

# Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

Friday 7 April 2017

10.00 am Luttrell Room - County Hall,  
Taunton



To: The Members of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

Cllr L Redman (Chairman), Cllr D Huxtable (Vice-Chairman), Cllr M Adkins, Cllr A Dimmick, Cllr J Dyke, Cllr D Hill, Cllr J Hunt, Cllr J Lock, Cllr D Yeomans, Eileen Tipper, Ruth Hobbs and Richard Berry

All Somerset County Council Members are invited to attend meetings of the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees.

Issued By Julian Gale, Strategic Manager - Governance and Risk - 30 March 2017

For further information about the meeting, please contact Neil Milne on 01823 359045 or [ndmilne@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:ndmilne@somerset.gov.uk)

Guidance about procedures at the meeting follows the printed agenda.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

This agenda and the attached reports and background papers are available on request prior to the meeting in large print, Braille, audio tape & disc and can be translated into different languages. They can also be accessed via the council's website on [www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers)



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# AGENDA

Item Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee - 10.00 am Friday, 7 April 2017

**\*\* Public Guidance notes contained in agenda annexe \*\***

**1 Apologies for Absence**

to receive Members' apologies

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Details of all Members' interests in District, Town and Parish Councils will be displayed in the meeting room. The Statutory Register of Member's Interests can be inspected via the Community Governance team.

**3 Minutes from the previous meeting held on (Pages 7 - 12)**

The Committee is asked to confirm the minutes are accurate.

**4 Public Question Time**

The Chairman will allow members of the public to ask a question or make a statement about any matter on the agenda for this meeting. **These questions may be taken during the meeting, when the relevant agenda item is considered, at the Chairman's discretion.**

**5 Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 13 - 28)**

To discuss any items for the forthcoming work programme. To assist the discussion, the following documents are attached:

- a) – The Cabinet's latest published forward plan;
- b) – Current Work Programme for the Committee;
- c) – Outcome Tracker.

**6 Child Sexual Exploitation prevention update (Pages 29 - 46)**

To receive a presentation and update on progress made since the Task and Finish Group's final report.

**7 Pathways to Independence (P"i) update (Pages 47 - 52)**

To consider this report.

**8 Data Handling update**

To receive an update on progress made since the report considered in December 2016.

**9 Young Carers Task and Finish Group Final Report (Pages 53 - 62)**

To consider the final report of the Task and Finish Group that has reviewed Young Carers Services in Somerset.

Item Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee - 10.00 am Friday, 7 April 2017

10 **Committee's End of Quadrennium report** (Pages 63 - 68)

To consider this report.

11 **Any other urgent items of business**

The Chairman may raise any items of urgent business.

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## Guidance notes for the meeting

### 1. Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the Agenda should contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting – Neil Milne on 01823 359045 or email: [ndmilne@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:ndmilne@somerset.gov.uk)  
They can also be accessed via the council's website on [www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers)

### 2. Members' Code of Conduct requirements

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/organisation/key-documents/the-councils-constitution/>

### 3. Minutes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

### 4. Public Question Time

**If you wish to speak, please tell the Committee's Administrator by 12 noon the (working) day before the meeting.**

At the Chairman's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about any matter on the Committee's agenda – providing you have given the required notice. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. The length of public question time will be no more than 30 minutes in total.

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed. However, questions or statements about any matter on the Agenda for this meeting may be taken at the time when each matter is considered.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chairman. You may not take a direct part in the debate. The Chairman will decide when public participation is to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely. If an item on the Agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting. Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally to two minutes only.

5. **Exclusion of Press & Public**

If when considering an item on the Agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act.

6. **Committee Rooms & Council Chamber and hearing aid users**

To assist hearing aid users the following Committee meeting rooms have infra-red audio transmission systems (Luttrell room, Wyndham room, Hobhouse room). To use this facility we need to provide a small personal receiver that will work with a hearing aid set to the T position. Please request a personal receiver from the Committee's Administrator and return it at the end of the meeting.

7. **Recording of meetings**

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public - providing this is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings and a designated area will be provided for anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings. No filming or recording may take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting. As a matter of courtesy to the public, anyone wishing to film or record proceedings is asked to provide reasonable notice to the Committee Administrator so that the relevant Chairman can inform those present at the start of the meeting.

We would ask that, as far as possible, members of the public aren't filmed unless they are playing an active role such as speaking within a meeting and there may be occasions when speaking members of the public request not to be filmed.

The Council will be undertaking audio recording of some of its meetings in County Hall as part of its investigation into a business case for the recording and potential webcasting of meetings in the future.

A copy of the Council's Recording of Meetings Protocol should be on display at the meeting for inspection, alternatively contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting in advance.

## **SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton, on Friday, 10 March 2017 at 10.00 am

**Present:** Cllr L Redman (Chairman), Cllr D Huxtable (Vice-Chairman), Cllr M Adkins, Cllr A Dimmick, Cllr J Dyke, Cllr J Hunt, Cllr J Lock, Cllr D Yeomans, Eileen Tipper and Ruth Hobbs.

**Other Members present:** Cllr Gorskop and Cllr Nicholson.

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr D Hill and Richard Berry

### **12 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2**

Cllr Adkins, Cllr Dyke, Cllr Hunt, Cllr J Lock, Cllr Redman, and Cllr Yeomans, all declared a personal interest as a District and/or City/Town, Parish Councillor.

Eileen Tipper declared a personal interest as a lay member of the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and as a trustee of CHYPPS.

Ruth Hobbs declared a personal interest as Director of Somerset Parent Carer Forum.

### **13 Minutes from the previous meeting - Agenda Item 3**

The Committee agreed the minutes of the last meeting were accurate, and the Chairman signed them.

### **14 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4**

There were no members of the public present.

### **15 Scrutiny Work Programme - Agenda Item 5**

The Committee considered and agreed its own work programme and the future agenda items listed. The Chairman requested an update on the status of Members Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, and this was provided by the Scrutiny Manager who noted that this process would begin afresh after the elections.

The Committee considered and noted the Council's Forward Plan of proposed key decisions in forthcoming months including Cabinet meetings up to 12 April 2017.

The Committee also accepted the updated outcome tracker and the Scrutiny Manager reminded Members that once an outcome had been agreed as complete (Green) and reported to the Committee, it would be retained on the master copy but not reported again.

**16 Addressing drug and alcohol safeguarding concerns in families - Agenda Item 6**

The Committee considered this report designed to give Members an understanding of what services were available and how drug and alcohol use and the safeguarding concerns associated with families were addressed.

The strategic approach in Somerset to addressing drug and alcohol concerns recognises that there are different levels of need within the population which require different levels of response in terms of promotion, prevention, early intervention and specialist treatment.

Members heard that a programme of training for non-drug and alcohol specific services is provided to ensure that anyone working in Somerset (whether in paid employment or as a volunteer) would be confident and competent to respond to drugs and alcohol issues at a level that was right for them and the setting they are working in. In addition Members welcomed that the training emphasised the need to think family in working with any individual to ensure best outcomes from early interventions.

The Committee then heard (by way of an anonymous case study) and an example of a young person that had become involved with the service and the various measures put in place. This was then followed by a brief discussion during which questions were asked and answers provided.

The update was accepted and it was suggested that an update report be provided at a future meeting.

**17 Youth Offending Team update - Agenda Item 7**

The Committee agreed to note the Youth Offending update report, which was an information report.

**18 Data Handling update - Agenda Item 8**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the Data Handling Update until its next meeting.

**19 School Performance 2016 - Agenda Item 9**

The Committee considered this report that provided details of performance by Somerset schools in 2016 and included a summary of summary of the Somerset Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Assessments, KS1 and KS2 Standard Assessment Tests (SATs), GCSE and A Level results for 2016. It was stated that the data had now been validated and this had not changed the figures much.

It was reported that Schools either as academies or as maintained schools have increasing autonomy and the Council worked in partnership with all schools to maximise this autonomy and to increase school effectiveness. Following the development of the strategic vision 'Achieving Excellence for All'



the Council has put in place a number of key activities to support areas for improvement.

Overall it was stated that between 94-95% of Somerset Schools were good or outstanding however when compared to the national average (NA) figures or statistical neighbours (SN) Somerset's performance was average and this was a recurring theme. Vulnerable groups were still not performing as well as their peers although students with English as an additional language and Black and Minority ethnic groups had performed better than in previous years. The achievement gap for those in receipt of Free School Meals and their peers had increased. There was a question about male/female performance and it was noted that Somerset was still better than NA and SN in terms of the difference in performance between boys and girls.

Members considered and discussed the performance at the various key stages with consideration to also given to higher education and A level results and how children in care at the virtual school had performed. The Chairman sought and received reassurance the gaps between the most vulnerable groups and their peers remained an urgent priority. It was explained that Schools were very aware of this and the focus was to support School improvement through the Somerset Education Partner programme to enable more focus and support for those schools struggling to close the gaps. The report was accepted.

## 20 **Team Around the School** - Agenda Item 10

The Committee a report on the development of the Team Around the School (TAS) model that is an early help approach that supports the targets set out in the County Plan relating to Childrens Services in particular those improving the Ofsted rating and improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged children. TAS is also a key delivery vehicle for the Children and Young People's Plan.

Members noted that a key judgement made by Ofsted was that the Council needed to progress the early help strategy more swiftly, ensuring that it was well embedded across the partnership and that thresholds for services were better understood and implemented to reduce the number of inappropriate referrals and re-referrals to children's services.

It was reported that following discussions with various stakeholders in the Spring term 2015, that schools were best placed to be the drivers for improving early identification of need and the coordination of early support as they were a universal service with regular and consistent access to the vast majority of the children and young people across Somerset.

The issues that needed to be addressed were: Our vulnerable children are not doing well in Somerset; Strengthen local/partner relationships; Better deployment of multi-agency resources; Better support network for frontline staff; Need to address the 'refer on' culture and all partners hold appropriate level of risk; Consistent application of thresholds; Pockets of good practice across County; Align Early Help with school improvement.

The Committee heard that two schools, King Alfred's in Burnham on Sea and The Blue School in Wells were already operating a way of working that involved

regular multi-agency meetings, coordinated by senior staff of the school and involving feeder school staff that discussed pupils causing concern, and Wadham Community School agreed to join a pilot and coordinate the work in their area.

In response to a question it was explained that working with these schools has led to the development of the TAS model with the following aims:

- To provide a mechanism for schools to meet with family support services and other key partners on a regular basis in order to have shared conversations about children and young people where concerns have been identified and plan the delivery of and monitor the impact of support (aimed at Level 2 'Additional' need);
- To build trust and improve communication across agencies;
- To ensure early help resources from all agencies involved are utilised in the most effective way;
- To reduce exclusions, improve attendance, educational outcomes and overall wellbeing.

It was reported that a recent analysis of calls to Somerset Direct now showed that the schools sector is one of the lowest referring agencies with one of the highest conversion rates which is a significant change from a year ago. Whilst this cannot be solely attributed to the delivery of the TAS model it is reasonable to assume that it is a significant contributory factor.

Members noted that the Early Help Steering Group had been replaced by the TAS Strategy Group which has responsibility for overseeing the development and delivery of the model across the County and considering how it could develop in to the future. The report was accepted.

**21 Children and Young People's Plan 2016-2019 - improvement programme 6 update - Agenda Item 11**

The Committee considered this report that provided an update on achieving effective multi-agency support for more vulnerable children and young people and developing an excellent children's social work service.

Members noted that since programme 6 update was considered at a meeting the following achievements had been reported:

- Family group conferencing service was now fully staffed with conferences to be rolled out across the county in February 2017;
- Strategic Manager Prevention appointed – due to start in February 2017 (to develop services specifically for adolescents on the edge of care);
- Ofsted Monitoring visits for Assessment (November 2016) and Safeguarding (January 2017) stated that adequate progress was being made in Children's Social Care;
- A Care leaver was now engaged in work experience at Viridor and conversations with Skanska and local Chamber of Commerce were underway to extend the model;
- There had been significant improvement in permanent staffing in South Somerset Assessment and Children Looked After teams;
- The partnership CSE strategy group was making good progress with involvement and leadership of the Police;

- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children's (UASC) team was now in place, the team had been trained and data for all UASC children in the service was held in this team.

There was a brief discussion of various aspects of the programme and it was noted the following areas reported some slippage:

- There continued to be a poor response to advertisements for psychologists to join the emotional health and well-being team which meant the team was not yet able to function at capacity;
- There remain challenges in recruiting permanent staff to South Somerset safeguarding teams;
- Edge of care work was progressing more slowly than anticipated due to staffing issues however it was noted a Strategic Manager for Prevention would be in post from February 2017 to progress this work;

Placement stability remained a concern for children who had been looked after for more than 2 and half years. Examination of the data indicated that some foster carers struggle to manage children as they approach adolescence. It was reported that a revised training programme for those with 17/18 year olds would focus on building carer and child resilience was one of a range of measures in place to address this.

The update was accepted.

**22 Any other urgent items of business - Agenda Item 12**

The Chairman, after ascertaining there were no other matters arising, thanked all those present for attending and reminded Members that the Committee's next meeting would be the last of this quadrennium.

The meeting closed at 12:48.

**(The meeting ended at 12.48 pm)**

**CHAIRMAN**

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## Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee Work Programme

Committee meetings	Link to CYPP	Lead Member & Officer
<b>16 June 2017</b>		
Early Years Capital Bid to EFA		Dave Farrow + Charlotte Wilson
Fostering Recruitment Update report		Julian Wooster + Becky Hopkins
SEND update and EHCP Plans		Julia Ridge
CYPP – Q4 Update 2016/17		Philippa Granthier
West Somerset Opportunity Area		Sue Rogers
<b>28 July 2017</b>		
Children’s Social Care Statutory Customer Feedback report		Simon Clifford
<b>15 September 2017</b>		
<b>20 October 2017</b>		
<b>17 November 2017</b>		
<b>8 December 2017</b>		

**Note:** Members of the Scrutiny Committee and all other Members of Somerset County Council are invited to contribute items for inclusion in the work programme. Please contact Jamie Jackson, Governance Manager Scrutiny, who will assist you in submitting your item. [jjackson@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:jjackson@somerset.gov.uk) 01823 359040.

(What impact does that have on Children in Somerset?)

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## Somerset County Council Forward Plan of proposed Key Decisions

The County Council is required to set out details of planned key decisions at least 28 calendar days before they are due to be taken. This forward plan sets out key decisions to be taken at Cabinet meetings as well as individual key decisions to be taken by either the Leader, a Cabinet Member or an Officer. The very latest details can always be found on our website at:

<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=134&RD=0&FD=1&bcr=1>

Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 defines a key decision as an executive decision which is likely:

(a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or

(b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority.

The Council has decided that the relevant threshold at or above which the decision is significant will be £500,000 for capital / revenue expenditure or savings. Money delegated to schools as part of the Scheme of Financial Management of Schools exercise is exempt from these thresholds once it is delegated to the school.

Cabinet meetings are held in public at County Hall unless Cabinet resolve for all or part of the meeting to be held in private in order to consider exempt information/confidential business. The Forward Plan will show where this is intended. Agendas and reports for Cabinet meetings are also published on the Council's website at least five clear working days before the meeting date.

Individual key decisions that are shown in the plan as being proposed to be taken "not before" a date will be taken within a month of that date, with the requirement that a report setting out the proposed decision will be published on the Council's website at least five working days before the date of decision. Any representations received will be considered by the decision maker at the decision meeting.

In addition to key decisions, the forward plan shown below lists other business that is scheduled to be considered at a Cabinet meeting during the period of the Plan, which will also include reports for information. The monthly printed plan is updated on an ad hoc basis during each month. *Where possible the County Council will attempt to keep to the dates shown in the Plan. It is quite likely, however, that some items will need to be rescheduled and new items added as new circumstances come to light.* Please ensure therefore that you refer to the most up to date plan.

For general enquiries about the Forward Plan:

- You can view it on the County Council web site at <http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=134&RD=0&FD=1&bcr=1>
- You can arrange to inspect it at County Hall (in Taunton).
- Alternatively, copies can be obtained from Scott Wooldridge or Julia Jones in the Community Governance Team by telephoning (01823) 359027 or 357628.

To view the Forward Plan on the website you will need a copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader available free from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)  
Please note that it could take up to 2 minutes to download this PDF document depending on your Internet connection speed.

To make representations about proposed decisions:

Please contact the officer identified against the relevant decision in the Forward Plan to find out more information or about how your representations can be made and considered by the decision maker.

The Agenda and Papers for Cabinet meetings can be found on the County Council's website at:  
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=134&Year=0>



Weekly version of plan published on 1 March 2017

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<b>FP/17/03/02</b> First published: 27 February 2017	27 Mar 2017 Cabinet Member for Resources	Issue: 2017/18 Capital Maintenance Programme Decision: 2017/18 Property Capital Maintenance Programme	Corporate Property Planned Capital Investment Programme		Darren Puckett, Client Lead Officer - Corporate Property Tel: 01823 355712
<b>General Exception Notice published</b> First published: 17 March 2017	27 Mar 2017 Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	Issue: Adult Social Care Fees and Charges 2017/18 Decision: Adult Social Care Fees and Charges 2017/18	Adult Social Care Fees and Charges 201718 Appendix B General Exception Notice Fees and Charges 17-18 Appendix A		Martin Young, Finance Strategy Manager Tel: 01823 359057
<b>FP/17/02/08</b> First published: 20 February 2017	Not before 27th Mar 2017 Leader of the Council	Issue: Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Enhanced Programme of Flood Risk Management Works and the SRA Memorandum of Understanding and Constitution Decision: To consider the SRA's Enhanced Programme of Works and approve SCC providing forward funding for 2017/18 in advance of receiving LEP Growth Deal funding to support the delivery of the programme. In addition it is proposed that the Leader of the Council considers the revised SRA Memorandum of Understanding and its Constitution.	Somerset Rivers Authority Enhanced Programme of Flood Risk Management Works Appendix A SRA Budget 2017-18 Appendix B 2017-18 Enhanced Programme Appendix D SRA Local MoU 2017-18 Appendix D1 Task Force Vision Appendix D3 2017-18 Enhanced Programme development and Policies Appendix D3 2017-18 Enhanced Programme Appendix D4 Officer Groups Terms of Reference Appendix D5 SRA Scheme of Delegation		Sarah Diacono, Somerset Rivers Authority Senior Manager Tel: 01823 355194

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<b>FP/16/10/04</b> First published: 3 October 2016	Not before 3rd Apr 2017 Director of Commissioning for Economic and Community Infrastructure	Issue: Award and enter a contract for the delivery of broadband services for Lot 1 of the CDS SEP procurement Decision:			Katriona Lovelock, Economic Development Officer Tel: 01823 359873
<b>FP/16/12/05</b> First published: 3 January 2017	Not before 3rd Apr 2017 Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	Issue: Specialist mental health day services Decision: To award a contract for the provision of specialist mental health day services		Part exempt The item is likely to contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).	Rhian Bennett, Senior Commissioning Officer Tel: 01823 359793
<b>FP/16/12/06</b> First published: 3 January 2017	Not before 3rd Apr 2017 Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	Issue: Specialist mental health carers services Decision: To award a contract for the provision of specialist mental health carers services		Part exempt The item is likely to contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).	Rhian Bennett, Senior Commissioning Officer Tel: 01823 359793
<b>FP/16/10/04</b> First published: 3 October 2016	6 Apr 2017 Director of Commissioning for Economic and Community Infrastructure	Issue: Award and enter contract for the delivery of broadband services for Lot 4 of the CDS SEP procurement Decision:	Broadband Phase 2 contract award Lot 4 to preferred supplier and funding agreement		Katriona Lovelock, Economic Development Officer Tel: 01823 359873

Weekly version of plan published on 1 March 2017

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<b>FP/17/03/06</b> First published: 13 March 2017	Not before 10th Apr 2017 Director of Commissioning for Economic and Community Infrastructure	Issue: ENCTS fixed payment agreement Decision: A fixed payment agreement with a bus operator under the English National Concessionary Fares Scheme.	Officer non-key decision to implement the 2017-18 Concessionary Fares Reimbursement Scheme to Operators (28th February 2017) The Somerset Concessionary Travel Scheme 2017-18 (28th February 2017)		Oliver Woodhams, Strategic Manager, Community and Traded Services Tel: 07977400667
<b>FP/17/01/08</b> First published: 30 January 2017	12 Apr 2017 Cabinet	Issue: Decision to award the contract for the Yeovil Western Corridor Improvement Scheme Decision: To consider the report	Tender evaluation report	Part exempt	Nisha Devani
<b>FP/17/03/10</b> First published: 20 March 2017	Not before 25th Apr 2017 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport	Issue: Colley Lane Southern Access Route tender invitation Decision: To progress the CLSAR project into the next stage of procurement including issuing tender invitations taking into account updated risks and issues		Part exempt	Mike O'Dowd-Jones, Strategic Commissioning Manager – Highways and Transport Tel: 01823 356238
<b>FP/17/02/06</b> First published: 14 February 2017	Not before 5th May 2017 Director of Children's Services	Issue: Award of Family Based Care (fostering) Peninsula Framework Decision: The five peninsula authorities have jointly tendered for a framework of fostering agencies, assessed for quality and value for money. Cabinet is asked to approve the results of this tender.	Report on Somerset's proposed award Peninsula report on the process and results of tender	Part exempt	Louise Palmer, Strategic Commissioner

Weekly version of plan published on 1 March 2017

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<b>FP/17/02/01</b> First published: 14 February 2017	Not before 22nd May 2017 Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Issue: Award of Contract for the provision of a 3 Classroom Block at Court Fields School, Wellington Decision: To approve the awarding of the contract to the successful contractor	Confidential Financial Report Capital Programme Paper	Part exempt	Carol Bond, Project Manager, Property Programme Team Tel: 01823 355962
<b>FP/17/03/07</b> First published: 13 March 2017	Not before 22nd May 2017 Director of Commissioning for Economic and Community Infrastructure	Issue: SEIC Appointing a Construction Company Decision: To approve the appointment of a construction company (Wilmott Dixon) under the SCAPE Framework, to provide construction services to SCC to enable the delivery of Phase 2 of the Somerset Energy Innovation Centre (SEIC) and to enable the delivery of Phase 3 of SEIC, once the full funding package has been secured	Impact Study Cabinet Member Decision 09.02.17 Officer Non-Key Decision 27.04.15	Part exempt	Lynda Madge, Commissioning Manager – Economy & Planning Tel: 01823 356766
<b>FP/17/03/08</b> First published: 13 March 2017	Not before 22nd May 2017 Director of Commissioning for Economic and Community Infrastructure	Issue: SEIC Acceptance of GD and ERDF Funding Decision: The acceptance of the offer of Heart of the South West LEP Growth Deal funding (£5,156,500) and ERDF funding (£869,090), subject to legal acceptability of the final funding agreement, for the Somerset Energy Innovation Centre, Phase 2	Impact Study Cabinet Member Decision 09.02.17 Officer Non-Key Decision 27.04.15	Part exempt	Lynda Madge, Commissioning Manager – Economy & Planning Tel: 01823 356766

Weekly version of plan published on 1 March 2017

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<p><b>FP/16/08/05</b> First published: 15 August 2016</p>	<p>Not before 29th May 2017 Cabinet Member for Business Investment &amp; Policy</p>	<p>Issue: Enterprise and Incubation Hub at SEIC - approval to accept ERDF Funding Decision: Enterprise and Incubation Hub at SEIC - approval to accept funding</p>	<p>ONKD Paper signed by P Hewitt – ‘Approval to submit expressions of interest for European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF for CDS and SEIC)’ dated: 27th April 2015</p>		<p>Lynda Madge, Commissioning Manager – Economy &amp; Planning Tel: 01823 356766</p>
<p><b>FP/16/11/10</b> First published: 27 September 2016</p>	<p>7 Jun 2017 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: Children's Services Improvement - Somerset's Children and Young People's Plan 2016-19 progress Decision: To consider the report and agree necessary actions.</p>	<p>Report to Cabinet 29 April</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Philippa Granthier, Assistant Director Childrens Services Tel: 01823 359054</p>

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<p><b>FP/17/03/09</b> First published: 13 March 2017</p>	<p>7 Jun 2017 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: Framework Agreement for Travel Demand Management Decision: To appoint Suppliers to a Framework Contract in particular for delivery of an integrated Travel Behaviour Change and Road Safety Training and Awareness Programme in connection with the Hinkley Point C development</p>	<p>Key Decision on 25 March 2013 regarding the contributions to Somerset County Council within the Hinkley Point C Site Preparation Works and Development Consent Order Section 106 Agreements Non-Key Decision Report by Strategic Manager – Major Programmes on 3 August 2016 - Authority to commence procurement for services in connection with a Travel Behaviour Change and Road Safety Training and Awareness Programme associated with the Hinkley Point C development Non-Key Decision on 2 December 2016 by the Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic and Community Infrastructure Hinkley Point C – Authority to appoint a supplier for assurance services in connection with a Travel Behaviour Change and Road Safety Training and Awareness Programme Non-Key Decision on 6 March 2017 by the Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic and Community Infrastructure Hinkley Point C</p>	<p>Part exempt</p>	<p>Andy Coupe, Acting Strategic Manager - Major Programmes Tel: 01823 355145</p>

Weekly version of plan published on 1 March 2017

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<p><b>FP/17/03/01</b> First published: 6 March 2017</p>	<p>Not before 19th Jun 2017 Cabinet Member for HR Health and Transformation</p>	<p>Issue: Provision of Healthwatch Somerset Decision: Agree to the award of a contract for the provision of Healthwatch Somerset following a competitive procurement exercise</p>	<p>Tender evaluation report</p>	<p>Part exempt</p>	<p>Catherine Logan, Procurement Officer Tel: 01823 359293</p>

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## Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

Agenda items	Link to Former Imp Plan	Action owner	Agreed Outcome	RAG Status
<b>18 March 2016</b>				
Committee Chairman's feedback on the March Children's Services Quality and Performance Review Meetings (QPRM)		Julian Wooster	The Chairman in summary reported that his recollection of the impression of the meeting was that it was effective and focused and he noted the overall direction of travel regarding performance was positive and he undertook, and the Committee agreed, to attend other quality and performance review meetings.	Completed.
<b>17 June 2016</b>				
Any Business of Urgency	All	Chairman	The Chairman suggested that 7 Members of the Committee each take a special interest in one of the 7 improvement programmes and focus their attention and consideration of each report of how progress was being made against their particular improvement programme. The DCS replied that he thought this was a good suggestion and offered to provide Officer support for any Member of the Committee.	Only 4 of the 9 Committee have volunteered
<b>22 July 2016</b>				
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)			There was a suggestion that the Council consider approaching the local Muslim Community to work with and offer advice on this area and that such a representative might also be invited to become a co-opted Member of the Committee. The Chairman noted the suggestion and said it would be considered during the summer recess.	To be added to agenda of summer 2017 meeting of new Committee
<b>9 September 2016</b>				
DBS checks	All		Officers to ensure all Members of the Committee, as well as those on the Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Parenting Board have completed a DBS check	Process to start afresh following May election.

## Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

<b>11 November 2016</b>				
Work Programme	<b>All</b>	Leigh Redman	Chairman to liaise with the Chairman of Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee to discuss the possibility of a joint meeting.	Suggestion to be considered by Chair of Committee post election
<b>9 December 2016</b>				
Early Years Capital Bid to EFA	<b>All</b>	Dave Farrow	The update was accepted and it was agreed to request a further update report in 6 months.	Scheduled for June 2017
Data Handling Update	<b>All</b>		The Committee accepted the report and given the number of actions and improvements that had been recently undertaken they requested a further update report for the March 2017 meeting.	Scheduled for April 2017
<b>27 January 2017</b>				
Children and Young Peoples Plan 2016-19	<b>All</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In respect of Improvement Plan 1 an update report was requested a future meeting on the West Somerset Social Mobility project;</li> <li>• In respect of Improvement Programme 3 an update report was requested a future meeting regarding the vacant posts in the Children Looked After Team, including the Psychologist posts.</li> </ul>	Scheduled for June 2017
Impact of proposed financial changes to Schools	<b>All</b>		The Committee encouraged Officers to continue to lobby for these proposed changes to be made so the higher funding materialised.	Pending
Young Carers Task and Finish Group	<b>All</b>		The Committee agreed to proceed with the Task and Finish Group and the Chairman and Eileen Tipper volunteered to sit on the Group with a view to producing a final report for the 7 April meeting.	Scheduled for 7 April meeting
Team Around the School School Performance 2016			It was agreed to defer consideration these 2 reports for the next meeting.	Completed

## Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

The CYPP has been produced following a multi-agency process, overseen by Somerset Children's Trust. Seven improvement programmes have been identified – our work is focused on ensuring progress and achievement within these 7 programmes:

1. Supporting children, families and communities to become more resilient
2. Promoting healthy outcomes and giving children the best start in life
3. Improving emotional health and wellbeing
4. Building skills for life
5. Providing help early and effectively
6. Achieving effective multi-agency support for more vulnerable children and young people and developing an excellent children's social work service
7. Embedding a think family approach across the workforce

Key:

Completed	Action complete and will be removed from tracker for next meeting.
Pending	Action on-going or plans in place to address.
Incomplete	No action currently in place with a minimum of 3 months since action agreed.

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# Child Sexual Exploitation

## What we know and what we don't

**Claire Winter**

**Deputy Director Children and Families  
Somerset County Council**

**Liz Hughes**

**Detective Chief Inspector – Protect Somerset  
Avon and Somerset Constabulary**



# National Context

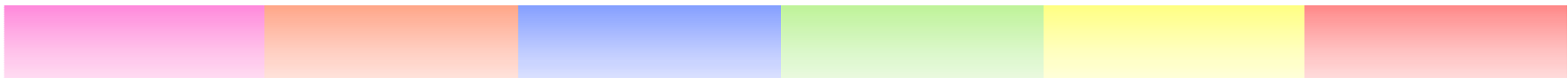
## Who is likely to be exploited?

It can happen to any young person:

- in any area (rural or urban),
- of any age,
- gender or
- ethnicity.

Victims have been identified nationally from heterosexual, gay, lesbian and bisexual orientations.

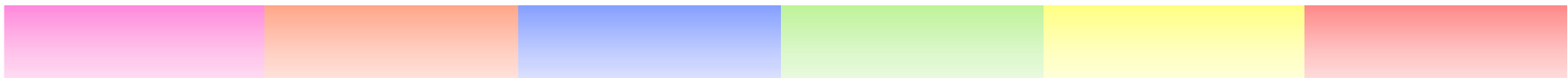
Victims most commonly become known to statutory and non-statutory agencies at the age of 14 and 15, although victims as young as 9 years old have been identified.



# Definition

*Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.*

Working Together 2015 (update Feb '16) p93



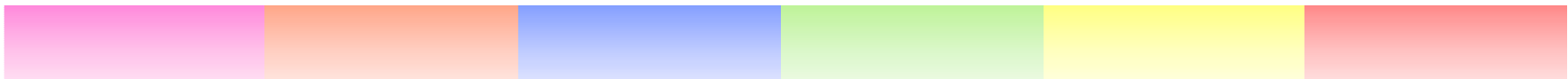
# Who are the perpetrators?

According to the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry, there is a great deal that we do not know about the perpetrators of Child Sexual Exploitation.

- Partly because agencies rarely record data on perpetrators, and when they do, it is incomplete and inconsistent.
- Frequently victims only know their abusers by aliases and nicknames, or they can only provide physical descriptions as children are often heavily intoxicated by drugs and alcohol, and abused by multiple men.

For these reasons, many abusers remain unidentified, and the actual number of abusers is likely to be far higher than those actually reported

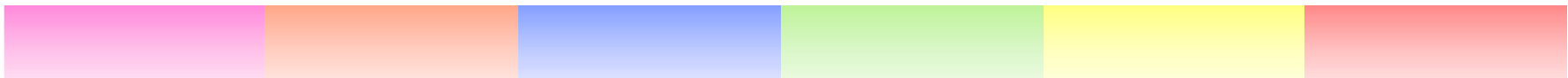
Perpetrators often exacerbate their victims' vulnerabilities to gain, and maintain control over them and isolate them from the people who may be able to protect them (CEOP 20115).





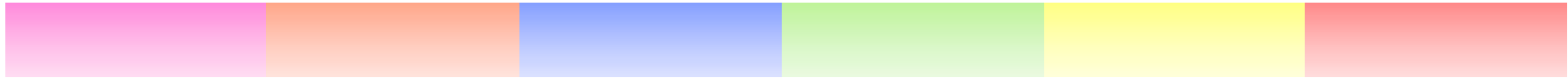
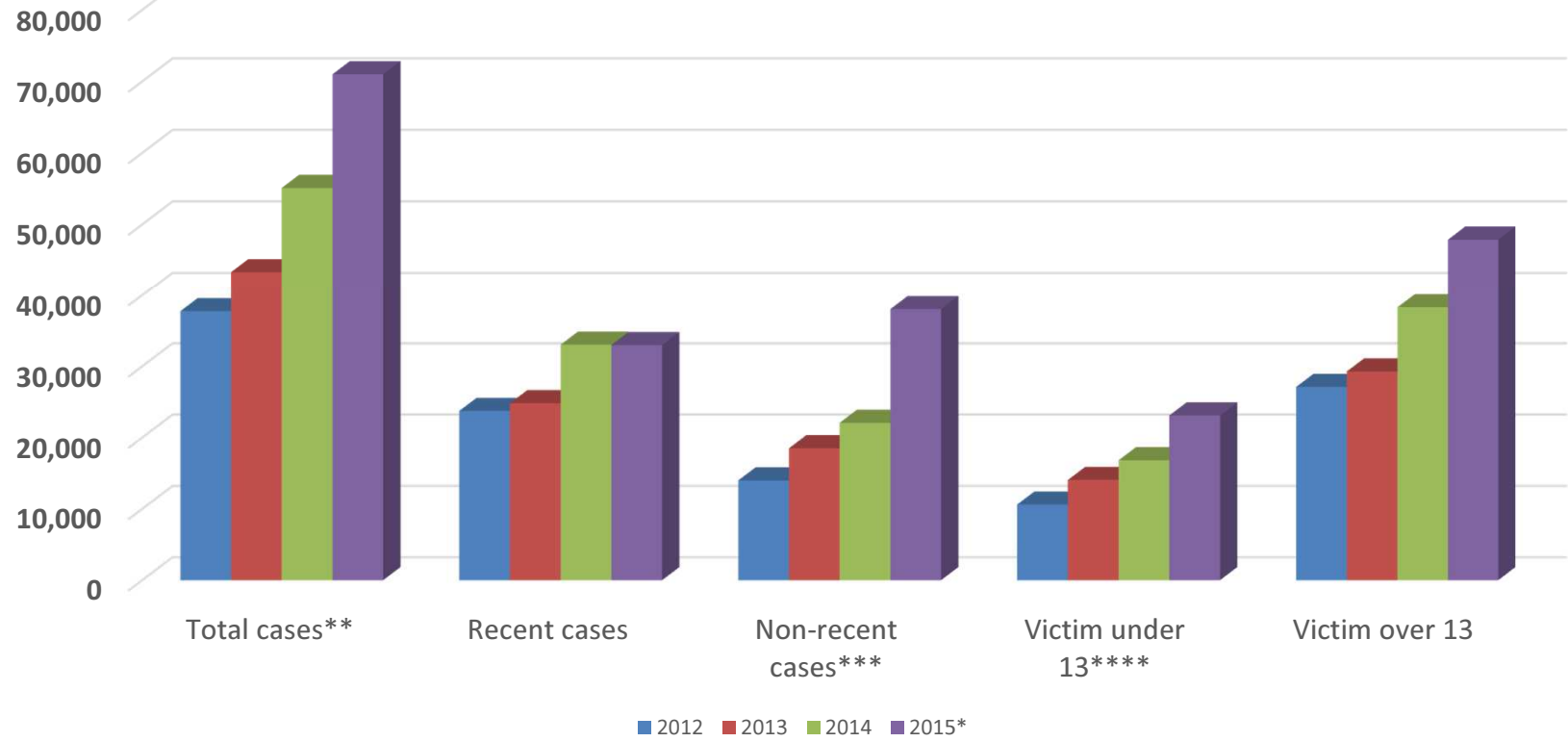
## What is the prevalence of Child Sexual Exploitation?

- It is difficult to assess the numbers of victims of Child Sexual Exploitation, as it is a “hidden” form of abuse which leaves victims reluctant to make disclosures.
- Many young people do not even recognise that they are being abused as those perpetrating the abuse manipulate them into believing they are in loving relationships, or they are dependent upon the abuser for protection (CEOP 2016).
- Until recently Child Sexual Exploitation has not been regarded within police databases and as a result the data relating to Child Sexual Exploitation is partial, concealed in other categories of data, or simply unrecorded
- The Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry estimated from the evidence that 16,500 children in the UK were at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation.
  - Due to the reasons above, figures of reported victims is likely to be an underestimate of the true prevalence in the UK.
- Both the recent Ofsted report on Somerset County Council’s services for Children (including Somerset Safeguarding Children Board) , and the 2015 HMIC Police effectiveness inspection identified that further work was required across the partnership to fully understand the scale and prevalence of Child Sexual Exploitation within the County.



# Child Sexual Abuse Workload in England and Wales

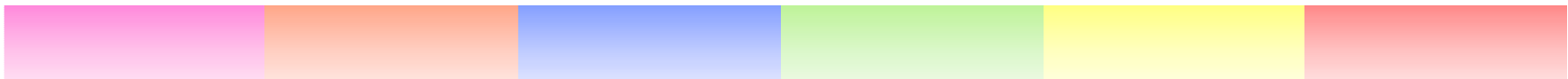
Child Sexual Abuse Workload in England and Wales





# Police Challenges

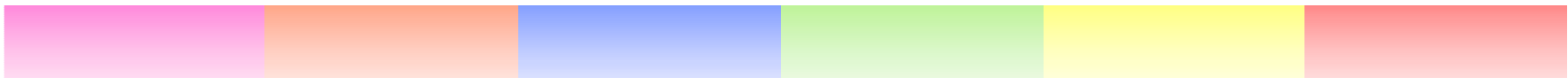
- Information sharing
- Increasing demand not matched with resources
- Reactive investigations rather than proactive
- Skills of officers and staff
- CSE- Not just the business of child protection specialist detectives.
- Too focused on victim disclosure



# Disclosure

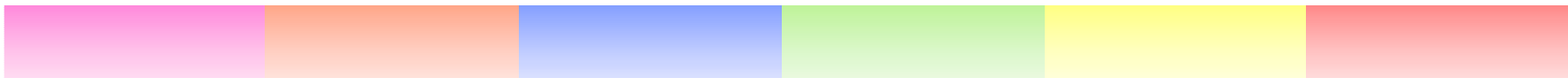
- Disclosure (or telling) can take a very long time (for example, 7.80 years on average); sometimes never at all
- Children tried to tell on average 4 times
- The younger a child at the age that abuse starts, the longer the delay to disclosure
- Research evidence suggests that ‘false allegations’ and ‘retractions’ of disclosures are uncommon

Dr Debbie Alnock – University of Bedfordshire



# What facilitates disclosure?

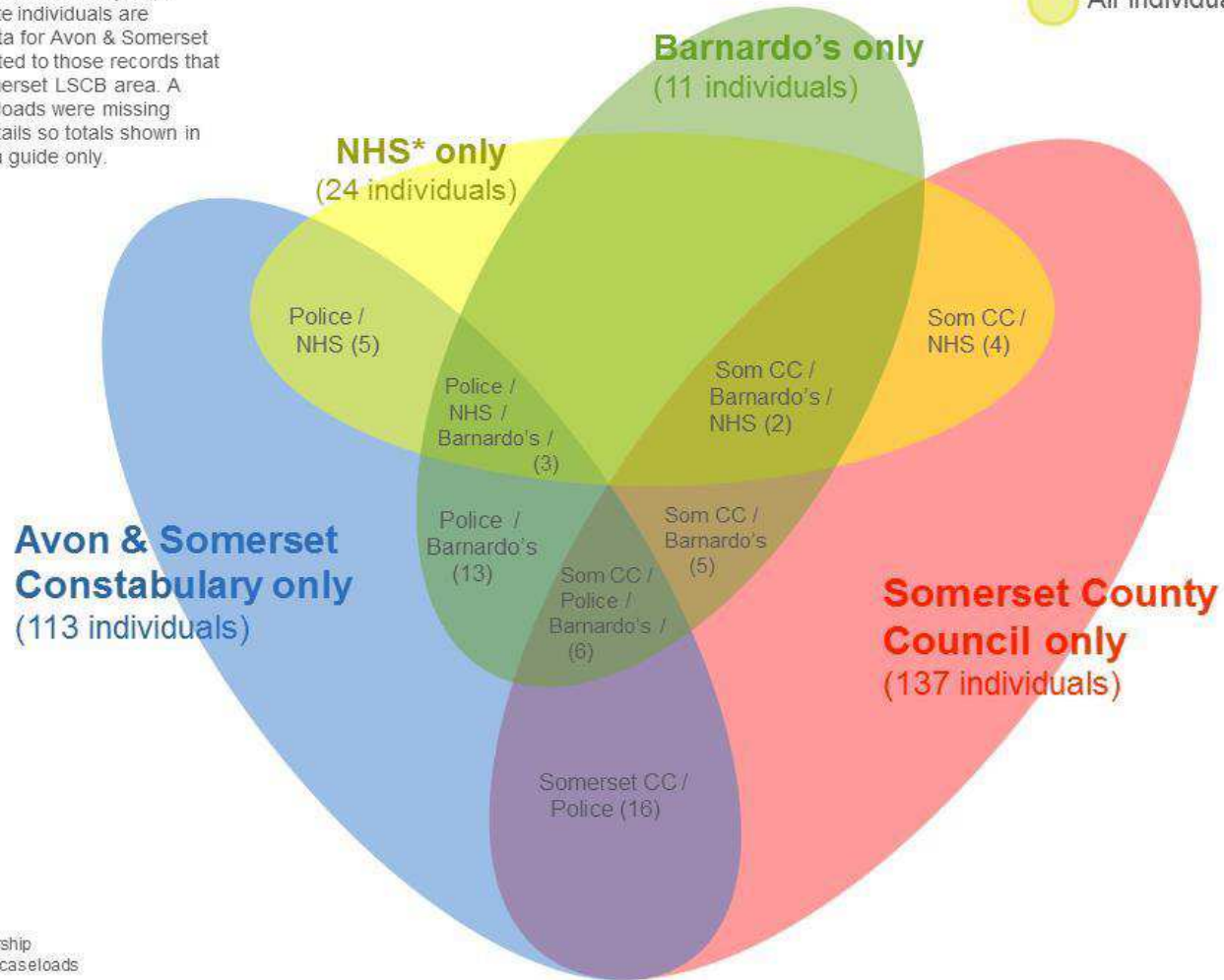
CSA (younger, intrafamilial, extra-familial, non-CSE specific)	CSE (older, extrafamilial)
Recognising abuse (sometimes simply by getting older, talking to friends)	Recognising/ accepting that a relationships they may be involved in are abusive
Being believed	Having a pathway to a supporting and trusted adult
Being noticed, Trust; having someone to talk to	Building good, positive relationships
Abuse getting worse	Fear of abuse (or sharing of images) may be escalating out of control



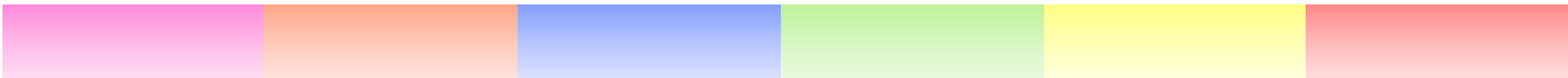
# CSE and CSE risk cases known to agencies in the Somerset LSCB area - 2015/16

**Note:** Figures in brackets relate to the number of individuals known either exclusively to or across the different agencies shown (based on the caseload data provided by Somerset County Council, Avon & Somerset Police, Barnardo's and Somerset Partnership NHS Services\*). In total, 339 separate individuals are represented in the diagram. Data for Avon & Somerset Police and Barnardo's is restricted to those records that could be located within the Somerset LSCB area. A number of records in both caseloads were missing postcode or other locational details so totals shown in the chart should be treated as a guide only.

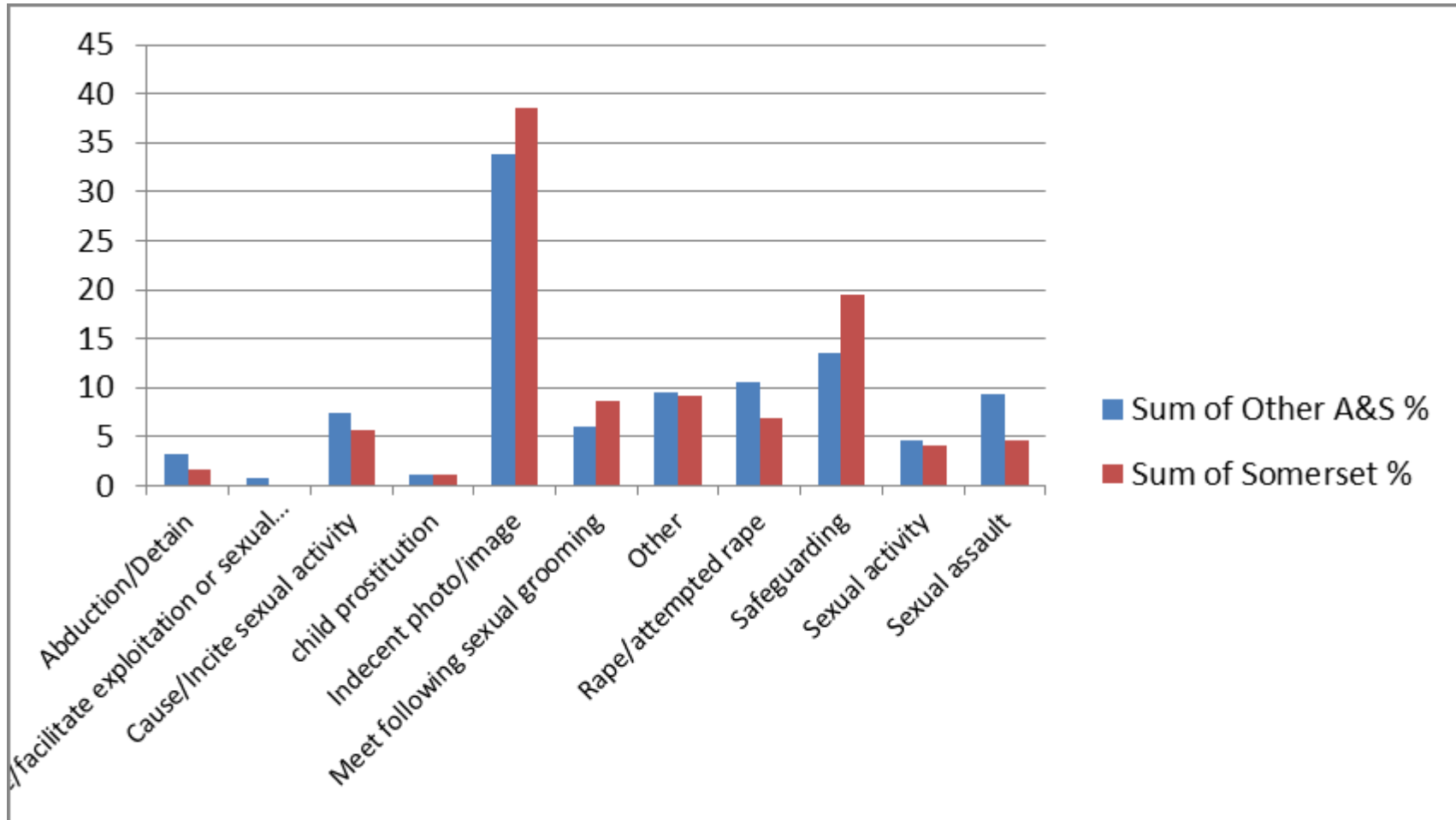
- All individuals - 170
- All individuals - 156  
(Figure is comprised of individuals with CSE warning markers and those appearing in police occurrences data)
- All individuals - 40
- All individuals - 38



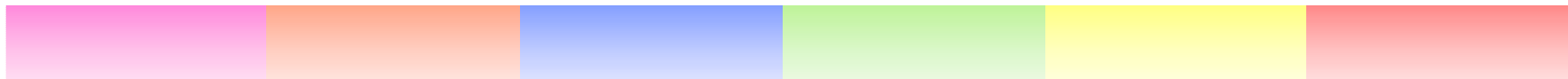
\* Comprising Somerset NHS Partnership Safeguarding and Somerset CAMHS caseloads



# How much offending and victimisation related to CSE do we know about?



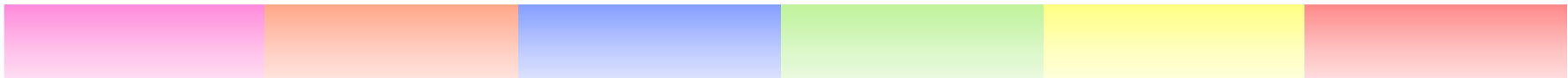
The prevalence of occurrence categories in Somerset and all other areas in Avon & Somerset





# Perpetrators

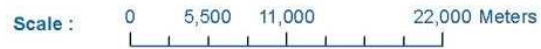
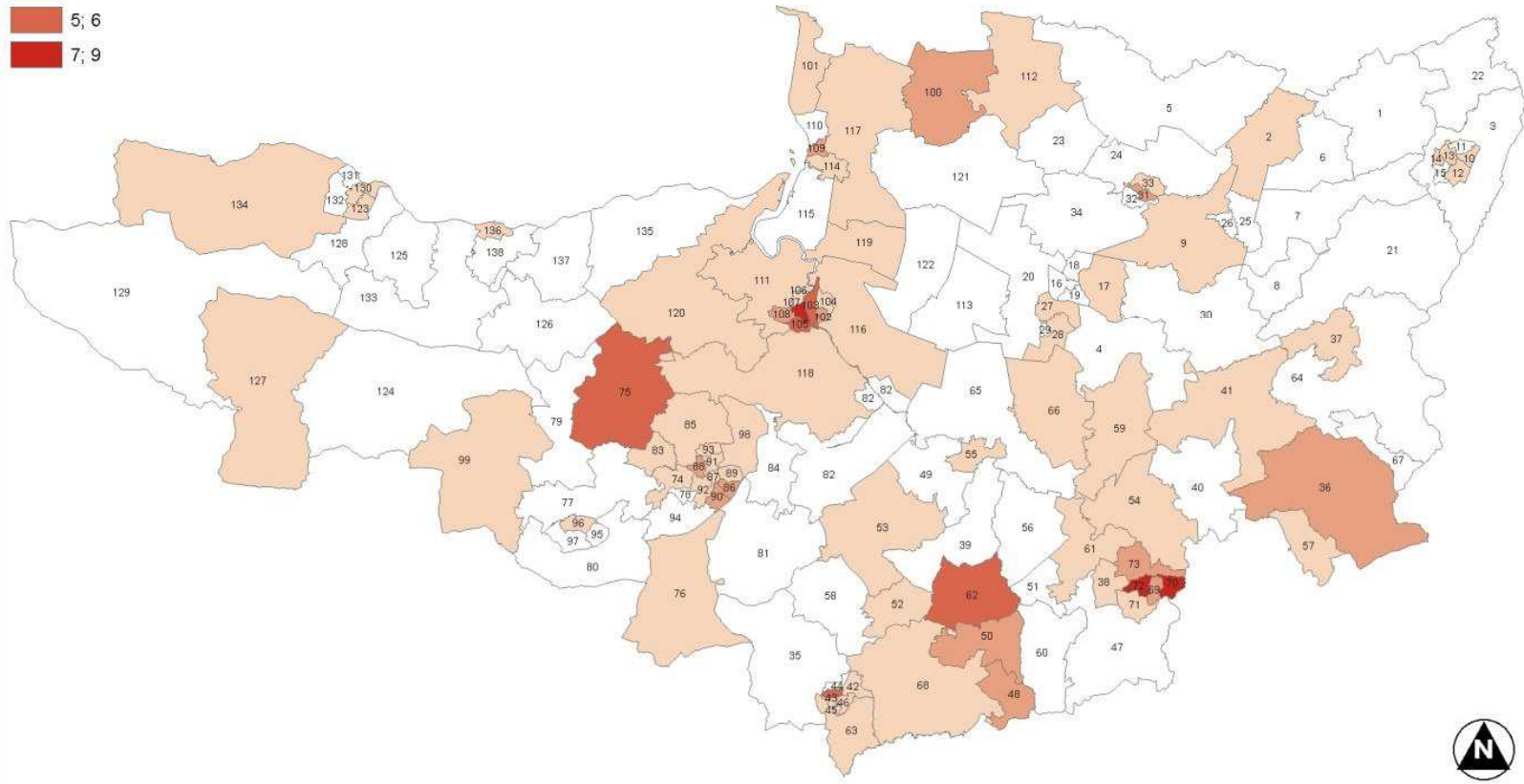
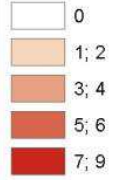
- Lone perpetrators more prevalent
- Male and under 25
- Intelligence gaps- employment, vehicle details etc
- Enforcement



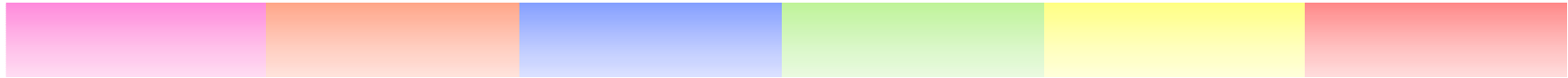
### Police CSE Occurrences

Somerset\_Wards

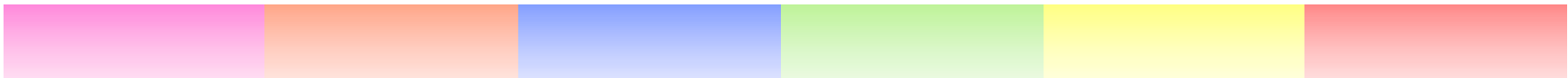
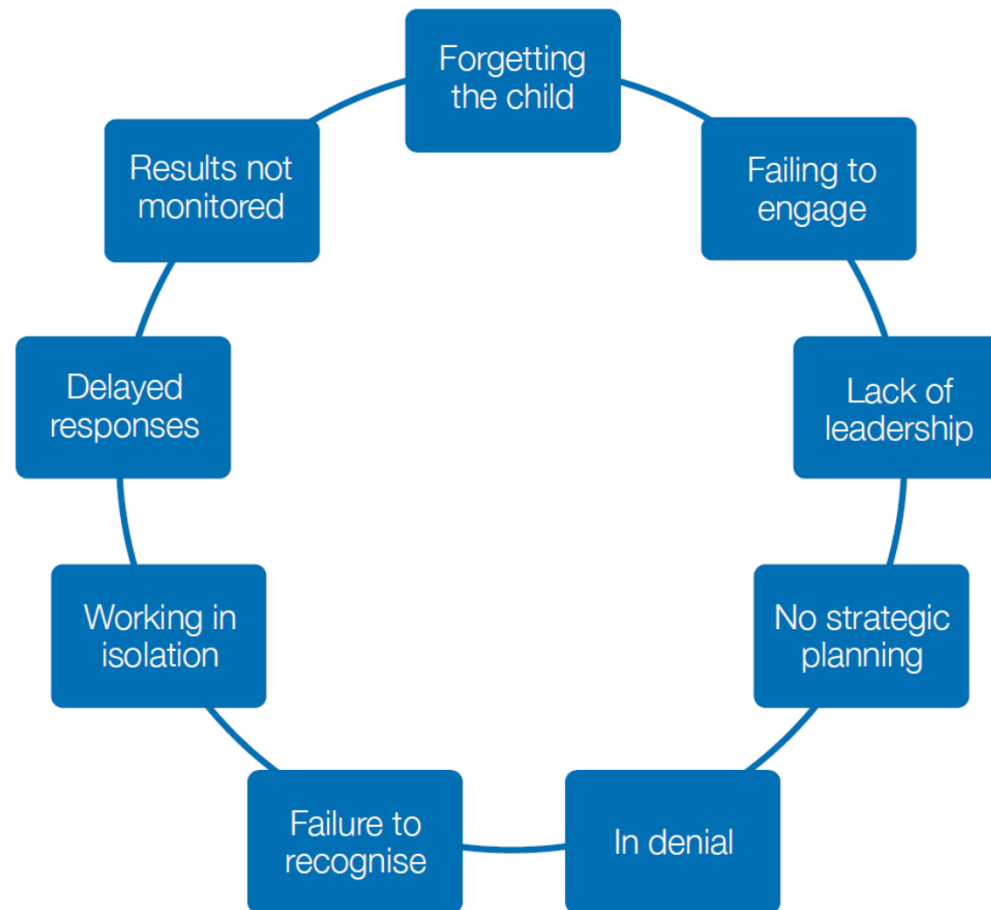
No\_of\_occurrences



All maps were produced by the Avon & Somerset Constabulary from (c) Crown Copyright Data supplied by Ordnance survey. Licence 100022962.

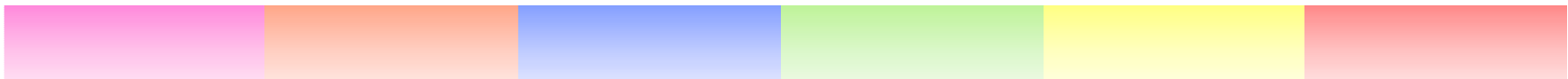


# Recipe for failing children



# CSE Sub-Group

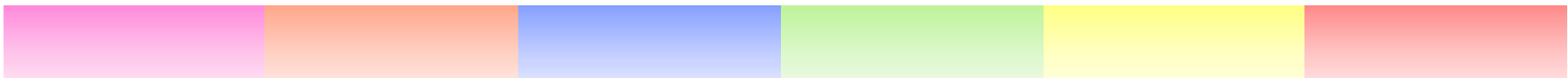
- Reports to the Somerset Safeguarding Board
- Strategic Plan
  - Prevent
  - Protect
  - Pursue
- Key is to hear the “Voice of the Child”



# Foundations of good practice:



Berelowitz et al (OCC)



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## **Pathways to Independence (P2i) Update**

Lead Officer: Philippa Granthier, Assistant Director – Commissioning and Performance

Author: Emma Good, Senior Commissioner Children's Services

Contact Details: [egood@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:egood@somerset.gov.uk)

Cabinet Member: Cllr Frances Nicholson, Lead Member for Children

Division and Local Member: All

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1.** Somerset County Council and the Somerset District Councils have statutory responsibilities in relation to homeless 16 to 17 year olds and Care Leavers up to the age of 25. Some of the duties are met through an integrated commissioned service called Pathways to Independence Service (P2i).

The Pathways to Independence Service (P2i) allows young people with housing related support needs to access person-centred support, until they are able to sustain independent living without the need for support.

The newly commissioned P2i service delivery model started on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017. This report has been requested to update Scrutiny Committee members of the progress since that time.

- 1.2.** The service meets the requirement stated in the County Plan to continue to prioritise the vulnerable children and adults who need our help most.
- 1.3.** P2i contributes to meeting the following improvements priorities within the Children and Young People Plan 2016 - 2019
- Supporting children and families to become more resilient – through the comprehensive mediation service aimed at returning and sustaining young people within the family home
  - Improving emotional health and wellbeing – through ensuring P2i is psychologically informed and focused on the health and emotional wellbeing needs of the young people supported through an outcomes focus approach
  - Building skills for life – though the focus P2i has on education, training and employment and on the requirement for providers to enable young people to develop independent living skills and sustain independence
  - Providing help early and effectively – through a comprehensive countywide early help, prevention and mediation service
  - Achieving effective multi-agency support for more vulnerable children and young people – P2i has been commissioned and will be delivered with the involvement and coproduction of all relevant partners.

### **2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations**

- 2.1.** Members are asked to consider and comment on this report.

### **3. Background/Update**

- 3.1.** The newly commissioned P2i service began operation on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017. The

transition of all young people from the two outgoing providers was managed by a comprehensive transition plan being in place for all young people. Young people were moved on to suitable accommodation or independent living as appropriate to their needs. As of the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 42 young people within South Somerset and 46 young people within Taunton Deane successfully transitioned.

- 3.2.** New P2i Panels for allocating services for young people and providing multi-agency support were set up in all areas on a rotational basis from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017. These panels have been very well attended and successful in their operation. Young people are discussed on an individual basis and professionals from various agencies including providers, Targeted Youth Support (TYS), Leaving Care, Social Workers etc. attend the panel to discuss the best route forwards for the individual. Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 a total of 207 young people have been discussed at this panel (some of these will be multiple discussions about the same young person). An average of 17 young people are discussed at each weekly panel with an average of 7 (40%) of these being care leavers.

The P2i Commissioner has also been attending these panels to ensure that the process is running smoothly and to consider any strategic issues that arise. A panel was recently attended by the new Strategic Manager for Prevention in Children's Service who was very impressed with the level of partnership working and the real intention of the panel to do what was in the best interest of the young person and come up with creative solutions if needed.

- 3.3.** The P2i Coordinator is a secondee from Sedgemoor District Housing and an expert in young people's housing rights and the duties of the respective organisations. A further 6 months secondment has been successfully negotiated to allow her to remain in post until end of September 2017. This has been an invaluable source of expertise and appropriate challenge when needed. It has also further cemented relationships with District Council colleagues.
- 3.4.** P2i Hubs are now operational in four areas in Somerset; Bridgwater, Taunton, Shepton Mallet and Yeovil. These Hubs have a full time worker provided from SCC (either a TYS or Leaving Care worker) as well as a full time P2i Homelessness Prevention Officer provided by District Councils (half time post in South Somerset). The Hubs are the first point of contact for young people when they are faced with housing issues and provide advice guidance and support. Hub workers also carry out assessments of need (using the Early Help Assessment) to understand in more depth the support required and also complete a risk assessment for any service provision. The South Somerset hub (currently operating from Morley House) is due to begin operation from Petters Way in a partnership arrangement with South Somerset District Council from 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017.
- 3.5.** The P2i Mediation service is currently being managed by Targeted Youth Support and two full time workers cover the county. The Mediation service is working with families and young people offering a quick response to try to make sure the young person can go home if it is safe to do so. They also work with the young person to show them the reality of the types of accommodation options available to them and also in finding out if there are any other solutions open to them e.g. staying with extended family or finding private rented accommodation. This service is already experiencing high demand and a report is being drafted to look at the need in the first quarter of operation and to possibly request further resource for two additional workers to be appointed, thereby providing one post



for each area of the county.

- 3.6.** There are two providers commissioned to provide P2i Services until January 2020. Mendip YMCA covers Mendip and South Somerset areas and YMCA Somerset Coast covers Taunton Deane and West Somerset and Sedgemoor areas. The providers have worked very hard to ensure that there were sufficient units of accommodation available by the 1<sup>st</sup> January in all areas, and that every young person transitioned appropriately according to their needs. A new contract management framework that is outcomes based and built on quality management and continuous improvement methodologies has been implemented which will provide a fully rounded picture of these services going forwards identifying areas of improvement and celebrating success.
- 3.7.** The P2i service has been identified by DCLG and St Basils as an exemplar project of best practice for commissioning homelessness services for young people nationally. The P2i Commissioner and P2i Coordinator were invited to present at an LGA conference in London in January to share best practice on commissioning housing services for young people in two tier authorities. The presentation was very well received and requests for support have been received from several local authorities nationwide. P2i was also invited to speak at a recent conference held in Bristol on best practice in Homeless Models for Children and Young People. A further conference event is planned to be held in Somerset at the end of June 2017 led by LGA to follow up on the January event and to accommodate the high number of requests to visit the service from other local authorities.

#### **4. Consultations undertaken**

- 4.1.** Feedback has been very positive on the new service from a variety of agencies, providers as well as young people themselves. Consultation and feedback are inherently built into the new contract management framework as part of continuous improvement.
- 4.2.** A quote from a Young Person in P2i Accommodation:  
*'I would really like to thank the Mendip YMCA project for helping me achieve as much as I have so far. I've been living at the YMCA about four months in Frome and I love the YMCA project as a whole and what it has done for me. I'm grateful for the introduction and welcome feeling which allowed me to feel comfortable during my stay. I'd also like to thank all the staff for helping me achieve everything I have so far. I came from residential care and other placements which I found very unhelpful if not making my situation worse where I cannot live at home. Since I have been at the foyer, I feel an overall improvement in my quality of life, including mood which I used to struggle with quite a lot, family relationships such as mum, dad and girlfriend have all improved and I'm out doing more in the community such as going to college.'*

*I have achieved more through my current four month stay at the foyer than I have in my past 18 years of my life, to which I know this will continue for the rest of my stay. You are all doing an amazing job at helping me become independent in an array of ways, and I'm so so grateful for this!*

- 4.3.** Feedback from P2i provider staff:  
*Cluster Units*

*It's still early days but the new model is presenting some really clear positives already. The young people who moved into our first cluster unit were openly delighted at having such lovely accommodation offered to them and the transition from 'housing project' to house/home' has had an obvious and positive impact in the sense of 'normalising' behaviour. Cooking together, negotiating behaviours at house meetings, using the washing machine correctly and even sorting a rota for putting out the recycling have become fairly regular domestic routines and we know that routines are a powerful antidote to chaotic behaviours and thoughts. Two of the young people in our first house had presented quite challenging behaviours at the Foyer on an ongoing basis. After a few weeks in the house during January one started to revert to some old habits and we discussed with her the possibility of moving her back to the core unit as she did not seem ready for cluster. The impact on her behaviours was immediate and has been pretty much sustained as she was so determined to stay in the house as she loved it so much. One young man at our first cluster house has stayed there with reasonably calm success since January which is the longest he has been known to settle in a single place.*

### **Panels**

*The panels have been overwhelmingly positive in their impact I think. They have become a place where we know options can be discussed with a group of knowledgeable colleagues who have a keen interest in helping make things work for young people. When faced with managing a very challenging young person it's a huge source of help and support and I think will build mutual understanding of the possibilities and limitations all parties are working with. I think it has helped build relationships across services and this can only help improve effective joint working down the line which will be so critical for the services success.*

## **5. Challenges/Next Steps**

- 5.1.** There are still challenges with providing suitable accommodation for a small number of very high needs young people including those with undiagnosed and diagnosed mental health issues as well as offending/re-offending behaviour. The P2i Commissioner is working with the Police, Leaving Care, Adult Social Care, Public Health amongst others to try to address some of these issues and find alternative solutions.
- 5.2.** A training programme for all P2i Hub staff is being put in place to make sure that all staff share the same knowledge and skills in areas such as Emotion Coaching, Housing Advice, Signposting and Assessments.
- 5.3.** Expansion of the Mediation service to make sure this is as responsive as required in all areas to prevent homelessness and unnecessary placements to limited emergency accommodation.
- 5.4.** Further work and training with Children's Social Care staff to reach a shared policy position on the 16/17 year old duty and processes to be followed. Training and communications with Children's Social Care staff to make sure they are aware of the changes to the P2i service and what the new model can and can't offer.
- 5.5.** Further automation of assessment and referral processes using the new Early Help Module via the Children's Social Care database LCS. This will ensure background and historical information on young people can be established

quickly making for a safer and more responsive information sharing process.

## **6. Background papers**

**6.1.** None.

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Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee  
7 April 2017

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## **Young Carers Task and Finish Group**

Lead Member: Cllr Leigh Redman, Task and Finish Group Chairman

Author(s): Neil Milne, Community Governance and Gemma Pickford Waugh, Children's Commissioning

Contact Details: 01823 359045

Division and Local Member: All

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to outline for members of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee, the findings of the Young Carers Task and Finish Group and the Committee is invited to consider and comment on the report's recommendations.
- 1.2. The Task and Finish Group was made up of Councillors Leigh Redman and Alan Dimmick and co-opted Committee member Eileen Tipper, and the group was supported by Neil Milne and Gemma Pickford-Waugh. The Task and Finish Group are very grateful to those who have helped in their review including Young Carers themselves as well as professionals who support them.
- 1.3. The work of the Young Carers Project contributes to Somerset Children and Young People's Plan priority 1. Supporting children, families and communities to become more resilient and 7. Embedding a 'think family' approach across the workforce.

### **2. Issues for consideration**

- 2.1. We identified that the number of Young Carers the Council is aware of is only a fraction of the total; however the amount of money the known Young Carers save the Council and other services is huge. The support offered by Young Carer in Somerset helps the Council to keep care costs down and in return the Council can support and enhance the Young Carers service by building on the work already started.

The Council should work with all stakeholders (including but not exclusively - GP's, Schools, Colleges) to try and find a way to improve identification and subsequent support of Young Carers as early as possible and ensure details are passed to relevant Officers for initial contact and evaluation with a timetable for follow up if appropriate. Currently too often a lack of awareness and understanding is leading to poor or no support packages for young carers (and those they care for) and this impacts negatively on their educational outcomes.

#### **2.2. Recommendations**

Members are asked to consider the Task and Finish Group's report and support its recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Children and Families/Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.

##### **Support from Schools**

- Each Somerset School shall have a named person to act as Young Carer Champion;
- School data collection forms should seek to identify young carers, with

support offered if appropriate and when identified passed to appropriate Council officers;

- 'Whole School' approach to young carers: information/raise awareness, assemblies, mufti days, school drop-in, extra help with homework and course work etc.
- We welcomed the pilot project (involving 4 Schools) beginning after Easter half term to highlight young carers and we suggest our successor Committee request an update report in 6 months;
- Overall Somerset's Schools and colleges should have processes in place to identify Young Carers and ensure they have access to adequate support to enable them to have the same opportunities and choices as those without caring responsibilities;
- A drive to raise the profile of young carers and the issues they face – particularly with schools and colleges and their peers, would greatly help to remove any stigma that Young Carers may feel as a result of their caring responsibilities, and enable them to discuss their needs and any problems they face without fear.

#### **Support from Adult services**

- Each Adult assessment should be used to better identify Young Carers and that the young carer is not being adversely affected by the care they provide;
- No care package shall rely on children to meet the needs of an adult;
- That Adult services, including mental health services talk to the Young Carers service and include the needs of young carers in their plans;
- That support from Adult services is timely (examples of long waiting times after referrals for support to be put in place).

#### **Support from Health**

- Work with Somerset LMC to encourage and support GPs to 'think family' when working with adults with caring needs, and recognising the role of Young Carers so appropriate referrals can be made in a timely manner;
- Public Health to take the lead to ensure clear training programmes in place for health and social care professionals (GPs, nurses, care assistants, personal assistants, social workers, nursing/care home staff) – but also in schools, for teachers and students.

#### **Support from the Council**

- A pilot linking children and adults services has made a great impact, and we recommend that this should be maintained and supported and developed by the Council to span the ages from 0 to 25, so bridging the gap between childhood and adulthood. We feel this continuation is particularly important so that the achievements and positive outcomes gained in such a short period of time are not lost;
- This would help to develop better links between children and adult services for young carers (data and officer);
- Funding for Young Carers to access social support be maintained;
- Work to identify and support more Young Carers in the future;
- Young Carers be helped to transition to College/University, without worrying about leaving the person they care for;
- A Councillor to be a Young Carer Champion.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The Task and Finish Group was agreed at the Committee's meeting on 27 January 2017 following a meeting between the Director of Children's Services

and the Chairman of the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee. The focus of the task and finish group, as outlined in a scoping report, would be to review current arrangements for young carers in Somerset and provide a number of recommendations as to improvements that could be made to identify and support our young carers.

**3.2.** We found that in Somerset you are considered to be a carer if you give up your time without pay, to look after a family member, a friend, or a neighbour, who is ill, frail or has a disability. You can be a parent carer, a young carer, or care for an older person or other adult with care needs. The term ‘Young Carer’ refers to children and young people under 18 who provide regular and on-going care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally ill, has a disability or misuses substances or other form of dependency. The term does not apply to everyday and occasional help around the home. Responsibilities can include; housework, healthcare (including administering medication), personal care, cooking and shopping, and caring for siblings.

**3.3. Data**

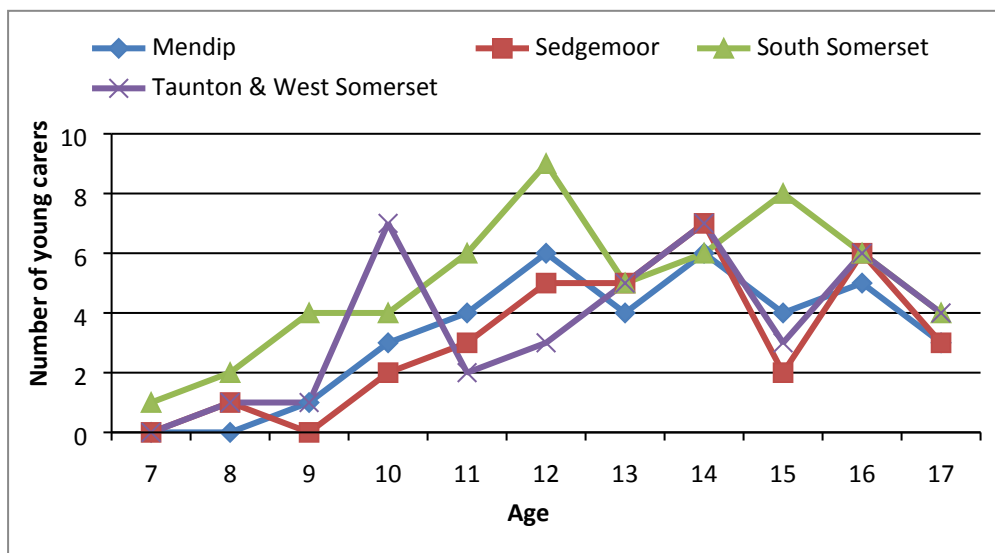
We discovered that estimating the number of people who provide unpaid care to friends, family members or others is notoriously difficult. The 2011 Census is currently the most reliable means of quantifying carers. It recorded that 3,306 people aged under 25 in Somerset identified themselves as unpaid carers (representing 2.3% of the under 25 age group, and 6% of people who identified themselves as carers).

The 2011 Census data indicated that there had been a 19% rise in unpaid carers aged 5 to 17 since 2001. Across the South West, the increase had been much higher, at 36%. Therefore if Somerset were typical of other areas across the South West, it would suggest there were around 1,750 young unpaid carers in the County.

In Somerset the anticipated value of unpaid care provided by all ages was £535m in 2001, £1,016m in 2011, and £1,101m in 2015 (Valuing Carers 2015). Based on carers under the age of 25 being 6% of the caring population in the 2011 census and adjusting for the differences in the number of unpaid hours provided by young carers compared to carers, we can very loosely extrapolate that between £14m and £29m of unpaid care may have been provided in Somerset by Young Carers & Young Adult Carers in 2015.

We noted that the Young Carers Project is currently open to 164 young carers, the majority being over 12years as the table below shows.

Age	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
N#	1	4	6	16	15	23	19	26	17	23	14



We found that 59.39% of the young carers open to the Young Carers Project are female and 40.61% were male, a split that is slightly higher for females than the population as a whole (51% female / 49% male). Of that cohort a total of 4.7% were from an ethnic minority, compared to 6% of the Somerset population.

We wanted to know how Young Carers were identified and we noted that from January 2017, the Young Carers Project have had 40 referrals;

- 9 were referred by Parent & Family Support Advisers (PFSAs),
- 8 by children's social care,
- 6 by adult social care,
- 5 by schools,
- 3 by child & adolescent mental health service,
- 3 by parents,
- 2 by children with disabilities team,
- 2 by the ambulance service,
- 2 by getset.

129 young carers were in school years 3-11, of those 58 (45%) were attending school less than 90% of the time and we also found that **no young carer has the benefit of a 100% attendance at school**. 6 of the school age young carers had no attendance data recorded because they were home schooled.

We were also mindful of Troubled Families and the information showed that 133 households with young carers were identified as households with worklessness or financial exclusion (81.6%).

The Somerset Children & Young People's Health and Wellbeing Survey in 2016 asked young people, in school years 8 and 10, for their views regarding healthy eating, safety, emotional wellbeing and leisure time. The overall data was then analysed to compare it with those who identified themselves as a Young Carer. This represented 180 responses from Young Carers being considered against the 3428 responses from their peers.

There were many significant differences, some key ones being:

- More likely to report a medium or low score to describe their self-esteem, when things go wrong they are more likely to get upset and feel bad for ages.



- More likely to say they have been bullied at or near school in the last 12 months, they may feel afraid of going to school because of this.
- More likely to be exposed to smoking at home or in the car, and are more likely to have smoked themselves.
- More likely to have free school meals, not have had anything to eat or drink for breakfast on the day of the survey, and also want to lose weight and think they are being bullied because of their weight.

#### 4. Consultations undertaken and Fact finding

- 4.1. Prior to its initial scoping meeting, the Task and Finish Group had been provided with a number of documents and sources of information from which to brief themselves in greater detail on the topic. These included details of the relevant sections of the Children and Families Act 2014 that set out that Local authorities must assess whether young carers in their area have support needs and, if so, what those needs are, and also the Care Act 2014 which directed that LA's must take a whole family approach to assessing and supporting adults so that young carer's needs are identified when undertaking an adult or adult carer's needs assessment.

At the scoping meeting it was agreed in an attempt to obtain as full a picture as possible in reviewing current arrangements for Young Carers in Somerset to speak with a range of service users and providers. The group agreed it would be beneficial to be able to speak with young carers, a young adult who had been/ was a carer (transition stage), and officers that provided services, and also parent carers.

The task and finish group also agreed it would be beneficial to ask all of the different people involved in this area the same broadly similar set of questions and to enquire as to what they as service users or providers regarded as working well and what they might like to see change.

#### 4.2. Meeting with Young Carers

On 16 February 2017, following the scoping meeting, the Task and Finish Group met with 8 children of the Young Carers Forum at the New Prospects building in Bridgwater. We spoke with the young carers to understand how they had first heard about the Young Carers Project, and also their experiences of how other different service areas such as Schools, G.P's and Adult Social Care reflected their role as a Young Carer.

What we found as a common theme from the Young Carers was despite a plethora of policies and guidance documents both nationally and locally, in practical terms there appeared to be **little and no consistency of approach**. It was clear that the **process of identifying Young Carers was not simple and user friendly**. Once identified their also appeared to be a variety of approaches from Schools and also G.P's in how help/support was offered **if at all**. Also the Young Carers relayed that there did not appear to be much linkage between different services (Health, Adult social care, and Mental health services).

Our conclusions were that Young Carers need to be identified and supported, so that they can achieve the same life opportunities as their peers. It has to be noted that with the existing team great strides are being made in Somerset within a context of increasingly limited resources, to address the needs of Young

Carers and provide them with support and activities, but more needs to be done. Schools and colleges should have processes in place to identify Young Carers and ensure they have access to adequate support to enable them to have the same opportunities and choices as those without caring responsibilities. Young Carers need to be able to influence and help shape the support and services available to them. There is a need to raise the profile of young carers and the issues they face – particularly with schools and colleges and their peers, and work to remove any stigma that Young Carers may feel as a result of their caring responsibilities, and enable them to discuss their needs and any problems they face without fear.

#### **4.3. Meeting with Young Carer Professionals**

On 2 March 2017, the Task and Finish Group met with Dave Willis & Wendy Jenner Young Carer professionals; Nigel Gregory & Rachel Wren – Young Carers Transition Workers; and Fiona Moir from Public Health.

The Young Carers Project is working with 200 young people at any one time, last year there were 113 referrals to the service. A Task and Finish Group is being set up in May to develop ways to increase identification. The service assesses the Young Carers needs in terms of their caring role and identifies how it can be reduced. Provision is supplied by a mixture of 1:1 support, groups and counselling. This work is overseen by the Young Carers Forum which gives young people a chance to have a voice in how the services meet their needs. The largest offer from the Young Carers Project is respite in the form of 8 groups that run fortnightly (4 juniors and 4 seniors). 144 sessions were delivered last year with an attendance rate of 80% (higher than neighbouring authorities). Other activities are run during the holiday, some leisure and some to help with their caring role (e.g. first aid). Trips and Activities are funded by the Friends of Somerset Young Carers charity.

The biggest threat to the service is if adult social care and adult mental health are only focussed on short pieces of casework that don't focus on reducing young carers' care role then the Young Carers will become more invisible; increasing vulnerability and their outcomes will only get worse. Young Carers aren't included enough, or even identified, when being assessed by adult social care or mental health services.

The Young Carers Transitions Workers pilot has had an impact on identification of Young Carers through utilising college admissions data, and this now ensures learning support is put in place for Young Carers. The Young Carers Project intervention workers now have links with the colleges which is working well. Assessments are completed depending on which is most relevant between a young carers assessment and adult social care assessment. There are concerns however that the new adult social care assessments invite inappropriate caring from children and young people by embedding them into a caring role for life due to the focus on using existing support networks first.

After discussing the issues faced by the professional we reflected that that some positive steps and progress had been made by the Council in addressing the issues young people face through the transition to adulthood, when they reach age of 18 and find that their support arrangements change. The Task and Finish Group was particularly impressed with the fact that a pilot linking children and adults services has made a great impact, and we recommend that this should be maintained and supported and developed by the Council to span the ages from 0

to 25, so bridging the gap between childhood and adulthood. We felt it particularly important that the achievements and positive outcomes gained in such a short period of time not be lost.

#### **4.4. Meeting with Public Health**

Following the differences identified in the Somerset Children & Young People's Health and Wellbeing Survey the issues for Young Carers in schools are being revisited by Public Health, particularly for those groups where there is a crossover between vulnerabilities e.g. Young Carers being more likely to access Free School Meals and more prone to adults smoking at home.

We discussed this and a range of issues and our overall conclusion was the great advantage that can be obtained by working better together, inasmuch as the Council can achieve more by working with other agencies. We believe the key to improving support for carers is through greater partnership working. There appears to be some good work going on across Somerset to support carers; but more will be needed to underpin prevention and wellbeing agendas.

We are of course very mindful (in our role as a time limited Task and Finish Group) about the financial, demographic and legislative pressures on all organisations that can make providing additional support or services difficult. However we believe that a big difference could be made if organisations worked together more – by providing joined-up services that pool resources, skills and expertise and share ideas and best practice, to reduce duplication and costs; by adopting a 'whole-family approach' in relation to health and social care customers, to recognise the support provided by carers, ensuring that both the cared-for and the carer are signposted to the support available and by the Council being pro-active in addressing barriers to data sharing between the NHS and other local Councils and agencies.

We noted, that Public Health had produced a toolkit (with 10 steps) for schools to use to identify Young Carers, suggestions of what can be done (staff awareness raising e.g. secretaries), and some of the issues that may crop up (e.g. young people needing to call home, not completing homework) and raise awareness amongst teachers. The toolkit itself seemed cumbersome and this might have contributed to a lack of its awareness and/or use by Schools across Somerset.

Overall we felt that the absence of a unified approach was exacerbated as it was recognised that young people don't recognise the amount of help they give for adults with mental health problems and so they remain below the radar. Better links and connections for young carers between different agencies would help to raise the overall profile and ensure more consistent approach.

#### **4.5. Meeting with Somerset Parent Carer Forum**

On 2nd March 2017, the Task and Finish Group met with Ruth Hobbs and Claire David. The Somerset Parent Carer Forum work with families with children who have additional needs, often the sibling also becomes a carer and so they signpost them to the Young Carers Project. Many of the Young Carers however don't identify themselves as a Young Carer; that their caring role fits with their brother/sister role. Provision of more sibling groups may help identify more Young Carers as they are more likely to identify themselves as a sibling of someone with additional needs than a carer of someone with additional needs. There need to be more opportunities for the young people to just be young people, not necessarily to sit around talking about being a young carer.

Having met with the Parent Carer Forum it was clear to us that better training has the potential to help improve awareness and understanding of, and support for, carers. But it is also needed to help carers themselves (e.g. training in manual handling). The task and finish group would like to see clear training programmes in place for health and social care professionals (GPs, nurses, care assistants, personal assistants, social workers, nursing/care home staff) – but also in schools, for teachers and students.

The overall problem was that currently too often a lack of awareness and understanding is leading to poor or no support packages for carers (and those they care for) and this impacts negatively on their educational outcomes. When considered against the support offered by Young Carers in Somerset and how this helped the Council to keep care costs down and we felt the Council should in return do more to support and enhance the Young Carers service by building on the work already started.

#### **4.6. Meeting with Young Adult Carer**

Eillean Tipper met with two Young Adult Carers and their transitions support worker Nigel Gregory on 31<sup>st</sup> March to understand in hindsight what support was valued and how this could be improved, and also to understand the transition experience.

The young adults' experiences reflected the conversations that had taken place with young carers. The support received from schools was limited, they had identified their role of young carer but there was no action following this. It would have been helpful to have had more flexible deadlines and an understanding of the role of a young carer during a crisis resulting in the option to take time out during a crisis if necessary. Support was more visible for one of the young adults in college as identification happened during the application process, and an identified contact was allocated who provided support as and when throughout the course.

Both young adult carers had experienced difficulty navigating the benefits system, both on behalf of their parents and for themselves. There was a lack of knowledge of what benefits were appropriate and how to access them, resulting in not accessing everything they were entitled to and facing for example rent arrears. This also made it difficult to purchase the County Ticket bus pass to enable accessing college. The support worker helped to navigate and this, along with putting in place appropriate care, enabled one of the young adults to attend university knowing that their mum had support.

It was clear that both young adult carers have aspirations of their own and were keen to continue their education (one is at university and one is at college), but this is only possible where appropriate support is put in place for the people they care for. The support worker was key to navigating and negotiating access to this support, they were seen as a 'fixer'.

## **5. Background papers**

- 5.1.** Scoping report to 27 January 2017 committee meeting;  
Notes of initial meeting of the Task & Finish group – 2 February;  
Notes of T&F meeting with Young Carers – 15 February;

Notes of T&F meeting with Young Carers Professionals – 2 March;  
Notes of T&F meeting with Young Adult Carers – 31 March 2017;  
The Somerset Children & Young People’s Health & Wellbeing Survey (2016)  
Transition Interim Report (2016);  
Somerset’s Commitment to Carers (2016);  
Adult Social Care Young Carers Policy (2016);  
Valuing Carers 2015 – the rising value of carers’ support. Research report by  
Carers UK;  
Chilton Trinity Young carers Charter.

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.

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## **End of Quadrennium Report of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee**

Chairman: Cllr Leigh Redman

Division and Local Member: All

Lead Officer: Julian Gale – Strategic Manager – Governance and Risk

Author: Jamie Jackson – Governance Manager - Scrutiny

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### **1. Summary**

- 1.1.** The Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee is required by the Constitution to make an annual report to the Council each year and we were also asked to give consideration to producing a report to reflect on our first 2 years.. Our report to the next Full Council will be our second annual report since our first meeting in May 2015, following the Council's enhanced focus on scrutiny of Children's Services.
- 1.2.** The main part of our work programme fully supported by the committee during our first 12 months was based on the nine cross cutting Somerset priorities that had been agreed by the Somerset Children's Improvement Board. Our focus over the previous 12 months has been based on the seven cross cutting Somerset priorities that are the key themes in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). We have received an update on progress of the seven improvement programmes at our meetings and asked detailed questions of the Director of Children's Services and his team.
- 1.3.** Over this time we have been pleased to see significant progress in many areas of the improvement programme, including the reduction in average caseloads and increased senior management capacity in the service. We requested and received detailed breakdowns of the number of remaining vacancies for social workers and team managers and the use of interim staff.
- 1.4.** We had specific agenda items and discussions on:
  - Children's Safeguarding;
  - Children Leaving Care;
  - Business Architecture and IT;
  - Addressing Drug and Alcohol Concerns in Families;
  - The CQC Review of Healthcare and Safeguarding; and
  - The Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 1.5.** The Committee has 9 elected Members. We also have 7 co-opted members. There is currently 1 Church representative and 2 vacancies; we have a Parent Governor representative and one vacancy; we have a Schools Compact representative and a representative from the Schools Forum. All of these co-opted members have voting rights on education matters only.
- 1.6.** Members of the Council are reminded that:
  - all Members have been invited to attend meetings of all Scrutiny Committees and to contribute freely on any agenda item;
  - any Member could propose a topic for inclusion on the Scrutiny Work Programmes;

- any Member can be asked by the Committee to contribute information and evidence, and to participate in specific scrutiny reviews.
- 1.7. Since our first meeting in May 2015 we have been pleased to see continuing progress in many areas of the Council's improvement agenda for children and young people and our central focus has remained to constantly ask and seek reassurance about - **What impact does that have on children in Somerset?** We would urge our successor Committee and its Members to retain focus on working towards ensuring the best outcomes for Children, Young People and Families in Somerset. We wish to place on record our thanks to those Officers, whom we have tried to support, for their on-going endeavour and hard work for the benefit of children and young people in Somerset.
2. **Recommendations/Items for consideration**  
The Committee is asked to consider and comment on these suggested measures to help improve Scrutiny in the next quadrennium:
- Enhanced support for Scrutiny Members such as a Scrutiny Officer role;
  - More Scrutiny Committee and Member involvement and input before Cabinet decisions;
  - Scrutiny training be provided for the new Council after the May elections;
  - Encourage greater Member commitment and involvement as this is crucial to ensuring Scrutiny remains effective;
  - Lead Officer and Cabinet Member attendance at Scrutiny should continue as this is helpful;
  - Our outcome tracker be adopted by the other 2 Scrutiny Committee's to ensure all recommendations are actioned/followed up.

3.

3.1. **Scrutiny Work Programme**

The work programme has focussed on the nine improvement priorities and practical work to support and challenge service improvement. The committee fully support this and the nine priorities, the chairman & vice chairman have been working with the Director of Children's Services (DCS) to ensure topics dealt with during scrutiny support the improvement process. When considering reports and policy changes we are constantly assessing what impact does that have on the children of Somerset? We would encourage all Councillors to become more actively involved and aware of their corporate parent responsibilities.

Each of our meetings had specific agenda items to consider the work programme and allow members and officers to suggest items we should scrutinise in more depth. We are also reviewing and updating how we track and monitor our suggested outcomes and/or recommended actions so we can understand the impact of our work so we can learn how to better focus our scrutiny work to ensure we have made a difference. In addition to our monthly Committee meetings we have established task and finish group to consider aspects related to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and also Young Carers in Somerset and have found this more focused approached very worthwhile.

Scrutiny Members have endeavoured through the first two years of the Committee's meetings to make suggestions and express opinions to Commissioning/Service Directors and Cabinet Members after discussion and debate. The majority of these were accepted and incorporated either into the operations of the Council or the decisions of the Cabinet. The Committee wishes



to formally place on record its appreciation to those Cabinet Members that have attended our meetings. This has often proved to be helpful both for the Committee and also the Cabinet Member and Lead Officer. We have also been grateful for the benefit of first hand testimony having invited front line staff to attend and participate at our meetings. We are also grateful to those professionals that participated in our task and finish reviews (often at short notice) and we have greatly valued them sharing their frontline knowledge and experience.

We have also been mindful during the last two years to reflect the Council's overall corporate focus on improving outcomes for young people across Somerset and ensuring improvement is real and deliverable. In this regard we have purposely sought to create constructive relationships with our sister Scrutiny Committees (Policies and Place) and (Adults and Health) as we have endeavoured to take care in establishing our respective work programmes of future items to avoid duplication and therefore hopefully complement their work. We are still hoping to arrange a joint meeting with the Adults and Health Committee to consider the improving outcomes from children and young people through better joint working between various agencies and partners.

We have felt frustration on occasions over the last few years regarding our work programme and the production of reports. We agreed to consider our work programme and when we decide future reports and agenda items at the beginning of each meeting. We have welcomed and sought Officer participation in this process of helping us to shape our on-going work programme. However having agreed our work programme and reports for our future meetings we have been disappointed as reports have either subsequently been removed from our agenda or been produced after our agenda has been published and tabled at the meeting.

The late production of reports has affected our ability to consider and digest their contents and subsequently provide constructive challenge and or comment. We accept that as Officers seek to improve outcomes for Children and Young People that their main focus, quite rightly, will be on operational matters however they also need to be able to evidence the progress they are making to our Committee, and recognise we are keen to offer them support in their endeavours but that we are currently reliant on them to explain to us how things are going.

### **3.2. Meetings overview**

During our first 2 years the Chairman and 2 Vice-Chairmen have outlined the importance for the Committee to focus on aspects of the seven priorities of Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) and we agreed that our work programme should be developed through discussions with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, DCS and Cabinet Member for Children and Families.

We subsequently agreed to have an update on progress made against improvement programme 6 of the CYPP at each meeting and this has proved to be very useful. The Chairman requested that each member of the Committee volunteer to act as a champion for each programme and 5 of the 7 programmes have benefitted from having a member champion.

We would urge our successor Committee to focus on the delivery of the Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP). The 7 priority themes of the CYPP are:

1. Supporting children, families and communities to become more resilient
2. Promoting healthy outcomes and giving children the best start in life
3. Improving emotional health and wellbeing
4. Building skills for life
5. Providing help early and effectively
6. Achieving effective multi-agency support for more vulnerable children and young people and developing an excellent children's social work service
7. Embedding a think family approach across the workforce

We have considered a number of reports on a range of topics and these have included:

- Regular updates on the implementation of the Children and Young People's Plan, particularly programme 6;
- Children's Safeguarding;
- Children Leaving Care;
- Data Handling and IT;
- Sedgemoor Together Team;
- Addressing Drug and Alcohol Concerns in Families;
- Annual report of Somerset Local Children's Safeguarding Board;
- Care Quality Commission's Review of Healthcare for Children Looked After and Safeguarding in Somerset;
- Updates on of local Youth Justice services;
- Strategic Vision for Education;
- Early Years and School Place Planning Infrastructure Growth Plan;
- Children's Services – Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Action Plan Update;
- Somerset: Our County – Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA);
- Halcon One Team in Taunton and Sedgemoor Together team update;
- Updates on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children;
- District Council's work with Vulnerable Families and Housing provision;
- Annual Children's Social Care Statutory Customer Feedback report;
- Somerset's Early Help Strategy 2016-2019;
- Children's Services Workforce Strategy;
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) updates;
- Elective Home Education (EHE);
- The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (Budget setting process).

### **3.3. Suggestions for the Future**

Despite the occasional problem with late or deferred reports, we have noted that over the last few months the timeliness of reports has improved. However this has been perhaps largely due to us receiving a series of update reports, therefore monitoring the implementation of a Cabinet decision. Scrutiny typically can occur at 3 stages: before the Cabinet has made a decision; after the Cabinet has made a decision but before it has been implemented or lastly after the Cabinet decision and after the decision has been implemented. We feel the Council would benefit from Scrutiny being asked to undertake more pre Cabinet decision work to help the transition from policy development to implementation.

Many of the reports we have considered have been what might be described as information reports where our ability to make constructive input or provide

feedback has therefore been limited. As we look towards the next quadrennium we suggest that the Committee is asked to consider policy/plans prior to Cabinet decision and implementation. Over the last few years we have formed several time limited Task and Finish Groups and these fact based and outcome focused reviews have been very constructive and allowed us over the course of 5/6 meetings to gather more facts and information and make recommendations.

As a Committee we recognise we are still relatively new and also that we were created specifically to help improve Children's Services as it was requiring urgent improvement and to some degree support. We therefore have always endeavoured to approach our task as a 'critical friend' by trying to be supportive to Officers and encouraging them to highlight areas of concern to us, whilst hopefully providing a suitably robust challenge to question poor performance and seek reassurance that appropriate action is taken to achieve improvement. We have on occasion been able to lend our support to requests for additional resources and to offer approval to new ways of working, particularly when the Council collaborates with other agencies to bring about improvement.

#### **4. Consultations undertaken**

- 4.1. The Committee invites all County Councillors to attend and contribute to its meetings. For the purposes of this report Lead Officers and Members were invited to provide input and responses were received from 2 Members, as below.

##### **Member comments**

*I feel that the matters brought before the Committee are not scrutinised in sufficient depth and that the level should be more penetrative without being destructive. For example the first item on the last agenda an excellent first part of the presentation was followed by a very long narrative which was too long and somewhat self-defeating I thought. I feel that it should be a given that all members sitting on the committee should be expected to have read and marked the presentations for their concerns and queries and the Chair should ask the presenter to highlight the aspects of the written report that he or she feels are most important and add any last minute additional matter of progress, dangers, concerns of failure or shortcomings. That would give far more time for the questioning and fact finding that the Scrutiny should be doing.*

*The longer the presentations the less time there is for questions and the interest level decreased the longer the meeting continues so that important items as the end of a long agenda often do not get the attention that they merit.*

*Therefore overlong agendas should be avoided. Presentations should be succinct, focussed, devoid of unexplained acronyms and "management speak" obfuscation, and where possible be almost bullet pointed and clear, and contain and highlight up to date information and potential risks .*

*The Members should be fully conversant with the agenda for the meeting, the Chair should allow, given the extra time that the foregoing, would create, much more opportunities for probing questions if they are germane and not self-promoting.*

##### **Member comments**

*During my time on Scrutiny I felt that under Leigh's Chairmanship the work carried out was effective and that meetings were fair and unbiased in the way in which they were conducted.*

*However, I have been aware of the failure by some officers, on several*

*occasions, to provide adequate pre-meeting information and/or delivery of reports on time, which hampered decision making and the ability to move things forward. In such a key area of the Council's function this is unacceptable. With regard to report delivery there remains much to be desired in relation to appropriate content and the skill of some presenters. At times it felt like an uphill battle despite the best efforts of support officers.*

## **5. Implications**

- 5.1.** The Committee considers carefully, and often asks for further information about the implications as outlined in, the reports considered at its meetings.
- 5.2.** For further details of the reports considered by the Committee please contact the author of this report.

## **6. Background papers**

- 6.1.** Further information about the Committee including dates of meetings in the new quadrennium, and agendas & reports from previous meetings are available via the Council's website.  
[www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers)

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.