

Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

Friday 18 May 2018

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 J Lock, Ms Helen Fenn, Mrs Eileen Tipper, Mr Richard Berry, Cllr N Bloomfield, Cllr A Bown, Cllr M Dimery, Cllr N Hewitt-Cooper, Ruth Hobbs, Cllr M Pullin (Vice-Chair), Cllr J Williams and Cllr N Taylor

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 - 10 May 2018

For further information about the meeting, please contact Neil Milne on 01823 359045 or 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



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AGENDA

Item Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee - 10.00 am Friday 18 May 2018

**** 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 20 April 2018 (Pages 5 - 8)**

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 9 - 22)**

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 **West Somerset Opportunity Area (Pages 23 - 44)**

To consider this report.

7 **Young Carers Update report (Pages 45 - 56)**

To consider this report.

8 **Progress on Recommendations arising from the Ofsted Inspection Report, January 2018 (Pages 57 - 96)**

To consider this report.

9 **Any other urgent items of business**

The Chairman may raise any items of urgent business.

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
They can also be accessed via the council's website on 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 20 April 2018 at 10.00 am

Present: Cllr L Redman (Chairman), Cllr J Lock, Mrs Eileen Tipper, Cllr N Bloomfield, Cllr A Bown, Cllr M Dimery, Cllr N Hewitt-Cooper, Ruth Hobbs, Cllr M Pullin (Vice-Chair) Cllr N Taylor and Cllr J Williams

Other Members present: Cllr S Coles, Cllr H Davies, Cllr A Govier, Cllr F Nicholson

Apologies for absence: Ms Helen Fenn and Mr Richard Berry

1 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

Eileen Tipper declared an interest as a member of the Community Council for Somerset.

Ruth Hobbs declared an interest as a Director of the Somerset Parent Carer Forum and noted that she served on the Committee in her capacity as a School Governor.

2 Minutes from the previous meeting held on 16 March 2018 - Agenda Item 3

The minutes of the last meeting held on 16 March 2018 were accepted as being accurate and signed by the Chair.

3 Scrutiny Work Programme - Agenda Item 5

The Committee considered and noted the Council's Forward Plan of proposed key decisions in forthcoming months.

The Committee considered and agreed its own work programme and the future agenda items listed.

The Committee noted the outcome.

Public Question Time – Agenda Item 4

18 members of the public had registered to speak about agenda item 6 Changes to the Physical Impairment and Medical Support (PIMS) Team, and the majority of those attended the meeting along with a number of other people interested in this item. Those that did speak expressed their concern and frustration at how the proposed changes to the PIMS had been conveyed to them. This had created a great deal of uncertainty amongst those families and children that used the PIMS service. It was clear that the PIMS team was greatly valued and many spoke about the transformative affect the work of the PIMS team had on the lives of young people and their families in Somerset. All those who had submitted questions were advised they would receive a written response.

A verbal response was provided by the Director of Children's Services. He began by apologising for the way in which the process had been dealt with so far and undertook to improve the Council's contact and communications with those children and families that would be effected by any changes and also with affected members of staff.

He further noted that during the summer term the Council would hold meetings with all those children and their families to ascertain their views and what they felt they required from the PIMS team in future. He welcomed the report and recommendations made in a submission received from the Somerset Parent Carer Forum and repeated his commitment to ensuring all children remained in a mainstream setting and that the Council would endeavour to obtain the views of the children and families that used the PIMS service.

5 **SEND Peer Review Update** - Agenda Item 6

The Committee began by considering the report requested at its last meeting to provide an overview of the PIMS team and the proposed changes that had been prompted by a change in which central government funding would be allocated.

The Committee held a thorough discussion, asking a number of questions that the Corporate Director answered when he stated his commitment to hold meetings with staff and children and families during the summer term to properly ascertain the direction of travel for proposed changes. He repeated his apology from earlier in the meeting that the process to date had not been handled well and noted the Council had to deal with a number of financial challenges. However this should not prevent the Council from communicating effectively with those affected by any changes proposed to the PIMS team. The way the Government provided funding in this area had changed and it meant that funding was now provided in 3 ways rather than a single route and this had necessitated a review of how services could best be provided in future in a sustainable way and that the Council can fund and support. He underlined his commitment to children remaining in mainstream settings, and the Council was keen to ensure the best way of using its resources to support children. He stated that there would be no redundancies as a result of the proposed changes. He welcomed the recommendations from the Somerset Parent Carer Forum and thought it would help inform the discussions with affected families in future weeks.

The Committee held a discussion on the report and reflected on many of the comments made by those members of the public. There were also other Councillors who spoke during the debate and they thought this process had been handled badly but were reassured that the approach would change and those families would be contacted individually so needs could be gauged.

The Committee, after a further brief discussion, agreed a number of recommendations following the discussion:

1. Endorse the importance of individual needs of every child and that the Council works closely with children, parents and schools to ensure individual needs are met;
2. The key priority must be to keep children in mainstream schools and improve outcomes;
3. If there is an identified skills gap, we need to ensure that staff are appropriately upskilled to meet need;
4. Provide the very best service with the resources available;

5. Progress is reported to the Committee in September.

6 Pathways to Independence (P2i) - Agenda Item 8

The Committee considered a report, received a presentation and heard from a young person who had experienced Pathways to Independence (P2i).

The Committee found the testimony of the young person very interesting and informative and her contribution was greeted with a round of applause.

There was a discussion of the report with answers to questions and further information being provided by other service providers.

The Committee agreed to accept the report and it was suggested and agreed that a further report be provided at a future meeting to report progress on the Improvement Plan.

The Committee agreed to accept the report.

7 SEND Peer Review - Agenda Item 7

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this item to a future meeting.

10 Any other urgent items of business - Agenda Item 9

There were no other items of business and the Chair thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting at 13:03.

(The meeting ended at 1.03 pm)

CHAIRMAN

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 Michael Bryant in the Democratic Services Team by telephoning (01823) 357628 or 359500.

To view the Forward Plan on the website you will need a copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader available free from 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 3 April 2018

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
FP/18/03/07 First published: 20 March 2018	2 May 2018 Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Issue: New Bridgwater Special School - Bower Lane Site Decision: Approval to appoint consultancy services for RIBA Stages 0-7 for the delivery of the proposed new school	Bower Lane Special School, Bridgwater - Decision Report		Carol Bond, Project Manager, Property Programme Team Tel: 01823 355962
FP/17/01/04 First published: 11 January 2018	2 May 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Award of contract for the provision of Temporary Labour Decision: To approve the award of the temporary labour contract to the preferred supplier under ESPO MSTAR2 framework, as detailed in the appended confidential report		Part exempt	Paul Skuse, Service Manager, Commercial & Procurement - Business
FP/18/02/07 First published: 13 February 2018	2 May 2018 Cabinet	Issue: LTP Implementation Plan adoption and approval for publishing Decision: To agree to a 1 year LTP Implementation Plan to fulfil SCC's statutory obligations. The current one covers 2013-17.			Lucy Bath Tel: 01823 359465
FP/18/02/11 First published: 26 February 2018	2 May 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Capital Investment Programme 2018/19 + Decision: To report on Government grant announcements and recommend capital approvals for 2018/19 and subsequent years to deliver key capital projects			Elizabeth Watkin, Service Manager - Chief Accountant Tel: 01823359573

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
FP/18/03/05 First published: 12 March 2018	3 May 2018 Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development	Issue: Disposal of County Farms Decision: Authority to conclude negotiations for the disposal of surplus farm and lands including those disposals to be conducted via public auction as appropriate	County Farm Sales April 2018 Appendix A - Farm sales April 2018		Charlie Field, Estates Manager, Corporate Property Tel: 01823355325
NON-KEY DECISION First published: 28 December 2017	Not before 14th May 2018 Commercial & Business Services Director	Issue: Strategy for the Management of the County Farms Estate Decision: To approve the publication of the strategy for the management of the County Farms Estate in accordance with existing policies, taking into account the recommendations from Scrutiny Committee Policies & Place			Claire Lovett, Head of Property Tel: 07977412583
FP/18/02/08 First published: 13 February 2018	Not before 21st May 2018 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport	Issue: Taunton Transport Strategy Decision: To agree to adopt the joint (with TDBC) Taunton Transport Strategy			Lucy Bath Tel: 01823 359465
FP/18/04/01 First published: 3 April 2018	Not before 21st May 2018 Commercial & Business Services Director	Issue: County Hall Priority 1 Enabling Works approval Decision: SCC Full Council approved funding for Priority 1 works at County Hall in Feb 18. This decision seeks the approval of the first tranche of this funding which ensures enabling works to unlock the full project proceed at the right time		Part exempt	Commercial & Business Services Director

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FP/17/09/04 First published: 11 September 2017	Not before 21st May 2018 Director of Finance, Legal and Governance, Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic Community Infrastructure	Issue: iAero (Yeovil) Aerospace Centre (2,500 sq m) Acceptance of ERDF Funding Decision: The acceptance of the offer of ERDF funding (£3.5 million), for the iAero (Yeovi) Aerospace Centre			Lynda Madge, Commissioning Manager – Economy & Planning Tel: 01823 356766
FP/18/02/01 First published: 6 February 2018	Not before 21st May 2018 Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic Community Infrastructure, Director of Finance, Legal and Governance	Issue: Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Superfast Extension Programme (SEP) Phase 2: decision to accept further grant funding and introduce additional funding into the contract for Lot 4 Decision: To accept additional grant funding from DCMS to invest in broadband infrastructure in Lot 4. To introduce the additional funding into the contract for Lot 4 to deliver more broadband infrastructure in that area			Katriona Lovelock, Economic Development Officer Tel: 01823 359873
FP/18/01/03 First published: 5 January 2018	Not before 21st May 2018 Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Issue: Heathfield School, Taunton - Award of Contract for the Proposed ASD Base Decision: To seek approval to award the contract for the delivery of the propose dnew base		Part exempt	Carol Bond, Project Manager, Property Programme Team Tel: 01823 355962

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>FP/18/03/04 First published: 12 March 2018</p>	<p>Not before 21st May 2018 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport</p>	<p>Issue: Procurement for the construction of traffic signals improvements at the Rowbarton junction in Taunton Decision: To commence the process to secure a contractor to deliver the scheme to improve the traffic signals at Rowbarton junction in Taunton</p>			<p>Sunita Mills, Service Commissioning Manager Tel: 01823 359763</p>
<p>FP/18/03/06 First published: 13 March 2018</p>	<p>Not before 21st May 2018 Cabinet Member for Corporate and Community Services, Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development</p>	<p>Issue: Community Leisure Services Post 2019 Decision: Agree that SCC does not extend or renew the current contract for community leisure provision. Sites will be made available for disposal to the schools were possible.</p>			<p>Barry James, Strategic Commissioning Manager – Community Infrastructure Tel: 01823 356659</p>
<p>FP/18/04/03 First published: 9 April 2018</p>	<p>Not before 21st May 2018 Commercial & Business Services Director</p>	<p>Issue: Insourcing and re-procurement of Hard FM arrangements for Corporate Estate only Decision: The Council is required to arrange replacement planned and reactive maintenance services (Hard FM) for when the current contract comes finishes at the end of September. The Council proposes to create an in-house team to deliver the core electrical, mechanical and fabric maintenance and procure a suite of contracts to cover specialist maintenance works.</p>		<p>Part exempt</p>	<p>Claire Lovett, Head of Property Tel: 07977412583</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
FP/17/12/02 First published: 14 December 2017	Not before 28th May 2018 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport	Issue: Contract for Provision of Bus Lane Enforcement Infrastructure Decision: To award the contract for the enforcement of bus lane enforcement infrastructure		Part exempt	Bev Norman, Service Manager - Traffic Management, Traffic & Transport Development Tel: 01823358089
FP/17/08/01 First published: 9 August 2017	Not before 4th Jun 2018 Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development	Issue: Disposal of Surplus Land at Castle Cary Decision: Authority to conclude negotiations for the disposal of surplus (former) farm land (13 acres, land only) at Castle Cary. Authority to conclude negotiations for the disposal of surplus (former) farm land (13 acres, land only) at Castle Cary.	Disposal of Surplus Land	Part exempt	Charlie Field, Estates Manager, Corporate Property Tel: 01823355325
FP/18/04/06 First published: 30 April 2018	Not before 4th Jun 2018 Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic Community Infrastructure	Issue: Procurement of the HotSW Growth Hub Service Decision: To undertake the procurement of a Business Support Service (Growth Hub) on behalf of the HotSW LEP			Melanie Roberts, Service Manager - Economic Policy Tel: 01823359209
FP/18/04/19 First published: 30 April 2018	Not before 4th Jun 2018 Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Commercial & Business Services Director	Issue: Creation of two New Academies in Somerset Decision:			Elizabeth Smith, Service Manager – Schools Commissioning Tel: 01823 356260

Weekly version of plan published on 3 April 2018

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
FP/17/11/05 First published: 16 November 2017	13 Jun 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Customer Feedback Annual Reports 2017/18 Decision: Consider the annual customer feedback report and Ombudsman report for 2017/18			Rebecca Martin Tel: 01823 356257
FP/18/03/08 First published: 20 March 2018	13 Jun 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Somerset County Council Business Plan Decision: Agree the new Business Plan whihc outlines what SCC will do over the next 3 years to deliver the new County Vision			Alastair Higton, Executive Assistant - Policy and Research
FP/18/04/05 First published: 16 April 2018	13 Jun 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Consultation on draft Somerset Air Quality Statement Decision: To go out to public consultation on the draft Somerset Air Quality Statement			Stewart Brock, Public Health Specialist, Public Health Tel: 01823357235

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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>FP/18/04/02 First published: 3 April 2018</p>	<p>Not before 25th Jun 2018 Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</p>	<p>Issue: Shaping the future models for Support in Sheltered Housing in Somerset Decision: SCC's contract for support in sheltered housing schemes is due to end in October 2018, a consultation is taking place between 3rd April – 30th May to seek the view of a wide range of people to discuss the different way which the council could provide these services in the future. This decision is to agree the outcome of that consultation.</p>			<p>Vicky Chipchase, Senior Commissioning Officer Tel: 07775 406590</p>
<p>FP/18/04/04 First published: 16 April 2018</p>	<p>Not before 25th Jun 2018 Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</p>	<p>Issue: Re-Provision of existing Learning Disability Service in Mendip Decision: To agree award decision for re-provision of a Learning Disability service in Mendip</p>			<p>Steve Veevers, Strategic Commissioning Manager Tel: 01823359155</p>
<p>FP/18/02/09 First published: 13 February 2018</p>	<p>9 Jul 2018 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: Road Safety Strategy Decision: Adoption of the Road Safety Strategy</p>			<p>Lucy Bath Tel: 01823 359465</p>
<p>FP/18/04/07 First published: 30 April 2018</p>	<p>9 Jul 2018 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: Children and Young Peoples Plan 2016-19 - Report on progress of year 2 Decision: Report on progress of year 2 (1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018)</p>			<p>Director of Children's Services</p>

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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
FP/18/05/02 First published:	9 Jul 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Decision to award contract for the provision of Somerset Specialist All Age Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service Decision: Cabinet to approve the award of contrac			Amanda Payne, Co-ordinator Somerset Drug and Alcohol Partnership, Public Health Tel: 01823357641
FP/18/05/01 First published: 9 May 2018	9 Jul 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Adoption of the 'Well-managed highway infrastructure' Code of Practice by Somerset County Council Decision: To agree SCC adopts the new CoP and its 'risk based' approach for the management of the highway network.			Neil Guild, Highways Asset Improvement Officer
FP/18/04/08 First published: 30 April 2018	Not before 3rd Sep 2018 Commercial & Business Services Director, Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Issue: Creation of two New Academies in Somerset Decision: King Alfred School and Pawlett Primary School			Elizabeth Smith, Service Manager – Schools Commissioning Tel: 01823 356260

Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee Work Programme

Committee meetings	Link to CYPP	Lead Member & Officer
18 May 2018		
West Somerset Opportunity Area		Julia Ridge
Young Carers Update		Tom Whitworth/Wendy Jenner
Response to Ofsted		Claire Winter
15 June 2018		
CYPP 2017/18 –Year 2 Q4 Update		Philippa Granthier
30 hour placements		Charlotte Wilson
SEND Peer review update		Rowena Cliff-Shanley
20 July 2018		
Feedback Annual Report		Rebecca Martin
14 September 2018		
CYPP 2018-19 – Year 3 Q1 Update		Philippa Granthier
PIMS Update report		Annette Herrington
19 October 2018		
16 November 2018		
CYPP 2018-19 – Year 3 Q2 Update		Philippa Granthier
Drug & Alcohol safeguarding concerns in families		Amanda Payne
7 December 2018		

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. jajackson@somerset.gov.uk 01823 359040.

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

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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
13 May 2016	Link to CYPP			
Focus on the education of vulnerable children (To include Children Looked After, Special Educational Needs and Free School Meal recipients)	All	Julian Wooster	The update was accepted and it was suggested that to help improve information available for and communications with all service users a decision tree (visual aid in the form of a diagram/flow chart) for the benefit of service users be considered.	Pending
27 January 2017				
Impact of proposed financial changes to Schools	All	Julian Wooster	The Committee encouraged Officers to continue to lobby for these proposed changes to be made so the higher funding materialised.	Pending/On-going
10 March 2017				
Addressing drug and alcohol safeguarding concerns in families		Amanda Payne	The update was accepted and it was suggested that an update report be provided at a future meeting in 12 months.	Pending Nov 2018
20 October 2017				
West Somerset Opportunity Area		Julia Ridge	The Committee noted the report and it was agreed that an update on this would be given in 6 months.	Pending for May '18
17 November 2017				
Children's Services Commissioning		Louise Palmer	It was requested that an update report on Pathways to Independence (P2i) be considered at a future meeting.	Completed at April 18 mtg
Young Carers update		T Whitworth + W Jenner	It was requested that an update report be prepared for the 16 March 2018 meeting.	May '18 meeting
26 January 2018				
Overview of Family Based Care (Fostering) -		Louise Palmer	The Chair asked if consideration had been given to producing a flow-chart or a form of easy to follow guide to show the overall process and the Director of Children's Services noted that this had been raised by others and was being progressed. The update was accepted and it was agreed to request an update in a further 6 months.	Pending

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

20 April 2018				
SEND Peer Review			Agreed to consider the update at a future meeting	Pending
Changes to the PIMS team			The Committee agreed to request an update report at the September 2018 meeting	Pending

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.

Somerset County Council
Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families
Committee – 18 May 2018

West Somerset Opportunity Area

Lead Officer: Julia Ridge

Author: Julia Ridge, Head of Vulnerable Learners

Contact Details:JARidge@somerset.gov.uk

Cabinet Member: Frances Nicholson; Children's and Families

Division and Local Member: Cllr Mandy Chilcott – Minehead; Cllr Hugh Davies –

Watchet and Stogursey; Cllr Frances Nicholson - Dulverton and Exmoor and

Cllr Christine Lawrence - Dunster

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Opportunity Area Programme is a key part of the Education Secretary's priority of tackling social mobility, and improving opportunities for young people across the country. Twelve areas with both poor social mobility and schools that face challenges, will receive a share of £72 million to boost opportunities for young people in these communities.
- 1.2. The areas chosen were amongst the weakest in both the 2016 Social Mobility Commission's index, and the Department for Education's (DfE) data on school standards and capacity to improve. West Somerset was 324th out of 324 Council areas in the social mobility index in both 2016 and 2017.
- 1.3. The plan published on the 9 of October 2017 by the DfE works across business, education and community to create and maintain more opportunity for our young people. It is important that this is a community wide initiative, supported by Early Years providers, Schools, Colleges, Businesses, The Voluntary Sector, Health, Council services, and most importantly young people and their families. The programme runs to March 2020.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on the West Somerset Opportunity Area plan prepared by the DfE, and ensure that the funding is in line with the plan.
- 2.2 Members are asked consider and comment on the cross cutting themes the West Somerset Opportunity Area are addressing.
- 2.3 Members are asked to comment on the progress so far with the Opportunity Area targets.

3 Background

3.1 The DFE identified West Somerset from the social mobility data. The West Somerset Opportunity Area programme has four priorities.

Priority 1: Every child has a great start in life

The ambition for priority 1 is that children in West Somerset will begin school with a strong start, with the proportion achieving a good level of development rising to above the current national average. The key areas of work are supporting the early years workforce, improving home learning, improving assessment in early years and improving access to children's services.

The planned investment is £866,752.

The social mobility data from 2017 shows:

Stage	Metric	Performance	Rank
Early Years	% of nursery providers rated 'outstanding' or 'good' by Ofsted	90.52	224
	% of children eligible for FSM achieving a 'good level of development' at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage	30.55	324

Our current progress is that all 16 West Somerset Nursery providers are good or outstanding. The Outstanding nursery providers are: Watery Lane Pre-School at St Micheal's School Minehead in 2016, Teddy Bear Nursery at Old Cleeve Washford in 2011, Dunster Pre-School in 2015 and Cheeky Cherubs Surestart in Minehead in 2018.

The target for 2020 is that 70% of all pupils reach a good level of development. The data below shows a significant improvement since 2015 for 50% to 65% in two years, but still a distance to travel between 2017 and 2020 data, where the target is in line with the County expectation.

Good levels of Development

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020
Somerset	67	70	71		
West Somerset	50	58	65		70

Priority 2: Educational excellence in the classroom

The ambition for priority 2 is that Every child in West Somerset will begin school with a strong start having achieved a good level of development at the end of the Early years Foundation Stage. The key areas of work are; Phonics & Talkboost, SEND, Transitions, Maths and Leadership & Governance.

The planned investment is £920,086.

KS1: % achieving at least the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths

	2015	2016	2017
West Somerset		56%	61%
Somerset		61%	65%
England		60%	64%

KS1: % achieving Level 2+ in Reading, Writing and Maths

	2015	2016	2017
West Somerset	86%		
Somerset	86%		
England	86%		

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): % of pupils eligible for FSM achieving a good level of development

	2015	2016	2017
West Somerset	32%	39%	52%
Somerset	46%	52%	56%
England	51%	54%	56%

The social mobility data from 2017 shows:

Stage	Metric	Performance	Rank
Schools	% of children eligible for FSM attending a primary school rated 'outstanding' or 'good' by Ofsted	95.70	22
	% of children eligible for FSM attending a secondary school rated 'outstanding' or 'good' by Ofsted	73.05	170
	% of children eligible for FSM achieving at least the expected level in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2	26.67	274
	Average attainment 8 score for pupils eligible for FSM	34.70	273

The current progress is that all West Somerset Schools are good or outstanding, except for Danesfield School Williton, which required improvement in 2017. It is now making good progress under new leadership.

The Outstanding schools are; Old Cleeve in 2011 and Cutcombe in 2008.

The % of children eligible for FSM achieving at least the expected level in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2

KS2: % of pupils eligible for FSM achieving at least the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths

	2015	2016	2017
West Somerset		29%	36%
Somerset		29%	37%
England		35%	43%

KS2: % of pupils eligible for FSM achieving Level 4+ in Reading, Writing and Maths

	2015	2016	2017
West Somerset	33%		
Somerset	56%		
England	66%		

The target for 2020 is that the proportion of children reaching the expected standard in reading, writing, and maths outcomes at Key stage 1 will put West Somerset in the top half of the Country, and the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils will be half what it was in September 2017.

The current progress is that

The target for 2020 is that the proportion of children reaching the expected outcomes at Key stage 2 will put West Somerset in the top half of the Country, and the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils will be half what it was in September 2017.

The current progress is that

Key stage 2 All Pupil/Pupil Premium gap

	2016	2017	2018	2020
Somerset	-11	-11		
West Somerset	-6	-11		-5

Key stage 4 % achieving 5+ GCSE standard passes inc. English and Maths (grade 4+)

		2016	2017		2020 target
All pupils	Somerset	56	60		
	West Somerset	50	62		
Pupil Premium gap	Somerset	-24	-23		
	West Somerset	-12	-22		-11

The West Somerset College, which was previously identified by OFSTED as requiring “Special measures”; was taken over by the Bridgwater College Trust. In 2016 OFSTED confirmed that the West Somerset College was a “Good” school. The significant improvement for all pupils at Key Stage 4 from 50% to 62% meant that West Somerset was the third most successful school in 2017. At secondary level, pupils achieve GCSE results which were above the Somerset and the national averages. This shows significant improvement at the district’s single upper secondary school and this much stronger foundation will help the school to achieve more with young people.

Priority 3: Transition to adulthood

The ambition for priority 3 is that Every young person in West Somerset will be inspired to achieve the best possible education outcomes after the age of sixteen. We will prioritise the access of disadvantaged young people into higher education

and high level technical routes at the same rate as in the top half of England. The key areas of work are; Transitions to post 16 education and employment, Increasing the vocational offer at the West Somerset College, Broadening Horizons, Work of Work and progress and development. The planned investment is £822,000.

The social mobility data from 2017 shows:

Stage	Metric	Performance	Rank
Youth	% of young people eligible for FSM that are in education, employment or training (positive destination) after completing KS4	88.00	96
	Average points score per entry for young people eligible for FSM at age 15 taking A-level or equivalent qualifications	26.58	256
	% of young people eligible for FSM at age 15 achieving 2 or more A-levels or equivalent qualifications by the age of 19	30.10	164
	% of young people eligible for FSM at age 15 entering higher education by the age of 19	12.33	269
	% of young people eligible for FSM at age 15 entering higher education at a selective university (most selective third by UCAS tariff scores) by the age of 19	3.33	97

Young people have access to an Ofsted rated good sixth form at West Somerset College in Minehead and two outstanding colleges outside of the district and some distance from the area.

The targets for 2020/21 are that we will increase the % of young people achieving level three qualification, such as A Levels, at age 19 and close the gap between West Somerset and Somerset both in academic and vocational qualification. By 2020/21 we want achievement in West Somerset to equal strong results already achieved in the best performing parts of Somerset.

KS5: Average Points Score per Entry

	2015	2016			2017		
		A Level	Applied General	Tech Level	A Level	Applied General	Tech Level
West Somerset College	208.5	29.21	27.67	35.38	21.50	24.17	31.33
Somerset	216.6	30.32	35.51	31.09	30.71	37.65	32.42
England	213.0	30.44	34.66	30.76	31.13	35.69	32.25

Destinations of KS5 students: % recorded in a sustained Higher Education Institution

	2014/15	2015/16
West Somerset College	26%	42%
Somerset	39%	41%
England	48%	51%

Sources: SCC/FFT Aspire/DfE Performance Tables

Also for 2020/21 we expect that all young people leaving West Somerset College will go into further education, employment or training.

The current progress is that in 2015 92.6% of West Somerset pupils were participating in education, employment or training and in 2017 it was 95.1%. The participation rate for the County for 2017 is 95.5%

Priority 4: Skills for employment and business

The ambition for priority 4 is that Every young person in West Somerset should be equipped to succeed in the world of work, which is why we will ensure that every school pupil in West Somerset gets four excellent experiences of work and will invest in adult skills.

The key areas of activity are: Women's Opportunities, SME and Business investment Skills, Skills and Apprenticeships and Young Peoples Skills.

The planned investment is £784,000.

Where are we?

Stage	Metric	Performance	Rank
Adulthood	Median weekly salary (£) of employees who live in the local area, all employees (FT and PT)	311.80	324
	Average house prices compared to median annual salary of employees who live in the local area	8.48	215
	% of people that live in the local area who are in managerial and professional occupations (SOC 1 and 2)	23.10	279
	% of jobs that are paid less than the applicable Living Wage Foundation living wage	41.35	324
	% of families with children who own their home	51.59	283

Many employers, including many small enterprises, are providing valuable support: EDF Energy, one of the country's big six energy firms delivers educational programmes in the area to support West Somerset's young people. They have pledged to support children and young people to improve their skills and access to high quality work experiences. Employer engagement will involve the many well established businesses that are important to West Somerset in a strong and well-networked community.

Employment Hubs are already providing opportunities for people to benefit from jobs in the area, including support with job applications and interview preparation. This is complemented by 'Positive People', a programme that is helping adults to overcome different forms of challenges including debt management and health problems.

Funding has been secured for a Hospitality and Tourism Academy, West Coast 360, that will nurture talent and skills in the workforce working with primary age children through to adults already in the workforce.

EDF Energy, one of the 'big six' energy companies, has pledged support to children and young people in West Somerset. £1.6 million has been invested in West Somerset Community College in the Hinkley Ready and Enterprise projects enabling local people to fully benefit from the opportunities that

The target for 2020 is that the proportion of young people progressing to higher education, will put West Somerset in the top half of the country.

There is also a target that there will be an increase in the number apprenticeship starts so start rates are as high, or better than, the rest of Somerset and so completion rates are better than, the rest of Somerset.

In 2015 3% of West Somerset students went into apprenticeships and in 2017 it was 4.4%. The number of students moving on to apprenticeships in the rest of the County for 2017 was 7%.

3.2 Funding

Somerset County Council has received in 2017/18 a grant allocation of £700,000, and is expecting a grant of £2.9m in 2018/19 based on the plans submitted for each of the priorities and agreed by the Department for Education.

In addition to the Opportunity area funding West Somerset is now a priority for other central government initiatives including:

- Working with local 'cornerstone' employers to provide young people with experience of the world of work.
- A new Essential Life Skills programme, to help disadvantaged young people have access to the same opportunities as those in the top-performing schools.
- The Education Endowment Foundation will also support schools.
- The National Citizen Service (NCS) is working to help young people benefit from a programme of personal development and volunteering.

The programme board is currently investigating whether to invest in four additional cross cutting areas of expenditure;

3.3 Mental Health

School staff and other professionals working in West Somerset have highlighted mental health as an issue that they are concerned about. The area covered will be;

- Maternal mental health – intervention – parenting support (PEEP training) and Horizon groups through Health Visiting service – will be launched summer 2018
- Behaviour management and SEND support –whole school approach to mental health and well-being including behaviour management policies
- Improve resilience and support for children & young people in West Somerset through delivery of comprehensive PSHE and targeted additional support
- Adults working with children well-being supported

3.4 Extra-curricular activities

Too many children and young people who live in West Somerset have limited opportunities to access the 'outside world' whether that be leaving Somerset itself and experiencing a city or further afield, for example, the opportunity to travel abroad and experience a new culture, language and way of life.

We have heard anecdotal evidence from a number of stakeholders (primarily schools) that this is particularly a problem for low income families whose children are eligible for free school meals or families who may not fall into this category but would be classified as 'just about managing'. This is compounded by the rurality of living in West Somerset which means that it is harder access a new environment due to distance and poor transport links.

- Special Educational Needs
- Access to Services including Child care, transport and digital connectivity.

3.4 Childcare and childminder places

Transport to early years provision:

The Local Authority does not provide free travel assistance for children below Statutory School Age to any pre-school or nursery.

Transport for employment and training – Post 16: Public bus routes exist but are limited by main roads and frequency.

3.5 Case study:

A young person living in Watchet, who would like an apprenticeship at his neighbours business based in the neighboring town of Wellington, would need to catch the bus at 0633am to get to work at 8.55am. Having left work at 5.00pm they will catch the 5.44pm bus returning to Watchet at 19.19 pm. The potential day would be nearly 13 hours, (7 hours travelling for 8 hours work). The private car journey is 45 minutes from Watchet to Wellington.

The current [minimum wage rate](#) for an apprentice is £3.70 per hour (£136.90 per week based on 37 hours per week contract). This rate applies to apprentices under 19 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year. West Somerset has a low number of Apprenticeships.

For students continuing with education there is a bus ticket for some routes at an annual cost of £695 with some colleges able to support the cost with a bursary.

Transport for extra-curricular activities - For school children under statutory school leaving age, the costs of travel home from extra-curricular activities or to and from work experience placements are not met by the School Transport budget. Any journeys outside normal home to school/college travel times, are met by the school's delegated resources, or parents'. There are no public transport buses from Minehead to Dulverton after 17.33 pm.

4 Consultations Undertaken

4.1 The DFE & Somerset County Council have worked with West Somerset District Council, early year's providers, schools, colleges, employers, the voluntary sector, and the LEP to draw together plans for the West Somerset

Opportunity Area.

4.2 The DFE have committed to making sure that young people are at the heart of the work. The DFE will be consulting with young people building on research already commissioned from the Somerset Rural Youth Project which will examines the experiences and expectations of young people living in rural parts of West Somerset along with on line pulse surveys.

4.3 There are a number of surveys including one to understand the barriers facing women returning to work in West Somerset. There are also surveys for pupils and staff to monitor the impact of the work undertaken as part of the West Somerset Opportunity Area.

5 Implications

5.1 The activities within the plan will be funded by the DFE through a grant to Somerset County Council. The grant will be held by Somerset County Council and subject to Somerset County Council procurement rules. Somerset County Council will report to the DFE.

5.2 Each priority has a number of targets which the opportunity area has to achieve to improve outcomes for all learners.

6 Background Papers

6.1 The West Somerset Opportunity plan can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/650231/Social_Mobility_Delivery_Plan_West_Somerset.pdf

6.2 Data References

Here is the social mobility data for Somerset

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/social-mobility.html>

6.3 Data on all areas:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-index>

6.4 Digital inclusion data for Somerset

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/digital-inclusion/>

6.5 West Somerset Opportunity Area Newsletter May 2018



West Somerset
Opportunity Area Spr

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

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Term: Spring 2018
Issue: 1
Date: May 2018

This edition includes:

- The published plan
- The partnership board
- Ofsted news
- The Naturally Healthy May event
- Our Priorities:
- Priority 1 Story Sacks
- Priority 1 update
- Priority 2 update
- Priority 3 update
- Priority 3 continued
- Priority 4 update
- The Essential Life Skills

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The West Somerset Opportunity Area

Welcome to the first newsletter for the Opportunity Area (OA) programme in West Somerset. We have designed this newsletter to keep you updated as the work progresses across the West Somerset OA.



Pictured:

The Secretary of State, Damian Hinds with local councillors and partnership board members Mandy Chilcott and Frances Nicholson.

Secretary of State visit to the new Nuclear College

On Tuesday the 10th of April, the Secretary of State for the Department for Education, Damian Hinds, visited the New Nuclear College at Cannington site of the Bridgwater and Taunton College.

During his visit the Secretary of State met members from the West Somerset Opportunity Area Partnership Board to find out about progress to date and better understand the challenges the area faced.

The West Somerset Opportunity Area delivery plan

The Opportunity Area programme is a flagship policy at the heart of the Government's ambition to drive up social mobility and improve outcomes for young people.

The West Somerset Opportunity Area delivery plan was part of the first six wave of Opportunity Areas published in October 2017.

Click [here](#) for a link to the published plan.



The four priorities set out in the published plan



Priority One: Ensuring that every child has a great start in life.



Priority Two: Achieving educational excellence in the classroom.



Priority Three: Ensuring that there is a smooth transition into adulthood for West Somerset's young people.



Priority Four: Improving young people's skills for employment and business.

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Working in partnership across West Somerset - the Department for Education

Jan Downie and Lottie Jones representing the Department for Education will continue to work closely with the West Somerset Partnership Board, Julia Ridge (the local programme manager) and the four priority working groups to shape the activities set out in the delivery plan and leave a memorable legacy for future generations.

We are working with local partners to make sure that we engage effectively and in a range of ways.

“I am delighted to have been asked to Chair the West Somerset Opportunity Area Partnership Board. Our vision is to create a culture where all children in West Somerset have the best opportunities to learn, achieve and gain worthwhile and progressive employment.”

Dr. Fiona McMillan



List of Partnership Board members

- Alison Bell:** Public Health Somerset
- Andy Berry:** Bridgwater and Taunton College
- Chris Garcia:** Heart of the South West LEP
- Corinne Matthews:** West Somerset Economic Development
- Fiona McMillan:** Independent Chair of the West Somerset Opportunity Area partnership board
- Frances Nicholson:** Somerset County Council
- Jim Whittaker:** Channel Group
- Julian Wooster:** Somerset County Council
- Mandy Chilcott:** West Somerset District Council
- Marcus Capel:** Cutcombe and Timberscombe first schools
- Mel Roberts:** Somerset County Council
- Naomi Griffith:** Onion Collective Community Development
- Paul Rushforth:** West Somerset Academy Trust
- Peter Elliott:** Bridgwater College Academy Trust
- Tom Thayer:** EDF Energy

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OUTSTANDING

Ofsted News:

Inspector was 'blown away' by Cheeky Cherubs!



CONGRATULATIONS - Cheeky Cherubs nursery received an 'outstanding' [Ofsted inspection](#) after an inspection on 30th January 18.

The report praised the nursery's "extremely effective leadership", highly motivated enthusiastic staff and excellent relationships with parents and the emotional security of the children.

GOOD

Ofsted News:

A number of "Good" Ofsted ratings across West Somerset schools

CONGRATULATIONS - To the Staff , pupils and Governors at **Minehead Middle School, Crowcombe CEVA Primary School, Stogumber CEVA Primary School, Timberscombe C of E First School, Timberscombe Pre-School, Little Vikings Nursery and Little Horseshoe Nursery** for positive Ofsted reports, after they all achieved another 'Good' rating in their latest Ofsted reports since September 2017.

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Saturday 26th May 2018 at Blenheim Gardens, Minehead

11am to 5pm

Come and join us at;

“Naturally Healthy May”

The plan is to have an enjoyable and relaxed community Health and Wellbeing day!

Devon and Somerset’s Local Nature Partnerships are marketing Naturally Healthy May again in 2018. As part of this Exmoor National Park Authority’s Moor to Enjoy Project is organising a one day event – ‘Naturally Healthy Minehead’.

The event will promote activities and information that help people achieve the Five Ways to Wellbeing. Activities provided will be a chance for people to try something new or pick up an activity they would like to do more of again! The activities will be things that people can do outdoors and/or that are inspired by the natural environment surrounding Minehead and Exmoor National Park.

Activities booked so far - Activities organised and booked to date are beach games with Channel Adventure, yoga, info on volunteering, Nordic walking, wellbeing workshop, guided walk, craft making, and a community picnic.

Come and see the West Somerset Opportunity Area OA stall to find out more about the West Somerset Opportunity Area.

Keep in touch at:

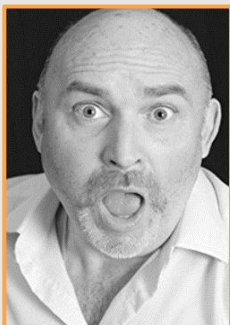


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PRIORITY 1



Story Sacks with Neil Griffiths

On 7th March Neil Griffiths the creator of “Story Sacks” came and gave a presentation of his work to the West Somerset Early Years Providers. Neil focused his speech on the value of storytelling and used his own childhood memories of stories read to him by his Dad to inspire us. His knowledge of learning, his gift of story, his passion for teaching and his love of children came over in abundance as he read and talked to us, his fellow practitioners and teachers. A further treat, courtesy of the West Somerset Opportunity Area, was a goodie bag of his famous titles and resources for all the Early Years providers and teachers in attendance. Project Team members from the West Somerset Opportunity area were also in attendance at the event and introduced to the audience, the many initiatives and activities that would be on offer over the coming months and years. All of this resulted in a thoroughly enjoyable, thought provoking and inspiring evening for all in attendance.

If you would like to learn more, please contact neil@cornertolearn.co.uk

Early Years Priority 1 Group and Early Years Staff

Staff from Early Years Cluster meetings and Inset days, have been putting ideas together for training events across the next 3 years. The staff will have the opportunity to be trained in “Emotion Coaching” to raise awareness of positive impact, daily practice and interactions supporting the Schools Speech, Language and Communication work.

If you would like to learn more, please contact the Priority 1 Lead:

Alison Bell – WSOA@somerset.gov.uk

Keep in touch at:



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PRIORITY 2



Excellence in the classroom

Head teachers from every part of West Somerset have come together to ensure that we make the most of this opportunity for the children we have in our schools now and the children we will see into the future.

We have focused on the areas in which we can make the biggest difference;

- phonic knowledge;
- special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- leadership;
- transition between schools and
- mathematics.

Most of the work relates to training for teachers, teaching assistants and school leaders. Some, like the phonics work, will have a very rapid outcome as nearly all schools have chosen to adopt the same phonics scheme to train staff together

Much of the training however, will show impact towards the end of the project and into the years beyond. We are working with a large range of organisations including Somerset Local Authority, the Boolean Maths Hub, the Regional Schools Commissioner's office and the Research School based in Wells. Teachers and teaching assistants will each get details of how they can become involved after Easter as the training brochures start to come into schools. This is a great opportunity and we are determined to ensure the children of West Somerset benefit fully

Paul Rushforth Priority 2 Lead PZRushforth@educ.somerset.gov.uk



The West Somerset Research School at the Blue School, Wells

The Department for Education have funded a Research School for West Somerset, the Blue School in Wells (pictured above) which has been supported by the Education Endowment Foundation. The Research School will support schools in West Somerset to use evidence-based practice to improve teaching and learning for students.

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PRIORITY 3



West Somerset College

At West Somerset College, we will be using the Opportunity Area funding to improve the college's vocational facilities and help us broaden our curriculum offer at Key Stage 5. From September 2018, five new level 2 vocational courses will be available at the college:

5 New Level 2 Vocational Courses for 2018

- Catering and Hospitality (City & Guilds)
- Hairdressing (City & Guilds)
- Light Vehicle Maintenance (IMI)
- Maintenance Operations (City & Guilds)
- Work Skills (World of Work) (BTEC)

Supporting students progression post 16 and career development

In addition, we will encourage sixteen and seventeen year olds to take part in the prestigious National Citizenship Service programme.

We will extend the skills of our post 16 learners, providing high quality individual careers advice and guidance for all students by creating personal action plans for all students to support their progression and career development. We will also offer students access to inspiring, high impact, careers encounters.

Zoe Stucki – Head teacher, West Somerset College.

The Careers and Enterprise Company – cornerstone employers and enterprise days

The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) have been collaborating with the schools and district and county councils to create a sustainable careers plan that increases the number of encounters students in the area will have with employers and employees. This will be driven forward by cornerstone employers, which includes EDF, Butlins, Miles Tea and the Onion Collective and implemented by a wide range of volunteers from local businesses.

Earlier this year, Emma Kelly from Butlins arranged a successful speed networking event at Minehead Middle School where all year 8 students had the opportunity to meet and interact with a wide range of local businesses.

While these relationships between the schools and businesses are being developed, the CEC has helped kick-start increasing the number of encounters for students by providing the schools with funding to spend on enterprise activities. In February, West Somerset College's Year 9 students took part in the Tenner Challenge and next month students from West Somerset, Danesfield and Minehead Middle will take part in enterprise days.

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PRIORITY 3



Somerset Talent Academies

Somerset Talent Academies are now taking place in West Somerset. This year students from West Somerset College joined others from Bridgwater and Taunton in the HPC Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Academy – working with a range of Tier 1 contractors including Bylor, Laing O’Rourke and Kier BAM, as well as visiting Hinkley Point C and working with EDF at Cannington Court.

Each Talent Academy is built around a particular industry sector and includes visits to local and regional employers, large and small, across Somerset and the South West. Talent Academies this year include aerospace, manufacturing, nursing & health, Teaching and Digital Skills. Young people in years 10 and year 11, with an interest in finding out more about careers and jobs in particular sectors are selected to attend 8 workshops with different employers. Employers who have delivered workshops this year include Yeo Valley, Leonardos, Mulberry, Yeovil District Hospital, Rolls Royce, Styles Ice Cream, Numatic and Taunton Fabrication.

This term West Somerset College is also piloting a Construction Talent Academy and a Catering & Hospitality Talent Academy, which will become the ideal way for young people to find out more about the post 16 vocational options being delivered at West Somerset College from this September 2018. Willmott Dixon and the CITB have been instrumental in providing Construction workshops that have included Virtual Reality building sites and information about the huge range of jobs across the Construction Industry.

For more information, please contact: Julie Young - JAYoung@somerset.gov.uk

Keep in touch at:



WSOA@somerset.gov.uk



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Pictured:
students attending the EB STEM Talent Academy on a site tour of Hinkley Point C.

PRIORITY 4



WIN
£50
BOOK
TOKEN

New Opportunities for women in West Somerset

In addition to supporting schools and early years settings the West Somerset Opportunity Area funding is being used to support the development of skills to enable women to succeed in the world of work. As part of this, we would like to hear your answers to some of the challenges you may face to help us understand what support we can provide. We are particularly interested in:

- The barriers that prevent you and other women from accessing jobs and learning opportunities in and around West Somerset; and
- The type of support you would like to see available to help you, and other women, make the most of these opportunities.

Be in it to win it!

The survey should take you no more than five minutes to complete and, if you are happy to provide us with your contact details, you will also be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 book token.

Look out for other opportunities to have your say at schools, Job Centre Plus, West Somerset Employment Hubs and a range of other community venues.

Please note that this survey will close on Friday 11th May.

- Please click on [this link](#) to complete the survey.

For more information, please email Natalie Wainwright – NEWainwright@somerset.gov.uk

Keep in touch at:



WSOA@somerset.gov.uk



[@westsomersetoa](https://twitter.com/westsomersetoa)

West Somerset Essential Life Skills Grants

Grants to improve activities for young people in West Somerset

New grant schemes have been launched to help children and young people in West Somerset get involved in extra-curricular activities to help improve their confidence, health and wellbeing.

Individuals and groups can apply for Essential Life Skills grants to improve access to activities like sports, performance and creative arts, music, physical recreation and youth provision.

Young people can apply for a £350 grant to cover the cost of their chosen weekly activity for a year, and groups can apply for up to £5,000 to either develop new activities or expand existing ones. Groups including schools, voluntary organisations and activity providers can apply.

Individual grant applications need the backing of a responsible adult such as a teacher or youth worker and applications can be made at any time. Grant applications for groups will be assessed quarterly throughout the year.

Councillor Frances Nicholson, Cabinet Member for Children and Families at Somerset County Council, said: "Evidence shows that these sorts of activities boost young people's social skills and emotional wellbeing, and this in turn helps them develop the skills to achieve their potential.

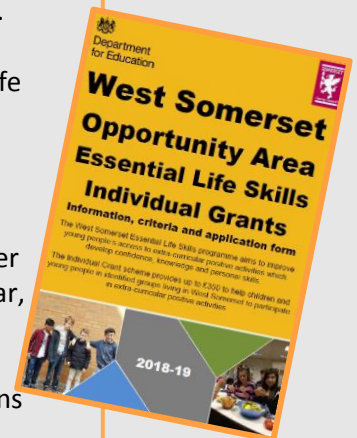
"This is a great opportunity and I hope groups and individuals across the area will seize it with both hands."

More information on the grants, funding deadlines and application forms are available from the Youth Funding pages of the Somerset Youth website. Anyone who has questions about the grant programme should contact SCC's Youth & Community Service.

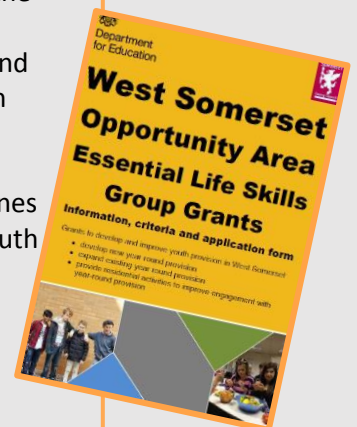
youthservice@somerset.gov.uk

[Click here to find out more](#)

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Keep in touch at:



WSOA@somerset.gov.uk



@westsomersetoa

Young people - we want to hear from you!
We would like to have a young people's column as a regular feature of these newsletters.

WSOA@somerst.gov.uk



Thank you for reading please share it with colleagues, networks and friends.

If you have a suggestion for something we should look at, please email WSOA@somerset.gov.uk

tweet us at [@westsomersetoa](https://twitter.com/westsomersetoa)

Keep in touch at:



WSOA@somerset.gov.uk



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Somerset County Council
Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee
18 May 2018

Young Carers Update

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

Author(s): Wendy Jenner, Targeted Youth Support and Gemma Pickford Waugh,
Children's Commissioning

Contact Details: 01458 449117 / 01823 359109

Division and Local Member: All

1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update members of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee on progress of the Young Carers Strategic Steering Group following the committee's recommendations in April 2017 and review in November 2017.
- 1.2. The work of the Young Carers Project contributes to the 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. Members are asked to consider and comment on the progress made against the Young Carers Strategic Action Plan (Appendix A);
Members are invited to consider and comment on the support provided to Young Carers.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Task and Finish Group reviewed arrangements for young carers in Somerset in April 2017 and provided a number of recommendations to improve identification and support to our young carers.
- 3.2. During Quarter 3 (January - March 2018) 175 young carers are open to Somerset Young Carers Project; all but 10 have a Young Carers Assessment.
 - 16 have an allocated Social Worker as a result of being assessed as a Child In Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP) case.
 - Over the last 18 months, over 40 young carers have been in one or other of these categories on CIN or CP and this is rising.
 - 50 Young Carers' parent(s) have a mental health issue.
- 3.3. A Young Carers Strategic Action Plan has been formed to take forward those recommendations, as detailed in Appendix A. Key achievements to date, grouped as per original recommendations, include:
 - 3.3.1. **Schools**
 - Report on 5 pilot projects taking place in schools in each district to raise awareness of the service and the needs of Young Carers has been completed. New schools have been identified and work commenced.
 - A school survey took place in March 2018 commissioned by Public Health; with a specific question on caring by young carers. Data is currently being

analysed. This will give a more accurate picture of who is caring and how much caring is being provided.

3.3.2. **Adult Services**

- Councillors Tessa Munt and Mike Pullen are leading as Young Carers Champions. They have met the Young Carers Forum.
- Choices for Life Panels now have an agenda item for Young Carers 3 times a year. This includes representatives from Adult Social Care and the new Care Agents (Somerset Carers Service).
- Young Adult Carers Pathway to adult services has been developed and a service agreement for young carers' transition to the Somerset Carers Service agreed.
- Young Carers Safeguarding Policy has been drafted to set out clear responsibilities to identify and address the needs of young carers.

3.3.3. **Health**

- Training is planned to take place for schools in June 2018 to develop a whole school approach to raise awareness and remove stigma. Young Carers will be delivering some of the training.
- Content is being developed for an e-learning module, due to be launched December 2018.
- Discussions are taking place with the CCG to enable identifying young carers from GP records. We are unaware of work planned to encourage GPs to identify and refer Young Carers. A lead for this work needs to be identified.

3.3.4. **The Council**

- An extensive programme of holiday activities has been delivered to provide respite opportunities funded by the Friends Charity and staffed by Young Carers staff. The events gave 228 individual breaks to the Young Carers that attended, and 70% of Young Carers open to the Service attended at least one event. The respite activities included:
 - Bristol pantomime with 70 young carers.
 - Bowling and cinema with 65 young carers.
 - Local theatre production with 17 young carers.
 - Well Being Days with 76 young carers.
- All Young Carers have a completed and reviewed Young Carers Assessment and regular contact. Cases are closed more effectively, because of the reviews, when there is no longer a need for the service.
- 6 young people were referred to the Counselling Service to support Young carers.
- The Young Carers' Facebook page and website is active and is used to maintain contact with Young Carers.

- 3.4. Areas for concerns include
- The lack of referrals from services such as GPs and adult social care. All referrals require an EHA or a parent can self-refer by ringing Somerset Direct.
 - Restrictions in budgets within front line Adult Health and Social Services mean that adults generally have to meet a higher threshold of need to access services, which results in some Young Carers being left to undertake inappropriate levels of care.
 - Progress on collecting data directly from schools is slow. SASH and SAPHTO are supporting communications with schools.

4. Consultations undertaken and Fact finding

- 4.1. The initial Scrutiny Task and Finish Group had met with Young Carers, Young Carer Professionals, Young Adult Carers, Public Health and Somerset Parent Carer Forum to identify its recommendations in April 2017.
- 4.2. The Young Carers Strategic Steering Group was not successful in set-up and so the work has been driven by key staff in the Youth Service, frequently in communication and partnership with stakeholders.
- 4.3. The Young Carers Forum developed the job description for the Young Carers Champion to ensure the role can meet their needs and have met with the new Champions.




5. Background papers




- 5.1. Young Carers Strategic Steering Group Action Plan (Appendix A);
Young Carers Update Report to 17 November 2017 committee meeting;
Young Carers Task & Finish Group Report to 7 April 2017 committee meeting;
Children's Commissioner (December 2016) [The support provided to Young Carers in England](#).

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



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Young Carers Strategic Action Plan

#	Action	What success looks like	Owner	RAG, due date and direction of travel.	Progress notes and planned activity.
1	Draft & agree a Memorandum of Understanding between children and adult services describing 'no wrong door' for young carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The needs of young carers are included in Adult Social Care (ASC) plans. Support from Adult Social Care (ASC) is timely. No care package shall rely on children to meet the needs of an adult. Ensure all staff are aware of who to contact for support in either department 	Tom Whitworth, Strategic Manager & Vicky Chipchase, Senior Commissioning Officer	Amber Ongoing 	<p>An agenda item for Young Carers is now included in every Choices for Life Area panel, 3 times per year. This will include representatives from Adult Social Care and the new Care Agents. Young Adult Carers Pathway to adult services has been developed and a service agreement for Young carers Transition to the Somerset carers Service agreed.</p> <p>Young Carers Safeguarding Policy is in draft. To be presented to Safeguarding Board, Childrens Trust and Health and Well Being Board setting out clear responsibilities to identify and address the needs of young carers.</p>
2	Create a role description and recruit a councillor to be a Young Carer Champion.	Awareness is raised of the existence, voice and needs of young carers.	Young Carers' Forum / Dave Willis, Professional Practitioner	Amber 17/11/17 	<p>Role description is completed the job description has been produced by the Young Carers Forum.</p> <p>Councillors have been identified to lead as Young Carer Champion. Tessa Munt and Mike Pullen. They have met the Young carers Forum.</p>
3	Establish clear training programmes for education, health and social care professionals for adults and children's services.	Professionals already working with children and young people recognise the role of a Young Carer and make appropriate referrals in a timely manner.	Fiona Moir, Health Promotion Manager & Dave Willis, Professional Practitioner	Amber June 2018 	<p>Public health are leading this work. Event planned for teachers in June 2018, with 100 delegates invited.</p> <p>Meeting undertaken with Andrew Fisk to develop an e-learning module. Content will be prepared during summer and launched Dec 2018</p>

4	Review & improve data collection and sharing protocols between children and adults services and schools.	Young Carers are identified at an early stage and only have to tell their story once.	Penny Johnson, Youth Offending Information Manager & Wendy Jenner, Targeted Youth Service Operational Manager	Amber January 2018 	<p>LA has a statutory duty to identify Young Carers but it is not statutory for school to pass this on.</p> <p>We are working to collect the data directly from schools via Schools Information Management (SIMS) Team. Contact made and costs have been identified. Slow progress is being made. Malcom Riches is now supporting this. He has contacted SASH and SAPHTO to get the approval of the schools and discuss how we can approach communicating this with them</p> <p>Young Carer data from caseload information is regularly reviewed at getset Quality Performance Review (QPR) meetings. Need to move from LCS to EHM (Young Carers) to enable us to run reports. We currently keep spread sheets.</p>
5	Review Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFC) proposals in relation to impact on Young Carers to ensure funding for Young Carers to access social support is maintained as per Scrutiny recommendation.	Young Carers access to social support is maintained.	Tom Whitworth, Strategic Manager	Green complete 	Friends of Young Carers Charity paid for Summer Activity Programme and are financing transport for a Taunton group.
6	Support schools and colleges to...			.	
6.1	a) Put in place processes that identify Young Carers and provide appropriate support.	Young Carers are identified and support enables them to have the same opportunities and choices as those without	Dave Willis, Professional Practitioner	Green Ongoing 	<p>Pilot project with 4 schools started April 2017.</p> <p>Report on school projects complete and other schools are being targeted. New schools have been identified and work commenced.</p>

APPENDIX A

		caring responsibilities.			Facebook and Website are operational
6.2	b) Develop a whole school approach to raise awareness and remove stigma.	Young Carers feel able to discuss their needs and any problems they face without fear.	Fiona Moir, Health Promotion Manager	Amber June 2018 	Training will be delivered to schools in June 2018
7	Work with Somerset Local Medical Committee (LMC) to encourage and support GPs to 'think family' when working with adults with caring needs.	GPs recognise the role of Young Carers and make appropriate referrals in a timely manner.	To identify lead	Amber March 2018 	<p>Draft young carers safeguarding policy currently underway. This will to be taken to a multi-agency board including adults and health to raise the issue with system leaders.</p> <p>This is a large piece of work as there are many independent GP surgeries. Currently GP's are reporting that EHA is prohibitive to making a referral.</p> <p>Agreed at Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust process to identify and refer.</p>

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Quality and Performance Review - Targeted Youth Support Area: Young Carers (YC)

Manager's Name: Wendy Jenner

Date: Jan-March 31st 2018

The Workforce	Casework Practice
<p>What is working well?</p> <p>All YC have a YC assessment and regular contact. Respite Activity programme planned for year.</p> <p>What are we worried about?</p> <p>Resignation of SS worker. Reduction in hours of new post.</p> <p>What needs to happen?</p> <p>Replace the SS worker with 18.5 hour post. This is underway.</p>	<p>What is working well?</p> <p>Regular contact with YC.</p> <p>Number of YC assessments completed and reviewed.</p> <p>Continuing work with schools to raise awareness and develop support.</p> <p>All YC have an In Case of Emergency (ICE) plan</p> <p>Cases are being audited and Case Summaries completed.</p> <p>What are we worried about?</p> <p>LCS not suitable for recording YC.</p> <p>Cases open to CSC do not appear on our reports.</p> <p>What needs to happen?</p> <p>Transfer of recording to Module on LCS for Young Carers.</p>
Service Performance in the Last Quarter	User/Partner Feedback/Involvement
<p>What is working well?</p> <p>There are currently 175 young people open to Somerset Young Carers Project including those waiting for assessment. 39 Mendip, 42 Sedgemoor, 44 Yeovil, 50 Taunton and West Somerset. 10 young people currently awaiting assessment.</p> <p>Due to regular reviews which we are carrying out at least once every 12 months we are closing cases more effectively and so when we have completed positive work with the young person and family and if there is no longer a need for our service we can appropriately end our involvement.</p> <p>16 young people open at CIN or CP. Over last 18 months over 40 young people have been on CIN or CP. We are seeing more cases that are CIN and CP being referred especially in 2018.</p>	<p>What is working well?</p> <p>Counselling Service to support YC referred 6 YP this year.</p> <p>Received £5K grant to supply a mental health resource bag to YC from Public Health. Joint delivery of YC Well being Days.</p> <p>Service Level Agreement in place for Young Careres pathways to adult service. Transition to Commisioned Carers Agents service.</p> <p>There will be a new school survey to take place in March 2018 commissioned by Public Health; there will be a specific question set to include caring/YC which will hopefully give a more accurate picture of who is caring and how much care is being provided by pupils at schools involved in the survey.</p> <p>Work of the charity Friends of YC.</p>

<p>70% of YC open to the Service attended at least one event or group in 2017 and so far in 2018.</p> <p>In 2017 we received 126 referrals, so far in 2018 we have received 27 referrals.</p> <p>Extensive programme of Holiday Activities delivered respite opportunities. Funded by Friends Charity.</p> <p>Bristol pantomime in January 2018- 70 young people attended</p> <p>Feb half term 2018 Bowling and Cinema- 65 young people attended.</p> <p>Local Theatre production March 2018 -17 YC carers went to Strode College to watch High School Musical Theatre</p> <p>Well Being days planned for Easter 2018. Separate days for Juniors and Seniors, 76 children are expected to come over those 2 days.</p> <p>We reported to Programme 7 Highlight report : Young Carers caring for a parent due to Mental Health in 2017.</p> <p>Current figures are:</p> <p>At least 50 young people are caring for someone with poor mental health issues. Due to the complexities of our families mental health is potentially effecting many more young people but this is not the primary reason they are caring.</p> <p>-Referrals since January 2018- (out of 27 so far) CSC 7 GETSET 4 PFSAs / Schools 6 GPS 0 ADULT SOCIAL CARE 0 ADULT MENTAL HEALTH 0 SELF REFERRAL 8 OTHER 2</p> <p>What are we worried about?</p> <p>Report to Young Carers Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>Lack of referrals from other services including schools and GP's. All referrals require a EHA or a parent can self refer by ringing Somerset Direct.</p> <p>Difficulties in obtaining data from Schools. LA must</p>	<p>Attendance at Friends' meeting planned. Summer Activity Programme funded by Friends of YC Charity.</p> <p>YC are identified as a priority in Somerset Commitment to Careers and the Children's Plan. Somerset feedback was quoted in Children's Commissioner's report.</p> <p>Work with Carers' Voice Somerset to deliver a Music Project and consultation event for Young Carers.</p> <p>YCs have met with Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust guidance on how to identify, refer and provide appropriate support for YC's.</p> <p>.</p> <p>What are we worried about?</p> <p>Lack of transition Assessments for YC. This has been raised as a concern.</p> <p>Lack of referrals from GP's</p> <p>Delivery of Scrutiny Action Plan.</p> <p>Delivery of Care Act, 2014 "Whole-family approach". Strategic support for YC and identification by services in contact with adults</p> <p>Restrictions in budgets within front line adult health and social care services mean that adults generally have to meet a higher threshold of need to access services. This can mean that YC are left to undertake inappropriate levels of care.</p> <p>What needs to happen?</p> <p>Write a YC Safeguarding Policy and present to SafeGuarding Board and Children's Trust to ensure that all services are aware of their responsibilities.</p> <p>A commitment by Children and Adult Services to work together through a Memorandum of Understanding (joint statement on key principles for supporting YCs made by DH & DfE (updated 2015)</p>
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take “reasonable steps” to identify YC. Schools across Somerset have been encouraged to add a question to their data collection sheets asking if a child has caring responsibilities. We are unable to collect this data centrally

Transport costs for YC groups are high. Many young carers live in very rural areas and parent do not drive.

What needs to happen?

Write a SafeGuarding Policy For Young Carers and present at Children’s Trust and Safeguarding Board.

To ensure sign up to a “Whole Family Approach” by establishing our collective ambition for these young people.

Reviewing the data on YC. Move to Early Help Module. We currently record on LCS and keep spread sheets.

Working with Public Health to deliver a training event on YC for senior leaders of schools to attend. This will be whole day event with up to 100 places for delegates across Somerset schools. This event will take place in June 2018 and will include YC delivering some of the training..

Need to overcome the barriers to delivering our statutory requirement under the **Care Act 2014** and **C&F Act 2014** for the LA and the Schools to identify and support Young carers. This is proving difficult .Peter Grogan & Malcom Riches are supporting this but there are blocks from within the LA.

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Somerset County Council
Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families
Committee – 18 May 2018

**Progress on Recommendations arising from the Ofsted
Inspection Report, January 2018**

Lead Officer: Claire Winter, Deputy Director, Children's Services

Contact Details: CWinter@somerset.gov.uk

Cabinet Member: Frances Nicholson

1. Context

- 1.1.** Ofsted re-inspected Somerset Services for children in need of help and protection in November 2017. The report was published in January 2018 and provided an overall outcome of Requires Improvement to be Good in all service areas, other than Adoption which was judged to be Good. The report outlines 13 recommendations (Appendix 2) for improvement which have been incorporated into Programme 6 of the Children and Young People's Plan for 2018/19. (Appendix 1)

Key headlines in the report were:

- The judgement indicated that services were just over the line.
- The front door service is strong whereas Safeguarding & Corporate Parenting arrangements are weaker (although adoption is strong)
- Placement Sufficiency is not a high enough priority
- Leadership & Management Capacity is highly dependent on a few individuals. Ofsted were concerned about the sustainability of this and the consequent impact of the Council's ability to get to good.
- Partnership Working has good senior management engagement but operationally is weaker (including services we commission)

2. Issues for consideration/Recommendation

- 2.1.** Members are asked to consider and comment on progress made against each of the 13 recommendations as set out in Appendix 1.

3.0 Background

Key areas of focus since the Ofsted Inspection have been:

- A planned visit from the DfE Advisor for Leaving Care to support the development of the new Leaving Care offer
- Contributing to the Corporate Peer Review –Children Services' overspend was identified as a key issue
- Strengthening placement sufficiency arrangements, including an in- depth review of permanence planning for all children in residential care.
- A planned meeting with Coram/BAAF to review the end to end effectiveness of our in-house fostering service
- Planning for a Neglect Peer Review in July with Wiltshire as part of the regional sector led improvement plan

- Building the capacity and leadership ability of middle managers through a programme of workshops
- Raising aspirations/expectations about the consistency and quality of services – with a focus on rigorous assessments and detailed plans based on best practice
- Confirming Essex as our Practice Improvement Partner for a further period with a focus on developing the skills in our ISRO service and further embedding robust care planning in all areas of service
- Implementing a new Family Support Service including Children's Centres Progressing service reviews with the creation of new Adolescent Support Services to work intensively with children on the edge of care, and to develop SEND central services

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Programme 6, Somerset Children and Young People's Plan 2018-19



CYPP Action Plan
Programme 6 May 18

Appendix 2 – Recommendations arising from the Local Authority Ofsted Inspection Report published January 2018



Ofsted 2017
recommendations.doc

For Information

Somerset County Council Ofsted Reinspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers



059_Single
inspection of LA child

CYPP, Programme 6, Action Plan 2018/19 - FINAL MAY (4.5.18)



Improvement Programme: 6
Lead Delivery Group: Children's Social Care/ Somerset Safeguarding Children Board
Senior Responsible Owners (SROs): Deputy Director Children's Services/ Somerset Safeguarding Children Board Chairperson

Ofsted 2017 Recommendation number	Action	Action Owner	Deadline for Completion	BRAG rating	Key Performance Indicators	Outcome
1. Increase the capacity of the leadership team so that the pace of change can be accelerated Lead: HR Director and Deputy Director Children's Services						
1	Review senior management structure and roles to ensure there is sufficient capacity and expertise to drive consistent social work practice a) Embed the leadership competency framework at all staff levels to identify strengths and areas of development in becoming a "Good" authority b) Consult with the workforce about flexible ways of working which better meet family need for both staff and service users c) Reconfigure the role of CSW, to provide more agile expert support to social-work teams.	HR Director / DDCS	a) 31st May 2018 b) 1st June 2018 c) 1st June 2018		a) 90% of SW workforce is permanent overall by April 2019 b) 75% of Year 3 students become ASYEs in Somerset in 2018 c) 80% retention of ASYEs at the end of Year 2 d) 75% of Step up students become Somerset ASYEs when their course finishes in 2019 e) Social worker turnover rate is below the national average of 14% f) Audit evidences that 50% of practice is graded as good or above	Increasingly experienced and permanent workforce whose practice is consistently improved at Ofsted "Good" or above
1	Develop Workforce capacity via the County Workforce Strategy to increase the permanent social care workforce by: - strengthening liaison with south west universities and the Open University, including development of social work apprenticeships - influencing the content of social work degree programmes and - providing a Somerset presence on courses, in seminars and recruitment events - delivering high quality student placements, particularly in Year 3, within the Council - continue to lead the south west consortium for Step Up to social work	OM Learning and Workforce Development	31st March 2019			
2 and 3	Revise the Strategic QA Framework to ensure effective scrutiny and oversight of practice, - to establish overarching management accountability principles focusing on good outcomes for children resulting from high quality social work practice - ensure that there is a clear audit structure which informs service planning, learning and improved outcomes for children, incorporating children and families' feedback about their experience of social work practice Review audit tools, to ensure alignment with overarching principles above Embed the training, audit, learning cycle in social work practice across the service with a focus on improving the quality of plans and outcomes for children, including understanding of ethnicity, identify and cultural needs	Strategic Manager Partnerships, Audit and Quality	1st June 2018		a) Audit identifies clear and case directive management overview in 75% of audits undertaken	Service development is informed by training, audit and learning from service user feedback
	Develop a management decision-making matrix to increase accountability and autonomy at all management levels.	Strategic Manager Assessment and Safeguarding	1st April 2018			
3	Review case tracking mechanisms and associated documentation to ensure they contribute to improving the quality of social work practice	OM group led by South Somerset OM	30th April 2018			
2. Improve the consistency of social work practice Lead: Deputy Director Children's Services						
A. Permanence planning Lead: Strategic Manager Children Looked After and Leaving Care						
10	Support families on the edge of legal proceedings to care for their children by improving practice in the PLO stage: - Provision of practice guidance to social workers on appropriate use of PLO in pre-proceedings. - Development of training for all SWs, for delivery by CSWs in areas to teams to embed the guidance.	Strategic Manager Assessment and Safeguarding/ OM Sedgmoor	1st May 2018		a) All fieldwork social workers have undertaken PLO training b) Audit identifies appropriate use of pre-proceedings thresholds. c) increased % of PLO process which end in de-escalation	Families are supported to care for their children within their own community
11	Reshape Permanence Panel to focus on quality of planning for children who need long-term foster placements supported by: - increased specialist capacity to recruit carers for named children - Development of a kinship team to deliver good quality assessments of connected persons and prospective special guardians and to provide ongoing support to these carers.	OMs for Fostering and Permanence	1st June 2018		% children who have more than 3 placements in 12 is reduced to 11% by year end % children who have been in care for more than 2.5 years in long term placements is 65% or above	More children have a permanent home, where difficulties can be managed and the placement sustained
10	2) Engage wider birth family networks by: - broadening the remit of Family Group conferencing to all families open to Children's Social Care to enable them to find their own solutions - developing the Rapid Response service as part of Team 8 to provide 24/7 support to families with adolescents, in crisis. - developing community adolescent support teams to prevent family breakdown and support families where children return home from care.	Strategic Managers Vulnerable Young People and Prevention	1st June 2018		75% of children who are subject to Family Group Conference remain living with their birth family 75% of children referred to community adolescent teams are supported and do not escalate to a CSC referral	Families are better supported to care for their children within their own community
1, 2 and 3	Deliver a high quality training programme across the workforce focussing on: a) relationship based therapeutic tools for social care staff and foster carers to support the holistic assessment of permanence options for children	OM Learning and Workforce Development	Developed during the 2018/2019 year		% children who have more than 3 placements in 12 is reduced to 11% by year end % children who have been in care for more than 2.5 years in long term placements is 65% or above	Improved social work practice is evidenced in greater placement stability and more timely permanence planning
B. Placement stability Lead: Strategic Manager Partnerships, Audit and Quality						
11	Develop an IRO scorecard to focus on placement stability and permanency planning outcomes, enabling IROs to alert managers earlier when placements are becoming unstable	Strategic Manager Partnerships, Audit and Quality	1st April 2018		% children who have more than 3 placements in 12 is reduced to 11% by year end % children who have been in care for more than 2.5 years in long term placements is 65% or above	More children have a permanent home, where difficulties can be managed and the placement sustained
11	Ensure disruption meetings are held in order to learn from matched long term fostering placement breakdowns and from post adoption family breakdowns.	OMs for Fostering and Permanence	1st April 2018		Disruption meetings are held for all long term fostering and post adoption family breakdowns	Learning from disruption means that more children have a permanent home, where difficulties can be managed and the placement sustained

	1, 2 and 3	Develop Action learning based opportunities for: management oversight and scrutiny of practice, including quality assurance - for first line managers to ensure clarity of expectations on permanence planning, course-correction and tackling poor performance. - for Operation and Strategic Managers' their role in supporting the development of first line managers	Strategic Manager Partnerships, Audit and Quality/ OM Learning and Workforce Development	1st June 2018		Audit identifies that in 75% of audited cases management overview is analytical, focussed on permanence and course corrects poor practice	Improved social work practice is evidenced in greater placement stability and more timely permanence planning
	12	Ensure that children's initial health assessments are timely and that the emotional and mental health needs of care leavers and children looked after are recognised and addressed.	Chair Corporate Parenting Board sub group for Health and Emotional Well being.	Incremental during 2018/19 -see KPIs for targets		June 2018 - 80% of IHAs are completed on time December 2018 - 90% of IHAs are completed on time March 2019 - 95% of IHAs are completed on time Audit of minutes from the monthly CAMHS/CSC emotional health review meetings evidence that CLA and Care leavers receive the right emotional/mental health support at the right time	CLA and Care leavers' physical and emotional health needs are identified and addressed promptly
3. Ensure that partners (especially Health and Police) work effectively together to secure positive outcomes for children Lead: Assistant Director Partnerships and Quality Assurance/Safeguarding Children Board Chairperson							
	8 and 9	a) Ensure that children and young people within the child protection process have timely access to advocacy services by ensuring social workers are aware of children's right to access an advocate and know how to access the advocacy service b) Ensure CP Chairs monitor the appropriate provision of advocates and challenge social work practice where appropriate c) Ensure that the Advocacy service and CP Chairs annual report includes views of children about the effectiveness of CP and homelessness advocacy services and that this is reported to the LSCB d) Develop the CP score card to include the number of children who have had access to an advocate in the child protection process in a timely way	Strategic Manager Vulnerable young people/Strategic Manager Partnerships, Audit and Quality	a) 30th April 2018 b)30th April 2018 c)presented to LSCB in July 2018 d) 30th April 2018		a) The families of 100% of children over 4 have been offered an advocacy service in the child protection process b) 75% of children whose families have been offered advocacy are represented in CP conferences.	Children are able to express their views clearly in the child protection conference process and understand how these have informed child protection planning
	9	Develop provision of independent advocacy for 16/17s around decision to become Children Looked After, including: - clear guidance for social workers and advocates - a leaflet for young people and - identification of points in children's planning for regular review of young people's decision where they have initially decided not to be CLA .	Strategic Manager Prevention	30th April 2018		a) 100% of homeless 16 and 17 year olds referred to CSC have been offered and advocacy service b) Audit identifies that homelessness decisions are regularly reviewed and clearly recorded in case records, including the involvement of an advocate	Homeless 16 and 17 year olds have been able to access an advocacy service and understand their accommodation rights and responsibilities.
Page 60	10	Improve outcomes for children experiencing neglect by: a) developing and implementing multi-agency neglect toolkit as part of the SSCB neglect Strategy b) take part in regional neglect peer challenge to identify partnership strengths and areas for development	Assistant Director Partnerships, Audit and Quality/ Designated Nurse for Safeguarding	a) 30th June 2018 b) 30th June 2018		Increased % of EHAs where neglect is a factor and where the EHA ends with improved outcomes for the child	Children who experience neglect are identified and supported early
	2	Review SSCB QA Framework	Strategic Manager Partnerships, Audit and Quality	1st June 2018		multi agency data identifies key areas of risk and strength in the safeguarding system	
	4	Work with Avon and Somerset Constabulary, and Health partners to develop an effective force-area system for appropriate support and oversight of all children in Police custody, including: - identifying and learning from good practice in other authority areas. - timely notification by the police to the local authority of all children in custody, their length of stay and post detention destination	Strategic Manager Vulnerable Young People/ Police Area Commander/Designated Nurse for Safeguarding	1st May 2018		a) Police information about children in custody is provided to relevant partners within 24 hours of the detention (evidenced in audit)	Children in custody identified, supported and overseen appropriately by the partnership
	5	Work with Avon and Somerset Constabulary, and other partners, to ensure partnership understanding of "Working Together 2015" in relation to agreeing criteria for statutory responsibilities in joint child protection enquiry processes including: - Ensuring multi-agency understanding of the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Board Escalation Process so that concerns about non-engagement in strategy discussions or section 47 enquiries are dealt with promptly	Strategic Manager Partnerships, Audit and Quality/Police Area Commander	1st May 2018		Somerset Safeguarding Children's Board lead audit of strategy discussions and S47 enquiries evidences improved practice in this area.	Children who are the subject of child protection enquiries tell their story once
	6	Develop joint Community Adolescent team and Social work training, to include: - What good Return Home Interviews and Missing Prevention Plans look like (using learning from other authorities). - how these interviews/plans can inform wider care planning for children.	Strategic Manager Prevention/ OM CLA	1st May 2018		a) Audit identifies improved quality of RHIs and MPPs, b) fewer children go missing more than once.	Fewer children go missing more than once.
		With Police and other CSE/missing review group partners, consider ways to enhance data capture, to improve outcomes for children who go missing and to inform wider risk reduction strategies. This should include: - Where children go missing from and to, and who they go missing with. -Data analysis within police force to identify common themes, to improve prevention strategy.	SSCB CSE sub-group Chairperson	30th April 2018			
	7	Via the SSCB CSE subgroup: - promote the work of BASE in CSE prevention work across all agencies - develop the CSE screening tool as a police intelligence to facilitate prevention and disruption activity - promote and develop the work of the regional CSE overview group to provide the data needed to inform trend and risk analysis by senior managers	SSCB CSE sub-group Chairperson	1st September 2018		a) SSCB audit identifies consistent use of CSE screening tools to prevent escalation of CSE	Fewer children are involved in CSE activity
4. Increase the range and quality of local care placements for children looked after Lead: Deputy Director Children's Services/Assistant Director Children's Commissioning							
A. Commissioning of the Care Market Lead: Strategic Commissioner							
	11	1) Set up a weekly residential review panel to consider permanence planning for children in residential care, the quality and value for money of this provision and to support transition to foster care when appropriate. 2) Work with Independent care providers to provide sufficient high quality care placements for Somerset children in Somerset. This includes improved relationships, shared workforce development, and contracts which provide greater certainty and innovation.	1) Deputy DCS 2) Children's Strategic Commissioners/ Strategic Commissioner Commercial and Procurement	1) 10 March 2018 2) 30 September 2018		% of children in residential care is in line with the average for "good" authorities - 11% % children who have been in care for more than 2.5 years in long term placements is 65% or above Reduction in children placed more than 20 miles from Somerset to 12% in line with statistical neighbours	Children have a long term family home where they are safe and cared for
B. Sufficiency of Council Foster Placements Lead: Operations Manager Fostering							

11	Commission an external review of the Council's fostering service to explore the likely market capacity in Somerset, innovative recruitment and an improved offer of support and benefits	Assistant Director Commissioning	1st June 2018		n/a	The Council and partners understand where there is capacity to recruit more in house carers, what would maximise this potential and have a clear plan about how to achieve it
5. Improve Outcomes for Care Leavers Lead: Deputy Director Children's Services						
13	Improve preparation for independence by: - Improving the pre- independence skills offer for all Somerset Children Looked After - Developing an Asdan Award for independent living skills. -	Strategic Manager CLA and LC	1st June 2018		Pre-independence programme is piloted with 20 children over 12 with children, carers, partners, social workers, IROs and leaving care workers actively involved in implementing it	Children in care learn independence skills gradually so that they are confident and resilient when they begin to live independently
13	Develop the local Leaving Care offer to 25 in conjunction with Care leavers	Strategic Manager CLA and LC	Local Offer - 30th September 2018 Survey completed - end March 2019		A survey of care leavers up to 25 shows that they are able to access the offer independently and that it provides useful and relevant information	Care leavers understand and can access services to support them when they need to
13	Continue to improve access to ETE by Working with Council contractors and external employers to development work experience and job opportunities.	Strategic Manager CLA and LC/ Service Manager Organisational Development	31st March 2019		% of care leavers who are NEET 16 and 17 is reduced to 10% and for 18 to 21 year olds is 25%	More care leavers are in employment, training or education
13	Increase capacity in the Virtual School to incorporate capacity to work with post 18 provision, specifically further education, apprenticeships and promoting university applications	Virtual School Head	1st September 2018		% of care leavers who are NEET 16 and 17 is reduced to 10% and for 18 to 21 year olds is 25%	More care leavers are in employment, training or education

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Ofsted 2017 recommendations

Recommendations

1. Ensure that capacity in the senior management team is sufficient to address the operational issues that have resulted in inconsistencies in social work practice.
2. Ensure that the scrutiny and oversight of practice provided by managers, child protection chairs and independent reviewing officers are effective in achieving positive change for children.
3. Ensure that all plans and reviews focus on improving outcomes for children and young people and are informed by an up-to-date, holistic assessment of need that includes their ethnicity, identity and cultural needs.
4. Develop effective systems with partner agencies to ensure the appropriate support and oversight of all children kept in police custody.
5. Improve the quality and effectiveness of strategy discussions by ensuring that joint investigations are appropriately planned, with timely completion of actions, and that contingency planning is clear.
6. When children go missing, ensure that return home interviews are timely and of sufficient quality to inform individual planning for children and wider risk reduction strategies.
7. Ensure that there is consistent use of tools for all children who may be at risk of sexual exploitation to improve safety planning and inform trend and risk analysis by senior managers.
8. Ensure that children and young people within the child protection process have timely access to advocacy services.
9. Ensure that all homeless 16 and 17 year olds are appropriately advised of their entitlement to become looked after, and that those that require it are actively supported as children in need.
10. Improve the timeliness and standards of social work practice to families in pre-proceedings work to help parents to understand the concerns for their children and make improvements.
11. Ensure that sufficient foster homes are available for children to meet their needs and that a range of quality placement options are available to them.
12. Ensure that children's initial health assessments are timely, and that the emotional and mental health needs of care leavers and children looked after are recognised and addressed.
13. Ensure that care leavers receive support for living independently at a time appropriate to their individual needs, and that all care leavers are engaged in some purposeful activity that supports them in accessing education, employment or training.

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Somerset County Council

Reinspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers

Inspection date: 7 November 2017 to 30 November 2017

Report published: 29 January 2018

Children's services in Somerset require improvement to be good	
1. Children who need help and protection	Requires improvement
2. Children looked after and achieving permanence	Requires improvement
2.1 Adoption performance	Good
2.2 Experiences and progress of care leavers	Requires improvement
3. Leadership, management and governance	Requires improvement

Executive summary

Since the last inspection in 2015, when Somerset children's services were judged as inadequate overall, the local authority has made steady progress in improving the quality of services that children and young people receive. Senior leaders have worked effectively with an improvement partner, and they have created a culture of openness and willingness to learn that supports further improvement.

Increased oversight by elected members provides additional scrutiny and challenge. Services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, while requiring further improvement to be good, have improved from a very low starting point. Children who require adoption receive a good service.

An experienced and committed director of children's services (DCS) has appropriately focused on engaging partner agencies in improvement and, at a senior level, there is good engagement and understanding of the practice issues. This is not always replicated in the multi-agency responses that children receive, and too many children's circumstances have to be escalated to senior leaders for effective action by partners, especially health and the police.

While no children were found to be at immediate risk of harm during this inspection, the quality of practice remains variable and managers do not always challenge poor practice. Children's assessments and plans remain inconsistent, and do not adequately capture children's cultural and identity needs. Social workers do not update assessments regularly enough.

The turnover of staff and managers has been reduced and there has been significant investment in creating an environment that enables good practice to flourish. This includes smaller caseloads for social workers and increased frontline manager capacity. While necessary, these changes in staffing have hampered relationships with social workers, particularly for those children who have been looked after for some time. This has slowed down the progression of their plans.

Leaders have improved early help services. When children first need a social work service, the thresholds are clear and consistent, and children receive a timely and proportionate response. However, child protection enquiries are not always appropriately child focused. Multi-agency meetings to protect children are not sufficiently focused on risk reduction. Scrutiny and challenge by child protection chairs and independent reviewing officers (IROs) do not always prevent delay for children or raise practice standards. Few children have access to an independent advocate in the child protection service. Responses to homeless 16- and 17-year-olds are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all are appropriately supported.

Decisions for children coming into care are appropriate and mostly timely. More recent practice demonstrates good planning for very young children, who benefit from fostering for adoption placements. This means that permanence is achieved quickly, with the minimum of moves. There is good 'edge of care' work to prevent

children from coming into care, and the local authority is expanding this to support children to return home from care. The quality of court work is good. Pre-proceedings work is less effective in supporting parents to understand concerns and what needs to change. Assessments are not always appropriately used to inform decisions about children who return home from care and, as a result, plans for a few children are not sufficiently clear about the support needed to sustain their return home.

Most children looked after live in homes that meet their needs well. Fostering services are improving, but there are not enough foster homes for children whose needs are complex. As a result, too many children experience moves before they find the right home. Senior leaders have rightly prioritised investment in resources to improve sufficiency. However, although the local authority has focused on improving commissioning arrangements, this has not yet resulted in all children receiving a timely service and there is little joint commissioning with partner agencies.

Children looked after do not always achieve their full potential, and the quality of personal education plans is not consistently good enough. Health assessments for children take too long when they first become looked after and care leavers do not always know important details about their health history. There is no prioritisation of child and adolescent mental health services for children looked after, and not all children have their emotional health needs met in a timely way. The investment in emotional well-being services, while positive, is too recent to measure the difference that services are making for children. The local authority needs to do more with partners to ensure that there is appropriate support for children's health needs.

Responses to children experiencing sexual exploitation are effective in reducing risk for individual children, but the quality of return home interviews for children who go missing from home or care does not contribute to good risk analysis. The local authority's plans for improving this service need to accelerate to ensure that there is sufficient strategic analysis of risk, with a collectively shared and determined approach by partners, to reduce risks for all children.

Adoption services are good and timely, and include effective use of fostering for adoption for a wide range of children. Adopters and birth families receive a range of effective support services. While there is good learning from adoption breakdowns prior to a final order, breakdowns following this are not considered. This is a missed opportunity to improve practice in order to enhance the sustainability of all adoptions. Personal advisers support care leavers well. However, care leavers do not have consistently challenging targets, particularly around the development of their independent living skills and supporting them into employment, education or training.

While the local authority has been successful in ensuring that basic practice standards are met, and that children are safe, it recognises that it must increase capacity in the senior leadership team so that the current pace of change is

maintained and accelerated further. This reflects the scale of improvement required since the last inspection.

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The local authority

Information about this local authority area¹

Previous Ofsted inspections

- The local authority operates three children's homes. Two were judged to be good and one was judged to require improvement in their most recent Ofsted inspections.
- The last inspection report for the local authority's children's services was published in January 2015. The judgements for the local authority were:
- Overall effectiveness: inadequate
 - Children who need help and protection: inadequate
 - Children looked after and achieving permanence: inadequate
 - Adoption performance: requires improvement
 - Experiences and progress of care leavers: inadequate
 - Leadership, management and governance: inadequate.

Local leadership

- The director of children's services (DCS) has been in post since March 2015.
- The chief executive has been in post since May 2014.
- The chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has been in post since July 2012.
- The local authority uses the relationship-based model of social work, based on 'Signs of Safety'.

Children living in this area

- Approximately 110,000 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Somerset. This is 20% of the total population in the area.
- Approximately 15% of the local authority's children are living in poverty.
- The proportion of children entitled to free school meals:
 - in primary schools is 11% (the national average is 15%)
 - in secondary schools is 10% (the national average is 13%).

¹ The local authority was given the opportunity to review this section of the report, and has updated it with local unvalidated data where this was available.

- Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 4% of all children living in the area, compared with 21% in the country as a whole.
- The largest minority ethnic groups of children and young people in the area are Mixed ethnicity and Asian.
- The proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language:
 - in primary schools is 7% (the national average is 20%)
 - in secondary schools is 5% (the national average is 16%).

Child protection in this area

- At 7 November 2017, 2,480 children had been identified through assessment as being formally in need of a specialist children’s service. This is a reduction from 3,109 children at 31 March 2017.
- At 7 November 2017, 433 children and young people were the subject of a child protection plan. This is an increase from 413 at 31 March 2017.
- At 7 November 2017, seven children lived in privately arranged fostering placements. This is an increase from the most recently published data for 31 March 2015, which was suppressed.
- Since the last inspection, 10 serious incident notifications have been submitted to Ofsted and five serious case reviews have been completed or were ongoing at the time of the inspection.

Children looked after in this area

- At 7 November 2017, 495 children were being looked after by the local authority (a rate of 45 per 10,000 children). This is an increase from 475 (43 per 10,000 children) at 31 March 2017. Of this number:
 - 140 (or 28%) live outside the local authority area
 - 52 live in residential children’s homes, of whom 27% live out of the authority area
 - six live in residential special schools,² of whom 83% live out of the authority area
 - 363 live with foster families, of whom 26% live out of the authority area
 - 14 live with parents, of whom four live out of the authority area
 - 19 children are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- In the last 12 months:

² These are residential special schools that look after children for 295 days or less per year.

- there have been 32 adoptions
- 76 children became the subject of special guardianship orders
- 237 children ceased to be looked after, of whom 5% subsequently returned to be looked after
- five children and young people ceased to be looked after and moved on to independent living
- 20 children and young people ceased to be looked after and are now living in houses in multiple occupation.

Recommendations

1. Ensure that capacity in the senior management team is sufficient to address the operational issues that have resulted in inconsistencies in social work practice.
2. Ensure that the scrutiny and oversight of practice provided by managers, child protection chairs and independent reviewing officers are effective in achieving positive change for children.
3. Ensure that all plans and reviews focus on improving outcomes for children and young people and are informed by an up-to-date, holistic assessment of need that includes their ethnicity, identity and cultural needs.
4. Develop effective systems with partner agencies to ensure that appropriate support and oversight take place of all children kept in police custody.
5. Improve the quality and effectiveness of strategy discussions by ensuring that joint investigations are appropriately planned, with timely completion of actions, and that contingency planning is clear.
6. When children go missing, ensure that return home interviews are timely and of sufficiently good quality to inform individual planning for children and wider risk-reduction strategies.
7. Ensure that there is consistent use of tools for all children who may be at risk of sexual exploitation to improve safety planning and inform trend and risk analysis by senior managers.
8. Ensure that children and young people within the child protection process have timely access to advocacy services.
9. Ensure that all homeless 16- and 17-year-olds are appropriately advised of their entitlement to become looked after, and that those that require it are actively supported as children in need.
10. Improve the timeliness and standards of social work practice relating to families in pre-proceedings work in order to help parents to understand the concerns regarding their children and make improvements.
11. Ensure that sufficient foster homes are available for children to meet their needs, and that a range of quality placement options are available to them.
12. Ensure that children's initial health assessments are timely, and that the emotional and mental health needs of care leavers and children looked after are recognised and addressed.
13. Ensure that care leavers receive support to live independently at a time that is appropriate to their individual needs, and that all care leavers are engaged in some purposeful activity that supports them in accessing education, employment or training.

Summary for children and young people

- Services for children who need help in Somerset are getting better. Council leaders and staff have worked hard so that when most children and their families need help, they receive it quickly. Although services are better, there is still more work to do to ensure that all children receive a good service.
- Children are kept safe because social workers act quickly to protect them when they are at risk of harm.
- Assessments for some children need to include more information about them and their families, with plans that are clear so that children and families know what needs to change to make things better.
- Social workers and managers make the right decisions about which children need protection and when children are not able to live at home with their parents. When a few children return home, they do not always have sufficient help to make sure that things are better for them.
- Managers and other agencies have worked hard to understand how many local children are at risk of sexual exploitation, and they support them well to reduce risks.
- More work needs to be done to make sure that, when children go missing, they have an opportunity to talk to an independent adult soon after their return. This will help adults to understand the reasons for children going missing, and to prevent it from happening again.
- Some children looked after live a long way from home and some children have to move several times as there are not enough suitable options.
- Social workers are good at finding the right families for children who need adoption quickly. Children have plenty of help with settling in quickly, and are able to live with their brothers and sisters.
- Young people leaving care need more information about their health and medical needs, and too many are not in education, employment or training. They do not always have the right help to make sure that they are able to live independently. Staff keep in contact with them, though, and young people know where to go for help when they need it.
- Senior managers have plans to keep on improving services for children. Plenty of training is arranged for social workers and other professionals who work with children, to make sure that they understand the best ways to help children and their families.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection

Requires improvement to be good

Summary

Since the last inspection, early help services in Somerset have improved. The majority of families now receive responsive and effective support when needs first emerge. Families affected by domestic abuse, substance misuse or poor parental mental health have access to a range of good early help and specialist services. When early help does not improve children’s circumstances, the step up to a social work service is timely and informed by an up-to-date assessment of need. Children who require a statutory social work service receive a timely and proportionate response to their identified needs.

Children at risk of harm are identified appropriately and swift action is taken to ensure that they are protected. However, strategy discussions do not always include clear contingency planning, and children sometimes need to tell their stories a number of times due to the unavailability of the police to conduct joint investigations. Social workers are not routinely involved in subsequent police interviews of children, and this delays safety planning and means that there is not effective joint working.

Despite staff turnover, most children receive regular visits from social workers who know them well. Good-quality direct work and the effective engagement of parents enable social workers to gain a comprehensive understanding of children’s experiences. Children’s assessments and plans are improving, but their quality is too variable and they do not always lead to interventions that improve children’s circumstances quickly enough.

Initial child protection and review conferences are timely and well attended by partner agencies, but partners do not actively contribute to safety planning for all children. Child protection conferences are not consistently effective in identifying all risks to individual children in a family, to inform planning. While scrutiny of practice by child protection chairs is increasingly evident, this does not yet routinely lead to improved practice or better outcomes for children. Very few children have access to advocacy services.

Effective multi-agency actions safeguard children who are at high risk of sexual exploitation. Responses to children who go missing are more variable. The quality and timeliness of return home interviews are inconsistent and the interviews do not routinely inform risk assessments for children or lead to a strategic analysis.

Responses with regard to homeless 16- and 17-year-olds are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that their needs are fully known and that all young people who need it are given support by the local authority.

Inspection findings

14. Since the last inspection, services for children in need of help and protection have significantly improved. Social work practice is stronger and children's safety is promoted well. However, the quality of social work practice overall is not consistently good.
15. Early help services in Somerset have improved, yet are not fully established across the partnership. However, the majority of families benefit from responsive early help services that are effective in reducing risk. Practitioners successfully support families who are living with domestic abuse, poor parental mental health and substance misuse, through the provision of targeted and universal interventions. Delays in allocation mean that a small number of families do not get the help that they need soon enough and their difficulties increase, requiring statutory intervention.
16. Early help assessments and plans are improving in quality. However, they are still too variable and not all are sufficiently focused on actions for improving children's outcomes. Assessments do not always analyse children's experiences sufficiently and not all risks are clearly articulated. Plans do not consistently address the needs identified in assessments, or what families need to achieve within specific timescales.
17. When children are first identified as needing help and protection, they receive an effective response. Partners understand the thresholds for intervention. The majority of partners and professionals seek consent appropriately and refer without delay. Child protection concerns receive a timely response and the application of thresholds in First Response, the local authority's contact referral and assessment service, is consistent and appropriate.
18. Somerset has improved its out-of-hours arrangements to ensure that children are protected. The emergency duty team responds effectively to the needs of children and families. They work closely with children's social care and the police to ensure the timely sharing of information and the immediate protection of children.

19. The multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) is now established, with good engagement of partners in the initial stages of child protection enquiries. Strategy discussions are timely and lead to appropriate decision-making, and outcomes are proportionate to levels of concern. However, discussions lack contingency planning and meetings do not always consider what information is to be shared with parents. Planning for joint enquiries by the police and social workers is not always effective due to the unavailability of police. Although social workers visit children to ensure that their immediate safeguarding needs are met, some children have to tell their stories a number of times. During the inspection, the local authority took action to escalate these incidents to police senior managers to ensure that joint investigations were undertaken in order to prevent this from happening. Social workers are not involved in achieving best evidence interviews of children, and delays in the sharing of information regarding the outcome of police investigations hamper decision-making and safeguarding planning for children. (Recommendation)
20. While the local authority knows and supports well the children who are remanded to court, it has not identified other children who are kept in police custody. As a result, assessments of these children's circumstances have not been undertaken, and their needs have not been ascertained. (Recommendation)
21. Children in need of targeted support, including disabled children and children on the edge of care, receive proportionate and sensitive support to meet their needs. There are intensive intervention services available for nine- to 17-year-olds who are at risk of becoming looked after, and the majority of families are supported effectively to continue to care appropriately for their children.
22. The quality of assessments is improving, with a focus on strengths and risks. While assessments inform work with families that improves outcomes for children, they are not always sufficiently analytical or detailed. A few assessments do not take account of family history to ensure that children's needs are fully understood. The needs and risks of each child within a family group are not always sufficiently differentiated. In the vast majority of assessments, children's identity and ethnicity needs are not fully considered.
23. Overall, most unborn babies benefit from timely assessment and intervention. In a few examples, inspectors found an absence of active pre-birth assessments or multi-agency actions. As a result there was insufficient time to promote change through direct work and emergency responses were then required for these children.
24. Most social workers see children regularly and know them well. Good-quality direct work and the persistent engagement of parents ensure that social workers have a comprehensive understanding of children's experiences. Increasingly effective social work interventions, particularly by newly qualified social workers, are leading to improved outcomes for children and their families.

25. Timely responses to the escalation of risk for almost all children ensure that children are protected. However, turnover in the social care workforce means that some children, particularly those experiencing neglect, have waited too long before action was taken to improve their circumstances. While the local authority, together with partners, is developing a range of tools and guidance to equip professionals better in the early identification of and response to child neglect, responses to children experiencing neglect are too inconsistent.
26. Although child protection conferences are timely and include partner agencies, they are not always effective in addressing delay for a small number of children who have experienced long-standing neglect. While agencies attend conferences and core groups, they do not always actively participate and the contribution of partners to planning is not always clear. Too few children benefit from access to advocacy for child protection conferences, and this is a missed opportunity to maximise their voice and understand the experiences of children in need of protection. (Recommendation)
27. Child in need reviews have improved in effectiveness, and result in a coordinated response to children's assessed needs. They ensure that appropriate support services are provided when statutory social work intervention is no longer needed. Families receive the help that they need, with an appropriate step down to early help services when children's circumstances change.
28. The quality of supervision and management oversight is not yet consistently good. While staff report good management support, supervision is not sufficiently regular or effective in reviewing overall progress for all children. Management direction is not always clear or sufficient to address weaknesses. As a result, changes in children's circumstances are not always fully explored and, for a small number of children, this has led to delay in taking action to meet their needs.
29. A variety of preventative and support services provide good help to families who are affected by domestic abuse, substance misuse and poor parental mental health. Partner agencies work well together to identify children who are exposed to domestic abuse. Multi-agency risk assessment conference arrangements are well established and effective. However, children and young people do not benefit from specific services that support them to build resilience and recover from their experiences of living with domestic abuse, and this is a gap in support and help available.
30. Operational multi-agency arrangements for overseeing and reviewing children who regularly go missing require improvement. The collation of information gathered from individual episodes of 'missing' is not yet informing local mapping sufficiently to reduce risks. Return home interviews are not always timely or of sufficient quality to consistently identify changing risks or inform safety planning for children. (Recommendation)

31. The effective coordination and oversight of children identified as being at high risk of sexual exploitation reduce risks for children. Children at lower levels of risk do not receive the same level of oversight by senior managers, and the use of screening and risk assessments tools is too inconsistent. While no children were identified by inspectors as being at immediate risk as a result of these deficits, screening tools are not always used well to inform planning interventions in order to reduce risk. (Recommendation)
32. Effective arrangements identify and monitor children who are missing education. Timely notifications and risk assessments ensure that families are contacted and offered support by the local authority when the arrangements commence. There is no routine support programme provided, but children who receive targeted support are cross-referenced to support information sharing and the provision of services.
33. The majority of assessments of the immediate needs of homeless 16- and 17-year-olds are timely, and plans appropriately address the identified areas of need. However, homeless young people are not routinely considered to be children in need, or clearly advised of their right to become looked after. As a result, consideration of the longer-term planning needs of these young people does not benefit from social work oversight or support. (Recommendation)
34. Private fostering arrangements are suitably monitored and supported by Somerset. Assessments are mostly timely. However, they do not always capture children's voices effectively.
35. The local authority identifies and investigates allegations of abuse against professionals effectively. Good promotion of the role and function of the designated officer across the partnership and agencies ensures that appropriate referrals are made. Action plans and case recording are comprehensive and the designated officer tracks cases well to ensure that investigations are well coordinated and responsive to the needs of children.

<p>The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
<p>Summary</p> <p>Services for children looked after in Somerset have made good progress since the last inspection, but still require improvement due to a legacy of poor practice and a lack of suitable homes for children with complex needs that has not yet been fully addressed. A strong corporate parenting culture in Somerset has raised the profile of the needs of children looked after, and is resulting in higher aspirations and ambitions than previously. Children who are looked after feel cared for and prioritised by their carers. However, changes in social workers mean that some children experience delay in their plans being progressed.</p> <p>Children become looked after when they need to be and, for the vast majority of children, this happens at the right time. Children on the edge of coming into local authority care receive good, intensive support to enable them to remain with their families. Children returning home from care do not always receive the same high-quality service, which means that for a very small number of children their return home is not sustained. While most children live in good placements where their needs are well met, placement matching and the sufficiency of placements need improving so that children do not experience avoidable moves before they live in good, stable placements that maintain their local support networks.</p> <p>The quality of most assessments of children looked after is good, although the identity needs of children are not always well considered. Assessments are not updated regularly and social workers do not routinely update care plans following significant changes to children’s circumstances. Most plans are not specific enough to measure progress, and this can create delay in progressing planning. The improvement to permanence planning has resulted in much better use of special guardianship, but further work is required to improve the timeliness of permanence for children in long-term fostering.</p> <p>Children looked after do not achieve the same level of educational attainment as their peers, and the quality of personal education plans is not consistently good. Health assessments do not identify children’s initial health needs quickly enough, and written health plans are not always available.</p> <p>Adoption services are good, with good use of fostering for adoption, and Somerset supports adopters well. Post-adoption support is comprehensive, although the learning from adoption breakdowns could be improved.</p> <p>Practitioners support care leavers well, but do not always set consistently challenging targets for care leavers, particularly around the development of independent living skills and getting back into employment, education or training. In addition, pathway plans are not helpful for young people.</p>	

Inspection findings

36. Services for children looked after in Somerset have improved since the last inspection. There is now good attention to meeting children's needs and children are safer. However, there is still too much inconsistency in the quality of practice, so not all children receive a good service.
37. When children need to be looked after, the decisions are mostly appropriate. For very young babies, there are mainly timely decisions to issue proceedings at birth. Good identification of fostering or residential assessment placements results in very young children being safeguarded and effective parallel planning commencing. Older children at risk of coming into care receive a responsive, intensive 'edge of care' service from Team 8, the adolescent intervention team, which has a high rate of success. The local authority is investing in expanding this very successful service to support more young people to remain at home. When children return home from care, decisions are not always informed by risk assessments or plans that detail the support on offer to sustain their return. This has resulted in a few children returning to circumstances in which change has not been sustained, and coming back into care.
38. The majority of assessments of children looked after are of good quality and capture well their emotional health needs, including the trauma experienced by children. Parents' and children's voices are clear throughout. Brother and sister relationships and contact with the people important to children are well considered. However, not all assessments are up-to-date and some assessments do not consider children's identity needs sufficiently to inform their plans and the support provided. Plans are not always informed by assessments or updated following significant changes. The lack of specific targets or milestones creates delay for some children in progressing their plans.
39. Social workers do not use family group conferences effectively to support good care planning. The local authority accepts that practice in relation to family and friends carers does not always recognise situations in which children are looked after, as opposed to living in a private family arrangement. During the inspection, the local authority reviewed children cared for by relatives to ensure that, where appropriate, children's entitlement to becoming looked after is recognised.

40. The timeliness of care proceedings has significantly improved to an average of 31 weeks from a high of 60 weeks, but does not yet meet the expected timescale of 26 weeks. The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) reports an improving quality of evidence in recent months. Social work statements to court seen by inspectors are child centred, with good analysis, and family history is used effectively. However, pre-proceedings work is less effective. The local authority mostly uses letters before proceedings within the Public Law Outline (PLO) as a gateway to initiating proceedings. These are not sufficiently child focused, making it difficult for families to understand and address concerns. Letters are not always clear about what has been done to support families, and they lack detail regarding how further support will be offered to families. (Recommendation)
41. Placement matching when children first become looked after or need to move requires improvement. Children and parents are not involved in placement choice and planning and, too often, they receive little information prior to placement. The recruitment strategy for increasing the number of foster carers is not yet resulting in all children who require a fostering placement being offered a timely and suitable match. Placement plans are not good enough. Social workers do not complete them in a timely way, and this may leave carers vulnerable in terms of fully understanding a child's care needs and how to meet them.
42. Long-term placement stability for children looked after in Somerset has deteriorated due to a lack of sufficiency of placements. To address this, senior leaders have increased the resources for supporting children to remain in their placements. While placement stability meetings identify factors that are leading to placement instability, they do not always result in clear, action-based, outcome-focused support plans. Managers do not yet review any themes from children's placements that end prematurely and social workers are not proactively planning to prevent further future placement breakdowns. (Recommendation)
43. Fostering services are improving, and there are a range of initiatives designed to increase the in-house offer and raise the quality of the service. A range of specialist fostering schemes are available, and contribute to positive outcomes for some children, including supporting children with attachment difficulties. Foster carers benefit from a significant range of training and support activities, and they exercise delegated authority on an individual basis to help them to make day-to-day decisions for children. Foster carers' assessments are generally of a good quality, and annual reviews clearly inform foster carers' training and developments.
44. Almost all children live in homes that meet their needs. They have regular contact with their social workers, who know them well. In a small minority of cases, social workers combined visits with other meetings and did not see children alone or in their homes. This is poor practice.

45. Case recording does not always demonstrate the quality of the relationships that the social workers have with children. While social workers undertake some sensitive direct work with children to ascertain their wishes and feelings, it is not always clear how well direct work informs assessments and planning. Life-story work is not routinely undertaken to assist children's understanding of their history, unless they have an adoption plan.
46. Independent reviewing officers (IROs) have manageable caseloads and maintain contact with children between reviews. They review children's care plans regularly, and more frequently when risks increase. Most reviews for children looked after are child centred, and there is good engagement with parents and carers. However, a small minority result in poor-quality minutes and recommendations that do not aid good planning for children. A lack of consistent challenge by IROs means that a small proportion of reviews do not progress permanence planning sufficiently for children in long-term fostering. There are some good examples of working with children, and the use of the 'Mind of my own' app has significantly increased children's communication with social workers. Inspectors saw that good individual work is being done in order to understand children's communication needs, and that IROs are planning reviews differently as a result.
47. Permanence planning has improved since the last inspection and inspectors saw timely permanent fostering matches that were informed by good matching reports. Since the last inspection, the local authority has significantly increased the use of special guardianship for children who cannot live with their parents, and this reflects a strong focus on permanence. The quality of assessments and support plans is not consistently good enough, and special guardians do not receive the same level of high-quality support to sustain placements long term that adopters receive. (Recommendation)
48. Independent visitor and advocacy services are well established. Children looked after who are placed at a distance from Somerset are given priority for a service, if this is required. Supporting children to benefit from advocacy is a priority for the local authority, and a communication toolbox assists children and young people who do not use verbal communication. However, not all children looked after understand the complaints process, and when children make complaints the responses are not always timely and their quality is variable.
49. Risks in relation to child sexual exploitation and missing from care are recognised and there is appropriate use of strategy discussions, management oversight and disruption activity for those children who are deemed to be at highest risk. The quality and timeliness of return home interviews are still too inconsistent and the interviews do not routinely inform children's safety planning. However, inspectors saw that some good-quality work being undertaken by a specialist social worker in the youth offending team was reducing risk in relation to sexually harmful behaviour.

50. Health assessments for children looked after are not always timely, and performance regarding the timeliness of initial health assessments has deteriorated. However, inspectors saw no children whose immediate health needs were not being addressed due to this delay. Performance in relation to reviewing health assessments is much better, and the majority of children looked after have an up-to-date health assessment. However, carers identify that they do not always receive a copy of the health plan, which makes it more difficult for them to be clear about how they are to meet children's health needs. At the time of inspection, there were 13 children, all living at a distance from Somerset, who had not had a health assessment. Short-term funding has been identified to ensure that these children's needs are met, but the local authority recognises that a more sustainable solution is required to ensure that the ongoing health needs of children who live at a distance are met.
(Recommendation)
51. Children looked after are not given priority for child and adolescent mental health services, and the local authority cannot be assured that all of their emotional health needs are met well. The recent introduction of the emotional and well-being team is a positive step, but it is too early to see improved outcomes for all children. There is good, child centred practice with regard to making early plans for transition in the cases of older young people who have diagnosed mental illnesses. Improving the links with adult services to ensure smooth transitions for children is a priority, and the recent introduction of a complex transitions panel is supporting this.
52. Children looked after in Somerset do not achieve as well at school as their peers and, although improving, their educational attainment from their starting points is still not good enough. Children at key stage 4 achieve on average one grade lower than expected. Personal education plans are not consistently good across the county and the use of pupil premium is not measured to ensure that it is used effectively to improve children's attainment. (Recommendation)
53. The virtual headteacher is setting high expectations for children looked after and sharing this ethos with all partners who work with Somerset children, resulting in more focused attention on improving attendance and attainment. School attendance for all children looked after requires improvement. Last year it was below 90%. The virtual school staff now have a more intense focus on each individual child and, at the time of the inspection, attendance had improved. The virtual school does not currently have sufficient oversight of all children looked after, particularly those in early years settings and in Years 12 and 13. Too many children in Years 12 and 13 are not in education, employment or training. The virtual headteacher and senior managers have recognised this and actions are now in place to improve this for the current year.

54. The virtual headteacher carefully monitors children who are looked after on bespoke timetables and children who are missing from education, to ensure that they return to full-time education as soon as possible. Virtual school staff ensure that alternative provision supports the development of children, and that children have positive and worthwhile experiences. Somerset provides good support for schools to enable them to recognise and tackle bullying in all forms.
55. The participation of children looked after is highly valued by senior leaders and managers. Children are well represented by the Somerset in care council. The website is child centred and reaches a wide audience, particularly those children who are placed at distance from Somerset. The link with the 'Unstoppables' group, a forum for children who have special educational needs and disabilities, encourages inclusive participation. Children looked after are involved in a wide range of opportunities to influence local practice, including training in corporate parenting for county councillors, staff recruitment and producing films on the importance of supervision and what makes a good social worker. Their work links clearly with corporate parenting priorities. Younger children have fewer opportunities to contribute, and the local authority recognises this as an area for improvement.

<p>The graded judgement for adoption performance is that it is good</p>
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56. Strong adoption services in Somerset ensure successful permanence for a wide range of children, and result in a high number of children benefiting from adoption. In the last 12 months, 32 children moved to their adoptive families.
57. Effective planning and the early identification of children in need of adoption mean that the timeliness of adoption has continued to improve, and is now good. Over half of the children take fewer than 14 months to move in with their adoptive families from entering care. A combination of successful tracking and strong links between the adoption team and social workers means that children who require adoption progress well through the adoption processes with the minimum of delay. Social workers and managers know their children well, and have achieved positive permanence outcomes for older children, brothers and sisters together and children with complex needs.
58. Family finding is swift and effective, ensuring that timely matches are achieved for the vast majority of children without delay. The local authority uses a wide range of local and national family-finding strategies, and social workers make prompt referrals to family-finding services for children who would benefit from a wider search. At the time of inspection, all children with a plan for adoption had potential matches identified. Where children's plans have changed from adoption, this is the result of court decisions where family members have become known late in the planning process.

59. Fostering for adoption is an area of considerable strength in Somerset, and increasing numbers of adopters choose this as an option in order to minimise unnecessary moves for children. At the time of inspection, over a quarter of all children in the adoption process were benefiting from fostering for adoption placements.
60. Recruitment processes for adopters are thorough, and produce a wide range of adopters to support choice and good matching with children's needs. The service has now addressed the delays in adopter assessments caused by capacity issues and the lack of timeliness of checks and adoption medicals. There is effective tracking of timeliness, and any current assessments that are outside of timescales are due to appropriate, adopter-led delays.
61. Social workers understand children's needs well and the quality of child permanence reports has improved. Recent reports clearly include children's views and their cultural needs, and provide a clear picture of their personalities and their relationships with brothers and sisters. Assessments to consider whether brothers and sisters should be adopted together are timely and of a good quality. This provides clear analysis that informs planning and matching to prospective adoptive families.
62. The matching of children to their new parents is effective. Adopter reports consider the parenting skills of adopters and how these will meet children's identified needs; they also clearly identify any potential vulnerabilities. Social workers prepare adopters well for their children. Prospective adopters benefit from meeting the medical adviser prior to matching, to discuss their children's physical, emotional and psychological needs for the future. Adoption support plans are carefully individualised to meet children's needs.
63. A committed and effective adoption panel provides strong, independent scrutiny of adoption practice. Members have a wide range of relevant backgrounds and experience. The panel supports the service to improve and reviews the learning from any adoption breakdowns. In the last two years, there have been three adoption placement breakdowns prior to an adoption order being made. Disruption meetings carefully scrutinise all professional practice and the team has now implemented the learning from these breakdowns. However, the service does not systematically gather the learning on adoption breakdowns post adoption orders. This is a lost opportunity to learn lessons to improve practice in order to enhance the sustainability of all adoption placements.
(Recommendation)

64. Adopters told inspectors that they are prepared well for caring for their children. The comprehensive preparation course provides adopters with a good understanding of the needs of adopted children, and insight into their own skills. They value highly the support of the team through the different stages of the process. Social workers support children well in making the transition to their new families. Timely child-focused and creative life-story books enable adopters to support their children to understand their experiences. Later-life letters provide clarity for children on why they were adopted, and bring their histories to life to ensure that they understand decisions made about them.
65. Adopted children benefit from high-quality, meaningful contact with their birth families. Adoption workers support both indirect and direct contact effectively, where appropriate. Social workers carefully assess all contact, taking account of children's individual circumstances. As a result, children are sensitively supported to maintain relationships that are important to their identities as they grow up.
66. Adoption support is a strength. The services offered are wide ranging, and support adopted children and their families into adulthood and beyond. The adoption and permanence team undertakes well-timed and sensitive work, helping families to meet the challenges. Good use is made of the adoption support fund, which ensures that families have immediate access to a variety of high-quality, professional specialist services that are local to them. Social workers coordinate post-adoption support effectively, using their skills and training in relevant therapeutic techniques. Adopters spoke positively about the skilled support that they receive from social workers throughout their adoption journeys.

The graded judgement about the experience and progress of care leavers is that it requires improvement to be good

67. Services for care leavers have improved significantly from the very low baseline at the last inspection. Senior leaders have recently made improvements to ensure that the service is responsive to young people's needs, but care leavers do not all receive a consistently good service.
68. Personal advisers know young people well, and are persistent in their efforts to engage them. At the time of the inspection, only two of the 336 care leavers were not in touch with the service, and this was their own choice. Most care leavers have good relationships with their workers, but a few find it difficult to contact them, especially out of hours, when they most need support. Personal advisers work alongside social workers to support young people with specific tasks until they reach 18 years old, when the leaving care service takes full responsibility for them. This ensures that young people feel supported by people who they already know well.

69. Workers respond well to care leavers when there are difficulties, and targeted training in the past year has increased their skills and ability to work with those care leavers who are harder to engage. Personal advisers regularly visit care leavers in prison, supporting them to use their time effectively. They ensure that care leavers who misuse substances and alcohol receive specialist support to reduce the risks to their health. Young parents have a dedicated social worker in the leaving care team to support them to develop their skills in parenting.
70. Care leavers who met with inspectors do not understand the purpose of their pathway plans. They feel that the process is too long and they do not see the benefit of these plans. Some plans are not reviewed well enough to measure progress. Managers prioritised pathway planning training to raise the quality of pathway plans after the monitoring visit in August 2017 and, as a result, the very recent pathway plans show a better focus on the young person. Targets are more understandable and achievable. However, too many plans do not have consistently challenging targets for care leavers, particularly in the development of independent living skills and supporting them back into employment, education or training. (Recommendation)
71. Not enough care leavers are engaged in purposeful activity and not all personal advisers have high enough expectations for their care leavers. Almost a third of care leavers are not in employment, education or training, although this figure has been reduced considerably in the last year. A few care leavers did not feel sufficiently supported in their endeavours. However, increasing numbers of care leavers are participating in apprenticeships or training programmes, and 22 care leavers registered this year. Support from the local authority has increased with six apprenticeships provided by them, and managers within the service are working with industry to increase the opportunities, yet there is more to do. Senior leaders and managers recognise that they need to provide better support to engage more care leavers in focused activity. (Recommendation)
72. The health needs of care leavers are not considered or addressed sufficiently. The designated nurse for looked after children does not routinely provide health advice and guidance for care leavers who are over 18 years, and there are no specialist areas of support for care leavers. Young people access services through their general practitioners, with the support of their leaving care workers. In a few cases, young people have waited too long for appropriate services to become available. Most care leavers do not receive sufficient information about their health history, even when they have known allergies, and not all care leavers are aware of their immunisation history. (Recommendation)
73. For those young people who need to transition from the child and adolescent mental health services to adult mental health services, there is appropriate support, and transitions are well planned and effective in supporting continuity of care. But for those care leavers without a medical diagnosis and care plan, the support is not well defined and they can wait too long for interventions to meet their emotional health needs.

74. Care leavers do not always understand their entitlements, but the leaving care team ensures that young people access appropriate services and it supports them in receiving their benefits. Somerset provides additional support to ensure that care leavers have what they need. Care leavers have an incentive scheme to positively encourage young people in education and training. Managers are working with district councils to encourage them to reduce the council tax for all care leavers when in their own accommodation in Somerset.
75. Not all care leavers feel well prepared to live independently and too many young people have tenancy breakdowns. Recently, commissioned housing providers offer a range of tiered support options, to build confidence and independence skills in care leavers. Personal advisers provide support for care leavers by giving financial advice and help with budgeting and shopping, when needed. But senior managers recognise the need to develop a stronger independence strategy to ensure that all care leavers make the transition to independent living successfully, at a pace that is right for them. (Recommendation)
76. The local authority has started to provide a much better range of appropriate accommodation options for care leavers since the last inspection, and the vast majority of young people are in suitable accommodation. 'Staying put' arrangements are used well, and 26 care leavers were living with their former foster carers at the time of the inspection. Care leavers report that they feel safe, and that they like the accommodation choices provided. Although the choice of accommodation is better, a few young people say that they are having to wait too long for their accommodation, especially those who need higher levels of support.
77. Somerset has a lively leaving care council, which is well supported and has good links with the corporate parenting board. Its achievements include website development and organising the highly regarded annual awards evening. However, care leavers do not feel involved with the design of the care leaver service, and are not sufficiently consulted to inform its development. The local authority recognises that there is more to do to engage care leavers in the development of the service to ensure that it is more responsive to young people.

Leadership, management and governance	Requires improvement to be good
<p>Summary</p> <p>Since 2015, under the leadership of a committed director of children’s services and deputy director, the local authority has prioritised effectively, ensuring that children in Somerset are safe and receive timely services. Starting from a very low base of inadequate practice, senior leaders have ensured that services for children have improved at every stage of their involvement with the local authority. Effective work with improvement partners and a clear understanding of progress mean that leaders are fully aware of the further work that is required in order to ensure that children consistently receive a good service. Although all services have improved, the pace of change and the quality of practice remain too variable, and current capacity in the senior leadership team to support further improvement at a pace is overstretched.</p> <p>Overarching plans appropriately prioritise children’s needs, and strategic planning for children has improved significantly. A much-improved corporate parenting board, a committed lead member for children and a separate scrutiny panel challenge and hold officers to account effectively. Commissioning arrangements are not strong and there is insufficient joint commissioning to ensure that children’s needs can be met. The sufficiency of placements for children looked after remains a particular challenge in Somerset and has not improved, despite scrutiny, effort and investment in resources.</p> <p>Partnership working is improving, with clear senior commitment to addressing issues which affect children. However, senior commitment across agencies is not yet leading to consistent good practice with individual children, and some long-standing issues remain unresolved. These include timely health assessments, addressing delays in children’s emotional needs being met and timely joint investigations with police.</p> <p>Work is currently being done to improve strategic responses to children who go missing from home or care and those at risk of child sexual exploitation. This needs to be accelerated to ensure that agencies learn from children and respond to trends and emerging risks, and that there is a proactive and shared response to reducing risks for children.</p> <p>The local authority has invested significantly by creating working conditions that support good practice. Most social workers now have manageable caseloads and regular supervision. Staff turnover has been reduced and a good range of learning, support and development opportunities are available to staff. However, further work is required to ensure that both management oversight of practice and quality assurance of casework lead to improved outcomes for children.</p>	

Inspection findings

78. Senior managers and leaders in Somerset have led improvement effectively since the last inspection in 2015, when all services, except adoption, were judged to be inadequate. A permanent DCS and a deputy director have provided consistent and skilled senior leadership since their appointments in 2015. After many years of instability and inadequacy, these two significant roles have offered continuity and clarity, resulting in measurable progress for children.
79. The DCS and the deputy director have modelled a clear and unwavering focus on getting the basics right in order to improve services for children. They have welcomed and worked well with their improvement partner, and know their services well. A range of panels ensure that thresholds are appropriately applied and that senior leaders oversee standards of practice. While this has provided a helpful short-term span of tight senior control, the deputy director is overburdened with too many operational tasks and direct reports. The local authority recognises the need for additional senior management support to strengthen operational capacity, to lead on strategic tasks and to improve the quality of social work practice for children. (Recommendation)
80. The LSCB chair, chief executive, DCS and deputy director engage well with partners to improve services for children. Senior leaders understand well the link between good multi-agency work and good services for children. The development of the MASH is an example of how well this works. However, there is still more to do to address weaknesses in multi-agency practice. The time taken to meet the emotional health needs of children looked after and the delays in police investigations, requiring escalation to senior leaders before appropriate action is taken, are examples of the poorer practice seen in joint work, and these require a more coherent and effective joint strategy. (Recommendation)
81. A significant area of improvement for children since the single inspection in 2015 has been the strengthening of corporate challenge and scrutiny. Following the inspection, a separate scrutiny panel for children was set up to provide a dedicated focus on children. This has been effective and has raised the profile of children's needs, while appropriately challenging officers and scrutinising practice and outcomes. This panel considers priority areas of practice alongside detailed data and reports. It acts as an effective forum through which to scrutinise the work on behalf of children.

82. The lead member clearly champions children's needs and there is a much stronger corporate sense of responsibility for children. As a result, the local authority has successfully refreshed and revised the corporate parenting board, provided training to the majority of councillors and developed thriving and lively Children in Care Councils. Aspirations for children have increased within children's services, but there is more to do to ensure that all the departments of the local authority share this responsibility, and that children looked after are clearly prioritised for training and development opportunities and wider council services.
83. Progress has been appropriately steered by clear written plans. Initially guided in 2015 by a clear, overarching nine-point improvement plan, the strategic direction is now addressing the consistency of practice alongside compliance issues. The current effective children's and young people's plan is closely aligned to other strategic plans, including the joint strategic needs analysis (JSNA).
84. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of their local communities and needs. The regularly updated JSNA identifies children's needs and is of sufficient range and detail to inform the current three-year children's and young people's plan for 2016 to 2019. The Health and Wellbeing Board offers an appropriate separate consideration of children's needs. The work of the LSCB means that partner agencies now understand the thresholds better, and that they are more consistently applied.
85. Although there has been considerable work done, and all service areas have improved, the progress of improvement is inconsistent, with some services requiring a more urgent pace. Early help, although improved, requires further integration with partners to increase its capacity. The local authority has not systematically evaluated the impact of the early help offer on meeting the needs of children and their families.
86. Commissioning arrangements are not yet sufficiently established, or producing all of the required outcomes. While there are some notably successful areas of commissioned services, including the new arrangements for care leavers, the provision of placements is not yet sufficient to meet the needs of all children in Somerset. The local authority has begun to address this deficit through recent investment in additional senior commissioning posts and the alignment of the placements team to the commissioning service. Plans need accelerating to provide greater choice and better-quality placement options for children. There are insufficient fostering placements available for children and too many poor quality providers, requiring some children to move at short notice. Work done with providers to stimulate the market, and to monitor and develop the quality homes that children need, requires a stronger, dedicated focus.
(Recommendation)

87. A significant amount of work has taken place since the last inspection to ensure that partners better understand and address the risks for children at risk of child sexual exploitation or going missing. Inspectors saw positive work being done in order to keep individual children safe, particularly those at the highest risk. Fortnightly meetings that review children who have been missing, child sexual exploitation champions distributed in each of the geographical areas in Somerset and sexual exploitation network meetings are all contributing to developing practice. However, the strategic response to child sexual exploitation and children going missing is not sufficiently evolved. Scrutiny at senior management level to identify patterns or trends for all children at risk of exploitation is insufficient. The DCS and partners have recognised this and invested in a project lead, who helpfully chaired Somerset's recent serious-case review panel relating to child sexual exploitation. This work is appropriately supporting the development of a more focused strategy, with clear action plans and a more coherent pathway for children, particularly those at lower levels of intervention. (Recommendation)
88. Multi-agency meetings to protect children are not sufficiently focused on reducing risk and scrutiny, and the challenge by child protection chairs and IROs does not always prevent delay for children. Chairs of conferences have high caseloads, and this has hampered their ability to progress improvements in social work practice and identify whether risks are reducing for children. The challenge from child protection chairs and IROs is not sufficient to be effective, and a more robust and questioning style is required to avoid unnecessary delay for some children. (Recommendation)
89. Quality assurance and audit processes have developed a culture of scrutiny and challenge with a positive attitude to learning. An extensive range of processes are undertaken and include quality performance review meetings, peer 'diagnostics' of individual services, the regular auditing of cases, sample audits by managers and team manager 'stocktakes'. A bespoke business data framework informs a clear and comprehensive suite of performance reporting documents, which leads to a good understanding of what is happening for children. However, some aspects of the audit process are too complex, and there is now declining compliance in their completion. Managers understand that the priority must now be on improving the quality of practice. There is more to do to engage social workers in the audit process, to embed improvements and to increase social workers' understanding of what constitutes consistently good practice for children.
90. The local authority has an improved and positive working relationship with Cafcass and the local family justice board. Court timeliness is improving and the quality of court work is much improved.

91. Senior managers have needed to recruit, train and support new workforce. The ongoing challenge of ensuring that social work posts are filled, and that the standard of practice is good enough, has been a particularly difficult one. This has required continuous effort and energy in creative recruitment. Initiatives, including 'try before you apply' and an active presence at recruitment fairs, have proved successful and have resulted in there being only 12 posts currently unfilled. Newer staff spoke very positively about the recruitment process. The service is still too reliant on locum social workers and team managers and, while this situation has considerably improved, the local authority recognises that ensuring there is a stable, skilled workforce remains an area for improvement.
92. Staff report being happy in their work in Somerset and there has been a clear, positive shift in morale and culture since the last inspection. An annual staff survey and a range of emotional well-being initiatives are all demonstrating an investment in staff. A mindfulness course proved highly effective in improving staff support and retention.
93. Investment in the workforce in Somerset has seen a 20% increase in social workers, with smaller teams. The expanded role of consultant social workers is supporting and enhancing the skills of social workers. Caseloads are manageable for the majority of staff, with a target of 14 and a current average of 16, although a minority of social workers have a much higher caseload than this. Newly qualified social workers who are in their assessed and supported year of employment receive good support and speak positively about their experiences. They benefit from guaranteed smaller caseloads, and Somerset has been highly successful in retaining newly qualified social workers over the last two years. The turnover rate for social workers, although much improved, is still having an impact on children, particularly on children looked after, who have experienced too many changes in workers.
94. Supervision takes place regularly for the majority of social workers, although the quality of this varies considerably and it is not consistently reflective. Management oversight of work is also too variable and not all social workers benefit from consistently clear guidance and direction. The local authority needs to ensure that all frontline managers have the right skills to develop and support social workers. (Recommendation)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences of children and young people who have needed or still need help and/or protection. This also includes children and young people who are looked after and young people who are leaving care and starting their lives as young adults.

Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences adults make to the lives of children, young people and families. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with families and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the local authority knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

The inspection of the local authority was carried out under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Ofsted produces this report of the inspection of local authority functions and the review of the local safeguarding children board under its power to combine reports in accordance with section 152 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The inspection team consisted of seven of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted.

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