

Corporate Parenting Panel

**Monday 9 February
2015**

Agenda

A meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel will be held on Monday 9 February 2015 at 10.00 am, Shire Hall, Warwick

1. General

(1) Apologies for Absence

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Members are required to register their disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of their election of appointment to the Council. A member attending a meeting where a matter arises in which s/he has a disclosable pecuniary interest must (unless s/he has a dispensation):

- Declare the interest if s/he has not already registered it
- Not participate in any discussion or vote
- Must leave the meeting room until the matter has been dealt with (Standing Order 42)
- Give written notice of any unregistered interest to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting

Non-pecuniary interests must still be declared in accordance with the new Code of Conduct. These should be declared at the commencement of the meeting.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2014

To approve the enclosed draft minutes

2. Journeys Service Annual Report

The Panel will receive an update from Tania Miller and Andy Sjurseth on the Journeys Service which is, the tier 2 service for looked after and adopted children and young people across Coventry and Warwickshire.

3. Children in Care Council meeting updates

Minutes of the meetings of the Children in Care Council held on 2 December 2014.

Updates will be received from:

Councillor Chris Williams – 2 December 2014

Shinderpaul Bhangal – update on the CiCC election.

Rota for future CiCC meetings:

Tuesday 12 February 2015

Councillor Peter Fowler

Tuesday 3 March 2015

Councillor Clive Rickhards

Tuesday 14 April 2015

Councillor Jenny St.John

Tuesday 5 May 2015

Councillor Dave Shilton.

4. Update from Strategic Lead and Performance Set

Brenda Vincent, Service Manager (Safeguarding) will give a verbal update on current issues/challenges and present the performance dataset. Information to be considered during this item are:

- Sibling policy and guidance (for information)
- Delegation of authority to foster carers (for information)
- Dataset and summary report
- LAC by school and district
- Questions for elected members

5. Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report

Mary Eccleston will present the Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report.

6. Work Programme

Members of the Panel are asked to agree the work programme and to consider possible themes for future meetings.

7. Any other Business

Future meeting dates and agenda items

The following dates have been scheduled:

21 April 2015	10:00 am	CR1, Shire Hall
13 July 2015	10.00 am	CR3, Shire Hall
7 September 2015	10.00 am	CR3, Shire Hall
26 October 2015	10.00 am	CR3, Shire Hall
14 December 2015	10.00 am	CR3, Shire Hall
15 February 2015	10.00 am	CR3, Shire Hall
11 April 2015	10.00 am	CR3, Shire Hall

Corporate Parenting Panel Membership

Councillors: Peter Fowler, Bob Hicks, Clive Rickhards, Dave Shilton, Jenny St John and Chris Williams (Chair).

General enquiries

Please contact:

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**Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 27 November
2014**

Present:

Members of the Panel

Councillors:

Peter Fowler

Bob Hicks

Clive Rickhards

Jenny St John

Chris Williams (Chair)

Officers

Ann Mawdsley, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Steve Pendleton, Head of Vulnerable Groups and Virtual School

Brenda Vincent, Service Manager - South

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Dave Shilton, Shinderpaul Bhangal and the Children in Care Council.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2014 were agreed as a correct record with the following correction:

Page 5 – 3.3 Health related issues for Warwickshire’s Looked After Children

The word ‘included’ on the second line to be replaced by the word ‘inclined’.

Matters Arising

None.

2. Children in Care Council (CiCC) updates

Councillor Bob Hicks- 21 October 2014

Councillor Hicks reported that this had been a working meeting in preparation for the awards evening and the displays at that event. The CiCC had broken into groups to discuss what to put into questionnaires, etc. and he had participated in this. He felt that it had been a very constructive meeting.

Councillor Jenny St.John – 4 November 2014

Councillor St.John reported that the work begun on 21 October had continued at the 4 November meeting. She noted that they had had a practical run-through of the timetable for the awards event.

Shinderpaul Bhangal had also given an update at the meeting on the elected and she had told the CiCC about the session that had taken place to develop the e-learning tool on Corporate Parenting.

Wendy Fabbro confirmed that she would be attending the meeting on 9 September 2014. Councillor Chris Williams undertook to attend as Councillor Bob Hicks was not able to.

Shinderpaul Bhangal reported that Councillor Williams would be attending the Virtual School Awards Ceremony, Coventry University on 13th September 2014. This event was an opportunity for CiCCs to come together and to discuss leaving care issues.

Shinderpaul Bhangal reported that the first draft of the CiCC Newsletter was almost complete and was expected to be circulated at the end of September and quarterly thereafter.

Councillor Chris Williams – CiCC and Virtual School Awards – 12 November 2014

There was a broad discussion about the fact that young people did not like being referred to as 'children in care' as this label had a lot of negative connotations. It was agreed that in the future the term 'looked after children and young people' (LAC&YP) would be used, as this was more encompassing of all children and groups. Brenda Vincent undertook to review the terminology in WCC documents, including the pledge card when this is reviewed.

The Chair also noted the wide spectrum of age groups at the event, and that he felt that the Panel concentrated largely on the older age groups. Brenda Vincent undertook to include an age profile of Warwickshire's looked after children and young people in future data sets.

Steve Pendleton updated the Panel on the Awards Event, which had been very successful despite the logistical problems with traffic and the BBC filming close to the event. He emphasised that these children and young people

deserved to have a high profile event celebrating their achievements, and that he had received a lot of positive feedback since the event. One email from a foster carer had stated how pleased she had been to attend and how proud she had been to be a foster carer and part of Warwickshire.

Warwick University was being considered for the next award event, as this was a good setting to inspire children and young people.

Brenda Vincent noted that Shinderpaul Bhangal was collating a report of the views of LAC&YP of all ages. This would be brought to the next meeting of the Panel.

It was agreed that there needed to be more done to publicise these positive events, which could be shared with foster carers.

The Chair thanked Steve Pendleton and his staff for the excellent Event.

3. Update from Strategic Lead and Performance Dataset

Brenda Vincent tabled an updated version of the dataset, which she then reported against.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

1. Brenda Vincent outlined the details of the recent B-S Judgment, which required local authorities to put the interests of a child first when considered adoption, including being brought up by their birth family, where possible. All options had to be considered before adoption, including assistance and support to parents and relatives. Brenda Vincent confirmed that for Warwickshire this was already considered as best practice.
2. There was a need to monitor adoption numbers, particularly in light of the increase in the number of approved adopters and the apparent decrease in the number of children available for adoption during the first quarter of this year.
3. Warwickshire's Fostering Service was currently under pressure. There were currently 330 households with foster placements, but there is a constant demand for more available foster carers. There was a discussion about the competitive nature of the fostering market and the challenge for Warwickshire to compete financially. Brenda Vincent stated that there was a need to have a look at recruitment and competition to ensure that Warwickshire can stay in a position where they have the competitive edge in attracting new foster carers.
4. Warwickshire had tight procedures around missing children, which included close monitoring and engagement with the police. Numbers

were reported every month to the safeguarding strategic leadership team so that the numbers are tracked and the circumstances of missing young people are monitored. e.

5. The data set now included data on sibling groups (requested at the previous meeting). In October there were 352 children in sibling groups in care, and 203 had been placed together. The Sibling Policy, which was in early draft, sets out the key principles of:

- placing together wherever possible and appropriate
- taking the needs of sibling groups into account when recruiting foster carers
- priority for adoption fast-tracking
- having a framework for assessing sibling relationships.

This would standardise the approach. Members agreed that the Policy should be brought to the Panel for consideration.

6. Warwickshire had been successful in placing sibling groups for adoption, and while they may not meet the recommended timescale, it was acknowledged that sibling groups could take longer to place, and sometimes had to be placed out of county if the right family was found which is a longer process.
7. Brenda Vincent agreed to investigate the implications on LAC&YP following the SEND Regulations increasing the age to 25.

It was agreed that all Members would receive data on LAC placements in division and school on a termly basis. The Panel also considered the proposed questions for Members and agreed that the revised version, including points about pupil premium, opportunities for apprenticeships and promoting fostering, would be circulated with the placement data. It was agreed that this should also refer to the new e-learning tool which was expected to be ready by the end of the year.

The Chair reported that Brenda Vincent had spoken to the Conservative Group to raise the profile of corporate parenting, and Councillor St.John and Councillor Rickhards agreed to arrange for her to speak to their groups.

The Chair thanked Brenda for her presentation,

4. Themed Item – Virtual School

Steve Pendleton updated the Panel on the exam results for Children in Care for the 2013/14 school year and educational attainment more generally.

He made the following points:

- a. 18% of LAC who entered the GCSE exams received 5 A*-C grades, compared to 21% the year before. Steve Pendleton noted that on reflection, and following a discussion with the Head at Campion School, there was a need to look at measures of success differently. The current measures, which would need to continue to be monitored, were inappropriate as a measure for some LAC&YP such as asylum seekers who had not been able to speak any English a year earlier. He would be reviewing how the positive results that were being achieved could be reflected. This would give a truer picture of the impact of his service and the support they gave, and whether they were making a difference.
- b. A review would be done of the small number of children not able to achieve a C in both Maths and English, to look at any necessary support to help these children reach their full potential.
- c. There was a gap between the results of LAC&YP and children with other disadvantages compared to their cohorts.

During the discussion that followed these points were raised:

1. There was no evidence that academic results improved the longer children or young people were in care. Brenda Vincent pointed out that children and young people did not generally stay in care for long periods, and young people taking GCSEs would generally have come into care having had many years of issues within their families beforehand.
2. The care cohort was not a stable group, and involved a small number of children and young people, making it difficult to generate any patterns or to identify expectations within a cohort, as other Head Teachers were often able to do. A quarter of Warwickshire's school age LAC&YP were also placed out of county.
3. Steve Pendleton tabled a copy of his service's structure chart. He added that plans were in place to reorganise the service so that there was an officer with responsibility for keeping a grasp of the data .
4. When asked what could be done to improve thresholds and to raise the baseline for LAC&YP, Steve Pendleton noted that the pupil premium for LAC&YP was now allocated to him rather than individual schools. This gave him some say in the allocation of these funds, ensuring they were used to increase attainment and opportunities for LAC&YP to narrow the gap. Steve Pendleton undertook to have the list of criteria given to Heads for pupil premium spend, circulated with the minutes of the meeting.
5. Ofsted were able to consider the use of pupil premiums through the Virtual School Head and through Personal Education Plans (PEPs) which each child had, and which included how this money would be spent. School

Governors also had a responsibility to ensure this money was spent properly.

6. The Virtual School team received termly data from schools in all subjects. These were then considered at a meeting with area leads. If any child or young person was not making progress, a plan would be agreed to address these, using pupil premium money to target interventions if necessary.
7. There had been five exclusions over the year. Steve Pendleton noted that this could be due to contextual circumstances, but that discussions would always be held with the respective Heads. Head Teachers did have the right to exclude pupils.
8. Out of 45 LAC&YP, there were three NEETs. Extra career support was going to be given to Year 11 and 12 to help LAC&YP with their career plans and employability. Members recommended that arrangements were made to enable these young people to attend the Skills Show held at the NEC each year. It was agreed this should be included in PEPs.

The Chair thanked Steve Pendleton for his report.

5. Update on the CiCC Election

This item was deferred to the next meeting,

6. Work Programme

The work programme was agreed, including the updates agreed at this meeting.

7. Any Other Business

The following rota was agreed for Councillors attending the CiCC meetings:

Tuesday 2 December 2014	Councillor Chris Williams
Tuesday 20 January 2015	Councillor Bob Hicks
Tuesday 12 February 2015	Councillor Peter Fowler
Tuesday 3 March 2015	Councillor Clive Rickhards
Tuesday 14 April 2015	Councillor Jenny St.John
Tuesday 5 May 2015	Councillor Dave Shilton.

Future meeting dates

27 October 2014 at 10.00 am

9 February 2015 at 10.00 am

14 April 2015 at 10.00 am

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Chair

The meeting closed at 3.55 pm

Item 2



Report for Warwickshire

Corporate Parenting Panel – February 2015

Service Delivery April – September 2014

This year Coventry and Warwickshire Mind, in partnership with Relate Coventry & Warwickshire, have been continuing to offer Journeys – the tier 2 service for looked after and adopted children and young people across Coventry and Warwickshire.

The service is commissioned to work with children and young people (0-18) who are looked after or adopted and have mild-moderate mental health and emotional wellbeing issues. The service also offers consultation and training to foster carers, adopters and professionals working with looked after children and young people.

Service Update

The service employs 4fte Primary Mental Health Workers, 2fte Counsellors and an Occupational Therapist. The service consults with Phoenix Psychological Service for direct family and/or child interventions as well as for support to the Journeys practitioners in the form of complex case group supervision.

Partnership working with specialist CAMHS operates through two meetings per month between a senior CAMHS clinician and a Journeys manager. This enables the needs of the young person to be discussed where a tier 3 (CAMHS) service may be required. It also allows for the 'step down' of young people to Journeys from CAMHS.

The service works directly with children and young people, and in recent months has concentrated on strengthening the involvement of the team around the child/young person. Direct interventions delivered to children and young people have been in the form of;

- Counselling and therapeutic conversations
- Family Counselling
- Solution-focussed and behavioural therapeutic work delivered by Primary Mental Health Workers and OTs
- Therapeutic work involving creative play and art

In addition to one-one support, Journeys has provided the following group based interventions/support to children and young people and their families/professionals:

- User engagement activities – *Half term activities*
- Foster carer support groups
- Working with unaccompanied minors
- Residential care home support (Coventry only)
- Training to foster carers/adopters and professionals

New Developments

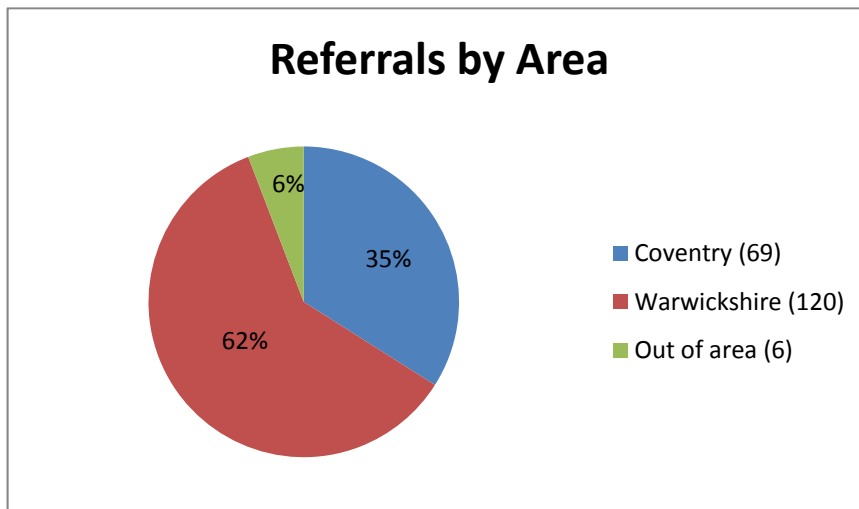
In place of the Journeys social based support groups it was agreed with commissioners to deliver this type of support in a different way, working with groups of young people, their siblings and foster carers/adopters during school holidays. The service found that working in this way has enabled young people and their families to have fun together, has enabled the family to strengthen themselves as a family unit and has helped to build relationships between the user group and the service. A recent example of this has been a sports event in the park event where over 30 young people and their carers gathered at the Memorial Park in Coventry. One carer reported that, *“One of the biggest positives from this is that the event allowed the children who already feel different to feel as though they belong”* this person also reported that *“...it was nice to see the fun side of the staff involved, to spend more time with them than just at Journeys and to meet other carers in a similar position as me”*

Last year the service piloted foster carer support groups across Coventry and Warwickshire. The main focus of these groups was to increase the foster carers' knowledge of attachment, attachment parenting, and understanding the behaviours displayed by the children and young people in their care, from an attachment perspective. The groups offered peer support and a 'listening ear' which was invaluable to the users of the group. The service has continued to offer these groups in Rugby, Warwick, Nuneaton and Coventry and have been well received. In total, 63 carers have attended 96 support sessions over the last 6 months. .

Working with the team around the child –This has included regular meetings with other professionals including teachers and support staff within schools to offer advice on understanding challenging behaviours from an attachment perspective and on the best strategies for managing the behaviours displayed by the child/young person.

Multi-professional meetings – All staff call or attend multi professional meetings aimed at ensuring that the team around the child are working together to support the child in an integrated and a coordinated way.

Referrals and Support (children and young people) Between April 2014 and September 2014, Journeys received 195 referrals. Referrals largely originate from Warwickshire (62%)



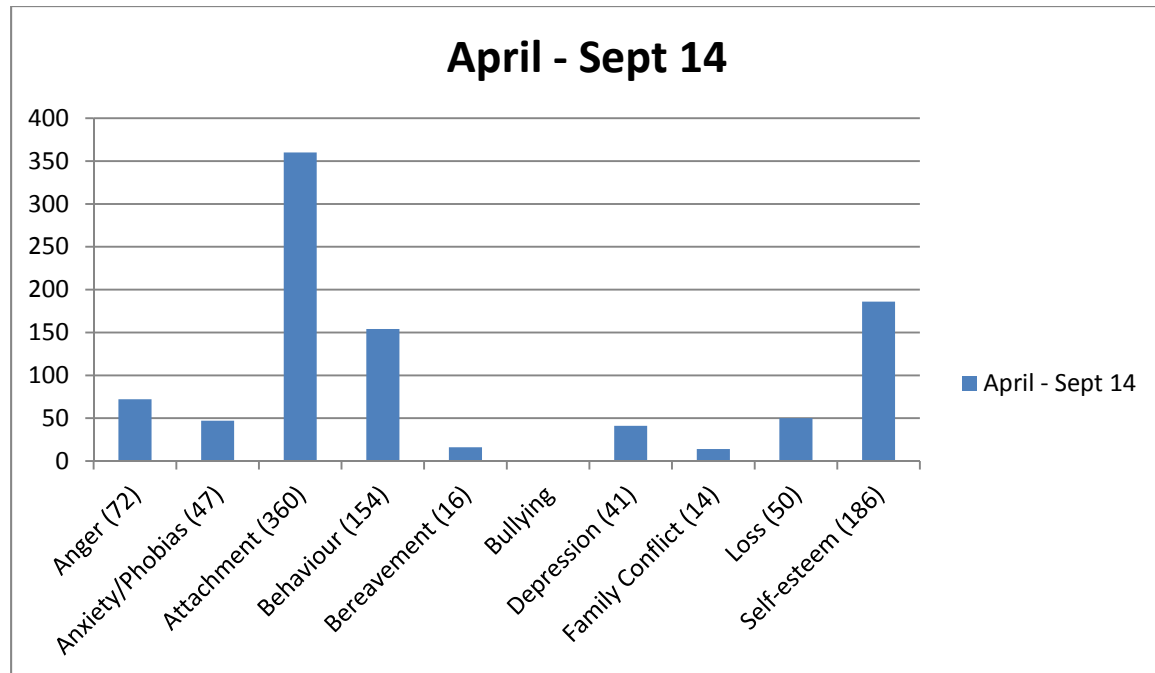
Over the past 6 months (April-September 14) the service has directly supported 245 individual children and young people. In total 1,004 one to one sessions were delivered. Children and young people in Coventry received 364 sessions over the 6 month period and in Warwickshire this was 606 sessions. *(The split between sessions delivered in Coventry and Warwickshire is similar to the split between referrals received. 60% of the one to one sessions have been delivered to young people from Warwickshire, 36% from Coventry.)*

The following provides more details of services delivered to children and young people between 1.4.2014 – 30.9.2014.

Performance Schedule	Coventry		Warwickshire	
	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2
Number of new children and young people who commenced treatment	46	18	52	43
Number of children and young people directly receiving treatment	74	67	105	124
Number of one to one sessions delivered	181	183	278	328
Number of children supported indirectly (due to ongoing work with carer/professional)	78	96	63	68

Areas of presenting concern

The main areas of presenting concerns are attachment, self-esteem and behavioural issues which correlate to the findings within the SDQ. *(This records severe/abnormal ranges within the emotional wellbeing conduct issue of children and young people completing the forms)*



Waiting Times

Over the past 6 months we have seen a reduction in waiting times for young people referred into the service. The waiting list has reduced significantly due to the new staff taking up full caseloads. The current average wait from referral to assessment is one week and the average wait from assessment to intervention is 2 weeks.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Journeys use the SDQ as a tool for recording pre and post change for looked after children and young people who commence treatment.

In quarter 1 – The SDQ can measure overall change, so if a young person's post score changes from when they commenced treatment then this is recorded as improved mental health as evidence by the SDQ. This has shown that 81% of the children and young people reported improved mental health at the point of closure. The table below breaks this down further to record change across each of the 5 scales. The table shows that overall; the mean SDQ pre intervention score was

within the severe/abnormal clinical range at 20.04. By the end of intervention or at point of review, the mean score reduced to 16.23, which is within the moderate/borderline clinical range. The average improvement was 3.81.

Improvement was demonstrated in all 5 scales.

	SDQ		Emotion	Conduct	Hyper	Peer	Prosocial
PRE	20.04	Before	5.46	4.35	6.08	4.15	7.50
POST	16.23	After	4.46	3.12	5.38	3.27	8.35

Within the SDQ, young people can feedback, regardless of their SDQ score, their opinion of change. The question asks the young person, has the service addressed and met your mental health needs? 92% of young people who felt this was the case.

In quarter 2 – The percentage of children who closed with improved mental health as evidence by the SDQ was recorded at 80%. The table below shows that overall; the mean SDQ pre intervention score was within the severe/abnormal clinical range at 20.96. By the end of intervention or at point of review, the mean score reduced to 16.56, which is within the moderate/borderline clinical range. The average improvement was 4.4. Again, improvement was demonstrated across all 5 scales.

	SDQ		Emotion	Cond	Hyper	Peer	Prosocial
PRE	20.96	Before	5.60	4.82	6.69	3.78	6.84
POST	16.56	After	4.29	3.73	5.76	2.78	7.53

The percentage of young people who felt that the service had addressed and met their mental health needs was 87% in Q2

Satisfaction Survey

The Journeys “What did you think” satisfaction survey features 5 questions with a choice of 5 emotion faces with an explanation of each emotion (e.g. smile = yes)

The table allows us to compare user experience of the service between the quarters. The responses to questions answered by the young people over the 6 month period areas follows:

What did you think?	Q1	Q2
The percentage of children and young people who felt that they were treated very well by the staff at Journeys	100%	95%
The percentage that felt that the practitioner knew how to help them	96%	95%
The percentage that felt that the service had helped them	92%	87%

Within the “What did you think” survey. There are also three questions where participants can use their own words to describe their experience. Some of the following was recorded:

“I was able to talk about me and my feelings”

“It helped me except myself for being in care”

“My counsellor was very understanding and helpful”

“They paid attention and listened to my problems”

“Tackling issues at home really helped”

“It helped being able to talk about my feelings and past experiences”

“I like that the people helped me to express my feelings”

“I think it helped me talk about what is upsetting me and I understood what I needed to do to make things better” “ When I first started I was upset about being adopted but now I am a lot better because I feel better about things and because I have talked about things. It has helped me to understand”

Other Interventions

Support & Training to Carers/Professionals

Journeys deliver a range of courses and workshops for carers and professionals.

Over the past 6 months, the service has offered 21 training workshops comprising 45 sessions. 197 individuals have attended training or workshops delivered by Journeys.

These include:

- **Fostering Attachments:**
A group programme for foster carers or adoptive parents. This programme consists of 3 modules of six sessions that increases the participants understanding of behavioural and emotional needs through an increased understanding of attachment theory and its application to the parenting of children.
- **Youth Mental Health First Aid**
Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) is an internationally recognised course designed specifically for people who live or work with or care for young people aged 11-18. The course provides information and training to promote a young peoples’ mental and emotional wellbeing and to enable participants

to support young people who might be experiencing mental and emotional distress.

- **Basic Counselling Skills**

An OCN accredited course that offers a framework and some of the skills necessary in helping others to enhance their working practice. This course is ideal for those who work in a helping or supportive capacity. It enhances the practice of those working with clients on a face-to-face basis as well as enhancing working relationships.

- Case Group Supervision for residential social workers (Coventry only).
- The service also offers a limited number of bespoke courses including short workshops on attachment and a full 1-day workshop.

In addition, the service has also provided 94 one off consultations to parents/carers and professionals and 96 sessions of social/therapeutic support groups to carers. On average, 31 carers attend these groups each quarter.

The following is a snap shot of the feedback received from the carers involved in the social/therapeutic support groups in Rugby.

Do you feel like that the Rugby Support Group has been useful? If So, how has it been useful?

IT HAS BEEN AMAZING, JUST TO SPEAK TO OTHERS WITH THE SAME PROBLEMS, KORI MAKES SENSE IN ALL SHE SAYS.

Do you feel like that the Rugby Support Group has been useful? If So, how has it been useful?

YES A PLACE I CAN TALK ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON WITH LIKE MINDED PEOPLE

Do you feel like that the Rugby Support Group has been useful? If So, how has it been useful?

THE SUPPORT GROUP IN RUGBY HAS BEEN A VITAL LINK TO RAISE AWARENESS AND OFFER SUPPORT AND ADVICE TO ADOPTIVE + FOSTER PARENTS IN THE AREA. A GREAT TOOL TO ENABLE NETWORKING TOO!

Is there anything else you would like to say about the group?

If there was no group where are the parents/carers going to go. Where like minded ~~people~~ people can listen and support ~~as well as~~ ~~for~~ each other with someone to help as well

Is there anything else you would like to say about the group?

It is a vital facility within the area making our roles less isolated and should definitely continue.

Key Challenges

City v County Service

This year, the number of referrals received from Warwickshire was far higher than those from Coventry. 32 per cent of referrals received during the year originated from Coventry, whilst 65 per cent originated from Warwickshire. As the service is 50% funded by Coventry City Council, understandably there were concerns from all stakeholders regarding this imbalance. This is being addressed by delivering some alternative services to Coventry looked after young people and practitioners.

Staff turnover

Over the past 6 months, the service has had to manage a loss of 4 of its existing experienced and qualified members of staff. This amounts to 57% of the overall staff team. This has been challenging on the service in terms of managing waiting lists and times, recruitment and consistency of service provision. The waiting lists have now reduced significantly due to new staff coming joining the service, Consistency of practise is ensured during periods of change through clinical supervisor, line managers and the complex case group supervision process.

Priorities for October 14 – March 15

- Consolidation of team, systemic ways of working, striving to improve
- Continuing to offer a flexible approach to working differently within Coventry and Warwickshire
- To look to adapting the 18 week Fostering Attachment Programme so that longer sessions are delivered over a shorter period of time in order that more programmes are delivered to meet the growing demand for this course

Case Study

Identifying Data:

Male, 10 years old, adopted child living with parents for 6 years.

Presenting Issues:

When he came in he presented as very explosive; he slept poorly and often woke up with night terrors and then would find it very difficult to be soothed. He presented as quite defiant and argumentative and would refuse to leave the home; He did not engage in any after school activities; He lacked confidence and had a very low self-esteem; He would refuse to go to sleep (he was on medication for this) and was aggressive with both mum and dad. He refused to call his adoptive parents mum and dad.

Summary of Interventions:

A total of 29 sessions with a primary mental health worker.

Client use the sand tray to express underlying issues and played out specific themes such as suffocation because he had been suffocated within birth family; Annulations through play figures.

At session 10, he came in to the therapeutic space and said that he didn't want to play today but wanted to talk about some of the past experiences that he had been through and then he proceeded to open up about much that he had been though (eg. being suffocated and locked in a cupboard). What was very poignant was that he was able to share these experiences not only with the practitioner but also with his adoptive mum who was then able to nurture him and provide him with comfort and empathy. From there on this was a turning point both for him in terms of processing his trauma but also for their relationship which really began to blossom and grow. Mum and Dad were very much involved with the process. The practitioner worked systemically in that she regularly had separate sessions with parents and took them though the 'House Model of Parenting' children with attachment issues as well as looking at specific strategies to help the young person feel more secure. In addition our practitioner also looked at their roles and how they parent. The practitioner was able to identify their individual parenting strengths and help them to bring these to the fore in order to best support the client's needs.

Practitioner also did a memory jar with client and his memories were about being adopted and these were positive memories and his last memory was of being in a house with a very loving nurturing family.

Outcomes:

Client was able to call them mum and dad which meant a lot to his parents. This was especially very emotional for mum. As indicated by the memory jar his sense of belonging within the family significantly increased. His night terrors all but disappeared and he was also able to go to sleep with ease without needing any medication.

He was able to maintain and sustain peer relationships and therefore his confidence, self-esteem and general well-being greatly increased. He was able to start going to after school clubs such as 'boys brigade' which he loved.

He generally became a lot more settled at home and at school and his levels of aggression greatly decreased both in terms of frequency and intensity. He was able by the end of therapy to tell his parents when he was feeling vulnerable thus allowing them to support him.

Feedback from client

Testimonial from a 14 year old young male worked with in Journeys

Before I came to Journeys, I used to get angry, a lot especially about my mum letting me down all the time and not knowing who my dad was. I was confused about my identity. I used to always worry about my mum going into hospital and not being able to see her. Because of all of this I struggled to concentrate in school, was always getting told off and in detention. I struggled to make friends at school and people used to pick on me. I live with my carer who cares for me, but before I came to Journeys I did not get on with my carer, I was back chatting and being rude. I never really thought about my actions.

I first met with my Journeys worker at a community centre in Nuneaton. We used to talk about what was going for me at home and school. When I first started secondary school I didn't feel able to talk to my teachers about personal stuff because I didn't know them so having Journeys to speak to really helped. I really enjoyed going to Journeys it helped me in my life. We used to talk about my feelings using toys and I learnt a lot about how to manage my difficult feelings. We did a lot of work about mental illness. My mum has a mental illness, and now I know it can affect anyone, it was really good to learnt about this and it has really helped me cope with my mum's situation much better. I even got the opportunity to go on a trip to west midlands safari park!

Now I am in year 9, I finished with Journeys 18months ago. I am able to make friends, I haven't had a detention in ages and I am coping much better. I even won an award at school for creativity and ingenuity. I cope with my mum's illness much better and it has improved our relationship. She even spent Christmas with us. Coming to Journeys was a really good experience.

Carer's feedback: I am so proud of what John (not his real name) has done. He is now I joy to be around. The one part of the Journeys work which has really stuck out for me was being advised to let John be a child, and go back to younger years and reclaim the years he lost. This has really helped us as a family.

Item 3

Warwickshire



Notes from meeting on Tuesday 2nd December 2014, 6.30pm, Shire Hall, Warwick

Present:

Daniel K
Caitlin L
Sara D
James D
Jamie B
Mia W
Bradley B

Supporting Staff:

Shin Bhangal (Practice Leader Participation)

Visitors

Rob Statham (minutes)
Cllr Chris Williams
Dyved Price
Kate Sahota

Apologies

Laura D, Grant E, Chris W and Lewis E, Bella H,

1. Updates from last meeting

- Meal out set as Tuesday 9th at 18:30, at Taybarns
- The events calendar is to be emailed out

2. Digital By Default

Digital by Default is a project team that has been researching the potential to use IT solutions, in particular, care leavers. The project team have got to a stage where prototypes have been developed and these are being taken out to young people to seek their views on whether it is something that would help to improve services to care leavers.

The CICC split into two groups to review the prototypes. The feedback was as follows.

Traffic Light system

- Confidentiality is key

- Access could be an issue
- Would be improved with contact details
- Rated 4/5

Care Leavers Community

- Entitlements and rights to be included
- A potential forum would need a report button and to be password protected
- Must avoid Facebook
- Rated 4.5/5

Rate My

- Confidentiality important
- Needs an independent review system
- Probably wouldn't be used
- Rated 2-3/5

Radio/Podcast

- Podcast better than radio
- Restricted access would be required
- Need a login account
- Rated 3-4/5

Mentoring

- Information needed on both being a mentored and becoming a mentor
- Needs to remain as informal as possible
- Is it funded?
- Rated 4/5

Advice and Personal record app

- Rights included
- Have a potential rating system
- Rated 5/5

E-Pathway

- Has good potential to involve more options
- Could include reminders
- Rated 4.5/5

3. Being in Care Booklet/ Sibling Policy

Both these items were deferred into the new year.

4. Vulnerable Adults Short Term Support Service - Hannah Rooney & Paula Ellis

This item was run as a combined session with MYP/VOX.

Paula Ellis introduced information about a new service which she described as a service for vulnerable adults in need of short term support.

Paula Ellis explained the following key points about the proposed service,

- No decisions have been finalised about the service
- Aims to provide short term support
- Not replacing any services - aiming to work alongside others
- Service is for those not eligible for social services
- Service will offer advice and support
- Aim is to help move adults from one type of support to another
- No current set criteria agreed as yet
- The service has not even been given a title

Paul wanted the views of CiCC, MYP and VOX to include as part of the planning of the service. Paula handed out questionnaires which included the following questions.

1. Who do you think would use/benefit from this service?
2. What might happen in a person's life that would mean they might need to use this service?
3. What type of support might a person need?
4. How might a person access this service?
5. What types of skills might staff need?
6. Is there anything you would like to tell us that you think we have missed?

Paula thanked the group for their input and said that the views provided in the questionnaires would help shape the new service.

5. Corporate Parenting Panel

Ran out of time for this item.

Any other business

None

Item 4

Warwickshire County Council

Sibling Policy and Practice

Guidance

Version: 0.1

Date issue: December 2014

Reference:

Team: Children's Safeguarding

Warwickshire County Council

Sibling Policy and Practice Guidance

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1. Introduction

1.1 Sibling relationships are significant for looked after children. They can provide a sense of continuity and stability for the looked after child, offering emotional support at the same time helping the child maintain a sense of identity and promoting their self-esteem. Throughout the care planning processes it is important to record information which helps the child understand why decisions have been made. Decision making has to be **evidence based**, **defensible** and **clearly recorded**. This policy and guidance sets out our approach to working with sibling groups of looked after children in Warwickshire.

1.2 It will outline:

- The assessment framework (and associated guidance and tools) used for assessing sibling relationships that inform planning and decision making.
- Requirements in respect of sibling contact.
- Training and support to social care staff, foster carers and prospective adopters.

2. Legal position

2.1 The main legal provision on the placement of siblings is contained in the Children Act 1989

'Where the Local Authority provides accommodation for a child whom they are looking after, they shall ...so far as is reasonably practicable and consistent with his welfare, secure that ... where the authority are also providing accommodation for a sibling of his, they are accommodated together. (Section 23 (7) (B))

2.2 The Adoption and Children Act 2002 section 1 (4)

Requires the court to consider

'The likely effect on the child (throughout his life) of having ceased to be a member of the original family and become an adopted person' and 'the relationship which the child has with relatives ... including the likelihood of any such relationships continuing and the value to the child of its doing so'

2.3 Statutory Guidance on Adoption for local authorities, voluntary adoption agencies and adoption support agencies - July 2013

'Siblings should be adopted by the same prospective adopter unless there is good reason why they should not be. Where ... making a placement decision on two or more children from the same family, it should be based on a comprehensive assessment of the quality of the children's relationship, their individual needs and the likely capacity of the prospective adopter to meet the needs of all the siblings being placed together. Where it is not possible ... the agency should consider carefully the need for the children to remain in contact with each other ... Where a placement is sought for a child whose sibling(s) have already been adopted, it will be important to consider whether it is possible to place the child with the parents who have already adopted the sibling(s).'

2.4 Looked after children: contact with siblings
(Update to the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review - February 2014)

'There is a specific requirement for the care plan to set out arrangements for the promotion and maintenance of contact with brothers and sisters, so far as this is consistent with the child's welfare [Schedule 1, paragraph 3(1) and Schedule 1, paragraph 3(4)].'

'Contact arrangements should be focused on, and shaped around, the child's needs. The child's welfare is the paramount consideration at all times and each child's wishes and needs for contact should be individually considered and regularly assessed ... It is important to ensure that contact arrangements between siblings are given very careful attention and plans for maintaining contact are robust.'

3. Policy

3.1 Our policy recognises that relationships between brothers and sisters are important and wherever possible they should be placed together. Where it is not possible or appropriate either in the short or long term, we will ensure that contact arrangements are put in place that support the development of healthy and sustainable sibling relationships where this is appropriate.

3.2 We will put this policy into practice in the follows ways:

- Considering and addressing the needs of children in sibling groups from
 - (i) the point of the edge of care meeting or legal planning meeting,
 - (ii) in the placement referral and matching processes
 - (iii) though ongoing looked after arrangements including the looked after reviews and
 - (iv) in securing permanency placements for children.
- By understanding from children and young people who they view as a sibling – this can include non related children who have lived together as a family group, step relationships and half brothers and sisters where they share one birth parent. To ensure that genograms are completed.
- Placing sibling together, in both the short and longer term, wherever possible and where this is consistent with their wishes and welfare.
- Providing separated siblings with the same independent reviewing officer who can oversee arrangements for their care and contact
- Listening to their views and wishes about contact
- Ensuing arrangements are in place for promoting and maintaining contact with brothers and sisters who may or may not all be looked after, and where they are, not placed together. Opportunities are promoted for brother and sisters to have contact, underpinned by written agreements that are kept under review.
- Providing information and counselling/support to a looked after child/ren where decisions are made that contact with a brother or sister is to cease. This will usually be the result of a legal process where for example the siblings have differing permanency plans.

- Through fostering and adoption marketing and recruitment activities promoting the need for sibling placement and prioritising these in the subsequent preparation and assessment processes.
- For children already adopted to always consider whether a younger or new born sibling can be placed with them.
- Providing training to social care staff, foster carers and adoptive parents on the significance of sibling relationships, the assessment process and how to promote and secure the best possible long term outcomes for sibling groups of children. To including minimising potential risks arising from ongoing sibling contact, how to renegotiating contact arrangements and the support available.
- Ensuring social care staff are skilled and supported in completing sibling assessments in line with the Warwickshire framework.
- Sharing this policy with the Children in Care Council for their views and observations.
- Reporting to the Corporate Parenting Board on an annual basis the profile and specific needs of looked after siblings groups.

4. Contact

- 4.1 A key principle of the Children Act 1989 is the presumption of contact between a looked after child and their family members, including parents, siblings and extended family members.
- 4.2 Where sibling are not placed or do not live together the social worker for the child should explain the reasons for this to the child/young person.
- 4.3 Throughout the placement planning process as detailed in the Care Plan and Placement Plan careful attention must be given to contact arrangements. Sibling relationships should not be weakened due to an absence of suitable placement or detailed planning. The plan needs to ensure that sibling relationships are meaningfully maintained and thrive despite the disrupted and complex living circumstances of the children concerned.
- 4.4 In all but exceptional circumstances contact should take place within the foster home(s). Where this is not possible or in the child's interest, or where contact forms part of the assessment process, there should be a consistent

contact supervisor. The views of the children should always be sought regarding these arrangements.

- 4.5 Where contact is not taking place, children should be informed why this is the case and their views and wishes sought. Indirect forms of contact may be considered in these circumstances.

5. Assessing children in sibling groups

5.1 This section outlines Warwickshire County Council's approach to undertaking comprehensive assessments on sibling relationships, incorporating their individual needs and the likely capacity of permanency carers – prospective adopters, foster carers or special guardians, to be able to meet these needs in the event of the siblings being placed together.

5.2 The assessment framework consists of three elements:

- The assessment format that will be completed jointly by the child's social worker (Sections C and D – Significant History/Reason for Assessment and Areas for Assessment, covering the sections on individual child's needs in relation to parenting and care and current relationships between siblings) and the workers assigned to complete the sibling assessment that will involve gathering information and evidence from various sources, completing an analysis and making recommendations.



Sibling
Assessment.final.doc

- Sibling Assessment Guidance Notes- draws upon research evidence and posing key questions for the assessing workers to consider



Guidance notes for
assessing sibling relat



What is sibling
abuse.docx



Sibling Rivalry.docx

- Sibling Assessment Tools – this includes the **Sibling Relationship Checklist** and other formats that can be used to gather information about the nature and quality of sibling relationships.



Framework for
assessing sibling attachment



Complex cases
-Tools for assisting in



Sibling Relationship
Questionnaire.docx



Direct work
ideas.pub



Framework Sibling
Assessment.docx

- 5.3 Consideration should be given at the earliest possible time following the admission to care of a sibling group as to whether it is beneficial for a comprehensive sibling assessment to be completed. Where legal proceedings may be initiated the Pre Proceedings Meeting should **always** consider this.
- 5.4 Prior to the commencement of the assessment an **Assessment Planning Meeting** should take place chaired by a Practice Leader from the Children's Team. The meeting should include the social worker, foster carers, their social worker, sessional worker and any other professionals e.g. CAMHS/Journey's, schools, CAF/CASS officer – anyone whose input will be required as part of the assessment process. Consideration should be given to including the IRO in the meeting and/or seeking their views regarding the proposed assessment.
- 5.4 The purpose of the planning meeting is to:

- Clarify the purpose of the assessment – the *audience* for the report
- Confirm the approach/tools that will be used and how the *'team around the siblings'* will be required to contribute evidence to the assessment.
- Detail who is obtaining and collating the assessment information and who will be undertaking the analysis
- Review arrangements and timescale.
- Whether access to professional consultancy is required e.g. from a more experienced colleague or psychologist, and how this will be secured.

5.5 Where the assessment covers a sibling group of more than 2 children, particularly where they are in separate placements, it is recommended that 2 workers are assigned to complete the assessment.

5.6 The completed Sibling Assessment Report is to be agreed by the Children's Team Operations Manager (or Service Manager) before it is submitted to legal services for court purpose. The recommendation made in the assessment report, where accepted, is to be recorded as a key decision on the care records for the children concerned.

6. Training and Support

6.1 As identified in the annual performance review all social care staff who are involved directly in the assessment of siblings will have the opportunity to complete 'Sibling Assessment Training' underpinned by theories on attachment and other research evidence on the nature of sibling relationships. Training on care planning and permanency processes will also highlight the sibling dimension to the planning and decision making processes.

6.2 Foster carers have a key role and responsibility for ensuring that the plans that are put into place for sibling contact are successful. The Fostering Service will ensure that training and supervision for foster carers addresses the following issues:

- Understanding the importance of sibling relationships exploring attitudes and experiences
- The impact of loss and separation on siblings
- Overcoming the practical barriers to promoting contact
- The carers role in assessment of sibling relationship – the checklist
- Opportunities within foster care to develop healthy sibling relationships and attachments.

- 6.3 The recruitment of prospective adopters should include a specific awareness and training session on meeting the needs of sibling placements, addressing both practical and emotional aspects, including the availability of adoption support services in the short and longer term.
- 6.4 Where siblings are placed separately the social worker for the children and fostering workers should convene meetings at intervals to ensure that the contact and assessment arrangements (where applicable) are progressing as planned. These meetings will also provide the opportunity to address any actual or potential difficulties and can reinforce the importance of promoting the sibling contact and provide support where this is consistent with the plan for each child concerned.

Sibling Assessment

Of

Name of child(ren)

Team:

Author/s of Report:

Job title:

Date of Report:

Family Information:

First name(s) of child(ren)	Surname	DOB	Address	Legal status	Pre school or school

Name of parent(s) or carer (s)	Address	Relationship/s to child	Do they hold parental responsibility? Yes/No	DOB(s)

Genogram and timeline:

For tools to aid the completion of the timeline/geonogram see guidance.

Assessment worker(s):

Name and job title of assessor(s)

Assessment worker(s) details:

Worker(s) statement – include qualifications/background/work history/experience

Executive Summary:

ASSESSMENT

Dates and times of assessment sessions and attendance:

Example: The Assessment ofhas been undertaken between and 2014. If observations have taken place, include those details here also.

Date/Time	Venue	Participants	Type of session

Enquires undertaken:

For example: Schools, Health, parents or other primary carer, foster carers, Early Years professionals, contact workers, CAMHS, previous social workers. Detail what and when enquiries have been undertaken.

Significant history/reason for the assessment:

Details of Children's Services involvement both historically and current. Detail the purpose of this assessment and why now. State the aim and circumstances of the assessment (include relevant facts relating to children's age, providers of information, etc.)

Areas of assessment

- *Each child's individual needs, particularly in relation to parenting, care and education to be completed by the child(ren)s social worker).*
- *Current relationship between the siblings and its unique meaning to each child including how each child sees their role in relation to their siblings.*
- *Quality of the relationships between the siblings including position within the family, gender, understanding of abuse and lived experiences.*
- *The sibling group dynamics and levels of attachment and any behaviours demonstrated between the siblings*
- *Each child's placement needs, including their potential future relationships into adulthood.*
- *Childs wishes, feelings and views in respect of their relationships with siblings.*

Children's individual needs, particularly in relation to parenting, care and education.

Include the age, characteristics, personality and background of each child.

Evidence of current relationships between the siblings and its unique meaning to each child including how each child sees their role in relation to their siblings.

The sibling group dynamics and levels of attachment and any behaviours demonstrated between the siblings.

The checklist can be completed by the allocated social worker, child's foster carers, contact supervisors, or other professional involved with the sibling group. The assessment worker will be responsible for co-ordinating and analysing the findings.

As part of the assessment a Sibling Relationship Checklist has been completed in respect of all of the children. From this checklist, the following observations have been made:

Interaction	Frequency Sometimes (S) Often (O) Never (N)	Comments <i>This should include descriptions of the interactions between the siblings which will form the evidence for the assessment.</i>
Defends or protects	<i>e.g:</i> MILLIE S KIERAN N	
Recognises siblings distress and offers comfort		
Accepts comfort from sibling		
Teaches or helps		
Initiates play		
Responds to overtures to play		
Openly shows affection		
Misses sibling when apart		
Resolves conflict through age appropriate reasoning		
Annoys, irritates or teases		
Shows hostility or aggression		
Blames or attempts to get sibling into trouble		
Behaviours sabotages efforts to meet other siblings needs		
Any modelling of dysfunctional parental		

behaviour towards sibling		
Any sexualised behaviour		
Boisterous play		
Imaginative activities		
Jokes and fun		
Secrets		
Roles they adopt		
Activities and interests		
Behaviour		
Personality		
Evidence of reciprocity?		
Pride in each other		
Praise and criticism		
Mutual help		
Do they model each other?		
Think and look alike		
Imitate each other		
Emulate the qualities they like		
Unite in face of problems		

Summary/assessment of the information gathered from the completion of the checklist(s):

Quality of the relationships between the siblings, including position within the family, gender, understanding of abuse and lived experiences.

To include levels of attachment, rivalry, and support between siblings, taking into consideration 'normal' siblings behaviours.

Each child's placement needs, including their potential future relationships into adulthood.

List each child's individual placement needs; include appropriate health, social, behavioural, emotional and future needs

Child’s wishes, feelings and views in respect of their relationships with siblings.

To include the child’s feelings and views, where these wishes/views cannot be achieved provide an explanation to why and how the views have been taken into consideration in respect of the final decisions and outcomes.

Analysis

Comprehensive analysis and summary of the assessment and the relationship(s) between the siblings. This should include the strength and difficulties of either separation or keeping siblings together. If there are difficulties within the relationships is this a matter that can be addressed through re-parenting either prior to or post placement? If not why not.? Is there any evidence to say that sibling relationships have improved over time?

Recommendations:

To include should siblings be placed together or apart, what additional support or work is required both now and in the future, including any preparation and post work due to separation of siblings, any post placement support and levels of sibling contact.

From the observations made of the children as a sibling group and as individuals, it would be my recommendation that:

-
-
-

I believe that the facts stated in this report are true and that the analysis and conclusions I have compiled are valid.

Author of report:

Signed:

Dated:

Report authorised and analysis discussed with and confirmed by:

Signed:

(Practice Leader or Operations Manager)

Dated:

References:

Assessing Sibling relationships

Siblings – together or apart?

Many factors affect the final decision to place sibling groups together or not; policies, procedures, staffing issues, availability of placements on entering care, and the personal beliefs of social workers, foster carers and Panel members, solicitors, magistrates, judges, guardians and as far as possible you should be aware these factors exist. These are further complicated by the ages of the children, their ethnicity, and level of disability, whether they came into care together or not, their legal status, long term plan, contact needs and views and wishes of birth relatives.

And yet it should be clear that each child's own wishes and feelings, the assessed quality of the relationship between the siblings, and each child's assessed needs are the most important factors which should inform decisions about whether siblings are placed in foster care, within their extended family or a permanent new family together or separately.

Clarify who the siblings are:

Understanding the dynamics of sibling groups particularly those which are larger and have complex histories, needs to begin with asking children who they regard as their brothers or sisters and who they feel close to or estranged from. Thus the significance of sibling relationships is personal and inter-personal, not only biological or legal and this understanding should therefore guide our thinking and practice in our work with siblings.

Include siblings coming into the system together, those already in the system, those adopted, half and full siblings. Think about common genes, common history, family values, culture, common legal status, children who share at least one parent, children who have lived in the same household as each other and children who would have lived together had they not been received into care.

Who should be involved:

Each child's social worker, each child's foster carer, an adoption worker, school teachers and any other professional with a knowledge of each or all the children. The birth parents may feel able to contribute to the assessment and consult each child's carer, as well as your own observations to develop a view of how each child relates to each of his or her siblings.

A general framework;

Interviews and initial meetings

- Interview with social worker
- Interview with other fostering support workers

- Interview with foster parents/ key worker/school/ others who know child/children. Remain focused on who can provide the observational evidence needed to help inform the process.
- Child Behaviour Checklist
- Sibling Attachment Framework
- Use of Questionnaires
- Observed contacts between siblings

Assessment Time

- We are mindful that there are time restraints upon the sibling assessment, frequently the work must be completed between 4-6 weeks - a plan would need to reflect this.
- Siblings seen together at least twice.
- Each child ideally seen twice individually, in chronological order.
- Sibling pair or grouping seen together for final session.

Children in separate foster homes:

It is essential they have regular contact with each other for more than a couple of hours a week and preferably in a foster home without other children around, and separate from and contact with their birth parents. This is so that their interaction with each other can be observed and evaluated.

Assessing each child's needs

The relationship with and attachment to siblings is important, but it is important to assess each child as an individual with his/ her unique needs and balance these needs with the need to be with siblings. Understand each child's awareness of their experience and their wishes for the future.

Context in which the relationship has developed

Children's position in the family, their gender, cultural and family expectations of each child, the emotional age at which the child is functioning, shared history, the role the child was deemed to have played in the children leaving the family, the individual child's innate temperament and resilience. Factors in the birth family can also affect the relationship for example the quality of early attachment to the main carer, quality of parental relationship, the emotional climate in the family, impact of abuse and neglect.

Each child's attachment to and relationship with each sibling.

It is important to assess each individual child's relationship and attachment to each of its siblings.

Dynamics of the sibling group.

Assess each child individually, in a “dyad” and as part of the sibling group. Is one child acting out for the others, do two siblings relate well until joined by a third etc.

Identify who should be placed with whom or alone if a sibling group is to be split.

This should be based on their individual needs, their wishes and their relationships. If siblings are to be re-united, ensure they spend increasing time with each other.

Permanency/Adoption Triangle – child, permanency carers, extended family, adopters, birth family.

Most of the above is about child’s needs but when making an assessment about the placement of the siblings together or separately you need to be aware of the reality of any family arrangement coping with all the children, do the children have different contact needs with birth family?

Assessment and evaluation

Has a thorough assessment of the sibling relationship been carried out?

You will need to identify the themes that emerge from the use of the checklists and all the other information gathered during the assessment process, consider research and seek advice from experienced practitioners, line managers and Children’s Panel when making your recommendation about the placement of siblings together or separate.

Have the children had the opportunity to have meaningful contact if in separate placements? Research indicates a need for regular contact in a variety of settings to ascertain how the children relate to one another.

Have the expectations placed on Foster Carers for contact arrangements to promote sibling relationships been explicit?

Can the foster carers be encouraged to work closely together to promote contact? Could they offer respite to the other carer, or babysit? How do they view the relationships? Remember, foster carers will also have strong views and beliefs about siblings groups influenced by their experiences.

Recording

Write the report with a clear view as to who will be reading it, i.e. Court, Panel, Carers etc.

Helping decision making for sibling groups:

Make a list of the pros and cons for placing children together or separately or for separating siblings who are already together

Adopt a life-span approach in relation to assessment, decision making and planning for sibling groups in care, think carefully about the consequences of this in 2 years, 5 years, 10 years' time and through to adulthood.

For each argument to separate them or place them together, challenge your own view to look at the argument for doing the opposite.

For example, a common reason for not trying to place children together is that "no-one" will take all of them- How do you know?

It may be that adopters and other permanency carers of older siblings could and would take these children.

It is very important that the reasons and rationale for deciding to separate siblings or to place them together is clearly recorded and based on updated assessments which are evidence based. The record should include the children's own views and the reasons, where applicable, why it was decided to override these.

Undertake a feedback session with professionals, foster carers or keyworker.

Undertake a follow – up interview with social worker- to establish appropriate placement and to establish evidence for reviewing process of assessment.

Decisions should be recorded as key decisions on the child's records.

Assessment of Sibling Relationship

What factors do we need to consider in an assessment?

- What are the individual needs of the child?
- What are the child's wishes for the future?
- What are the dynamics of the children's relationships with each other?

Key Considerations for Assessment:

Parenting Intensity:

The degree of developmental trauma experienced by children in the looked after system means they often require very intensive developmental re-parenting. Deficits and damage caused by early poor parenting means that, in order to heal and catch up, children require to be parented as much younger children. It is common knowledge that parenting babies and very young children is very time and energy intensive.

Consider what is the degree of developmental trauma that the child has experienced? How much re-parenting will they need and what time and energy will this require?

Nature of the sibling relationship:

When assessing a sibling relationship the assessor should take into account the intensity of parenting required if the siblings were to be placed together. This needs to include not only an assessment of the individual needs of each child but also the sibling dynamic. Parenting siblings who have been harmed by early parenting experiences and whose sibling relationships have been pathologised can be extremely demanding. In making family placements it is important that the primary objective of developing a secure attachment between child and parent is not jeopardised by the demands of managing sibling relationships.

Consider what intensity of parenting will be required to manage sibling dynamics?

Will the ability to form a secure attachment be jeopardised by the demands of managing sibling relationships?

The compatibility of the sibling's parenting needs:

In a healthy functioning birth family where children have developed secure attachments the natural style of parenting the parent offers usually works well for all children within that family and 'fits with' the family's culture. However, when a child's development has been distorted by early adversity their demands and needs may be

more extreme and displayed in diverse ways. In this situation it is difficult for a parent to exercise one consistent style that will meet the demands of children across a sibling group. For example, a young boy with a disorganised attachment style and a tendency towards aggressive self-reliance may require one style of parenting whereas his sister who is highly dissociative and withdrawn might require quite another. The active demands of the brother may over shadow the less obvious but no less important need for parents' time and attention the sister requires. Furthermore the parenting approach that would meet the brother's needs may well be inappropriate to meet the needs of his sister.

Consider what parenting approach is needed to suit each child's needs and does this fit with the style needed for each sibling?

The security of the sibling relationship:

What are the dynamics in the interactions between siblings, are they healthy and positive or are they at risk of re-enacting unresolved traumatic experiences?

Some positive indications

- Helping each other
- Teaching and encouraging learning, showing a sibling how to do something
- Sharing- time, toys, sweets, drinks, taking turns
- Having fun together
- Sharing in boisterous play
- Caring and nurturing
- Showing emotional warmth, love, affection or empathy
- Seeking or giving comfort
- Resolving conflict through age appropriate reasoning
- Being loyal or protective

When does a sibling become an attachment figure?

Often we need to differentiate an attachment bond vs an affectionate bond.

In many parts of the world basic child care is performed by older children as a matter of necessity.

In role reversal, the child is the psychological parent and puts the protection of their parent before their own needs but they are not necessarily an attachment figure for younger siblings.

For the sibling to become an attachment figure the caretaker child must fill the basic requirements of an attachment figure - provision of physical and emotional care and continuity and consistency in the younger child's life, together with emotional investment in the child. (Howes, 1999)

Sibling Patterns of Relating

Children who are fostered or placed for adoption today have more complex and fragmented family relationships than other children. (Kosonen 1999 and Rushton et al 2001). There are significant risk factors in their background and must as a consequence of their adverse early experiences be suffering some degree of developmental trauma. This developmental trauma affects sibling relationships and the type and intensity of parenting children require.

Absent: Children have failed to form enough connection to an adult even to seek out other relationships.

Adult Lockout: Siblings have developed a bond with one another that serves as a substitute for or even a barrier to parent-child attachment.

Half and Half: Siblings have a genuine but extremely problematic sibling relationship due to their dysfunctional attachments to their caregiver (interactions involve re-enacting difficulties in their environment).

Trauma Shield: Siblings have developed defences to cope with living in an extremely traumatic context that can lead to them being fused and reliant on one another to cope.

The following conditions may indicate that siblings should be placed separately:

- Intense rivalry or jealousy, with each child totally preoccupied with and unable to tolerate the attention their sibling(s) may be getting.
- Exploitation, often based on gender e.g. boys may have been seen or see themselves as inherently superior to their sisters with a right to dominate and exploit them.
- Chronic scapegoating of one child
- Maintaining unhelpful alliances in a sibling group and family of origin. Sibling patterns of behaviour may be strongly entrenched and may prevent re-parenting or learning new cultural norms
- Maintaining unhelpful hierarchical positions e.g. the child may be stuck in the role of victim or bully
- Serious sibling abuse/violence
- Highly sexualised behaviour with each other unresolved
- Acting as triggers to each other's traumatic material potentially re-traumatising each other. The triggers may well be unconscious, unintentional and mundane.
- Separation from a sibling is requested by one of the children
- A mental health assessment has been undertaken that indicates it would be in each child's best interests to be placed separately

Impact of Age Differences

An older sibling may not be able to invest emotionally in a new family and will hinder the emotional investment of a younger child.

The care plan in the best interest of the child may be different (e.g. foster care and direct contact vs adoption and indirect contact)

Younger children can be easier to place and placement with older siblings may provide a delay.

Different relatives may be available to provide a permanent placement (is the adult-child relationship more important than the sibling relationship?)

Lord and Borthwick (2008)

Sibling Abuse

What is sibling abuse?

Sibling abuse is the physical, emotional or sexual abuse of one sibling by another. Physical abuse can range from more mild forms of aggression between siblings, such as pushing and shoving, to very violent behaviour such as using weapons.

Often parents don't see the abuse for what it is. As a rule, parents and society expect fights and aggression among siblings. Because of this, parents often don't see sibling abuse as a problem until serious harm occurs.

Besides the direct dangers of sibling abuse, the abuse can cause all kinds of long-term problems on into adulthood.

How common is sibling abuse?

Research shows that violence between siblings is quite common. In fact, it is probably even more common than child abuse (by parents) or spouse abuse.

Experts estimate that three children in 100 are dangerously violent toward a brother or sister. A 2005 study puts the number of assaults each year to children by a sibling at about 35 per 100 children. The same study found the rate to be similar across income levels and racial and ethnic groups.

Likewise, many researchers have estimated sibling incest to be much more common than parent-child incest.

It seems that when abusive acts occur between siblings, family members often don't see it as abuse.

How do I identify abuse? What is the difference between sibling abuse and sibling rivalry?

At times, all siblings squabble and call each other mean names, and some young siblings may "play doctor". But here is the difference between typical sibling behaviour and abuse: Where there is a sustained pattern where one child is always the victim and the other child is always the aggressor, it is an abusive situation. When one sibling continually hits, bites, or physically tortures a brother or sister, the normal rivalry has become abuse.

Some possible signs of sibling abuse are:

- One child always avoids their sibling.
- A child has changes in behaviour, sleep patterns, eating habits, or has nightmares

- A child acts out abuse in play
- A child acts out sexually in inappropriate ways
- The children's roles are rigid: one child is always the aggressor, the other, the victim
- The roughness or violence between siblings is increasing over time

What are some of the risk factors for sibling abuse?

We need more research to find out exactly how and why sibling abuse happens. Experts think there are a number of possible risk factors:

- Parents are not around much at home
- Parents are not very involved in their children's lives, or are emotionally distant
- Parents accept sibling rivalry and fights as part of family life, rather than working to minimize them
- Parents have not taught children how to handle conflicts in a healthy way from early on
- Parents do not stop children when they are violent (they may assume it was an accident, part of a two-way fight, or normal horseplay)

Parents increase competition among children by:

- Parents' differential treatment and favouritism
- Comparing children
- Preferential rejection
- Scapegoating of one child
- Focus on negativity
- labelling or type-casting children (even casting children in positive roles can be harmful)
- Parents and children are in denial that there is a problem
- Children have inappropriate family roles, for example they are burdened with too much care-taking for a younger sibling
- Children are exposed to violence: in their family (domestic violence) in the media (for example, in TV shows or video games) among their peers or in their neighbourhoods (for example, bullying)
- Parents have not taught children about sexuality and about personal safety
- Children have been sexually abused or witnessed sexual abuse
- Children have access to pornography
- Poor mental or physical health of parents.
- Substance misuse

Can sibling relationships have lasting effects into adulthood?

In the last few years, more researchers have looked at the lasting effects of early experiences with sisters and brothers. Siblings can have strong, long-lasting effects on one another's emotional development as adults.

Research indicates that the long-term effects of surviving sibling abuse can include:

- Depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem
- Inability to trust; relationship difficulties
- Alcohol and drug addiction
- Learned helplessness
- Eating disorders

Even less extreme sibling rivalry during childhood can create insecurity and poor self-image in adulthood. Sibling conflict does not have to be physically violent to take a long-lasting emotional toll. Emotional abuse, which includes teasing, name-calling, and isolation can also do long-term damage.

The abuser is also at risk—for future violent or abusive relationships, like dating violence and domestic violence.

Sibling Rivalry

Sibling rivalry is a normal part of growing up. Although siblings can be the closest of friends it is rare to find a child who gets along perfectly with all of his or her siblings. Brothers and sisters fight- it is just the natural ebb and flow of family life. Different personalities and ages can play a role, siblings also often see themselves as rivals, competing for an equal share of limited family resources (like the bathroom, or last piece of cake) and of course parental attention. In protective environments, where strong disagreements in ideas and values or responses to intolerable behaviour are expressed, siblings learn valuable lessons in how to handle aggression and keep anger within limits, disagree, negotiate, sort out core values and resolve differences without humiliating or dominating each other. These skills can be transferred into other interpersonal relationships in the wider world as children develop. However, in non- protective environments this behaviour can become unregulated and more damaging.

The root cause of conflict-

Attention

Children are always vying for their parents' attention. The busier the parents are, the greater demand is for their attention and the less they can focus on each child. When there is for example, a new baby, it can be hard for the other child to accept losing his or her position as the centre of attention. Sometimes, the parents' attention is focused on a child who is sick or has special needs. Children will act out and misbehave to get the attention they want when they feel like they are being ignored.

Sharing

Most households do not have unlimited resources. That means all siblings will have to share at least some of their possessions. Giving up a toy or other favourite possession to a sibling can be especially hard on young children.

Unique personalities

An older child might be head strong while the youngest is quieter and more introverted. Differences in temperament can lead to clashes. Age and gender differences can also lead to sibling fighting.

Fairness issues

Children are like 'little lawyers', always demanding fairness and equality and fighting for what they perceive are their natural born rights. A younger sibling might complain that their older sister gets to go to the cinema and she has to stay at home, while the older sister whines that she has to baby-sit her little sister instead of going out with her friends. Feelings of unfair treatment and sibling jealousy can lead to resentment.

Siblings and Attachment Theory

Quality of early attachment to main carer- A secure attachment will support a positive relationship with younger siblings. An insecure attachment to the main carer is more likely to result in conflict with siblings.

Quality of parental relationship and emotional climate in family

Parental stress and conflict may result in negative sibling relationships

Impact of abuse and neglect

On both abused and non-abused siblings may lead to hostility between siblings
Crittenden found that maltreated children were significantly more likely to maltreat younger siblings than non-maltreated children and that this was apparent in those as young as two years. The most common pattern for maltreated siblings was a lack of connection.

Parental neglect

If sibling is a protector may have a good sibling relationship

If highly traumatic conditions, sibling bonding is most likely fearful and ambivalent

Other Factors include:

Impact of non-shared influences

May make siblings different from each other and cause conflict and this can also include differences in ethnicity and cultural heritage between siblings

Closeness in age, shared gender and high access to one another

This promotes intensity and can increase conflict as a result

References:

The BAAF training package delivered in Warwickshire in 2013.

Family Futures

Dr Maxine Tostevin and Dr Amy Bailey- Psychology Associates

Sue Lowe- Siblings together or apart

Lord and Borthwick (2008) Together or apart: assessing siblings for permanent placement

Assessment of Sibling Groups for Placement

1. Guidance for Complex Cases

Where the situation is of a complex nature and there are significant mental health/emotional and psychological issues that need further consideration a consultation/ collaborative approach with CAMHS is recommended.

There are a number of instruments that are available in the assessment of complex cases which enable evidence based observations to inform the assessment process as follows:

BAAF training is a comprehensive method that incorporates a number of useful tools for recording and plotting the viability of sibling placements. They help to evidence the positives and negatives for placing children together.

Debbie Hindle's work relies heavily upon developing the **practitioner's observational skills** and the ability to evaluate and evidence the quality and potential of relationships.

(See - D.Hindle article Clinical Research: A psychotherapeutic assessment model for siblings in care. Journal of Child Psychotherapy Vol33 No 1 2007-70-93).

Semi -structured interviews were used by Debbie Hindle are reflected in the BAAF model when collating information from the professionals and carers. A descriptive account of each interview was written paying particular attention to the way the questions were answered, in particular to the emotions evoked in the participant and the interviewer.

These interviews not only provide valuable information about the children's histories, contact and placement issues, and current presentation and relationships both within the family and the professional network, i.e. who has engaged with whom and who can usefully help to support through transitional change?

Where it becomes necessary to provide more than one placement for the children, how can the carers be supported to think and work together to support contact for instance.

The **Child Behaviour Checklist** was designed by Achenbach and Edelbrock(1983) and is aimed at providing descriptions of competencies and emotional/behavioural problems of 4-18 year olds. The forms are completed by the carers.

The Sibling Questionnaire.

This questionnaire, also completed by the children's foster carers, was designed by Furman (1990) and again has been modified. It was anticipated that the questionnaire would focus attention on the children's sibling relationships in relation to three dimensions- relative status/power, warmth/closeness, and conflict.

Narrative Story Stem

A technique developed by Bretherton et al (1990) and later extended by Bauchsbaum in 1992 to use in the assessment of maltreated children. Debbie Hindle used the 12 narrative stems, adapted by Hodges and Steele (2000) as part of the Anna Freud Centre/ Great Ormond Street Project on Representations of Self and Parents in Abused/Neglected Children.

The ***Story Stem Assessment Profile*** (SSAP; Hodges and Hillman, 2004) asks the children to respond to a set of narrative story stems where they are given the beginning of a 'story' highlighting everyday scenarios with an inherent dilemma. Children are then asked to 'show and tell me what happens next?' This allows some assessment of the child's expectations and perceptions of family roles, attachments and relationships, without asking the child's direct questions about their family which might cause them conflict or anxiety.

The use of Story Stem Narratives, are a clinical and research assessment tool which requires a trained professional to take a lead as a decoder, it ensures a semi - structured approach to eliciting information regarding the past and present functioning of young people, in a non - threatening way. It is a technique specifically for use with clinical and maltreatment populations. Normally, it is best used with children aged between about 4 and 9 years. Previous research has shown that children's response to these story stems reflect both current and past features of their family life and attachment histories. The technique allows the child's attachment representations to be evidenced in a displaced way which is usually enjoyed by the child and not experienced as unduly threatening.

The story stems would be introduced in the first individual session for each child seen. These sessions would be process recorded, case video recorded, transcribed and analysed.

The pattern of sessions would be agreed and outlined in the initial plan as far as possible. It would be helpful if the children could be provided with a small box file of selected toys and materials. When the children are seen together the boxes for each child are placed out, where the child is seen individually only that child's box is used.

Sessions not recorded should be process recorded; the observations provide valuable information with regard to the dynamics and interactions. Attention given to not only the child's thoughts and feelings but also what was evoked in the practitioner themselves i.e. strong sense to rescue one child from another or a strong hostile reaction that may be apparent and needs further understanding. In this way it is important to take heed of the strong transference/ counter transference in the room.

The observational/ semi structured approach enables the practitioner to allow the young person's personality and view of the world to unfold thus avoiding the temptation for the youngster to present in a way the adults may require of them. It is essential the practitioner is able to obtain a clear and accurate picture .It can be obscured by a more directive approach. The practitioner focuses on the session rather than observing what is happening in the room.

Analysis of material and the development of a ***Time-Line/Placement Chart*** help to enable organisation of thinking into a useful tool both for evaluation and for thinking about future emotional/ psychological needs.

2. Supervision and Consultation.

Before completing such a complex and important decision making process, the findings and outcomes should be shared with a Senior Practitioner.

Practitioners are required to develop observational/ evidence based skills, time line/ chronology and knowledge of the use of story stem narrative.

A consultation process will be available, providing review of the evidence collated and to offer practitioners a second opinion where the complexities of this multi – dimensional assessment means a solution is unclear.

Rose Cull- Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist (Coventry CAMHS) - November 2014.

D i r e c t

W o r k

I d e a s

I d e a s

W o r k

Three Houses

What you need:

- Coloured pens
- Paper
- Craft items and cardboard (optional)

This activity can be used with any age group as the adult can scribe or the child can draw or write (depending on their ability). The three categories are what needs to happen, what is working well and what is worrying you. The categories should be changed to suit the individual child and can be decided between the child and the social worker.

This activity can be individualised as the SW can produce three houses, islands, cars, planes, characters, etc. It is also an option to 'build' 3 houses which can create space and time to build a trusting relationship.

House of worries (What are you worried about)	House of good things (What is working well)	House of dreams (What needs to happen)

Onion



What you need:

- Pens
- Paper
- An onion (optional)

This activity is more directed at children in their teenage years as it requires children to think about their different 'layers'. It enables a child to consider themselves and their identity.

Draw an onion to show the different layers and explain that when we look at an onion from the outside we see it is brown and shiny with a layer of skin (similar to people).



Explain that in the onion there are different layers which we only show to some people or at some times. In the centre is a solid part which is special and unique to us and this is the part we keep well hidden from the world.

Explain that people are like that too and explore what they like to show and what they like to hide.



This activity is best used when a relationship has previously been built up between the SW and the child as this is an activity which can be quite sensitive and can explore deeper emotions.



Safe Hands

What you need:

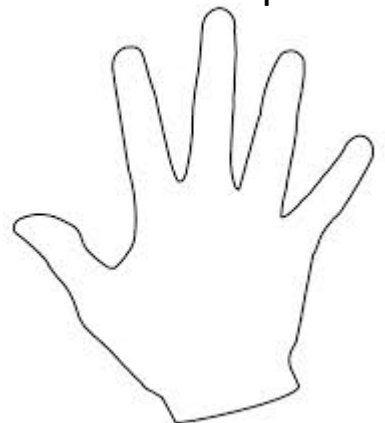
- Pens
- Paper

On each finger the child puts names of people who can keep them safe. This can be at home or at school.

If appropriate, the child can draw around the SW hand and vice versa. Initiating physical contact can build trust and can give the message that the SW trusts them.

It is important to have a discussion about why sometimes they may need to talk to or confide in an adult and not a child.

This activity helps children to identify people in their life who keep them safe.



Rainbow Talk

What you need:

- Coloured pens
- Paper

This activity can be used with any age group as the adult can scribe or the child can draw or write (depending on their ability).

The coloured circles link to different topics and the child draws or writes in each of the circles.

The topics can be chosen by the SW to stimulate specific conversation or discussion. Topic ideas are:

- ◆ Something that makes you happy
- ◆ Something you think about a lot
- ◆ Your dream house
- ◆ Things you like to eat
- ◆ Your favourite thing
- ◆ Your special toy

It is a good idea for the SW to join in and make their own circles to make it feel equal . This activity is good to start to build relationships with children and gives an idea of a child's daily life and resources available.



Traffic Lights



What you need:

- Traffic lights
- Toy car
- Statement cards

This activity can be used with any age group depending on their maturity as this is a game which could be considered to be childish. This activity aims to be a fun and positive experience.

The statement cards can be prepared prior to the activity or at the start of the session to allow the young person to contribute. These should include two or three “serious” cards alongside innocuous ones.

This activity is good way to encourage a child to talk about something a child is reluctant to discuss. The activity gives the child control but provides an assessment opportunity for SW.

There are 2 ways to use the activity.

1—Scatter the statement cards and call them parking spaces:

- Green—drive car around
- Amber—get ready to stop
- Red—stop on a card
- Talk about what is on the card

2—Child to decide whether the card is something the child :

- Green—loves to talk about
- Amber—will talk about a bit
- Red—doesn't like talking about

Whose job is it?



What you need:

- Whose job cards

This activity can be used with any age group as the adult can read and the child can answer. Children could choose to draw pictures of the members of their family and 'place' the jobs on top of their drawing to make the activity interactive.

Jobs can be chosen by the SW to stimulate specific conversation or discussion. Job ideas are:

Washing up, shopping, cooking, bedtime, opening letters, taking to the doctors, looking after the pets, making the beds, buy clothes, look after the baby, take to school, help with homework, lock the doors, make you clean your teeth, give cuddles etc

This activity is good to start to build relationships with children and gives the SW an idea of a child's daily life and who takes on what tasks within the home.

OUR FAMILY CHORE CHART

Name: _____ Name: _____

Chore List _____ Chore List _____

_____ ☆☆☆☆☆ _____ ☆☆☆☆☆

_____ ☆☆☆☆☆ _____ ☆☆☆☆☆

Name: _____ Name: _____

Chore List _____ Chore List _____

_____ ☆☆☆☆☆ _____ ☆☆☆☆☆

_____ ☆☆☆☆☆ _____ ☆☆☆☆☆

(A broom illustration is centered on the chart.)

www.PetersonGroup.co.uk

How does my body tell me I'm feeling unsafe?



Beads of sweat
Wide eyes
Red Cheeks
Dry mouth
Hair on neck standing up
Dry throat
Heart beating fast
Butterflies in the tummy

Clenched fists

Jelly legs

Headache

Crying

Red ears

Eyebrows go up

Round mouth

Throwing up

Shoulders go up

Sweaty underarms

Curled up toes

Hair on arms stands up

Goosebumps

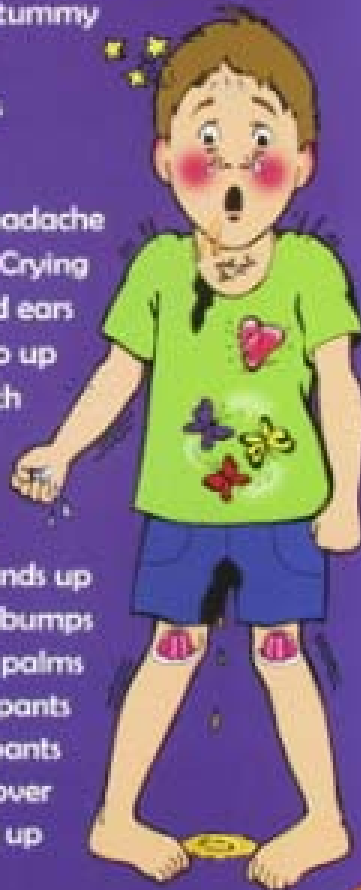
Sweaty palms

Soil pants

Wet pants

Shake all over

Jumping up

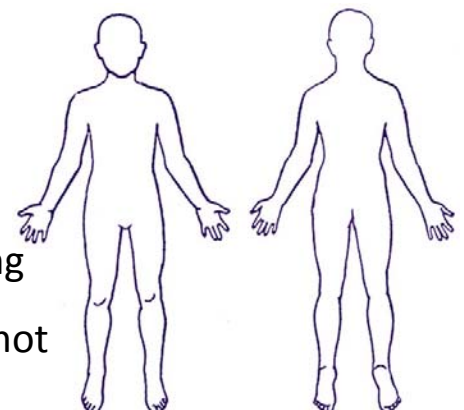


**If I get my
Early Warning Signs
I must keep telling
an adult I trust
until I feel safe again.**



Pictures of the outline of a body can help children identify Early Warning Signs.

They can also be used to discuss and identify areas of their body when making a disclosure. These pictures should be used as a tool for children who are struggling to identify areas or vocalise their experiences and do not replace conversation.



Guidance: Framework for Sibling Assessment and Attachment Behaviour

Jaak Panksepp (1998)

The Framework can be applied to observations of children, particularly young children and children who have experienced early trauma. It is important to understand that traumatised children function predominantly at the level of the primitive brain with feelings and feeling states driven by biochemistry rather than inter-personal co-created realities. They rarely develop, without therapeutic work and high quality parenting, to mid-brain expressions of attachment and a more sophisticated development of emotions.

Rating a child as high, medium or low on each dimension in terms of the level of activation of each of these four systems can lead to an assessment of the security of the sibling attachment relationships.

In this model, **secure attachment** is represented as exhibiting **medium levels** of aggression and fearful behaviour since these behaviours are adaptive and essential for survival. Comfort seeking and playful behaviour are also at medium levels of activation as they too are adaptive and linked to survival and development of the person. Play in this context refers to normal age appropriate interactive play e.g rough and tumble, hide and seek chasing etc. In contrast traumatised children may exhibit high levels of play but the play will be traumatised and characterised by repetition, ritual, violence and scary themes. When played out between children it is not reciprocal and collaborative; instead domination, power and control are characteristic of the interaction as it is a re-enactment of unresolved traumatic experience.

To complete the analysis direct observation of the children's actions by the assessor and conversations with primary carers and people who know the children well are the best sources of information. The judgement has to be made in comparison with what the assessor would perceive as 'normal' for siblings of an equivalent age. Contra indications are extremes in any of these four dimensions.

Warwickshire Fostering Service

Delegation of Authority to Foster Carers Policy

Warwickshire Fostering Service

Delegation of Authority to Foster Carers Policy

Contents

1. Policy
2. Responsibilities
3. Endorsement

1. Policy

- 1.1 This policy outlines the principles and approach of Warwickshire County Council to the delegation of authority to its foster carers as required under The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013, and the March 2014 Department of Education Statutory Guidance. This policy recognises wherever possible that the authority for day to day decision making is to be delegated to the foster carers particularly where this is intended to be a long term placement.
- 1.2 Warwickshire County Council will provide quality and safe care within a family setting for children and young people who are unable to live with their own families. All children have the right to enjoy their childhood and be supported to achieve well. They will be encouraged to have full and fulfilled lives that raise their self-esteem and confidence. It is ultimately about preparing them for adulthood and future independence. Warwickshire County Council will strive to be an organisation that is not risk averse. Children and young people in foster care should not be made to feel different from their peers or miss out on the opportunities by virtue of their looked after status.
- 1.3 Foster carers are the only corporate parents who have the care of children and young people for up to twenty four hours a day. There is recognition that carers will know the child or young person well and what is best for them.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 For this policy to be effective and in order to achieve the best and appropriate outcomes for looked after children and young people the Children's Safeguarding Team and Fostering Services will work collaboratively with foster carers in implementing this policy which is endorsed by the elected members on the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 2.2 Children's Safeguarding Team and Fostering Services will:
- Ensure the authority for day-to-day decision making about a looked after child is delegated to the child's carer(s), unless there is a valid reason not to do so. This is subject to child's legal status, placement type, planned length of the foster placement and the child's age and level of understanding.
 - Ensure that the delegation of day to day decision making for looked after children is addressed as part of placement planning process and is clearly detailed in the Placement Plan. This will record who has the authority to take particular decisions about the child/young person. It will also record the reasons why any day-to-day decision is not delegated to the child's carer. The appendix to the Placement Plan - Summary of Delegated Authority, will be provided to foster carers at the start of each placement highlighting the delegation arrangements. The Independent Reviewing Officer will monitor the delegation of authority through the reviewing process and will recommend any changes required to the Placement Plan.
 - Ensure that the views and wishes of the child/young person are taken into consideration in determining the levels of delegated responsibility depending on the child/young person's age and level of understanding and their ability to take some decisions for themselves.
 - Ensure that all social care workers understand delegated authority, Warwickshire's policy and their roles and responsibilities.
 - Where a decision must be taken by a social worker or manager, it will be taken quickly to ensure children and young people do not miss out on opportunities.

- Ensure that there is minimal delay in key decisions being made – this will ensure that looked after children and young people are not disadvantaged or lose out on opportunities as a result of delayed consent.
- Work sensitively with those who hold or share parental responsibility to involve and support their contribution to the planning processes for their child/ren by:
 - (i) Explaining to them how foster care works and how foster carers are approved, managed and supported and how the principle of delegated authority works - including them in the placement planning processes unless there are clear reasons for not doing so.
 - (ii) Supporting and developing carers to be able to feel confident in taking day to day decisions about children and young people they care for.
 - (iii) Where a decision is delegated appropriately and something goes wrong, the local authority will try and understand what happened, support those involved and take appropriate action to address any issues.
 - (iv) Ensuring that looked after child, foster carers, those with parental responsibility and significant professionals are clear on who can and will make decisions about all aspects of the child's or young person's care.

2.3 Warwickshire foster carers will:

- Participate in case planning discussions
- Accept authority for day to day decision making confidently
- Discuss with their fostering social worker if they have any concerns about the decisions being delegated to them.
- Discuss with the social workers involved any concerns that they have about the implementation or commitment to this policy.

3. Endorsement

3.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel will endorse this policy and use opportunities to receive feedback from the looked after children and young people through the Children in Care Council. It will also seek the views of foster care through the Warwickshire Foster Care Group about its implementation in practice.

Signed

Date

.....

Dr Sue Ross – Head of Safeguarding

.....

Cllr Chris Williams – Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel

Summary Dataset Report for the Corporate Parenting Panel - 9 February 2015

Introduction

The dataset for this period consists of three reports:

- Looked after activity as on 31.12.2015
- Report highlighting the demographics of the looked after population 31.9.2009 – 31.12.2014
- Quarterly dataset report against the key performance indicators.

Key messages

- The looked after population has decreased by 27 children over the past 12 months –these figures do not reflect the throughput of children entering and leaving care in Warwickshire during this period. However the overall trend is positive, whilst still above the national average and significantly higher than our statistical neighbour average.
- Whilst the majority of children are placed with Warwickshire approved foster carers – there has been a noticeable decline in these numbers with more children being placed in the independent fostering sector and a small increase in residential placements noted in the last period.
- Between 1.4.2014- 18.11.2014 there were 27 foster carer retirements/resignations – 16 of these had fostered for over 5 years, the longest 24 yrs with the average length of fostering in the cohort at 12 yrs.
- The number of children leaving care through adoption continues to rise which is contrary to the national trend in recent months and is higher than the England average.
- The quarterly dataset shows that there has been an improvement in the completion of health assessments for looked after children but this needs to improve further, long term placement stability has improved and too many children and young people are experiencing 3 or more placement moves.
- The looked after trend show a rise in the under 1 yrs, 5-9 yr. age range and young people 16 + yrs.
- The number of unaccompanied asylum seekers has reduced.
- The number of children being looked after continuously for 12 months or more has increased.
- Nuneaton/Bedworth and Rugby has seen the highest increases in their LAC population over the 5 year period.
- Over the 5 year period the most significant increases have been in the number of children made subject of care orders, or placement orders (which precede the move into adoption).

Considerations for Corporate Parenting Panel Members

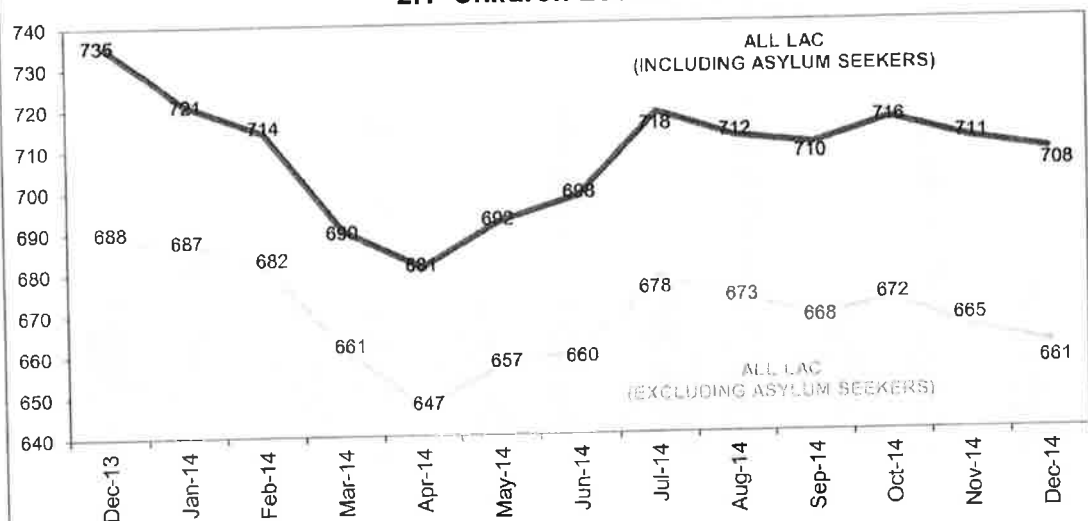
1. The impact on Children's Social Care of the increase in 'workload
2. The continuing pressures on the Fostering Service in an increasingly competitive environment nationally and locally

Brenda Vincent

Service Manager (South)

2. CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

2.1 Children Looked After



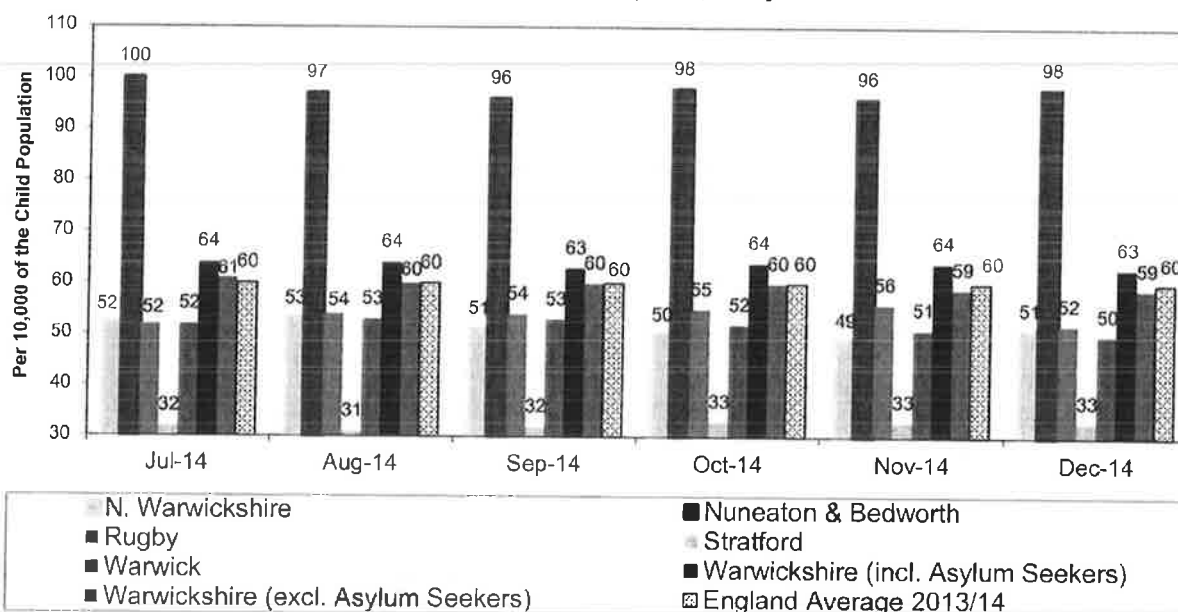
At 30 November 2014, Warwickshire's looked after population increased by 5 to 711, whilst the number of looked after children excluding asylum seekers also decreased, down 7 to 665.

2.2 Number of Looked After cases allocated by team

	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14
N. Warks Ch&F Team	65	66	50	49	48	51
North Warwickshire (ALL)	65	66	50	49	48	51
Bedworth Children's Team	208	202	168	171	167	165
Nuneaton Children's Team	53	51	49	53	55	60
Nuneaton District CST	5	5	3	4	2	2
Nuneaton & Bedworth (ALL)	266	258	220	228	224	227
Rugby Childrens Services Team	115	119	95	97	98	92
Rugby (ALL)	115	119	95	97	98	92
Stratford District Children's Team	75	72	53	55	58	60
Stratford (ALL)	75	72	53	55	58	60
Warwick District Child Assessment Team	1	2	2	0	3	2
Warwick Children's Team	129	130	103	101	95	93
Warwick (ALL)	130	132	105	101	98	95
N/W, Nun & Bed Integrated Disability	8	8	8	8	7	7
Rugby Integrated Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stratford Integrated Disability	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wark & Lm Integrated Disability	8	8	8	8	8	8
IDS Autism Team	6	6	5	3	3	3
Integrated Disability Service (ALL)	23	23	22	20	19	19
Leaving Care - North Warks					13	13
Leaving Care - Nununeaton & Bedworth					32	34
Leaving Care - Rugby					25	24
Leaving Care - Stratford					17	15
Leaving Care - Warwick					29	29
Leaving Care (ALL)					116	115
Asylum Seekers	40	39	42	44	45	47
LD Services Team - Adults	0	0	0	0	0	0
No Allocated Team	1	1	0	0	3	0
Youth Justice	3	2	2	2	2	2
Warwickshire (TOTAL)	718	712	710	716	711	708

2.3 LAC per 10,000 of the Child Population by District

Looked After Children allocated to the district teams that form the Leaving Care & Integrated Disability Services will be included under the relevant district when calculating the LAC per 10,000 by district



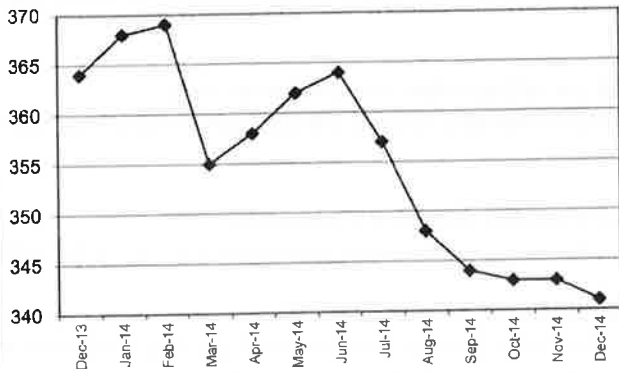
Please note that from February 2013 onwards the rates per 10,000 are based on the 0-17 population from the 2011 Census as supplied by the Office for National Statistics.

2.4 Looked After Children by Placement Type by Team at 31 December 2014

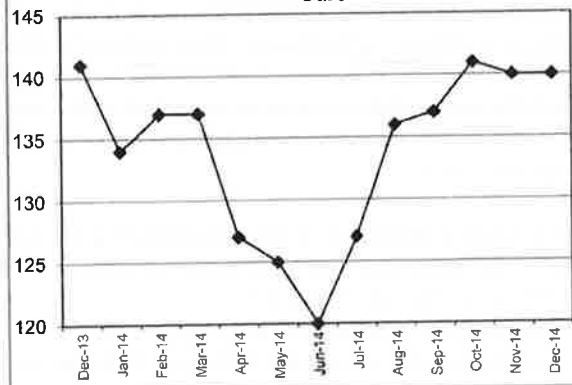
	WCC Foster Care	Placed for Adoption	Residential Home/School	Agency/O LA Foster Care	Relative/Friend Foster Care	Placed with Parents/Person with PR	Other Placement e.g. Independent Living, Mother & Baby Unit, Secure Unit
N. Works Ch&F Team	27	4	0	15	3	1	1
Bedworth Children's Team	74	16	12	47	12	2	2
Nuneaton Children's Team	29	12	1	7	5	4	2
Nuneaton District Children Services Team	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Rugby Children's Services Team	46	7	3	19	8	9	0
Stratford Children's Team	28	6	3	6	9	8	0
Warwick District CAT	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Warwick Children's Team	53	7	2	16	9	6	0
N/W, Nun & Bed Int Disability	1	0	2	4	0	0	0
Rugby Integrated Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stratford Integrated Disability	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Wark & Lm Integrated Disability	7	0	0	1	0	0	0
IDS Autism Team	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Leaving Care - North Warks	10	0	0	0	0	0	3
Leaving Care - Nununeaton & Bedworth	16	0	1	10	2	1	4
Leaving Care - Rugby	11	0	1	3	3	3	3
Leaving Care - Stratford	4	0	0	1	3	1	6
Leaving Care - Warwick	14	0	1	3	1	1	9
Asylum Seekers	20	0	0	5	1	0	21
Youth Justice	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
No Allocated Team	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warwickshire (TOTAL)	341	52	30	140	56	36	53

2.5 Children Looked After by Placement Type

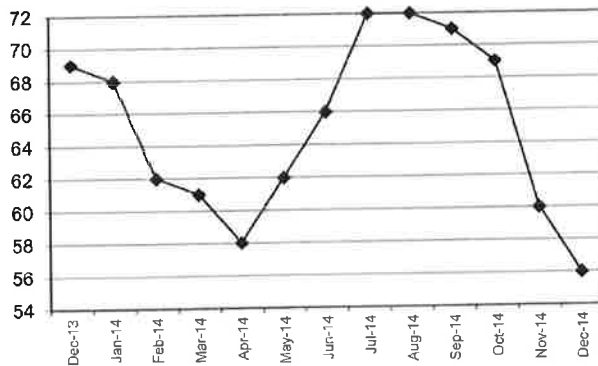
Children Looked After in WCC Foster Care



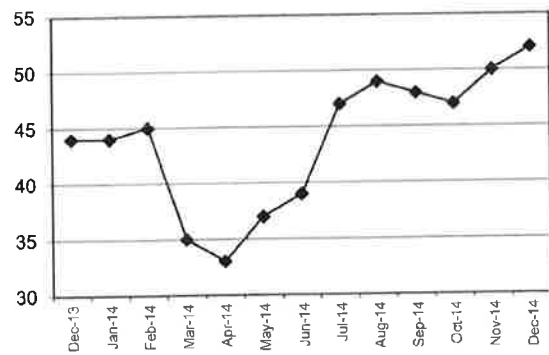
Children Looked After in Agency/OLA Foster Care



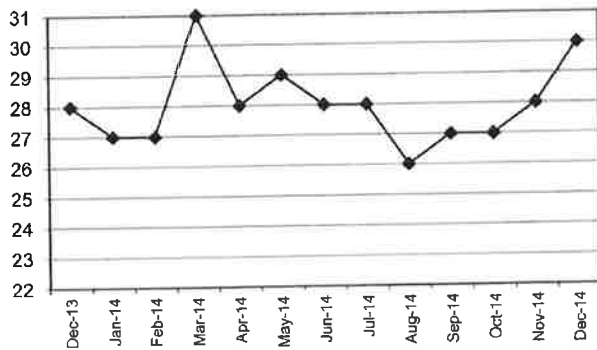
Relative/Friend Foster Care



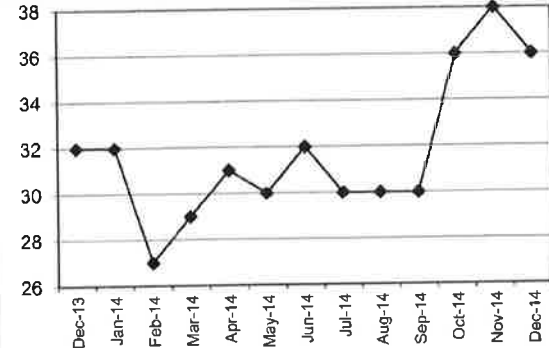
Placed for Adoption



Residential Home/School



Placed with Parents or Person with P.R.



At 31 December 2014, increases were seen in children placed in residential home / school (up 2 to 30), children placed for adoption (up 2 to 52) and children placed in other placements (up 1 to 53).

Decreases were seen this month in children placed in WCC foster care (down 2 to 341), children placed with relative/friend foster carer (down 4 to 56) and children placed with parents or person with P.R. (down 2 to 36).

Children placed in agency/OLA foster care (140) remained the same as the previous month.

2.6 Looked After Children 'Missing' or 'Away from placement without authorisation'

Between 1 - 31 December 2014 there were six episodes of a looked after child/young person 'Missing' or 'Away from placement without authorisation' recorded on Carefirst:

The following child(ren) were missing during the month and are still recorded as missing from care:

15 year old male, allocated to Rugby CST, missing since 16/11/2014 (Missing episode still open but subsequently closed in January 2015).

The following child(ren) were missing during the month but have since returned to placement:

14 year old male, allocated to Bedworth Children Services Team, missing on two separate occasions between 2/12/14 - 3/12/14 and 6/12/14 - 11/12/14

15 year old male, allocated to Leaving Care Team, missing between 5/12/14 - 7/12/14

13 year old female, allocated to Bedworth Children Services Team, went missing from School on 16/12/14, returned to placement at 23.45pm.

17 year old female, allocated to Warwick District Assessment Team, missing between 22/12/14 to 23/12/14

Looked after children

LAC Population Demographics Summary at end of year, 2009-2014 compared with 31 December 2014

Number of Children Looked After	31-Mar-09	31-Mar-10	31-Mar-11	31-Mar-12	31-Mar-13	31-Mar-14	30-Sep-14	31-Dec-14	% Change (based on 14 and 31-Dec-2014)
Total Number of LAC at Year End	536	574	636	681	698	690	710	708	2.6%
Gender									
Male	316	341	382	401	399	387	391	385	-0.5%
Female	220	233	254	280	299	303	319	323	6.6%
									% Change (based on 14 and 31-Dec-2014)
Age	31-Mar-09	31-Mar-10	31-Mar-11	31-Mar-12	31-Mar-13	31-Mar-14	30-Sep-14	31-Dec-14	14 and 31-Dec-2014)
Under 1	24	37	26	48	34	35	36	41	17.1%
1 to 4	66	65	112	119	132	110	108	97	-11.8%
5 to 9	114	114	100	95	130	132	136	138	4.5%
10 to 15	227	246	249	253	257	268	260	261	-2.6%
16 - 17	105	112	149	166	145	145	170	173	19.3%
									% Change (based on 14 and 31-Dec-2014)
Child in Need Categories	31-Mar-09	31-Mar-10	31-Mar-11	31-Mar-12	31-Mar-13	31-Mar-14	30-Sep-14	31-Dec-14	14 and 31-Dec-2014)
N1 - Abuse or Neglect	337	322	346	395	403	396	392	391	-1.3%
N2 - Child's Disability/Illness	16	13	11	11	14	16	15	15	-6.3%
N3 - Parental Disability/Illness	20	18	22	14	12	12	13	13	8.3%
N4 - Family in Acute Stress	44	67	67	74	82	79	76	75	-5.1%
N5 - Family Dysfunction	39	59	74	83	112	120	124	123	2.5%
N6 - Socially Unacceptable Behaviour	10	19	18	24	18	26	27	25	-3.8%
N7 - Low Income	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.0%
N8 - Absent Parenting	70	75	97	79	56	40	50	52	30.0%
N9 - Other Than Child in Need	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	5	N/A
N0 - Not Stated	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	8	N/A

Other Demographics	31-Mar-09	31-Mar-10	31-Mar-11	31-Mar-12	31-Mar-13	31-Mar-14	30-Sep-14	31-Dec-14	% Change (based on increase between 31-Mar-14 and 31-Dec-2014)
LAC with a Disability	41	39	31	32	34	31	29	28	-9.7%
Asylum Seekers (UASC)	60	66	87	69	45	29	42	47	62.1%
Number looked after continuously for a year or more	360	390	429	451	463	450	487	488	8.4%
Number placed out of county	182	184	217	228	238	237	275	242	2.1%

Number of children looked after by District at end of year, 2009 to 2013 compared with 31 March 2014

District	31-Mar-09	31-Mar-10	31-Mar-11	31-Mar-12	31-Mar-13	31-Mar-14	30-Sep-14	31-Dec-14	% Change (based on increase between 31-Mar-14 and 31-Dec-2014)
North Warwickshire	57	56	62	67	69	67	64	64	-4.5%
Nuneaton & Bedworth	159	167	197	206	237	256	253	261	2.0%
Rugby	67	82	99	108	110	109	120	116	6.4%
Stratford	59	66	68	75	85	82	74	75	-8.5%
Warwick	114	115	104	137	130	122	133	124	1.6%
Integrated Disability Service	19	21	17	18	22	23	22	19	-17.4%
Asylum Seekers	60	66	87	69	45	29	42	47	62.1%
Youth Justice	1	1	2	1	0	1	2	2	100.0%
Warwickshire Total	536	574	636	681	698	690	710	708	2.6%

Children looked after per 10,000 of the Child Population by District at end of year, 2009 to 2013 compared with 31 March 2014*

District	31-Mar-09	31-Mar-10	31-Mar-11	31-Mar-12	31-Mar-13	31-Mar-14	LAC 30/09/2014	LAC 31/12/14	% Change (based on increase between 31-Mar-14 and 31-Dec-2014)
North Warwickshire	44	43	50	54	55	53	51	51	-2
Nuneaton & Bedworth	58	61	73	77	87	94	93	96	2
Rugby	31	39	46	50	50	49	54	52	3
Stratford	24	27	28	31	36	35	32	32	-3
Warwick	44	44	40	52	49	46	50	47	1
Integrated Disability Service	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1.7	-0.3
Asylum Seekers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Youth Justice	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Warwickshire Total	48	51	57	61	62	62	63	63	1
Statistical Neighbours	42.1	45.7	47.2	48.3	48.7	49.1	49.1	49.1	N/A
Warwickshire	54	57	58	59	60	60	60	60	N/A

*Please note that the district per 10,000 table above excludes children allocated to the district IDS Teams

Placement Types of Looked After Children at end of year, 2009 to 2013 compared with 31 March 2014

Placement Type	LAC March 2009	LAC March 2010	LAC March 2011	LAC March 2012	LAC March 2013	LAC March 2014	LAC 30/09/2014	LAC 31/12/14	% Change (based on increase between 31-Mar-14 and 31-Dec-2014)
Foster placement with friend or family	55	57	56	63	70	61	71	56	-8.2%
Foster placement with LA carer	317	352	381	386	372	355	344	341	-3.9%
Foster placement with Agency/OLA carer	71	79	72	101	112	137	137	140	2.2%
Health Establishment providing medical care	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	N/A
Independent Living Placement	6	2	29	39	43	38	43	46	21.1%
Mother & Baby Unit	1	2	2	2	0	0	1	3	N/A
Placed for adoption	19	18	20	21	31	35	48	52	48.6%
Placed with own parents	47	41	47	44	44	29	30	36	24.1%
Prison/Police Custody	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	-50.0%
Residential Home/School	17	20	23	20	23	28	27	30	7.1%
Secure Unit	2	2	1	0	0	3	3	3	0.0%
Absent from agreed placement	0	0	3	2	0	0	3	0	N/A
Other Placement	0	0	2	3	1	2	1	0	-50.0%
WARWICKSHIRE TOTAL	536	574	636	681	698	690	710	708	2.6%

Legal Status of Looked After Children at end of year, 2009 to 2013 compared with 31 March 2014

	Mar-09	Mar-10	Mar-11	Mar-12	Mar-13	Mar-14	LAC 30/09/2014	LAC 31/12/14	% Change (based on 14 and 31-Dec-2014)
Interim Care Order	68	108	154	131	164	88	96	82	-6.8%
Full Care Order	215	202	203	244	245	285	291	303	6.3%
S20 Accommodation	208	225	245	256	220	210	222	226	7.6%
Freed for Adoption	6	5	2	2	2	1	1	1	0.0%
Placement Order	35	31	31	48	67	106	100	96	-9.4%
On Remand or Committed for Trial/Sentence	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Police Protection	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Warwickshire Total	536	574	636	681	698	690	710	708	2.6%

Children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March by reason episode ceased compared to first six months of 2014/15

Reason episode ceased	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	First 6 months of 2014/15 (1 April - 30 September 2014)	First 9 months of 2014/15 (1 April - 31 December 2014)	% Change (based on increase between 31-Mar-14 and 31-Dec-2014)
Adopted - application unopposed	14	20	16	17	17	21	7	8	N/A
Adopted - consent dispensed with	14	9	9	14	16	35	22	34	N/A
Died	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	N/A
Care taken by another LA	1	4	2	7	0	0	0	1	N/A
Returned home to live with parents or relatives	131	109	123	124	96	120	63	94	N/A
Residence order granted	5	9	5	12	16	10	1	7	N/A
Special guardianship order (former foster care)	5	7	8	15	35	31	4	7	N/A
Special guardianship order (not former foster care)	5	2	2	5	13	15	13	20	N/A
Semi-independent Living	35	42	21	33	39	29	8	18	N/A
Independent Living	16	16	25	37	45	49	19	29	N/A
Transfer to Adult Team	0	1	3	2	0	2	2	5	N/A
Sentenced to custody	1	1	1	3	0	4	0	1	N/A
Care ceased for any other reason	15	22	24	15	17	12	5	13	N/A
Discharged to Staying Put	0	0	13	7	10	6	5	7	N/A
Total	243	242	253	291	305	334	149	244	N/A - not yet reached full year

Warwickshire Corporate Parenting Panel Dataset

Data Caveats: Please note that quarterly data, although of benefit because it illustrates activity trends, may not be reflective of our final position at the end of year as we will need to undertake further validation and data quality checks at the end of each financial year.

LAC per 10,000 of the 0-17 child population	To be provided by	2010/11 Yearly Outturn	2011/12 Yearly Outturn	2012/13 Yearly Outturn	2013/14 Yearly Outturn	2014/15 Q1 Outturn	2014/15 Q2 Outturn	*Current* 2014/15 Q3 Outturn	2013/14 England Average	2013/14 - Statistical Neighbours Average
No. of Looked After Children per 10,000 population	Jamie Wat	57.2	61.2	62.4	61.7	62.4	63.4	63.3	60	49.1
Attainment of Looked After Children	To be provided by	2010/11 Yearly Outturn	2011/12 Yearly Outturn	2012/13 Yearly Outturn	2013/14 Yearly Outturn	2014/15 Q1 Outturn	2014/15 Q2 Outturn	*Current* 2014/15 Q3 Outturn	2013/14 England Average	2013/14 - Statistical Neighbours Average
CiC attainment: KS2 - Percentage who achieved at least Level 4 in Mathematics - ANNUAL MEASURE	expected to achieve Level 4	36%	68%	71.0%	53%	48.0%			61%	61.5%
CiC attainment: KS2 - Percentage who achieved at least Level 4 in Reading - ANNUAL MEASURE	expected to achieve Level 4	44%	80%	71.0%	59%	48.0%			68%	66.4%
CiC attainment: KS2 - Percentage who achieved at least Level 4 in Writing - ANNUAL MEASURE	expected to achieve Level 4	N/A	72%	79.0%	47%	48.0%			59%	59.7%
CiC attainment: KS4 - 5+ GCSEs A-C or equivalent - ANNUAL MEASURE	Steve Pendleton - those expected to get 5 A-C	32.8%	38.8%	42.9%	16.3%	30.0%			16.3%	15.2%
CiC attainment: KS4 - 5+ GCSEs A-C or equivalent including English & Mathematics GCSEs - ANNUAL MEASURE	Steve Pendleton - those expected to get 5 A-C (including English/Maths)	13.1%	16.3%	21.4%	14.3%	15.0%			12.0%	11.5%
% of looked after children who are making at least expected progress - by year group	Steve Pendleton	N/A	N/A	N/A					N/A	N/A
The percentage of sessions missed due to overall absences for children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months at 31 March - ANNUAL MEASURE	Steve Pendleton	5.0%	6.0%	TBC						
The percentage of school-age children looked after continuously for 12 months who were attending a school that was assessed as being good or better by Ofsted	Steve Pendleton	N/A	N/A	N/A					N/A	N/A

Health of Looked After Children	To be provided by	2010/11 Yearly Outturn	2011/12 Yearly Outturn	2012/13 Yearly Outturn	2013/14 Yearly Outturn	2014/15 Q1 Outturn	2014/15 Q2 Outturn	*Current* 2014/15 Q3 Outturn	2012/13 England Average	2012/13 - Statistical Neighbours Average
The proportion of children who had been looked after continuously for a year or more who had an annual health assessment during the previous 12 months.	Rachel Webster/Jamie Wat	80.2%	76.3%	76.8%	80.0%	75.3%	75.7%	79.9%	87.3%	84.2%

Data caveats around % of LAC without Health Assessments are that young people decline health assessments, referral delays/health capacity issues and missed and cancelled/arranged appointments affect completion within timescales.

Looked After Placements Monitoring		2010/11 Yearly Outturn	2011/12 Yearly Outturn	2012/13 Yearly Outturn	2013/14 Yearly Outturn	2014/15 Q1 Outturn	2014/15 Q2 Outturn	*Current* 2014/15 Q3 Outturn	2013/14 England Average	2012/13 - Statistical Neighbourhoods Average
% of LAC placed in Internal provision foster care at year/quarter end		68.7%	65.9%	63.3%	60.3%	61.6%	58.5%	56.1%	50.1%	N/A
% of LAC placed in External provision foster care at year/quarter end		11.3%	14.8%	16.0%	19.9%	17.2%	19.3%	19.8%	24.4%	N/A
% of LAC placed in Residential provision at year/quarter end		3.6%	2.9%	3.3%	4.3%	4.0%	4.2%	4.2%	9.8%	N/A
Long Term Stability: % of LAC aged under 16 who have been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years, who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption.		73.1%	69.5%	63.8%	63.0%	63.1%	62.6%	64.1%	67.0%	65.2%
Placement Stability: The percentage of LAC with 3 or more placements over a year		11.8%	12.8%	12.5%	12.2%	12.0%	13.2%	13.2%	11.0%	11.1%

Fostering	To be provided by	2010/11 Yearly Outturn	2011/12 Yearly Outturn	2012/13 Yearly Outturn	2013/14 Yearly Outturn	2014/15 Q1 Outturn	2014/15 Q2 Outturn	*Current* 2014/15 Q3 Outturn	2012/13 England Average	2012/13 - Statistical Neighbourhoods Average
Number of Mainsteam foster care households at end of each year/quarter	Jamie Wait	253	263	252	257	258	256	258	N/A	N/A
Number of Family/Friends foster care households at end of each year/quarter	Jamie Wait	48	63	61	37	49	60	42	N/A	N/A
Number of Short Term Breaks foster care households at end of each year/quarter	Jamie Wait	32	27	26	21	16	15	16	N/A	N/A
Number of open child referrals for a fostering placement	Lesley Malley	N/A	N/A	N/A	65	85		49	N/A	N/A
Number of foster carers at stage 1 of the fostering information and preparation process	Lesley Malley	N/A	N/A	N/A	15	8		6	N/A	N/A
Number of foster carers at stage 2 of the fostering assessment process	Lesley Malley	N/A	N/A	N/A	16	11		13	N/A	N/A

Adoption	To be provided by	2010/11 Outturn	2011/12 Outturn	2012/13 Outturn	2013/14 Outturn	2014/15 Q1 Outturn	2014/15 Q2 Outturn	*Current* 2014/15 Q3 Outturn	2013/14 England Average	2012/13 - Statistical Neighbourhoods Average
The Number of adoption orders granted (children adopted)	Sharon Shaw/Jamie Wait	25	31	33	56	16	28	42	N/A	N/A
The percentage of children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted (had their adoption order granted)	Jamie Wait	9.9%	10.5%	10.8%	16.8%	20.8%	19.9%	17.2%	17.0%	11.8%
The average time (days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family	Jamie Wait	113	117	87	143	104	148	163	217	215.4
The average time (days) between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (3Yr average)	Jamie Wait	558	562	535	553	424	433	444	628	664.8
Number of adoption decisions	Sharon Shaw	N/A	N/A	N/A	93	10		24	N/A	N/A

Adoption continued	To be provided by	2010/11 Outturn	2011/12 Outturn	2012/13 Outturn	2013/14 Outturn	2014/15 Q1 Outturn	2014/15 Q2 Outturn	*Current* 2014/15 Q3 Outturn	2012/13 England Average	2012/13 - Statistical Neighbours Average
Number of adopters in Stage 1 of the adoption information and preparation process	Sharon Shaw	N/A	N/A	N/A	16 15 [+5 on hold after stage 1]	16 16 [+7 on hold after Stage 1]		19	N/A	N/A
Number of adopters in Stage 2 of the adoption assessment process	Sharon Shaw	N/A	N/A	N/A	17 [+1 on hold in Stage 2]	20 [+2 on hold in stage 2]		24	N/A	N/A
Number of approved adopters available	Sharon Shaw	N/A	N/A	N/A	33 [no placement or match]	25 [no placement or match]		31	N/A	N/A
Children with a placement orders not yet placed for adoption	Sharon Shaw	N/A	N/A	N/A		48		25	N/A	N/A

Confidential: Looked After Children aged 4+ by School

The following breaks down the numbers of looked after children aged 4+ by school within each district. Please note that this is based on looked after children as at 31 December 2014.

Please note that due to the very small numbers of children attending certain schools there may be a disclosure risk so this data should be treated confidentially and not shared outside of the meeting it is intended for.

North Warwickshire District

Name of School	Number of Looked After Children attending school
ARLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL	4
COLESHILL C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL	1
DORDON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL	3
HARTSHILL SCHOOL	4
KINGSBURY JUNIOR SCHOOL	2
MICHAEL DRAYTON JUNIOR SCHOOL	3
OUTWOODS PRIMARY SCHOOL	8
QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOOL AND SPORTS COLLEG	1
THE POLESWORTH SCHOOL	2
WARTON NETHERSOLES C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL	1
WOODLANDS SCHOOL	6
TOTAL	35

Nuneaton & Bedworth District

Name of School	Number of Looked After Children attending school
ABBEY C OF E INFANT SCHOOL	3
ALL SAINTS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL NUNEATON	6
ARC SCHOOL	2
ASH GREEN SCHOOL AND ARTS COLLEGE	3
CAMP HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL	2
CANON MAGGS C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL	3
CHETWYND JUNIOR SCHOOL	4
ETONE COLLEGE	6
EXHALL GRANGE SCHOOL	3
GEORGE ELIOT COMMUNITY SCHOOL	9
GOODYERS END PRIMARY SCHOOL	3
HIGHAM LANE SCHOOL	13
KERESLEY NEWLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL	3
KING EDWARD VI COLLEGE	2
MIDDLEMARCH SCHOOL	1
MILBY PRIMARY SCHOOL	2
NEWDIGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL	3
NICHOLAS CHAMBERLAINE SCHOOL	7
NORTH WARWICKSHIRE AND HINCKLEY COLLEGE	4
OAK WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL	3
OAKWOOD SCHOOL	1
OAK WOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL	6
RACE LEYS JUNIOR SCHOOL	3
ST ANNES CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL	1
ST FRANCIS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL	1
ST MICHAELS C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL	2
ST NICOLAS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL (NUNEATON)	1
STOCKINGFORD INFANT SCHOOL	1
STOCKINGFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL	9
ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL	4
THE NUNEATON ACADEMY	8
WEMBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL	1
TOTAL	120

Rugby District

Name of School	Number of Looked After Children attending school
ASHLAWN SCHOOL	10
AVON VALLEY SCHOOL	11
BILTON SCHOOL, M & C COLLEGE	2
BOUGHTON LEIGH COUNTY INFANT SCHOOL	5
BOUGHTON LEIGH JUNIOR SCHOOL	1
BROOKE SPECIAL SCHOOL	2
BROOKE SPECIAL SCHOOL (TYNTESFIELD SITE)	3
HARRIS C OF E HIGH SCHOOL	5
LONG LAWFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL	2
NORTHLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL	1
OAKFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL	3
PADDOX PRIMARY SCHOOL	3
PRINCETHORPE COLLEGE	2
RUGBY COLLEGE	2
RUGBY HIGH SCHOOL	2
ST ANDREWS BENN C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL	4
ST MARIES CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL	1
TOTAL	59

Stratford District

Name of School	Number of Looked After Children attending school
BIDFORD-ON-AVON C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL	2
BISHOPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL	4
HENLEY-IN-ARDEN HIGH SCHOOL	2
KING EDWARD VI SECONDARY SCHOOL	1
LONG ITCHINGTON C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL	3
MORETON MORRELL C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL	1
RIVER HOUSE SCHOOL	6
SENSS: RIVER HOUSE SCHOOL	1
SHIPSTON HIGH SCHOOL	2
SHIPSTON-ON-STOUR PRIMARY SCHOOL	1
SOUTHAM COLLEGE	3
SOUTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL	2
ST BENEDICTS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL	2
STRATFORD COLLEGE	3
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON HIGH SCHOOL	4
STUDLEY HIGH SCHOOL HUMANITIES & MUSIC	2
STUDLEY ST MARYS C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL	1
TANWORTH-IN-ARDEN C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL	1
TOTAL	41

Produced by Business and Commissioning Intelligence (BCI), Strategic Commissioning, People Group

Warwick District

Name of School	Number of Looked After Children attending school
AYLESFORD SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	4
CAMPION SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE	13
CLAPHAM TERRACE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL	1
KENILWORTH SCHOOL	3
MYTON SCHOOL A SPECIALIST SCIENCE COLLEGE	6
NEWBURGH PRIMARY SCHOOL	2
NORTH LEAMINGTON SCHOOL	5
PARK HILL JUNIOR SCHOOL	1
SHRUBLAND STREET COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL	2
ST ANTHONYS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL	1
ST MARGARETS C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL	1
ST NICHOLAS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL KENILWORTH	1
THE RIDGEWAY SCHOOL	1
THE ROUND OAK SCHOOL AND SUPPORT SERVICE	9
THE TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL	4
WARWICKSHIRE COLLEGE	6
WARWICKSHIRE COLLEGE (MORETON MORRELL)	1
WESTGATE COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL	1
WHITNASH COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL	4
WOODLOES PRIMARY SCHOOL	3
TOTAL	69

Further information:

It is worth noting that currently another:

- 180 looked after children aged 4+ are schooled out of county.
- 58 looked after children aged 16+ have no school recorded as they are no longer of compulsory school age.
- 7 children aged 4 years of age have turned 4 since September 2014 and won't be of compulsory school age till the 2015/16 academic year.
- 42 children of school age currently have no school recorded on Carefirst.

Looked After Children by Ward of Placement 31/12/2014

The following breaks down the numbers of looked after children by district and ward that they are placed within. Please note that this is based on looked after children by placement at a snapshot date of 31/12/2014.

North Warwickshire District

Ward	Number of Looked After Children Placed
Arley and Whitacre Ward	6
Atherstone Central Ward	0
Atherstone North Ward	6
Atherstone South and Mancetter Ward	0
Baddesley and Grendon Ward	3
Coleshill North Ward	0
Coleshill South Ward	0
Curdworth Ward	1
Dordon Ward	5
Fillongley Ward	1
Hartshill Ward	6
Hurley and Wood End Ward	4
Kingsbury Ward	5
Newton Regis and Warton Ward	6
Polesworth East Ward	0
Polesworth West Ward	6
Water Orton Ward	0
Grand Total	49

Produced by Business and Commissioning Intelligence (BCI), Strategic Commissioning, People Group

Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough

Ward	Number of Looked After Children Placed
Abbey Ward	9
Arbury Ward	9
Attleborough Ward	13
Bar Pool Ward	7
Bede Ward	12
Bulkington Ward	0
Camp Hill Ward	4
Exhall Ward	4
Galley Common Ward	17
Heath Ward	5
Kingswood Ward	8
Poplar Ward	16
Slough Ward	5
St. Nicolas Ward	15
Weddington Ward	14
Wem Brook Ward	4
Whitestone Ward	9
Grand Total	151

Rugby Borough

Ward	Number of Looked After Children Placed
Admirals and Cawston Ward	9
Benn Ward	2
Bilton Ward	5
Clifton, Newton and Churchover Ward	3
Coton and Boughton Ward	4
Dunsmore Ward	9
Eastlands Ward	8
Hillmorton Ward	1
Leam Valley Ward	1
New Bilton Ward	3
Newbold and Brownsover Ward	5
Paddox Ward	4
Revel and Binley Woods Ward	1
Rokeby and Overslade Ward	5
Wolston and the Lawfords Ward	10
Wolvey and Shilton Ward	1
Grand Total	71

Produced by Business and Commissioning Intelligence (BCI), Strategic Commissioning, People Group

Stratford-on-Avon District

Ward	Number of Looked After Children Placed
Alcester Ward	2
Aston Cantlow Ward	2
Bardon Ward	2
Bidford and Salford Ward	4
Brailes Ward	0
Burton Dassett Ward	0
Claverdon Ward	0
Ettington Ward	0
Fenny Compton Ward	0
Harbury Ward	3
Henley Ward	3
Kineton Ward	1
Kinwarton Ward	0
Long Compton Ward	0
Long Itchington Ward	7
Quinton Ward	1
Sambourne Ward	0
Shipston Ward	2
Snitterfield Ward	1
Southam Ward	3
Stockton and Napton Ward	2
Stratford Alveston Ward	1
Stratford Avenue and New Town Ward	2
Stratford Guild and Hathaway Ward	0
Stratford Mount Pleasant Ward	0
Studley Ward	1
Tanworth Ward	2
Tredington Ward	2
Vale of the Red Horse Ward	0
Welford Ward	0
Wellesbourne Ward	3
Grand Total	44

Produced by Business and Commissioning Intelligence (BCI), Strategic Commissioning, People Group

Warwick District

Ward	Number of Looked After Children Placed
Abbey Ward	4
Bishop's Tachbrook Ward	3
Brunswick Ward	18
Budbrooke Ward	2
Clarendon Ward	12
Crown Ward	2
Cubbington Ward	0
Lapworth Ward	1
Leek Wootton Ward	0
Manor Ward	8
Milverton Ward	3
Park Hill Ward	8
Radford Semele Ward	4
St. John's Ward	0
Stoneleigh Ward	0
Warwick North Ward	5
Warwick South Ward	6
Warwick West Ward	8
Whitnash Ward	8
Willes Ward	5
Grand Total	97

Children placed out of county, placed for adoption or missing from placement

It is worth noting that currently another:

- 244 looked after children are placed out of county.
- 52 are placed for adoption so their address is confidential.

Corporate Parenting

A Checklist of Roles and Responsibilities for Elected Members

Corporate parenting describes the collective responsibilities that Warwickshire County Council and partner organisations have towards children and young people in the care of the Local Authority

Click on this link to access the full Corporate Parenting Policy

xxxxx

All Councillors must ask themselves:

- Do I understand why children and young people need to be looked after and the legal and policy frameworks that govern the County Council's responsibilities towards them?
- What are the governance arrangements in the County Council for 'corporate parenting' and are they effective?
- Do I know the profile and needs of looked after children and young people, how many are from my ward/district and are attending the local schools?
- How well do these children and young people perform compared to their peers?
- Do I know how well the County Council is performing in comparison with other Councils and against the national Government indicators?
- Is there a plan to address any shortcomings in services and to improve consistently the outcomes for looked after children and young people?

Examples of how a county councillor as corporate parent can make a difference:

- Enquiring at local schools (where you are a governor) how the pupil premium is being used and what difference it is making?
- Through business contacts find out whether work experience or apprenticeship opportunities might be available for a looked after young person
- Promote fostering for Warwickshire at every opportunity.

Item 5

Annual Report for the Corporate Parenting Group on the Independent Reviewing Service in Warwickshire

January 2015

Summary

- The IRO HANDBOOK and Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 sets out how local authorities should carry out the full range of responsibilities in relation to care planning, placement and review for looked after children.
- This report fulfils the requirement within the IRO HANDBOOK for the manager of the Independent Reviewing Service to provide an annual report to the Corporate Parenting Board for the scrutiny of members.

Recommendations:

- That the content of this report is noted and a decision made that future reports are presented in September of each year.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The IRO HANDBOOK *Statutory guidance for Independent Reviewing officers and local authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review for looked after children* states that the IRO Manager is responsible for the production of an annual report for the scrutiny of members of the corporate parenting board.
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to:
 - Provide both quantitative and qualitative information about the functioning of the service.
 - To highlight areas of good practice and areas that require improvement within care planning processes for looked after children.
 - To identify any emerging themes and trends.
 - To describe areas of work that the service has prioritised during the year and will focus on in the coming year.
 - To identify any issues that are posing a risk to the service
- 1.3 The handbook emphasises the need for authorities to utilise the information generated by Independent Reviewing Services to inform service developments and ultimately improve outcomes for looked after children.
- 1.4 One of recommendations of the National Children's Bureau research into the role of Independent Reviewing Officers was for more robust annual reports to be produced and an agreed National template. The purpose of this is to facilitate both regional and National collation of the information contained in the reports in order to inform development of all Independent Reviewing Services and general evidence of the impact services are having on outcomes for looked after children..

1.5 This report therefore follows the agreed National format:

2. Purpose of the service and legal context

- 2.1 Local Authorities have been required to appoint Independent Reviewing Officers since Statutory guidance was first issued in September 2004. The core purpose of the Independent Reviewing Officer is to ensure that the care plan for a looked after child fully reflects the child's needs, is progressed appropriately and reflects due consideration of the child's wishes and feelings. Where blocks to planning are identified the IRO must ensure that the matter is escalated until resolutions are achieved.
- 2.2 The IRO also has a duty to monitor the local authorities overall performance as a corporate parent, and to bring any areas of poor practice in overall care planning processes to the attention of senior managers.
- 2.3. The Children and young Persons Act 2008, followed by revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance came into force in April 2011. The Act extended the responsibilities of the IRO from monitoring the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to the child's review to monitoring the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to a child's case.
- 2.4 The IRO HANDBOOK also provides guidance to local authorities on their strategic and managerial responsibilities in establishing an effective IRO service. The aim is to give all looked after children the support and services that each one requires to enable them to reach their potential.
- 2.5 The Independent Reviewing Service was established in Warwickshire in March 1995. The service has adapted and developed in line with legislative change and statutory guidance.

3. Profile of the Service

- 3.1 The team currently consists of an establishment of 11 Independent Reviewing Officers, one operational manager and a team of administrative support staff. We are currently operating with 2 full time IRO vacancies.
- 3.2 The service is now located within the Professional Practice and Governance business unit within the people group.
- 3.3 We have a good record for staff retention within the team so the majority of young people will have experienced continuity of IRO throughout their time in care.

Over the last year there have been continued problems with recruitment. One full-time IRO has left the team, a part-time IRO has retired and one full-time staff member has been recruited.

- 3.4 Reviewing Officers are responsible for chairing child protection conferences and the statutory reviews for all looked after children. Where the child is subject to both looked after and child protection processes the same IRO is allocated. Where a looked after child is also a parent a different IRO is allocated to the parent and child to ensure there is a clear focus on the plan for the child in each case.

3.5 The service is represented on a number of departmental groups and therefore contributes towards the development of policies procedures and strategies for Safeguarding and care planning processes.

4. **Quantitative information about the IRO Service**

4.1 The guidance specifies caseloads of 50 - 70 looked after children per IRO. Recruitment issues have seriously impacted on the capacity of the service and caseloads are in excess of the recommended levels. As a service we continue to focus on developing systems, processes and interrelationships that enable us to implement the guidance with integrity based on current resources.

4.2 The table below illustrates the numbers of children looked after or subject to a child protection plan at March 2014. Although the numbers of children made subject to a plan has decreased the numbers of children who were subjects of a conference increased from 676 in 2013 to 747 in 2014.

	31 March 2012	31 March 2013	March 2014
Children subject to CP plans	534	550	528
Looked after children	681	698	690
Total	1215	1284	1218

4.3 The team is also responsible for:

- The continuing reviews of all relevant children.
- The annual review of all children placed in residential school provision. Previous enquiries have highlighted the vulnerability of this group of children. The IRO chairs enhanced reviewing process that ensures both educational and care arrangements are considered.

4.4 This requires the team to facilitate as a minimum 2,600 meetings in a year.

4.5 The location of placements varies as does the type of placement. There is therefore a significant team pressure in terms of travel and costs given the overall size of the county and the number of young people placed out of county.

4.6 The different types of placements and care plan will determine differing statutory requirements in terms of reviewing frequency. The table below provides some detail of the variation in placement type.

Placement type	LAC March 2012	LAC 2013	LAC 2014
Foster placement with friend or family	63	70	61
Foster placement with LA carer	386	372	341
Foster placement with agency or OLA carer	101	112	137
Independent living placement	39	43	38
Placed for adoption	21	31	35
Placed with own parents	44	44	29
Residential home /school	20	23	28

- 4.7 If combined numbers of children are calculated, i.e. children looked after and children subject to a child protection plan each IRO is responsible for 134 children. If broken down into child protection and looked after figures the numbers are:
- 76 Looked after children per IRO
 - 58 Children subject to child protection plans.
- 4.8 Given the overall caseloads, vacant posts, fluctuating patterns of demand and increased responsibilities through the Children and families Act it has been impossible to fully meet all of the requirements of the regulatory guidance.
- 4.9 The areas of work within statutory reviewing processes that are most affected is the ability to produce minutes within the required timeframes ,to progress chase cases where there are blocks to planning and the availability of time to meet young people separately if they choose not to attend their reviews.

5. Qualitative Information and Impact on Services for Looked After Children

- 5.1 Despite staffing issues our performance in key areas has remained good. Some highlights are listed below and relate to data at 31 March 2014:

	2013	2014
% of Child protection reviews held within timeframes	98%	97%
% of Statutory reviews held within timeframes	91.4%	92.6%
% of Conferences held within 15 days of the strategy meeting	92.8%	100%
% of children subject to a second or third child protection plan	13.3%	16.8%
% of looked after children who participated in their review	98.9%	97.9%%

- 5.2 IRO's have continued to prioritise ensuring that statutory reviews take place within the required timeframes so performance remains good.
- 5.3 Although the numbers of children subject to a second plan child protection plan has increased the numbers subject to a third plan has decreased. Monitoring and audit processes have also ensured that these cases are quickly progressed to achieve appropriate outcomes for the children, usually through legal intervention.

6. Participation

- 6.1 Although the percentage of children and young people who participated in their review has seen a slight decrease it still remains high and is above the national average. A key area of service development has focused on developing strategies to enhance this participation and also to work creatively to ensure young people's views appropriately influence service developments.
- 6.2 Over the last year a number of strategies have been used to achieve this. Some examples are listed:
- Individual visits to young people who chose not to attend their reviews.
 - An information leaflet has been developed which is sent to young people prior to their review to ensure they understand the responsibilities of their IRO and how they can communicate with them.
 - A young person has been involved in recruitment processes.
 - Young people are contributing to an update of their review consultation document.
 - The consultation documents will now be collated to pick up general feedback and any themes emerging regarding care planning processes from the child's perspective.
 - Close working with the children's participation officer to ensure IRO's work effectively with the children's in care council and act on feedback received.
- 6.3 In a recent event with young people they provided feedback about what support they had received from their IRO. They said:
- “I can get my thoughts across”
 - “Things are explained to me”
 - “I feel listened to”
 - “I get support when I need it”
 - “I get to say if I am being looked after properly”
 - “I can discuss my life”

7. Quality assurance processes.

- 7.1 One of the key functions of the Independent Reviewing Officer role is to identify any issues that are compromising the child's rights to have appropriate care arrangements identified and achieved in a timely way.
- 7.2 All authorities are therefore required to have in place formal dispute resolution processes to ensure that resolutions are reached in a timely way. These processes should also enable the service to evidence its impact on improved outcomes for looked after children young people.
- 7.3 Drawing on models that have been developed regionally and Nationally, Warwickshire have developed a system that enables a systematic approach to tracking the progress of individual care plans and the identification of themes and issues emerging that impact on the quality of service provision for looked after children.

- 7.4 Following each statutory review the IRO provides feedback on aspects of the review process. This includes a judgement of the progress of the care plan. These are:
- Red – Delay seriously impacting on the plan.
 - Amber – Specific issue of concern in care planning but overall plan is progressing.
 - Green – plan is progressing well.

7.5 The following table shows some of the data emerging from this system over the last two years:

	2013	2014
RED	1%	0% (2 cases)
AMBER	23%	21%
GREEN	76%	79%

7.6 The system is relatively simple but does allow us to evidence that the Independent Reviewing Officers are systematically raising issues of concern through the escalation process and that managers are responding appropriately and ensuring resolutions are reached.

7.7 Some examples of specific cases referred on the basis of serious concerns are:

- Delays in progressing adoption plans for a sibling group of five children
- Delays in identifying appropriate residential provision for a child.
- High level of concern regarding the quality of placement provision for a sibling group of three
- A dispute about the final care plans for two looked after children
- Delays in agreeing a permanency plan for a child
- Concerns about the quality of care offered within a residential placement which was leading to safeguarding issues for the child

7.8 Examples of more general themes and issues are illustrated and compared to previous years:

Issue of concern	2013	2014
Placement Provision	9%	10%
Incomplete documentation	43%	36%
Avoidable delay	3%	2%
Contact	5%	4%
Health provision	6%	10%
Education provision	3%	4%

7.9 The data illustrates that the majority of care plans for looked after children are considered by the allocated IRO to be making appropriate progress. Where concerns are raised, managers are responding appropriately and resolution to concerns are reached in a timely way. It has not been necessary to refer any cases for CAFCASS intervention.

7.10 The key issues impacting on care planning processes would appear to be the availability of placements that are matched appropriately to the child's needs and the difficulties encountered when an inter authority approach is required in order to ensure the child's particular needs are met.

- 7.11 The current escalation and communication protocols need strengthening to ensure that IRO's can more effectively challenge other agencies where service provision does not meet corporate parenting responsibilities and compromises the child's right to appropriate care arrangements.
- 7.12 In conjunction with operational managers the RAG system will be reviewed to ensure that the information captured remains informative and reflective of current regulatory requirements and best outcomes for looked after children.

8. Children and Families Court Advisory Service

- 8.1 There are two distinct areas in which the IRO is expected to work in conjunction with CAFCASS:
- As part of family proceedings when the child is looked after; and
 - When an IRO makes a referral to CAFCASS as part of the formal escalation process
- 8.2 The public law outline (PLO) refers to 'the timetable for the child'. The guidance states that the IRO should feel confident that they are kept fully informed of the progress of the child's case, during and at the conclusion of proceedings. This will involve:
- Close liaison with the children's guardian; and
 - The legal department for the Local Authority providing the IRO with all relevant court documentation.
- 8.3 In order to achieve this outcome a joint protocol has been agreed between Warwickshire and Coventry IRO services and both legal departments to ensure consistency of approach within the local family court system.
- 8.4 The protocol also ensures that the Reviewing Officer has access to Independent Legal advice if it is required.
- 8.5 The protocol has proven to be very effective in the management of issues or disputes arising within court proceedings and has been acknowledged nationally as an example of effective practice. Over the last year there have been a number of instances where guardians and Reviewing Officers have worked effectively on cases.
- 8.6 Joint training sessions are planned to ensure effective working relations are maintained and developed in response to any emerging issues.

9. Service Development

- 9.1 Warwickshire took part in a National Research project by the National Children's Bureau on the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer in England. The final report was published in March 2014.
- 9.2 Recommendations were made at three levels, National, Local Authority and Service level to improve the effectiveness of IRO Services. The report also proposed a set of indicators of a good service that Authorities could assess their IRO services against.
- 9.3 A detailed report mapping out Warwickshire's current position was presented to Safeguarding SLT and for the attention of GLT. An action plan to address areas of concern was included.

9.4 This report will form the basis of a strategic review of the service to ensure its design meets all of the requirements.

10. Achievements and Priority Areas for Improvement

10.1 Despite staffing issues the service has achieved a number of good outcomes including:

- Maintaining good performance in key areas
- The ability to evidence effective challenge within care planning processes.
- Continuing effective work with Children's guardians
- Developments in strategies to enhance the participation of young people.
- Contributions to work on a regional and National level.
- The development of a Post qualifying module for Independent Reviewing Officers with the University of Birmingham. This is the first of its kind nationally. Two Reviewing Officers have completed the module and a further two will complete this year.
- Participation in a National Research project as previously noted.

10.2 There are clear areas of improvement needed if the service is to meet the full requirements of the legislative framework. The areas of work most affected by current capacity issues are:

- Visits to young people when they choose not to attend their review
- Time to liaise on every case with Children's guardians and scrutinise all relevant information presented when a case is within proceedings.
- The production of timely minutes from all reviews
- The ability to progress chase cases where there are blocks to planning.

11. Conclusions

11.1 The service can again report that good performance has been achieved in key areas of practice. A number of service developments have been achieved despite the current resource issues. The service is also able to evidence good quality assurance systems to contribute towards effective care planning processes for looked after children. A plan of action is also in place to address any shortfalls in the service.

Enquiries:

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Item 6

Corporate Parenting Panel – Work Programme 2015

Date	Item	Report detail
21 April 2015	Update from CiCC	Members who have attended a CiCC meeting will give a verbal update to the Panel
	Update from Strategic Lead, Brenda Vincent	Brenda Vincent will give a verbal update on current issues to the Panel
	LAC Performance, Brenda Vincent	The Panel will consider the performance of LAC
	Themed Item - Adoption Panel/Scorecard	
	Risk Analysis for Adoption Services	The Panel requested a report on the Risk Analysis for Adoption Services in Warwickshire.
	Update from CCGs on GPs and LAC	Requested at the CPP meeting held on 8 September 2014 (attendees at that meeting : Jo Dillon, Carla Elkins, Patient Experience/Public Involvement Manager, NHS Coventry and Rugby CCG Dr Jill O'Hagan, GP and Clinical Lead for Partnership -Rugby Locality, NHS Coventry and Rugby CCG Sue Price, Director of Commissioning, Arden, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Area Team, NHS England)
	Draft Work Programming	The Panel will look to agree their work programme
Items to be agreed/Dates to be set	Young People's Questionnaire	This report sets out the outcomes of consideration of this questionnaire by the 'Believe in Care Strategy Group' and the CiCC.

	Ofsted Inspection Framework	Members requested a report to a future meeting on the Framework for Future Ofsted Inspections
	Update on Supported Housing	Members requested an update, including the outcome of the meeting with CiCC and Geena De Marco housing and the new offers into the market place within the context of supporting people within the recommissioning of services , at their meeting on 7 July 2014.
	Children placed out of the area for residential care	Brenda Vincent undertook to provide an update around the new regulations and the implications for Warwickshire.

DRAFT