	12.6	12.3	13.2	14.2	14.4	13.7	13.7	13.4
<b>West Midlands</b>	13.7	13.5	13.5	14.1	13.9	13.7	14.3	14.2
<b>Statistical Neighbours</b>	14.77	14.51	14.52	15.16	14.26	14.3	14.7	14.5
<b>England</b>	14	13.9	13.9	14	14.1	14.2	14.2	14.1

A specialist family therapeutic service has been commissioned to support the specialist therapeutic needs of children young people and their families. This service will not only strengthen the support to children and families to enable them to continue living together but will also offer therapeutic services to children in care and care leavers. The service will be operational by 1 May 2021 and will complement the services offered by the universal emotional wellbeing services and CAMHS.

# How we work with Children and Young People in Care

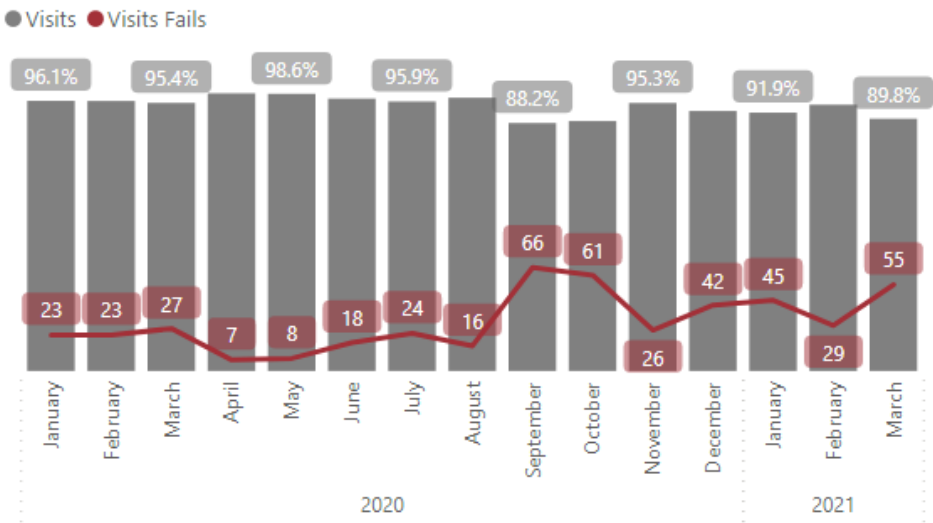


Social work visits to Children and Young People in Care fulfil a range of critical roles and functions not least to enable the child’s circumstances to be observed and monitored. Visits are carried out at least once every 6 weeks or once every 12 weeks in a stable placement.

During the year the vast majority of children received visits from their social workers within statutory timescales. As with CP visits, there was a reduction in the percentage for September, this indicator was affected by the migration to the new system. Visits had been taking place but due to misuse of the new form used to record these visits, some had been showing as out of timescale. Audits have continued to identify evidence of excellent relationship building and direct work.

There is strong evidence of children contributing to their plans and participating in their Children and Young People in Care reviews. The majority of children participated by speaking for themselves and some children chaired their own review.

Visits in Timescale



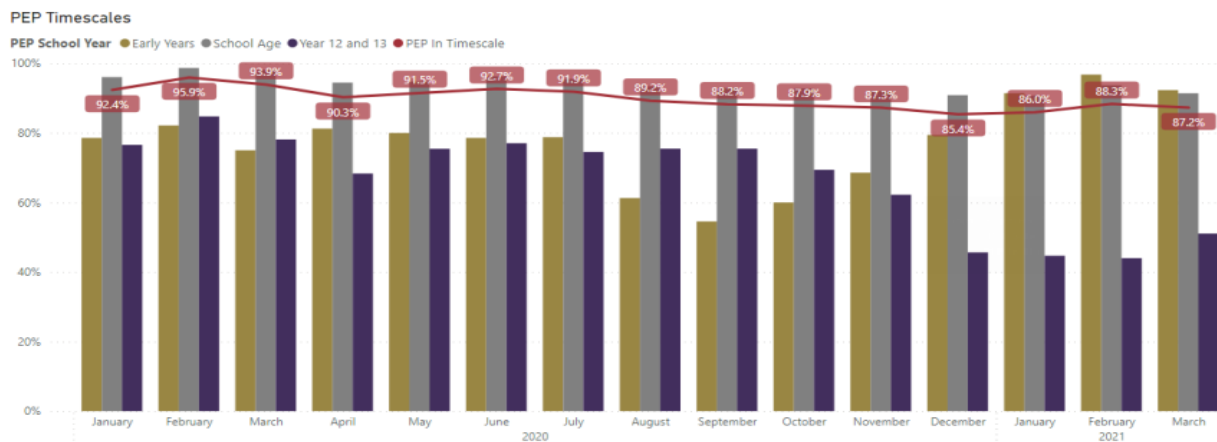
## Impact of our work with Children and Young People in Care

Audits of files suggest that the work undertaken by social workers alongside the Virtual School and other professionals, as well as strategic activity is contributing to improved outcomes for children and young people. Children and young people in care are achieving educationally. Previously, outcomes for the whole cohort at KS1 – 4 were broadly in line with national and regional averages, although KS1 and KS2 data is not available from the summer term 2020 due to assessments not being completed by schools. At GCSE, however, outcomes improved significantly for children and young people in care in 2020 - 25% of eligible children in the cohort achieved grade 4 or above in both English and maths. We feel that this improvement is due to grades being based on teacher assessments rather than exams.

School attendance is high with low levels of persistent absence. No children and young people in care were permanently excluded from school in the 2020/21 academic year to date and fixed term exclusions have significantly reduced.

Six Wolverhampton care leavers graduated from university in 2020, including one who achieved a first-class honours degree and three achieved upper second class (2.1) honours. We currently have 26 care leavers in higher education with 5 new starters in 2020.

## Percentage of Children with a Personal Education Plan



The pupil premium is used effectively to ensure children are achieving. Personal Education Plans (PEP's) completion rates are high and the recently developed Electronic PEP is supporting a detailed understanding of progress that children are making in schools as well as identifying areas that require additional support. Targeted work is taking place with the Reach 14 Plus Team to improve the completion of PEPs for young people in years 12 and 13.



# Supporting positive outcomes for Care Leavers

Social workers, young people’s advisors, family support workers, housing support workers and an education, employment and training (EET) co-ordinator facilitate excellent joint working arrangements to support young people into independence. Young people are aware of their entitlements as detailed in the Local Offer for Care Leavers - Reach. Key information leaflets and booklets are incorporated into a post-16 independence pack, and the information is on the care leavers’ Facebook page and CYPiC website. The teams are committed to increasing partnership working with young people and empowering them to develop confidence and achieve their aspirations. The Reach Offer has been revised and improved to increase support to care leavers throughout the pandemic, evidencing strong relationships across the council and with partner agencies.



Engagement in the variety of EET opportunities available is given a high priority within the service. Young people have priority interviews for apprenticeships within the council, and the offer of apprenticeships has now been extended for those up to 20 years of age. The council offers 10 inclusive apprenticeship posts. The number of apprenticeships within CYPiC Service has increased from two to four over the last two years and senior managers have committed to continue to increase this number across Children and Young People’s service. In addition, Reconomy, our House Project private company partner, are offering five apprenticeship positions for care leavers. The numbers of young people in EET at the end of 2020 is 51.3% compared to 57.9% at the end of 2020. EET opportunities for care leavers nationally and locally have been significantly impacted upon by the pandemic. However, we have continued to work with care leavers and partners to support young people into available opportunities as soon as possible which is reflected in the increase in EET for 19-21 year olds over the last five months.

## Housing options to support children in care and care leavers

Care leavers have a choice of accommodation provision including; Supported accommodation provision managed by Accord Housing, Wolverhampton Homes accommodation supported by our own Housing Support Service, Staying Put (over 18), Independent Accommodation (over 18) and local quality assured and monitored Supported Accommodation provisions. Additionally, up to 10 young people per year are supported into their own accommodation by our Local House Project .

The Housing Support Service has access to up to 33 Wolverhampton Homes flats, 2 crash pads and 2 training flats. Each young person has a designated housing support worker (HSW) who remains with them throughout their time in the service. Support hours vary, with a maximum of 30 hours per week, as the young person progresses, the number of hours decrease. The HSW draws up an individual support plan for each young person.

Between April 2020 and March 2021, 7 young people moved into independent living in a flat with a bespoke package of support from the Housing Support Team. All seven of these young people have maintained their tenancy for at least 6 months. The 10 young people in cohort one of our Local House Project have also all moved into their own accommodation. Of the 6 that have been living in their own accommodation for over 6 months, all 6 are still maintaining their tenancy. Cohort 2 young people, who joined the project in September 20 are now starting to move into their own properties.

We have continued to support young people to move into their own homes through this project during the Covid -19 restrictions and have utilised virtual meetings to maintain and establish support and learning opportunities. We have established, and recruited to, an apprenticeship mentor post within the House Project which was ringfenced to a care leaver.

An internal Supported Lodgings Service has been developed with 4 supported lodgings carers recruited and further development taking place. This will compliment the varied range of accommodation options available to children and young people in care.

The percentage of young people in suitable accommodation is 90%.

## Corporate Parenting

The Council believes it is important to invest in children and young people in care - the Corporate Parenting Strategy is supported by the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board (CPPB) chaired by the Council's Deputy Chief Executive. The CiCC and CLIC both produce an annual survey, the outcomes of which are used to form the Corporate Parenting Action plan which is then progressed by the board.

Some of our significant achievements that we have worked on with children in care and care leavers this year include:

- With the support of Violence Reduction Unit resources support sessions were delivered to care leavers using music, sport and online support to address issues of resilience, risky relationships and impact of adverse childhood experiences
- Development of the Grandmentors provision to widen the geographical area for those accessing a mentor to young people living outside of the city and widening of the age of referred young people from 18+ to 14+
- Development of links with social value partners – Engie delivering a career in construction workshop, interviews and support for CVs in Care Leavers' Week.
- Development of stronger relationships with Wolverhampton College, with the delivery of Total Respect Training and the inclusive apprenticeship offer.
- The use of the Winter Grant Scheme Fund to support the most vulnerable care leavers living independently with additional fuel and food costs during the winter months due to the impact of Covid-19

The Reach Local Offer for care leavers offer was reviewed in September 2020. Examples of additional offers includes;

- Extension of access to Kooth (an online counselling support) for care leavers up to 25
- A tailored support page on the Wolves Workbox to support care leavers into EET

## Participation and co-production with our Children in Care Council and Care leavers Forum

Children in Care Council (CiCC) has had 13 members in this period with 6 males and 7 females. Care leavers Independent Collective (CLIC) has had 7 members with 2 male and 5 female. Both groups have continued to meet fortnightly using Microsoft Teams.

### Achievements for CiCC in 2020/2021 include:

- Produced an annual survey for Children in Care to influence their group priorities over the year completed by 81 young people
- Co-produced a virtual annual conference focussing on the key highlights from the annual survey/achievements of the group
- The key highlights from the survey were presented by the vice chair of the group during the conference. The group also produced a video about advocacy as they felt it was important young people knew about the services to support them
- 3 new members have been recruited to the group since the start of the pandemic.
- Children in Care Council members took part in a virtual kindness conference with other youth voice groups in the city and shared ideas on how young people can be kinder to each other.

### Achievements for CLIC in 2020/2021 include:

- Co-produced a virtual care leavers' conference gathering views and insight from their peers to inform their work
- Reviewed the Care Leaver Offer, influencing the Care Leaver Offer Steering Group in expanding the offer
- Co-designed Care Leavers' Week for 2020
- Hosted Care Leaver of the Year awards and evaluated the nominations
- Met with the Corporate Parenting Board promoting the need for support with PPE and the costs of transport for care leavers
- Supported the National Care Leavers Benchmarking Forum promoting the needs of care leavers nationally
- Invite extended to the National House Project's Care Leavers' National Movement

Both the CiCC and CLIC helped develop the online learning Gamification modules on key issues relating to keeping young people safe including: bullying, mental health and money management.

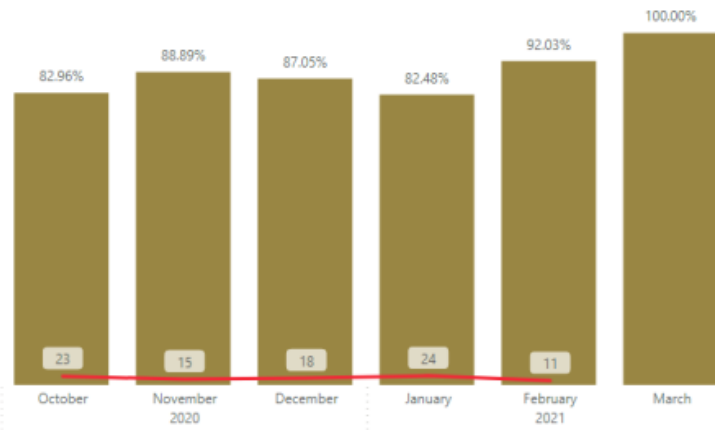
Both groups were involved in the recruitment of 30 social workers, in addition to the Deputy Director of Children's Social Care and HoS for Children in Care. Members have co-produced and adapted Total Respect activities so they can be delivered virtually.

# Supporting our children and young people with disabilities

- The establishment of a Designated Social Care Officer ensures that the needs of our SEND children are appropriately met at the earliest opportunity, with champions being established across the service to support this. Only when it is assessed that a specialist social work service is required to support a child with a disability and their family, a social worker is allocated from the Disabled Children and Young Person's (DCYP) team.
- Young people up to the age of 25 allocated to DCYPT are successfully supported on their journey to adulthood and benefit from consistent social work support during this crucial transition period. At this time, in particular, a strong partnership working approach between adult and children's social care, and health supports the needs of our most complex young people.
- Through Voice4Parents, the views of parents of our SEND children are integral to ensuring we are responsive in our service provision and planning.
- Support to children with disabilities through the DCYP team is strong and we are confident we understand their needs and know them well.

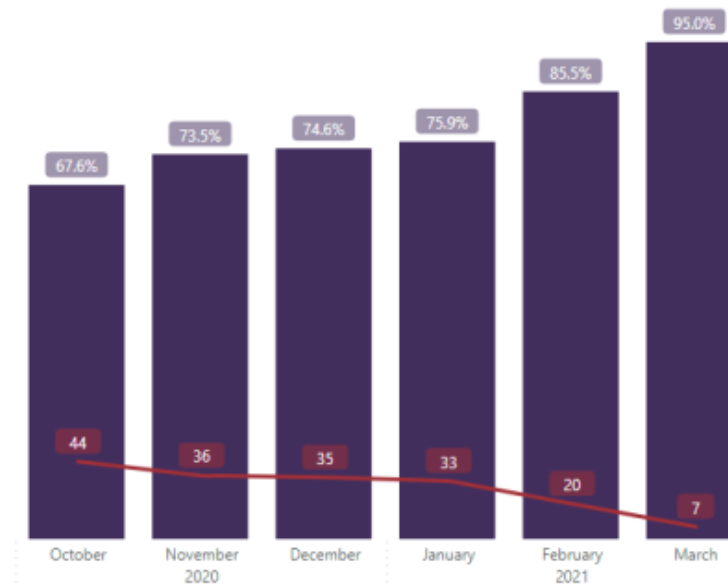
DCYP Visit Timescales

● Visits In Timescale ● Visits Fails



DCYP Assessments in Timescale

● Assessment ● Number of Assessment Fails



## Supporting inclusion of all children in school

The rate of permanent exclusion from schools in Wolverhampton has been significantly higher than the national average since 2015/6. In response to this and to more broadly promote educational engagement of vulnerable learners, we developed the Culture of Belonging Programme, following extensive engagement with all stakeholders. This is a whole system approach which focuses on three key areas: supporting more inclusive schools; having a clear pathway to multiagency support; and ensuring there is a positive alternative for children who need it. Schools are supportive of the Culture of Belonging activity and actively seek alternatives to exclusion with support from Inclusion officers.

The Inclusion Team work closely with schools and alternative providers in the city, along with 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. We undertake preventative work alongside Strengthening Families teams. We have an established Inclusion Support and Alternative Provision Panel, which is currently under review to enable closer co-ordination with Fair Access panels. We are also investing in an additional resource base attached to a mainstream school to provide short-term additional support for young people with challenging behaviour.

**Permanent exclusions numbers have fallen year-on-year since 2016/17, and when schools were closed in March 2020, we were at a lower level than the equivalent point of previous years.**

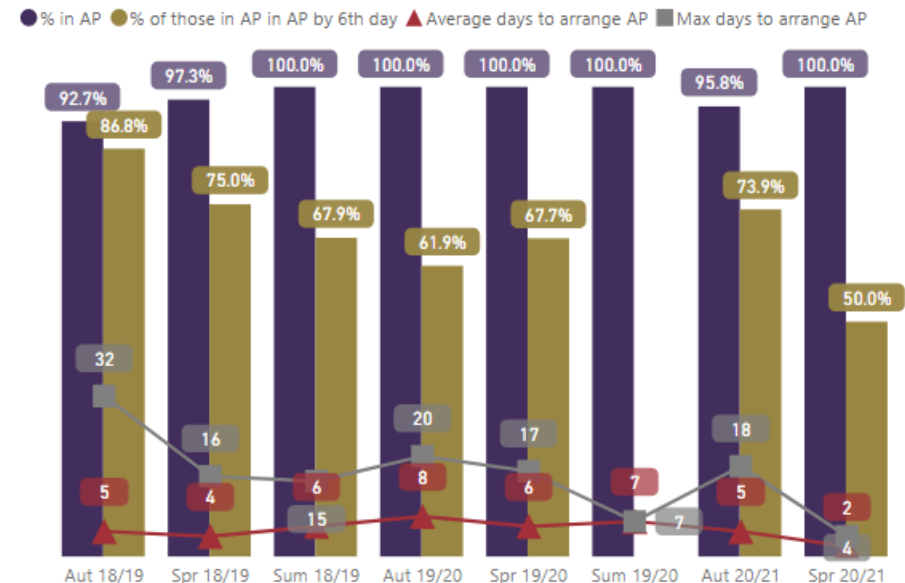
**The bottom table shows numbers and impact of exclusion prevention meetings (EPM) held, by academic year. The use of EPMs has increased and show a high degree of success, with 93% of those in 2019/20 who had one not being excluded within 3 months.**

Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Primary (exc. Withdrawn/Overtured/Pending)	22	18	15	5
Secondary (exc. Withdrawn/Overtured/Pending)	104	100	64	22
Special/PRU (exc. Withdrawn/Overtured/Pending)	1	1	2	0
X-City	9	12	2	0
Pending Permanent Exclusions		3		
Withdrawn/Overtured	1/5	4/1	2/0	0/0
Average number of Days taken to arrange Provision	6	5	8	5
Fixed Period Exclusions	2466	3016	1645	936

Exclusion prevention meetings	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Meetings Held	79	105	74	35
% Meetings that did not result in Permanent Exclusion within 3 months	84%	87%	92%	94%
% Meetings but still resulted in Permanent Exclusion within 3 months	16%	13%	8%	6%
% Permanent Exclusions with no meeting within 3 months	91%	89%	93%	93%

**All permanently excluded pupils are offered alternative provision, as shown in the graph below. The % of pupils offered provision by the 6th day of a permanent exclusion did see a drop from Autumn 2019 to Autumn 2020. Appropriate focus will be given to this area as school have now reopened to all pupils. We are also increasing quality assurance monitoring of APs with half termly meetings to be established from June 2021 attended by commissioning, education effectiveness and SEND officers**

Statutory Timeliness for Permanent Exclusions





## Children Missing Education and Electively Home Educated

The 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. School admissions are monitored and supported for these children and School Attendance Orders (SAOs) are issued where appropriate. The Attendance Team have robust systems in place to monitor CME, conducting lateral checks, making home visits where appropriate, and liaising with key partner agencies. A sharp rise in CME investigations in September 2020 was largely due to a significant number of Eastern European families who returned to Eastern Europe over the summer period (likely to be linked to COVID19). It is not considered to be linked to the rise in EHE.

Since schools reopened to all pupils in September 2020 there has been a significant rise in parents electing to home educate their children. The attendance team is offering advice support and challenge to all parents who make an enquiry about EHE. Additional Education Welfare Officers have been appointed to ensure additional monitoring and support is available to EHE families and for any other attendance issues that are related to Covid – 19. Where we have concerns that the decision to home educate is not a positive one for the child, we will challenge parents and schools.

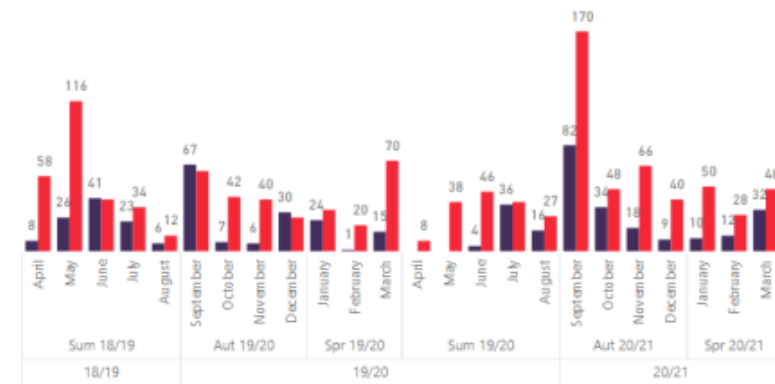
One of the aims of the Culture of Belonging Programme is to reduce the number of pupils leaving school to become home educated. We continue to work with schools when this happens, so that if there is a need for support, challenge or advice this is available before a child is off-registered.

A pathway has been developed to identify and support children with emotionally-based reasons for non-attendance at school.

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

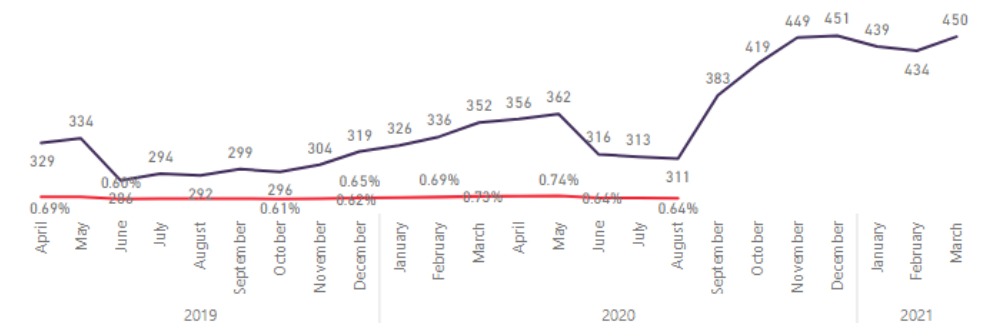
CME Referrals

● Internal CME Referrals ● External CME Referrals



End of month EHE Numbers

● Current EHE ● % school population (Jan Census)



## Summary of achievements - 2020-2021

- Reduction of overall demand across the social care system meaning the right support is offered to children young people and their families at the right time and at the earliest opportunity.
- Successful implementation of the children's electronic recording system Eclipse enabling a single record from early help through to social care
- Social work caseloads continue to stay at a manageable level
- We have a stable social work workforce with only 4.5 social worker vacancies
- Establishment of Social Worker in Schools pilot
- Review and refresh of our targeted 'earliest' early help offer
- Power2 team established and working with young people up to the age of 25 at risk of exploitation
- Establishment of Partnership Exploitation and Missing Hub
- Reduction in the numbers of children subject to a child protection plan for longer than 15 months
- Reduction of number of children in care
- Improved partnership approach to working with schools and education settings has been embedded further through the established integration of the Children and Young People and Education Directorates
- Culture of Belonging programme embedded improving children's inclusion in schools
- Wolverhampton achieved its target of 'turning around' 484 families as part of the Troubled Families programme in 20/21
- Embedding of the Youth Engagement Strategy, #YES, through co-production with children, young people and their families across the city, with success in virtual engagement throughout the year
- Reduced reoffending rates for young people remains spectacular, alongside a reduction in custodial sentences and numbers of young people on Remand

## Summary of achievements - 2020-2021 continued

- Winner of Children and Young People Now Award 2021 in the Care Leaver category for the impact of the House Project on improved outcomes for young people, and finalist in the Children In Care category for our Aspire2Uni programme
- Expansion of apprenticeships ringfenced for care leavers at CWC and establishment of inclusive apprenticeships within the council to support young people needing additional flexible apprenticeship support
- Improved education outcomes for children in care including increased numbers of young people attending university and graduating with excellent degrees. We have 3 times the national average number of care leavers attending university
- Further increase in number of foster carers approved by CWC ,with three quarters of children in care being placed with foster carers approved by CWC
- Continued improvement in long and short term placement stability for children in care
- Established support offer to families who have no recourse to public funding has resulted in families achieving an immigration outcome earlier and therefore enabled children to achieve a sense of permanence and have access to services earlier when they are given right to remain.
- Successful implementation of Local House Project, now working with 9 young people in cohort 2, having worked with 10 young people in cohort 1, to support their move into their own homes
- With support of young people and the House Project a co-production hub has been secured, providing a venue for young people to call their own, accommodating the House Project , a drop in for care leavers, The Reach Café, and a base for co-production with children and young people.
- Successful partnership working across Children's Social Care, Adults Services and the CCG with 0-25 year olds, this has resulted in smooth transitions into adulthood for our young people with more complex needs.
- Successful implementation of Eclipse ,our new electronic recording system

# RELIGHTING OUR CITY

Support  
people who  
need us most

Create more  
opportunities  
for young people

Generate more  
jobs and learning  
opportunities

Grow our  
vital local  
businesses

Deliver vibrant  
high streets and  
communities

## COUNCIL PLAN

Wulfrunians live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives

VISION 2030

## OUR PRINCIPLES

We will underpin our work with the following key principles;



### CLIMATE FOCUSED

This recovery commitment is aligned to our climate change strategy 'Future Generations' and our target to make the City of Wolverhampton Council carbon – neutral by 2028. We are committed to delivering on the recommendations of our Climate Citizen Assembly and to upholding the promises we made when the Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019.



### DRIVEN BY DIGITAL

The city is at the forefront of digital infrastructure and innovation, Wolverhampton will be one of the first cities in the world to host a 5G accelerator hub making us truly a world leader in emerging technology. Now more than ever digital skills and connectivity are vital to ensure our residents can access services, interact with friends and family, and enter the job market.



### FAIR AND INCLUSIVE

We will continue to tackle the inequalities in our communities which impact on the opportunities of local people. The Council's 'Excellent' rated equalities framework is at the heart of our recovery commitment. No community will be left behind as we transform our city together.

# Relighting Our City: Our key priorities for 21/22

## Support people who need us most

- Build on the successful opportunities provided by the Winter Grant Scheme and Holiday Activities Fund to support our most vulnerable families in the city by working collaboratively with our voluntary and community partners
- Develop a fully integrated offer across Children's and Adult services to enable our families to thrive
- Implementation of MASH24, our combined MASH EDT service
- Achieve an allocated target of 'turning around' 505 families as part of the extended Supporting Families Programme as part of our Strengthening Families approach
- Continue to work with partners to embed the outcomes of the contextual safeguarding review to further safeguard children, young people and young adults at risk of exploitation
- Evaluate support services to young parents and adapt the service delivery model
- Develop a programme of intervention and support to work with parents who do not have the care of previous children to support children living in their families
- Further expansion of the use of Family Group Conferencing to strengthen opportunities for children to live within their families
- Ensure all reflective discussions and supervisions are recorded on children's records
- Ensure consistent good quality records are kept for all children with the voice of children and young people being strong throughout all records

## Support people who need us most

- Continue to increase the number of children that have been seen within 5 days of referral
- Ensure we have consistent good quality robust care plans and pathway plans for all children and young people
- Further improve placement stability for children in care
- Increase early permanence opportunities for children with a plan of adoption
- Ensure children in care in care have good quality life journey work that meets their individual needs
- Ensure children in care regularly attend the dentist and have an up to date health assessment so that we can be confident we are meeting their health needs
- Embed the Emotional Wellbeing and the Specialist Family Therapeutic Support Services to support children, young people and their families
- Continue to embed Restorative Practice across Children's Services looking particularly at developing restorative approaches to child protection conferences



# Relighting Our City

## Create more opportunities for young people

- Embed the extension of the Grandmentor programme to young people in care aged 14 and above and those that live outside of the city who are in our care
- Continue to improve support and opportunities for our most vulnerable young people to be able to access a range of EET opportunities
- Embed further opportunities for co-production with children in the city
- Establish utilisation of the co-production hub as a base for co-production and participation of young people and to offer a base for a drop in for care leavers and the House Project
- Further development of social care support to our SEND children through the strategic lead of our Designated Social Care officer
- Continue to embed Culture of Belonging Programme to support the inclusion and educational engagement of vulnerable learners
- Embed the key priorities of our Equalities action plan to ensure delivery of inclusive services that tackle inequalities that children and young people face

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