

Blackpool Council

19 March 2024

To: Councillors Bamborough, S Brookes, Cooper, Critchley, Ellison, Fenlon, Flanagan, Jones and C Mitchell

Co-opted Members: Jo Snape and Gemma Clayton

The above members are requested to attend the:

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 27 March 2024 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room A, Town Hall, Blackpool

A G E N D A

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests in the items under consideration and in doing so state:

(1) the type of interest concerned either a

- (a) personal interest
- (b) prejudicial interest
- (c) disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI)

and

(2) the nature of the interest concerned

If any member requires advice on declarations of interests, they are advised to contact the Head of Democratic Governance in advance of the meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2024 (Pages 1 - 8)

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 25 January 2024 as a true and correct record.

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING

To consider any requests from members of the public to speak at the meeting.

4 FORWARD PLAN (Pages 9 - 16)

The Committee to consider the content of the Council's Forward Plan April 2024 to July 2024, relating to the portfolios of the relevant Cabinet Members.

5 BORN INTO CARE PROJECT (Pages 17 - 38)

To update the Committee around the Born into Care project and the impact that the key findings and changes can have upon children and families of Blackpool.

6 BLACKPOOL FAMILIES ROCK (Pages 39 - 42)

To update the Scrutiny committee regarding the Blackpool Families Rock, co-produced ethos. The way in which we work with families, work with each other and the way we as a Council act.

7 PLACEMENT STABILITY FOR FOSTER CARERS (Pages 43 - 68)

To consider the specific issue of placement stability and the impact on children, families and foster carers.

8 YOUNG INSPECTORS' PROGRAMME (Pages 69 - 76)

To provide an update on the work of the young inspectors' programme.

9 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKPLAN (Pages 77 - 86)

To note the ongoing workplan for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year and consider the update to previous Committee recommendations.

10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date and time of the next meeting is to be confirmed at Annual Council.

Venue information:

First floor meeting room (lift available), accessible toilets (ground floor), no-smoking building.

Other information:

For queries regarding this agenda please contact Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager, Tel: 01253 477213, e-mail sharon.davis@blackpool.gov.uk

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Agenda Item 2

MINUTES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING - THURSDAY, 25 JANUARY 2024

Present:

Councillor Flanagan (in the Chair)

Councillors

Bamborough
S Brookes

Cooper
Critchley

Ellison
Jones

C Mitchell

Ms G Clayton and Ms J Snape, Co-opted Members

In Attendance:

Councillor Paul Galley, Chair of the Scrutiny Leadership Board

Councillor Kath Benson, Cabinet Member for Young People and Aspiration

Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Chris Coyle, Assistant Director of Children's Services (Children's Social Care)

Paul Turner, Assistant Director of Children's Services (Education, SEND and Early Years)

Kara Haskayne, Head of Safeguarding Children and Strategic Partnership Boards

Jeremy Mannino, Head of Schools Safeguarding and Exclusion

Charlotte Baron, Head of SEND

Mike Chew, Divisional Director of Operations, Families and Integrated Community Care
Division, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals

John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser (Scrutiny)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2023 were signed by the Chair as true and correct record.

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no requests from members of the public to speak on this occasion.

4 EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

The Committee considered and noted the Executive and Cabinet Member decisions taken since the previous meeting.

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5 FORWARD PLAN

Members considered the items on the Forward Plan within its remit. Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, informed the committee that in respect of the items on the plan both the Updated Children's Services Medium Term Financial Plan and the Blackpool Children's and Young People Strategic Partnership Plan, would be completed in the near future and that the Partnership Plan would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee agreed:

1. That the be update; and
2. To add the partnership plan to its work programme for the next meeting.

6 HEALTH WAITING TIMES AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

Mr Mike Chew, Divisional Director of Operations, Families and Integrated Community Care Division, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals (BTH), presented the report outlining the progress made in improving access to services for children and young people with SEND.

In respect of Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) waiting times had been improved through increased staffing capacity and better organisation of waiting lists through the appointment of a coordinator role and reducing the numbers of children not brought for appointments or who had cancelled their appointments.

At Blenheim Child Development Centre improved waiting times had been delivered through the securing of additional administrative support. However it had been recognised that waiting times remained above 52 weeks and that additional staffing resource was needed to address the issues. Increased recruitment resources had been put in place to address the issue and Mr Chew expressed the view that these actions would be successful in reducing waiting times to below 52 weeks.

Mr Chew also reported that there had been improvements in the Neuro-Development Pathway (NDP) through increased staffing which had reduced the waiting times from 130 weeks to 26 weeks. However he also stated that there was a need to be clearer on why waiting times existed, noting that waits could be generated by the time it took for information to be brought together to allow cases to proceed. There was a process known as "watchful wait" that had been introduced during the time that a diagnosis was developed to ensure patients and their families were kept informed. It was also reported that BTH would be working with the SEND Partnership and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to develop a business case to secure increased priority funding for the NDP which would improve accessibility for children and young people.

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was discussed with Mr Chew reporting that nationally Blackpool benchmarked well but that there had been an increase

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in referrals which had created pressures on waiting times. In order that those on the waiting list remained supported and an overview of their wellbeing was retained CAMHS maintained contact with all those on the list. Recruitment of additional CAMHS staff was raised by the Committee with Mr Chew explaining that it was an issue. He highlighted that Blackpool had difficulty attracting quality individuals in a challenging national employment market. Work to address these issues included the development of incentives to working in Blackpool, however Mr Chew emphasised that whole system improvements would be a key feature in improving attractiveness to potential new staff.

The Committee highlighted that although those not accepted by CAMHS were informed of the reasons why they had not been accepted ongoing assistance was not always put in place. Mr Chew recognised that this should not be the case and emphasised the importance of listening to the experiences of those who interacted with services to ensure improvements could be identified.

The Committee noted that the report did not include details of “no-shows” at SLT appointments. Members understood that instances of children not being brought for appointments would contribute to increased waiting times and asked that the figures be provided for information.

Referrals on from the NDP were also discussed with the Committee informed that those who had been on the pathway and had received a referral to other services would be the subject of an additional waiting time. As this would result in further waiting for children and young people accessing help, the Committee asked that the numbers of those referred on be provided for information.

In addition to the work by BTH it was noted that waiting times were also impacted by features outside of health services such as housing and those not in employment education or training. Members therefore asked that the importance of partnership working between BTH, the SEND partnership, the ICB and other stakeholders within Blackpool in delivering improved access to services for children and young people be recognised.

The Committee agreed:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That details of “no-shows” for Speech and Language Therapy be provided to members of the committee for information; and
3. That details of waiting times for those referred on from the Neuro-Development Pathway be provided for information to members of the committee.

7 SEND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION AND STRATEGY UPDATE

Mr Paul Turner, Assistant Director – Education, SEND and Early Years, presented an update on the SEND Written Statement of Action (WSOA) and Strategy, highlighting progress made since the February 2022 Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection. He

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highlighted that progress had been made against the actions identified in the WSoA and that the Department for Education (DfE) was satisfied with the work taking place and had been providing ongoing guidance and support. Mr Turner further explained that a key part of this work was the embedding of the concept that SEND was “everyone’s business” and that ownership should be accepted by all services that were accessed by children with SEND, such as leisure.

Progress had also been made in increasing the number of SEND placements available within Blackpool. Mr Turner explained that through the creation of additional placements Blackpool could offer support to out of area children as well as those within the town. This would also assist in driving down costs within Blackpool and further improve service provision going forward.

The Committee noted the role that the private sector could play in supporting children with SEND. Mr Turner stated that this had been recognised and that a number of employers did support work involving children with SEND, but that more could be done in this respect. Members asked that details of the work taking place be circulated for information following the meeting.

It was noted that Mr Turner would be leaving his role at the Council and Members queried who would replace him and where responsibility for overseeing SEND work would lie. In response, it was explained that Mr Jeremy Mannino would become Assistant Director with responsibility for SEND in Mr Turner’s place, while SEND work specifically would remain with Ms Charlotte Barron as the SEND Manager.

The report highlighted that the Council was awaiting the outcome of a bid for funding for an Alternative Provision Academy from the DfE. Mr Turner explained that although no guarantee could be provided on how successful the bid could be, officers were confident it would be approved. The delivery of a new academy was recognised as an important addition to the SEND offer in Blackpool and would assist in returning some children with SEND back into mainstream schooling.

Members highlighted that they had informally discussed issues surrounding SEND as part of the Preparation for Adulthood Strategy meeting. As part of this the Committee had recommended that a deep dive on the “Transition for Young Adults with SEND” be undertaken and asked that this be added to the Committee’s work programme.

The Committee agreed:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That details of work with private sector organisations be provided to members of the committee for information; and
3. That a deep dive on the Transition of Young Adults with SEND be added to the Committee’s work programme.

Mr Turner, Mr Mannino, Ms Baron and Mr Chew left the meeting following this item.

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8 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

Mr Chris Coyle, Assistant Director – Children’s Social Care presented an update on progress against the Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan. He reported that sufficient improvements had been made and the Department for Education (DfE) had therefore removed its right of statutory intervention. This was noted as a significant step, although it was noted that the DfE had appointed a civil servant to provide dedicated support and advice to the Council as its improvement journey continued.

It was advised that two of the key aims of the plan were the aspiration to receive a “Good” Ofsted grading and that service users regarded the provision as good. This would involve better engagement with young people and their families to undertake their needs and identify where improvement could be made.

Oversight and monitoring of the plan had also been established to assist in ensuring that it was capable of meeting its aims. This included quarterly review meetings chaired by Ms Vicky Gent, Director of Children’s Services, where the work taking place would be monitored. Officers also regularly met with the DfE where constructive feedback was received and comment provided on work taking place. Mr Coyle added that the feedback received so far had been positive. Communication had also been maintained with Ofsted regarding progress and it was expected that a further inspection would be undertaken in the near future.

Mr Coyle also highlighted the data in respect of the work being undertaken, stating that the number of referrals had fallen from 1,000 to 780 per 100k, which was in line with comparable authorities. In addition to this the rate of re-referrals had fallen from 32% to 18%, which was below the national average. The number of Looked After Children had also fallen to 125 per 10k, although it was recognised that this remained above the national average. Section 47 Enquires were stated as being in line with Blackpool’s statistical comparators and the number of Children Protection Plans in place were at the national average. Mr Coyle reported that this demonstrated that the work taking place was having a positive impact and that services were improving.

It was noted that the number of Interim Care Orders was worse than the baseline figure and Mr Coyle accepted that this was the case. This was due in part due to national slippage in the number of orders but he also recognised that more could be done by the Council including work to identify members of children’s wider family.

The costs of Children’s Social Care was also discussed and Members queried if it was considered that the work taking place would lessen the financial pressures generated. Mr Coyle stated that this would be the case in the long term but pressures would remain in the short and medium terms. He advised that LAC and children in residential settings would remain the biggest cost, but that the number of these children was reducing in line with the national average and that officers were confident that services were progressing the right direction.

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The vetting of agency staff was raised with Mr Coyle explaining that Blackpool used fewer agency staff than the national average in Children's Social Care. He added that a structured process was in place for recruiting agency staff which was supported by the Council's human resources and commissioning teams. Further to this any externally recruited staff were subject to a contractual framework that ensured robust checks were in place before they could work.

The Committee agreed that the report be noted.

9 SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Ms Kara Haskayne, Head of Safeguarding Children and Strategic Partnership Boards, presented a report outlining the new children's safeguarding arrangements for Blackpool. Following the ending of Pan-Lancashire safeguarding arrangements, partners had decided to review the joint safeguarding arrangements in 2022 following concerns that they had led to a lack of strategic focus on local areas. Following this review, partners had agreed to cease Pan-Lancashire arrangements and move to a place based model allowing a greater focus on local need.

As a result of this decision the Council met with safeguarding partners at a workshop event in March 2023 to agree the strategic safeguarding priorities for Blackpool. This meeting established that the partnership would set up Strategic Delivery Groups responsible for each priority which would report assurance to a Blackpool Children Safeguarding Partnership Assurance Board (CSAP). The first meetings of these group began following the first CSAP meeting in May 2023. Ms Haskayne reported that all the groups had met except the Domestic Abuse Children and Families Strategic Delivery Group, which had not met due to a delay in Lancashire Constabulary nominating a Chair. However she added that this nomination had been received in January 2024 and therefore it was hoped that the group would begin work soon.

Ms Haskayne also reported on the work to develop the governance arrangements for the CSAP. These had been developed following the publishing of the Department for Education's "Working Together" consultation in September 2023. This had led to the agreement that the Board should be chaired by one of Blackpool's statutory "Delegated Strategic Leaders", Blackpool Council, Lancashire Constabulary and the Integrated Care Board (ICB). For the first year of the CSAP would be chaired by the ICB's Director of Safeguarding.

Further to this, the CSAP had also appointed an Independent Scrutineer, whose role was to hold members of the partnership to account and ensure that it delivered against its strategic priorities. Ms Haskayne added that the Independent Scrutineer would produce an annual report which would be brought to the Committee in June 2024. This report would set out the CSAP's business plan and the work being undertaken by the Strategic Delivery Groups.

The Committee welcomed the update on the role of the Independent Scrutineer and asked

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that to enable greater understanding of their role that they be invited to a pre-committee briefing to meet Members and explain the work they would be undertaking.

In order to ensure greater joined up working and that safeguarding governance would be brought together, Ms Haskayne informed Members that a Blackpool Partnership Business Unit had been established. She would be responsible for this unit as Head of Safeguarding Children and Strategic Partnership Boards. This unit would ensure that the CSAP, Blackpool Safeguarding Adult Board and BSafe Community Safety Partnership would work together effectively to deliver safeguarding for children, adults and communities.

The role of co-production in safeguarding was discussed with Ms Haskayne emphasising its importance in designing services. In respect of the selection of parents to take part in this process she explained that clarity on how this was undertaken was key. Learning on how this could take place had been gained from "Blackpool Families Rock" and ensured that a wide and diverse sample of parents would be used. This would ensure creative solutions could be developed to the challenges faced.

The Committee agreed:

1. That the report be noted; and
2. That the Independent Scrutineer be invited to a pre-committee briefing.

10 SCRUTINY WORKPLAN

The Committee noted its workplan, the table of recommendations and the notes of its Preparing for Adulthood Strategy informal briefing.

The Chair also reported that he would be attending a training session held by the Local Government Association with the chairs of children's scrutiny from other local authorities. He advised that this was an opportunity to gain learning on how other areas undertook children's scrutiny and that he would report back on the outcome of the training to a future pre-committee briefing.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted the date and time of the meeting as Thursday, 27 March 2024 commencing at 6.00pm.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.57 pm)

**MINUTES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING -
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Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser (Scrutiny)
Tel: 01253 477229
E-mail: john.greenbank@blackpool.gov.uk

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Date of Meeting:	27 March 2024

FORWARD PLAN REPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The Committee to consider the content of the Council's Forward Plan April 2024 to July 2024, relating to the portfolios of the relevant Cabinet Members.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Members will have the opportunity to question the relevant Cabinet Members in relation to items contained within the Forward Plan within the portfolios of the Leader of the Council relating to Children's Services only and the Cabinet Member for Young People and Aspiration.

2.2 Members will have the opportunity to consider whether any of the items should be subjected to pre-decision scrutiny. In so doing, account should be taken of any requests or observations made by the relevant Cabinet Member.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To enable the opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny of the Forward Plan items.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council priorities are:

- The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Forward Plan is prepared by the Leader of the Council to cover a period of four months and has effect from the first working day of any month. It is updated on a monthly basis and subsequent plans cover a period beginning with the first working day of the second month covered in the preceding plan.

5.2 The Forward Plan contains matters which the Leader has reason to believe will be subject of a key decision to be taken either by the Executive, a Committee of the Executive, individual Cabinet Members, or Officers.

5.3 Attached at Appendix 4(a) is a list of items contained in the current Forward Plan. Further details appertaining to each item is contained in the Forward Plan, which has been forwarded to all members separately.

5.4 Witnesses/representatives

5.4.1 The following Cabinet Members are responsible for the Forward Plan items in this report and have been invited to attend the meeting:

- Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 4(a) - Summary of items contained within Forward Plan.

6.0 Financial considerations:

6.1 None.

7.0 Legal considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Human Resources considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Risk management considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:

10.1 None.

11.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 None.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.

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EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN - SUMMARY OF KEY DECISIONS**APRIL 2024 TO JULY 2024***** Denotes New Item**

Anticipated Date of Decision	Matter for Decision	Decision Reference	Decision Taker	Relevant Cabinet Member
April 2024	Update of the Children's Services Medium Term Financial Strategy	12/2002	Executive	Cllr Hobson
April 2024	The Blackpool Children, Young People and Families Strategic Partnership Plan	16/2023	Executive	Cllr Hobson

EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN - KEY DECISION:

Matter for decision Ref N° 12/2022	Update of the Children's Services Medium Term Financial Strategy
Decision making individual or body	Executive
Relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Date on which or period within which decision is to be made	April 2024
Who is to be engaged and how	Subject to consultation with a range of stakeholders...
How representations are to be made and by what date	Not Applicable
Documents to be submitted to the decision maker for consideration	Report Updated Strategy
Name and address of responsible officer	Steve Thompson, Director of Resources, Resources Directorate, Blackpool Council, Number 1 Bickerstaffe Square, Talbot Road, Blackpool, FY1 3AH e-mail:steve.thompson@blackpool.gov.uk Tel: (01253) 478505

EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN - KEY DECISION:

Matter for decision Ref 16/2023	The Blackpool Children, Young People and Families Strategic Partnership Plan
Decision making individual or body	Executive
Relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Date on which or period within which decision is to be made	April 2024
Who is to be consulted and how	<p>Blackpool partnership agencies leadership teams and frontline workforce practitioners, front line workforce, Schools via the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Elected Members are co-producing the Children, Young People and Families Plan vision, logo and priorities.</p> <p>Children, young people, families and carers are involved in a Children Pictures Competition, so children's pictures can be included throughout the Plan and co-produce a version of the Executive approved final Children, Young People & Families Partnership Plan document, so this can be provided to Blackpool's children and families.</p> <p>The Children, Young People and Families Partnership Board – Data Sub Group are developing a Shared Outcome Framework (partnership performance data) enabling analysis to be undertaken with regard to the future impact of the plan.</p>
How representations are to be made and by what date	<p>A Children, Young People and Families Partnership Plan co-production electronic survey has been shared across the partnership.</p> <p>The electronic survey is being undertaken via the IT system provided by the Council Infusion Service. The survey is ceased on Friday 28 July 2023. And will be analysed by the Children's Services Head of Service – Safeguarding Children and strategic Partnership who is the author of the final plan.</p>
Documents to be submitted to the decision	A report from Director of Children Services, along with the Children, Young People and Families Partnership

maker for consideration	Plan document.
Name and address of responsible officer	Vicky Gent, Director of Children Services –. e-mail: victoria.gent@blackpool.gov.uk Tel: (01253) 476821

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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Laura Chadwick, Head of Transformation/Principal Social Worker and Bertie Goff, Workforce Development Lead
Date of Meeting:	27 March 2024

BORN INTO CARE PROJECT

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To update the Committee around the Born into Care project and the impact that the key findings and changes can have upon children and families of Blackpool.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 For Scrutiny committee to review the Born into Care project to date, to offer scrutiny and challenge around the next steps.

3.0 Reason for recommendation(s)

- 3.1 To ensure the Scrutiny committee has oversight of the Born into Care project, the work streams that has taken place and the changes that have already been undertaken as well as those which are yet to be implemented.

- 3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy approved by the Council? No

- 3.2 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered

- 4.1 All Born into Care project work streams so far have considered a variety of options in terms of changes to systems and processes. Any plans from the Born into Care project have been fully co-produced with lived experience individuals and are therefore considered to be the most appropriate and effective changes.

5.0 Council priority

- 5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- 'Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'

6.0 Background and key information

- 6.1 The Born in to Care project and research was undertaken as a result of the numbers of babies being made subject to care proceedings and removed from their birth families. Over the past decade this number has increased. Findings from the research have informed local area actions plans to address challenges in systems and to develop and pilot practice guidelines designed to introduce more sensitive and humane practice when the state intervenes at birth.
- 6.2 Blackpool Council became involved in the Born into Care project due to the high numbers of children, babies in particular, who enter into our care. In Blackpool Children's Social Care we are proud of the fact that many of our key measures are going in the right direction, for example we are steadily reducing is the numbers of children in our care ('Our Children'). However, we know we need to improve our practice and specifically reduce the numbers of babies we remove at birth, or soon after birth. The Born into Care project is focused on how we might do things differently to remove fewer babies from their families and, in situations where babies aren't able to safely remain at home, improve our practice and support to families to ensure it is kind, caring and sensitive.
- 6.3 The Born into Care project has genuinely been an amazing example of a co-produced project in the Blackpool culture and tradition we are building. With parents, health, 3rd sector, academic and other partners, this project has steadily been maturing over the last 3 years. We now understand that good co-production can take time and this project is now at the stage of delivering new and innovative ways of working that have, and continue to be, co-produced. Since the start of the Born into Care project small changes have been made to practice along the way, however we are not at a stage in Blackpool where the learning and the key findings are being used to make system changes, both in Children's Social Care, and other partner organisations such as midwifery.
- 6.4 In Blackpool we are determined to improve the support available to parents who have had a multiple children removed from their care. We are particularly interested in developing new ways of working in order to reduce the risk of more children being removed from their care, and have together with parents produced a suggested practice model to support parents in this circumstance.
- 6.5 **The Born in Care Project So Far:**
June 2020: First statistical analysis new-Born into Care proceedings.
2019 -2022: Ongoing data analysis by the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (NFJO) Data Partnership.
2021: Blackpool becomes site of Born into Care: Developing new national guidelines for when the state intervenes at birth.
Sept 2022-Feb 2022: Blackpool begins co-production process to look at local response to Born into Care findings.

March 2022: Local multi-agency area workshop held and co-production group's principles shared.

June 2022: Steering group formed to oversee work. Prioritised initial work streams.

Oct 2022: Three co-production work streams.

Jan 2023: Steering group – Theory of Change development.

June 2023: Recommendations from work streams and next step actions agreed.

Sept-Dec 2023: 5 co-production work streams – Practice models, Recurrent care, Lived Experience, Legal & Mapping.

Jan 2024: Steering group – development day.

6.6 **Achievements to date:**

During the course of the project a variety of work streams have worked together to change practice. One group consisting of workers and parents have developed and tested a map for parents, families and professionals that helps them navigate our social care 'system', that empowers parents and families to understand their journey, be more involved in choices and be more in control of their lives. This is being tested and refined and is due to be launched on April 10th.

6.7 In January 2024 a Born into Care development day was held where numerous work streams came back together and agreed that developing a clearer, practical and evidence-based offer for parents who have experienced multiple children being removed is the next step. A proposal for this recurrent offer is being presented to the Better Start Executive Board for funding and support. We hope this offer will sit with Better Start, at an Early Help level, offering both practical and therapeutic support to these families, support that is available before a baby is born and after a baby might be removed. This support will link to both universal services and also to our social work teams. In our new multiagency social work teams we are also looking to develop some teams as specialist pre-birth (or Start for Life) teams that will deliver better assessment and support to families with pregnant mothers and new babies.

6.8 There is a legal work stream that has members of the local judiciary, representation from legal practices locally, health, social care, parents, 3rd sector, academics. This group has national support from the NFJO and is looking at a different approach in court for these parents, babies and families. This is likely to be a longer-term part of the Born into Care project, but has some exciting potential. There are some positive models already to build on and we hope to return in coming months with more concrete updates around this part of the project.

6.9 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 **List of appendices**

7.1 Appendix 5(a) – Born into Care/Blackpool Families Rock presentation

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

Blackpool Children's Services

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Appendix 5(a)

Vicky Gent
Laura Chadwick
Michaela Goodridge
Lisa Harrison
Bertie Goffe

Scrutiny Committee Update March 2024

- *Blackpool Families Rock*
- *Born into Care*



Context – *culture change*

- Long history of “revolving door”
- Rapid escalation into Statutory services
- Pattern associated with weaker outcomes
- Culture change needed

Context – *co-production*

- Key to our development has been our Blackpool Families Rock approach, co-produced with our families
- A key part of any practice model is *how* we work with children, young people and families
- Blackpool Families Rock is our *how* and a core part of this is co-production,
- This approach was co-produced, we have a dedicated co-production team and much of our current work is co-produced

Social Pedagogy Concepts: Head, Heart & Hands



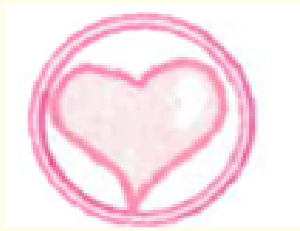
Head - Our thinking, our knowledge and our experience



Heart - Our values and what we feel



Hands - The doing of what we think and feel



Heart: Feeling

We are all human
We can all make mistakes
Trusting relationships are important
Respect each other
Be kind
Let's be brave together
Never give up on me
See me (I am unique)
See the good things
Share the power



Head: knowledge culture and thinking

Don't be nosy (ask yourself if you really need to know this)
Use plain language
Share knowledge
Take care in how you talk and write about us
Share what you know about us
Be non-judgemental
Walk in my shoes

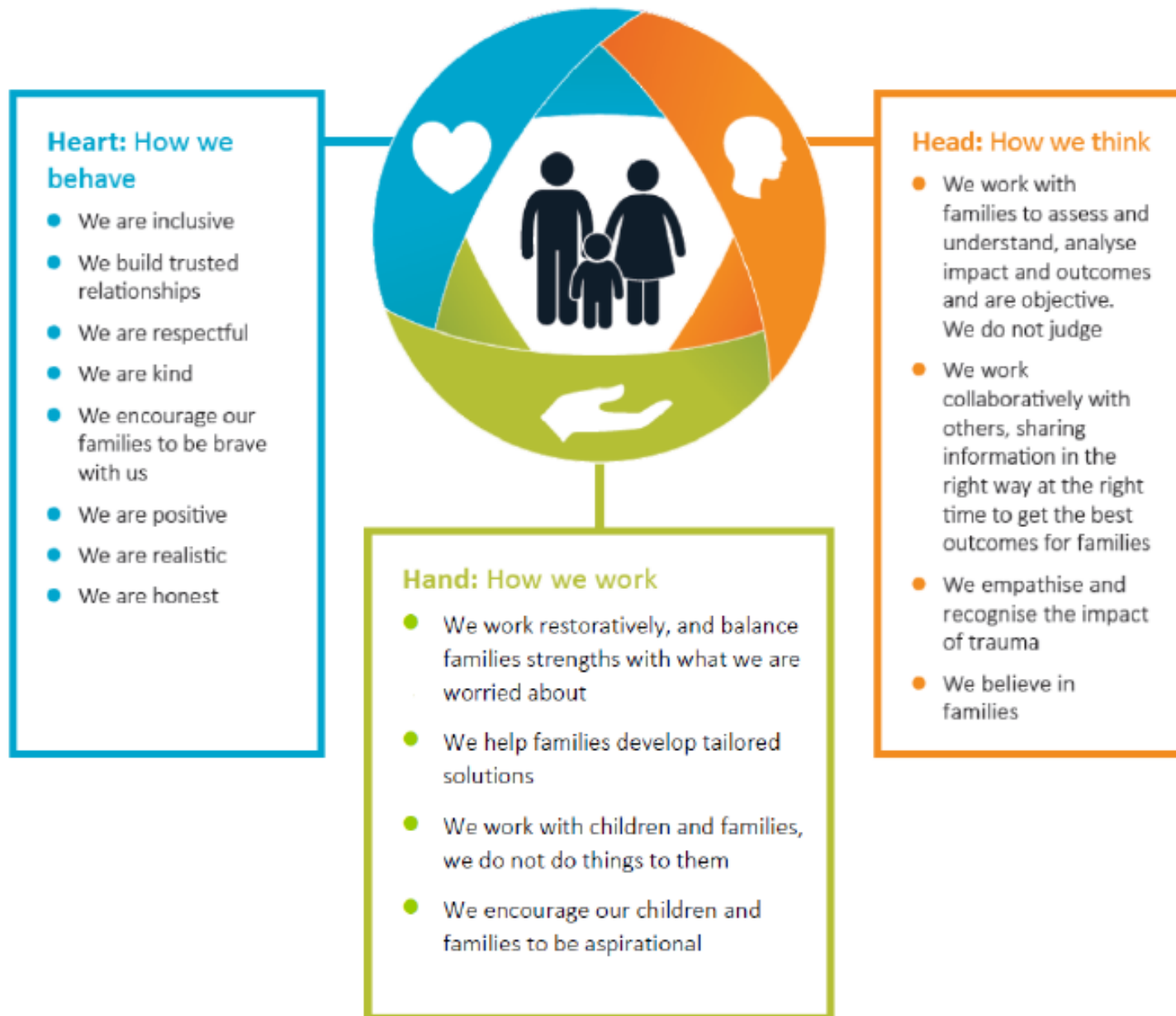


Hand: the doing of what we think and feel

See our strengths
Find out what works for us
Show you've listened by your actions
Be clear about expectations
Get to know me
Know who is important to me
Support us to develop our own plans and solutions
Have meaningful meetings
Celebrate positive changes
Make time for me
Be honest



Blackpool Families Rock Values & Practice Principals



Co-production – *what do we mean*

- Sharing power, leading to tangible changes in our service
- Positive relationships, trust
- It's never done, it's always a work in progress
- Many things are called co-production, but they are not
- We employ parents, carers, young people and support them to be integrated into working alongside other staff to develop our policies, practice, deliver training, participate and lead events, and more
- It's become 'the Blackpool way'

Consultation

Breadth = Consultation
Depth = Co-production

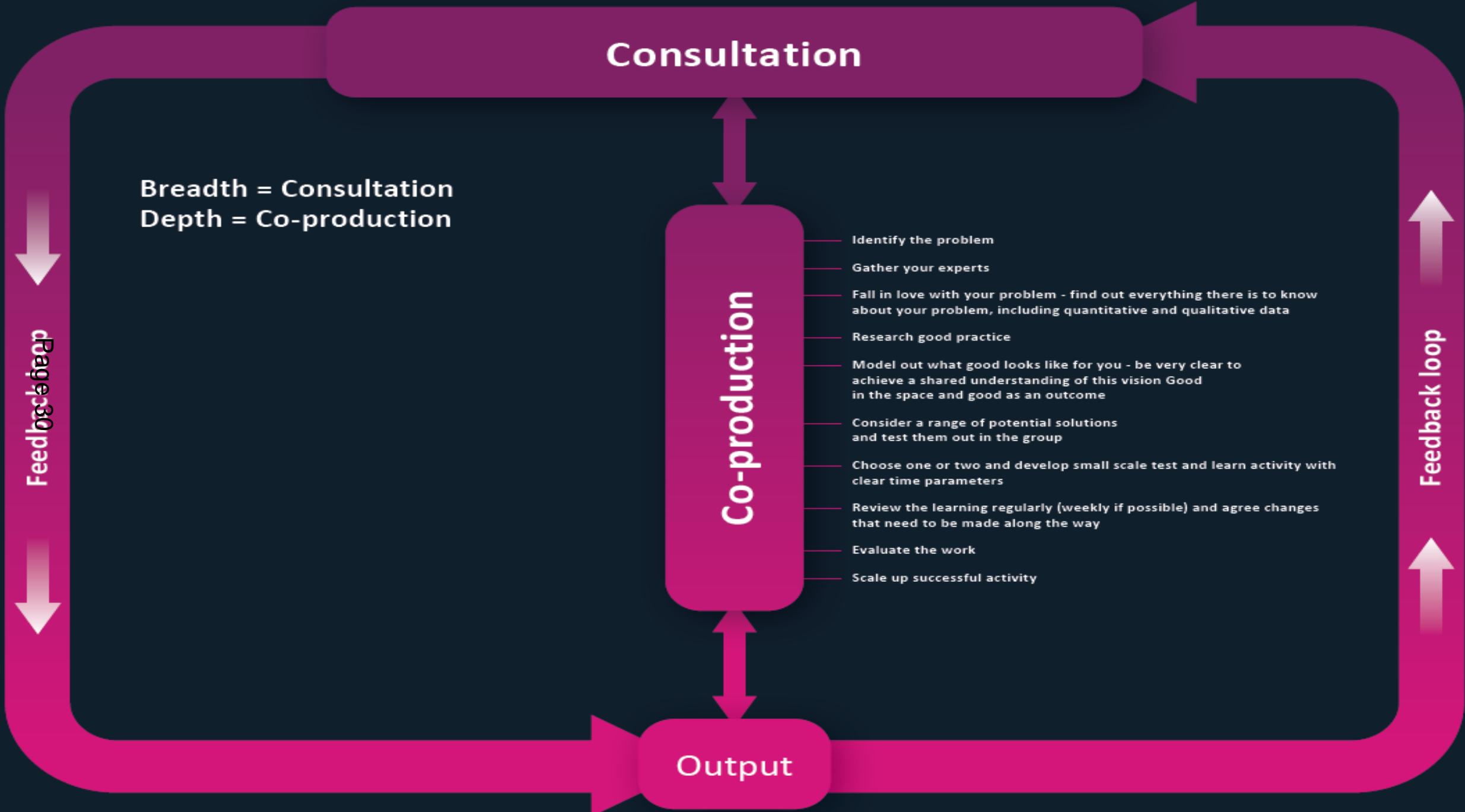
Co-production

- Identify the problem
- Gather your experts
- Fall in love with your problem - find out everything there is to know about your problem, including quantitative and qualitative data
- Research good practice
- Model out what good looks like for you - be very clear to achieve a shared understanding of this vision Good in the space and good as an outcome
- Consider a range of potential solutions and test them out in the group
- Choose one or two and develop small scale test and learn activity with clear time parameters
- Review the learning regularly (weekly if possible) and agree changes that need to be made along the way
- Evaluate the work
- Scale up successful activity

Output

Feedback loop

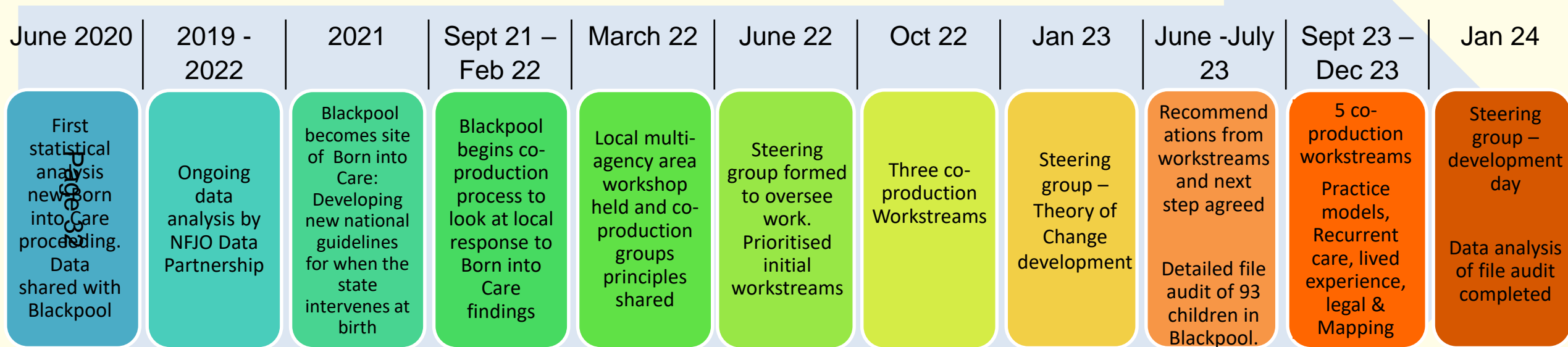
Feedback loop



Evolving Blackpool Families Rock

- Blackpool Families Rock is our overarching framework – it is *how we work with families*
- We recognise that things don't stand still, things develop – we're 8 years in with Blackpool Families Rock
- Born into Care is an example of how we've co-produced change in Blackpool
- Family Safeguarding – is our next step, more detail and more resources for our social work practice

Born into Care Blackpool: Our journey to co-producing a new offer



Born into Care – *example* – Mapping

- One of the achievements so far has been a map to help families and other people better navigate our system
- This was co-produced, co-designed – facilitated by a co-design professor from Lancaster University
- We've learnt even more about co-production as we continue to embed co-production as a core value in how our service works

A fun, collaborative, and creative process...

Glossary of terms

Referral — in the context of child protection, is when someone contacts Children's Services because they have concerns about the safety and well-being of a child. Anyone can make a referral including a parent, wider family member, friend, doctor, midwife, nurse, teacher or health visitor.

Lead professional — is identified from the multi-agency group of practitioners working with the parents and family.

Consent — practitioners often seek to give permission for something to happen.

Children's Social Care — is responsible for the care of children who are in need. They are expected to provide help and support to children in need.

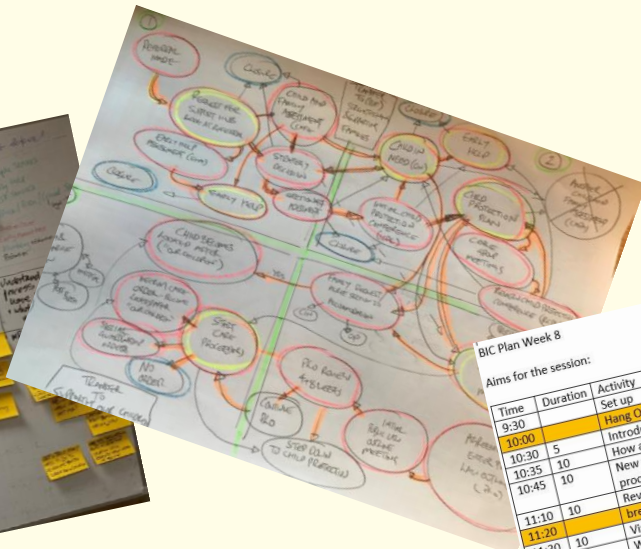
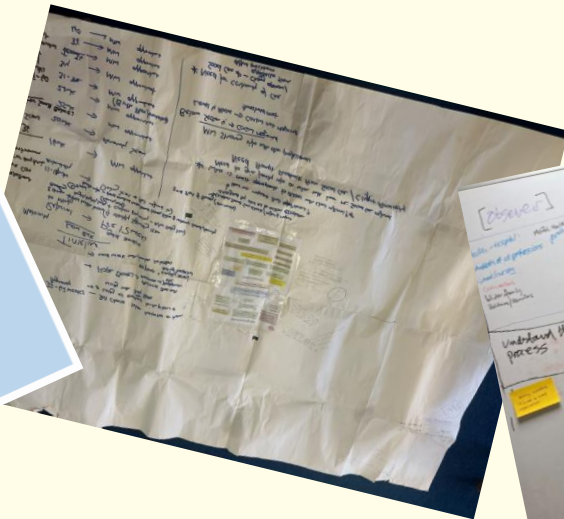
Supporting and Supporting Families (SSF) — primarily working with children in need, or on protection plans and their families — practitioners in these roles engage based on extensive evidence to help families recognise and respond to opportunities for change and ensure children are not significantly harmed. When families are in need, we will seek to create an environment for their children, practitioners in the network with facilities to explore alternatives and undertake the work required to find the right outcome.

Chaperone — the person who leads the meeting. This is normally the assistant director or a senior manager in Children's Social Care.

Legal Advice/Aid — legal aid can help meet the costs of legal advice, family mediation and representation in court or tribunal.

Concealed pregnancies — a woman is aware of the pregnancy but does not tell professionals, and/or may hide the fact that she is not accessing antenatal care.

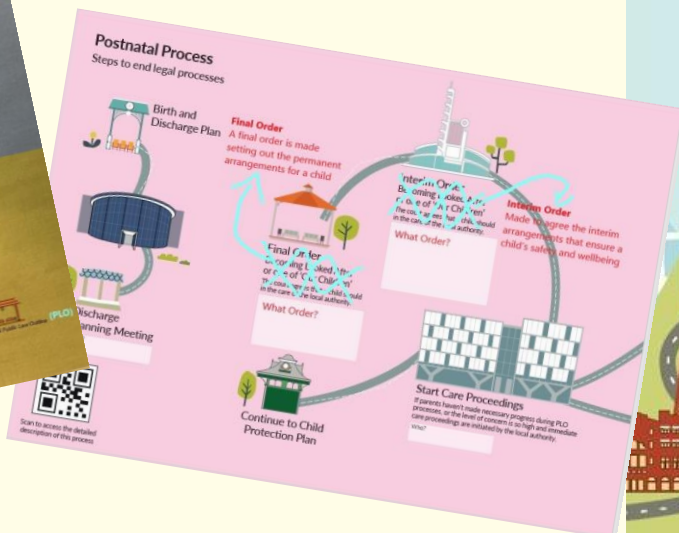
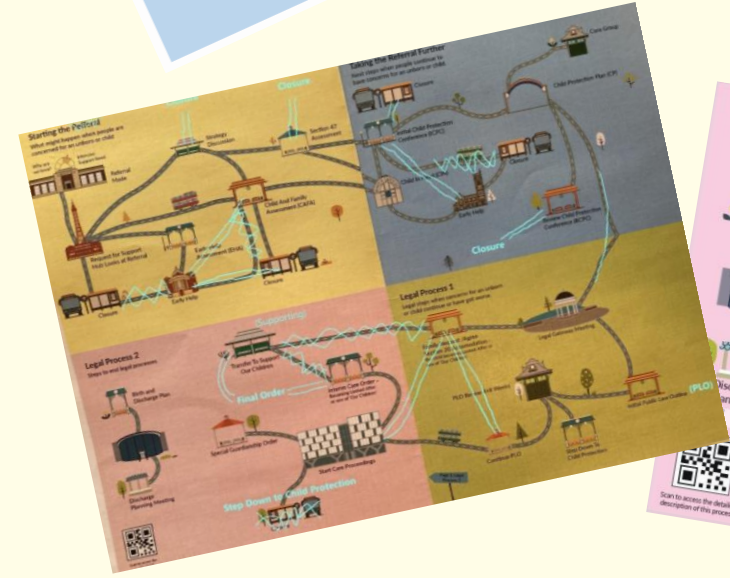
Denied pregnancies — the woman is unaware of, or unable to accept the reality of the pregnancy.

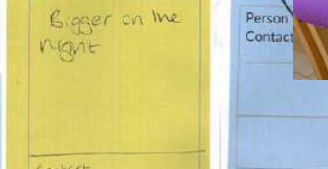
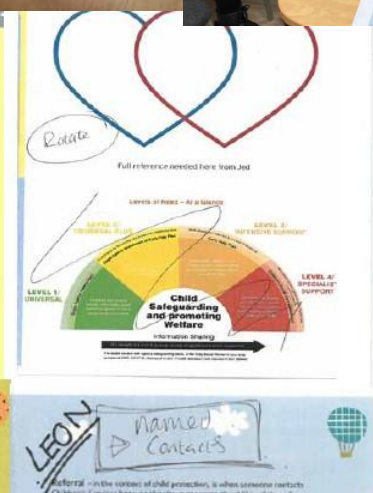
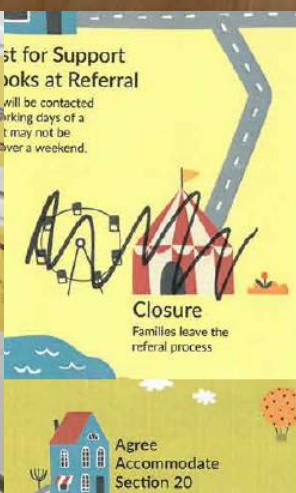
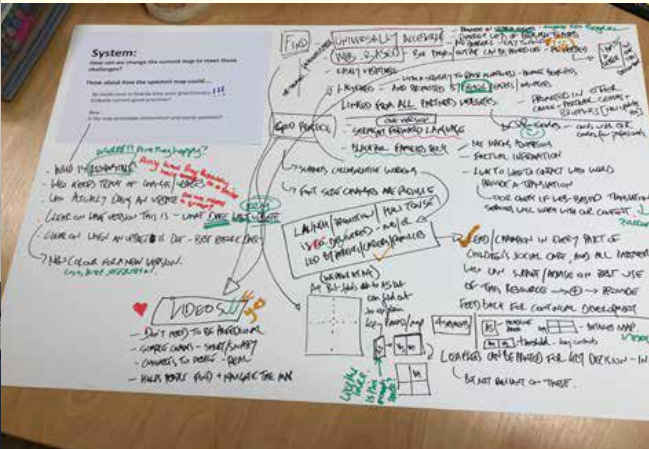


BIC Plan Week 8

Aims for the session:

Time	Duration	Activity	Resources
9:30		Set up	
10:00		Hang Out and welcome people	
10:30	5	Introduce Sejal	
10:35	10	How are we?	
10:45	10	New version review: changes as part of a new process, not for today!	
11:10	10	Review plan for public celebration	
11:20		break	
11:30	10	Visitors arrive	LC
11:40	2	Welcome and introduction of the event	MG
	5	Context	LC
	3	Co-Design team introduced	
11:50	20	Task - tables, advise on training and applications for the resources	MG
12:10	10	Manged reporting back of training and applications	MG / BG
12:20		Next steps	
12:30		Lunch	
1:00	45	Debrief and reflection on the process (optional)	Co-Design Team
1:45			

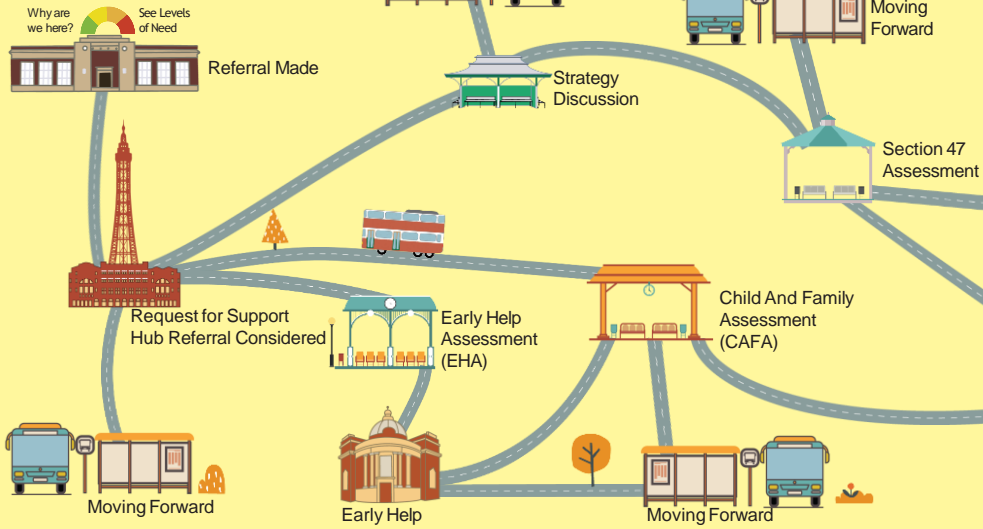






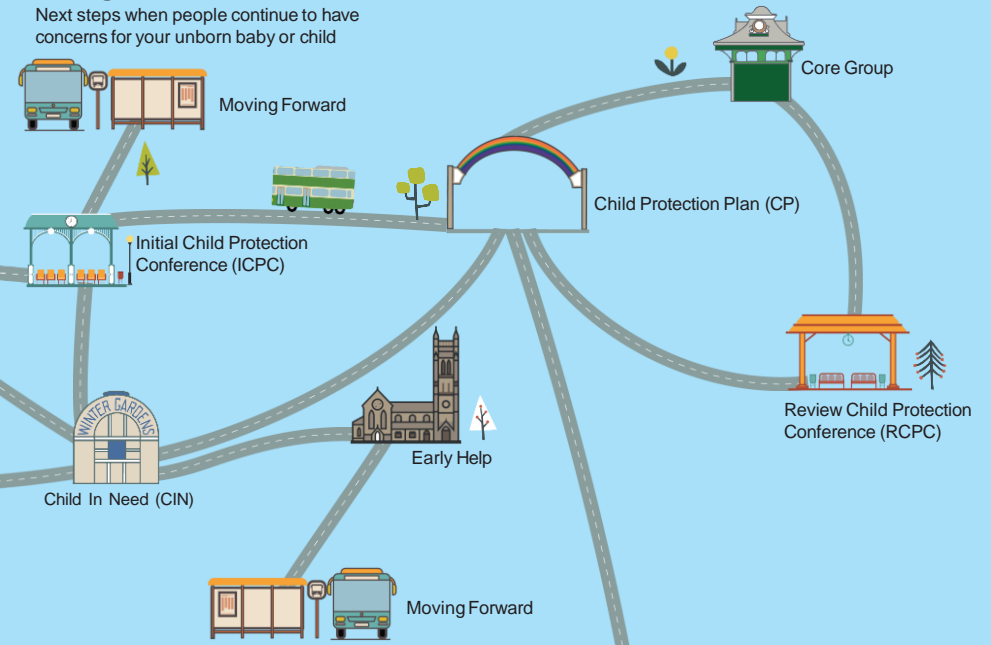
Starting the Referral

What might happen when people are concerned for your unborn baby or child



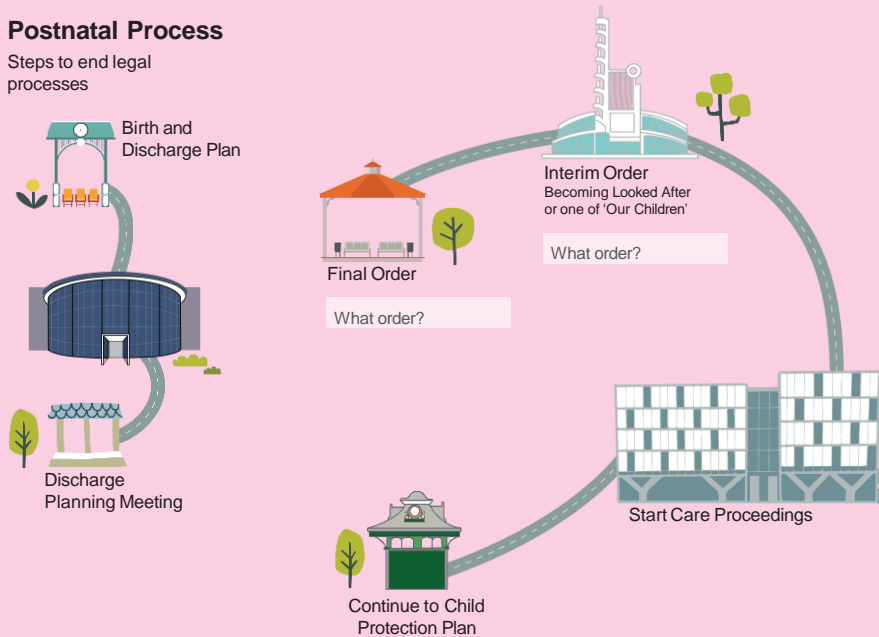
Taking the Referral Further

Next steps when people continue to have concerns for your unborn baby or child



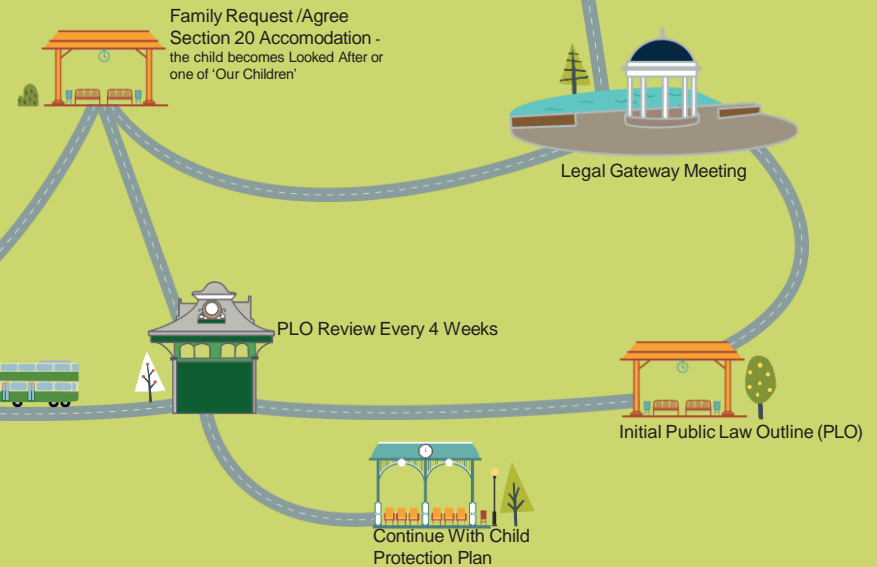
Postnatal Process

Steps to end legal processes



Prenatal Process

Legal steps when concerns for your unborn baby or child continue or have got worse.



Available 10th April

A Guide To Your Family's Journey

The website will be launched on 10 April 2024

COMING SOON
Family Journey

SCAN FOR MORE DETAILS

@Resiliencerev @Resiliencerev @Resiliencerev coproduction@bl...

Family Safeguarding – *linking up*

- We're also about to launch multiagency teams based on the Family Safeguarding model of practice
- This a great model with a proven history of successful impact
- We're working on how this will link to Born into Care work and other services and how it will build on our Blackpool Families Rock approach
- But it is important to pay attention to what improves practice, impact/outcomes for our children, young people and families

What we think makes a difference

- Wider culture led by the senior leadership (think SWORD)
- Co-production – living and breathing this
- Clear, simple aims for the whole service
- Good communication across the service
- The *how* of practice – when implementing any practice model, managers and practitioners are supported to focus and work on *how* they work with families
- Managers and leaders work to remove barriers for practitioners to do this *how* of practice better
- Nurturing relationships across the council and with partner agencies

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Laura Chadwick, Head of Transformation/Principal Social Worker and Bertie Goff, Workforce Development Lead
Date of Meeting:	27 March 2024

BLACKPOOL FAMILIES ROCK

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To update the Scrutiny committee regarding the Blackpool Families Rock, co-produced ethos. The way in which we work with families, work with each other and the way we as a council act.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To review the Blackpool Families Rock co-produced ethos and model of working, to consider the impact that it has had upon the workforce and upon the families whom we serve.
- 2.2 To offer scrutiny and challenge of the work to date

3.0 Reason for recommendation(s)

- 3.1 To ensure the committee has an overview and understanding of the Blackpool Families Rock model and way of working, and provide challenge how to we ensure that this embedded at all levels within children's services
- 3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy approved by the Council? No
- 3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered

- 4.1 Blackpool Families Rock has been co produced with parents who have had involvement with children's social care. The outcome of the integrated design has been a strength based, positive model of working has been produced. As a result, alternatives are not considered appropriate.

5.0 Council priority

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- ‘Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience’

6.0 Background and key information

6.1 Blackpool Children’s Social Care has had a long history of being a ‘revolving door’ local authority, by this we mean rapid escalation of children into statutory services and weaker outcomes from our statutory intervention. The high levels of deprivation, the challenging community we serve, only explains so much of our high numbers of children in statutory services and weaker outcomes. A significant part of the quality and impact of our social care service comes from the culture and approach of our staff – a more punitive, paternalistic approach where we ‘do to’ rather than ‘work with’ doesn’t empower families for long-term success. Changing the culture, changing how staff work with our children, young people and families is crucial.

6.2 Developing our Blackpool Families Rock approach was a key part in changing the culture to improve the service we deliver. At its core Blackpool Families Rock is an overarching approach, our set of principles to how we work with families in Blackpool. Its development links to a core approach across Blackpool – co-production. Blackpool Families Rock was co-produced with staff, parents, and young people around 8 years ago and has been the backbone to the culture in Children’s Social Care supporting steadily improved practice. At present we have a number of exciting further developments that are looking to build on Blackpool Families Rock as we continue to work on improving our social care service. Our Born into Care project and move into multiagency teams (using a Family Safeguarding approach) are building on this approach and the common thread through all of them is co-production.

6.3 Blackpool lives and breathes co-production better than most other local authorities in the country. Support from our Chief Executive downwards has been central to this success and funding a dedicated co-production team has also been crucial. It is important that staff and managers in our co-production team have the right values to support parents and young people with lived experienced, building trusting positive relationships with them. This means meaningfully sharing power in developing our services, giving people equal voice, valuing, listening and actively using their insight as we make ongoing changes to our services. We are keen to continuously build upon the amount of parents and young people who work alongside our services in order to co-production initiatives, ways of working which all contribute to the services we offer to families and the way in which work with them. We understand where they are in their lives, what they might be interested in, how they want to use their experiences and skills, and support them to be involved on their own terms, but also support their in

their development by providing opportunities to create a career and be paid for their input and for the work that they do.

- 6.4 We are rightly starting to be recognised for the quality of our co-production work, with other directors and local authorities asking to find out more about what we do. We also know we can still improve and are looking at the next steps as well as consolidating the co-production work we already do. It is influencing some of the ideas and potential services we are working on with our Born into Care project, in our multiagency Family Safeguarding teams, Family Hubs and more.
- 6.5 What we think has made a difference is the wider culture and strategic support for effective co-production – senior leaders practically supporting these teams and living and breathing Blackpool Families Rock principles and co-production values in their daily work. This is about the relationships our staff have with the people they serve in Blackpool – how they work – which is enabled and nurtured by how we manage and support them.
- 6.6 The Blackpool Families Rock ethos is embedded across our workforce, it is part of inductions for new workers, it features in interviews for new staff and it's at the heart of everything we do.
- 6.7 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of appendices

- 7.1 See appendix at Item 5.

8.0 Financial considerations

- 8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations

- 9.1 None

10.0 Risk management considerations

- 10.1 None

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:

- 11.1 None

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations

12.1 None

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken

13.1 None

14.0 Background papers

14.1 None

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Rachel Barnes, Head of Service, Supporting our Children
Date of Meeting:	27 March 2024

PLACEMENT STABILITY FOR FOSTER CARERS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To consider the specific issue of placement stability and the impact on children, families and foster carers.

2.0 Recommendations:

- 2.1 For the Scrutiny Committee to have oversight of the plans in place to ensure our children experience greater stability in their homes, and to provide scrutiny, challenge and support to aid development and ensure positive outcomes for our children.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee has an overview of the fostering service within Children's Social Care and can provide a challenge to service provision.

- 3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

- 3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

- 4.1 None.

5.0 Council Priority:

- 5.1 The relevant Council Priority is:
- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background Information

6.1 Our two key priorities within Children's Services are: supporting more children to stay safely within their families (or to live within a family setting where it is not possible for them to remain with their birth family) and to support more children to effectively engage with education. Should children need to reside outside of their families, foster homes are our preference for them and as such we remain committed to both recruiting and retaining our foster carers.

6.2 These priorities, and our ability to improve the outcomes for children within these areas are inextricably linked. We continue to experience significant challenges in securing education provisions that meet the needs of Our Children and respond to them in a trauma informed manner. Exclusions and reduced timetables have a direct impact on home stability.

Home stability is also impacted by our ability to offer Our Children timely, specialist health intervention or support (most notably mental health support). Sadly, our children with the most complex needs often experience multiple home moves, with a 'start again approach' should they leave their respective health service waiting list.

6.3 Our data shows that we have made significant improvements to the stability we provide to our children who have been in foster care for a longer period of time (2.5 years or more), with a small improvement to our stability for children who have been in our care for 12 months or more.

Feb '24 – 77.8% of our children living with internal foster carers have been in care for 12 months or more and are in the same home for 12 months or more
Compared to 75% in Feb '23

Feb '24 – 78.3% of our children living with internal foster carers have been in care for 2.5 years or more and in the same home for 2 years or more
Compared to 56.9% in Feb '23

When considering all of our children (residential, foster care and connected care) 11% of our children have experienced 3 or more homes in the last 12 months (this could include their home with their birth family); compared to our statistical neighbours figure at 10%

6.4 Our efforts to ensure home stability for our children can be summarised within three themes:

1. Reduce the number of children coming in to care
2. Support children and carers to ensure children reside in family settings wherever possible
3. Support children to exit care when safe to do so

6.5 Over the last twelve months we have taken the following actions in order to further improve the stability our children experience:

- Extended the early help offer to provide specific support to foster carers, connected carers and birth family, as well as a review of the times at which we remind carers of this offer.
- Weekly review of children within residential homes chaired by the Head of Service – consideration of those children that may be able to step down to foster homes, birth family or semi-independence.
- Moved the Supporting our Children and Carers Team under Supporting Our Children, offering solution focused interventions to children in our care.
- Funded an additional psychologist post to support our children and their carers.
- New life story policy and launch event – focus on children understanding their family history, why we are involved and why decisions have been made. Children not having this understanding directly impacts on home stability.
- Training to staff to encourage greater collaboration with a child’s birth family; adopting a ‘think family work family’ approach.
- Using our data to focus our interventions; for example children with 2 or more moves and turning 11 years.
- We have been successful in securing a bid for the Regional Fostering Recruitment and Retention Hub and this will go live in May 2024
- Work under way to create satellite hubs under the Mockingbird model, and we hope to launch this end of 2024/early 2025.
- We joined Foster Care Associations in September 2023. This provides support groups for our carers, challenges to our policies and practice, and an opportunity to share good practice.

6.6 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

- 7.1 Appendix 7(a): Mockingbird Impact Report 2022
Appendix 7(b): Regional Fostering Recruitment and Retention Hub - summary slides
Appendix 7(c): The Mockingbird model – two page summary

8.0 Financial considerations:

- 8.1 We have received funding from the DfE for the Fostering Hub and as such there are specific financial considerations for the fostering service. This funding is in place for two years and we will review the impact before considering committing beyond this

time. We have also received DfE funding to implement the Mockingbird model. The cost implications for this are lower, and whilst we are confident that this approach will positively impact on home stability, we will continuously review this impact.

All other support initiatives are incorporated in to existing budgets.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

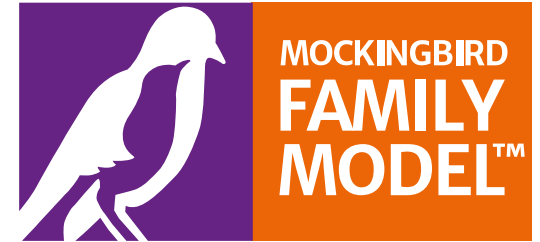
13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.



Appendix 7(a)



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Mockingbird Impact Report 2022

Mockingbird Impact Report 2022

About the Mockingbird Programme

Mockingbird, a global award winning and pioneering programme led by The Fostering Network in the UK, delivers sustainable foster care. It is an evidence-based model structured around the support and relationships an extended family provides.

The model nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families, supporting them to build resilient and caring community. Led by a hub home carer and liaison worker, with the support of their fostering service, the constellation community offers vital peer support and guidance alongside social activities and sleepovers to strengthen relationships and permanence.

Watch 'Mockingbird: A really big family' to hear from those involved in the programme.

Welcome to the 2022 Mockingbird Impact Report!

This report details a time of change, from April 2021 to March 2022, as the country and the Mockingbird community transitioned from long periods of national lockdown, to returning to new and old ways of 'normal'.

It was with great excitement and some trepidation that we reignited our national Mockingbird events programme in person again. Starting in autumn with creative workshops for children and young people who were part of our film production team and Nest group, throughout the year we were able to bring foster carers, service staff and the Mockingbird Team together for shared learning and development events across the UK.

We welcomed 21 new fostering services and saw over 25 new constellations launch between 2021 and 2022. We now work with 62 services, sustaining nearly 120 constellations.

The following report gives more details on the figures as well as the stories behind them. However, it is with huge credit to the over 3,000 adults and children and young people that are part of Mockingbird constellations, as well as the team at The Fostering Network, that Mockingbird not only survived, but thrived during the pandemic. We are able to continue to report on the ever-increasing reach of Mockingbird outcomes across the UK, amongst them; stability, support, creativity, fun, love and an overriding sense of hope.

Timeline

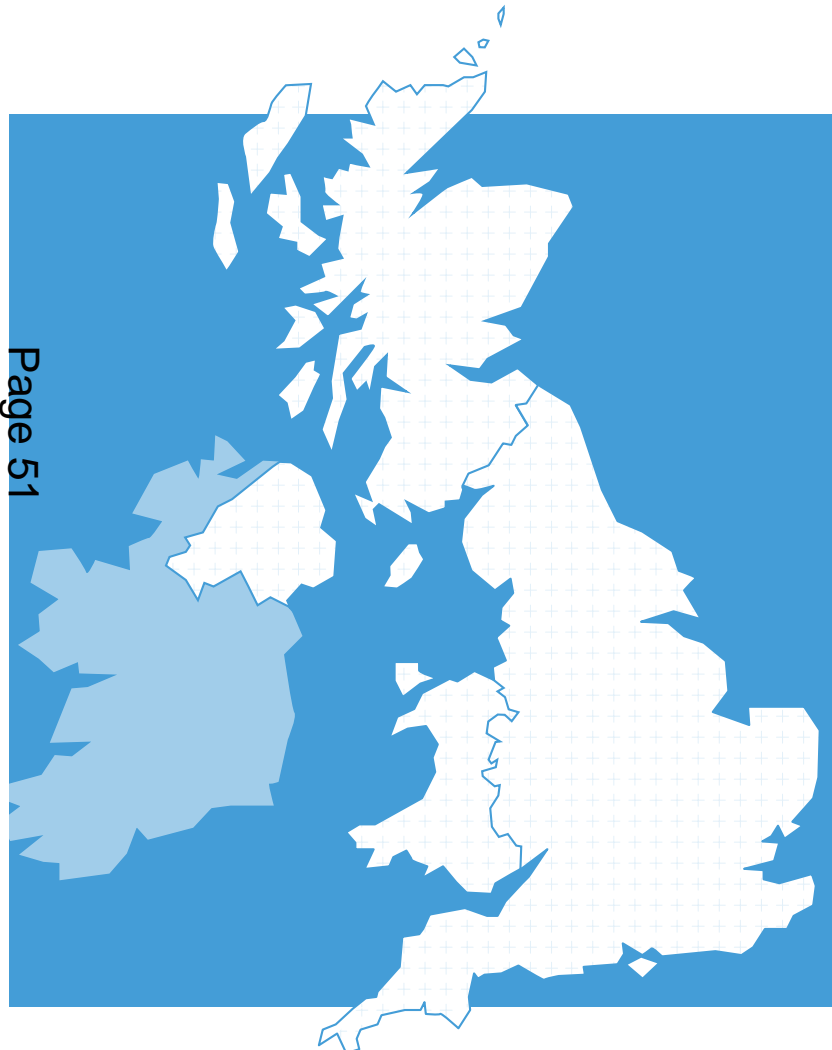
Running throughout this update is a timeline of quotes taken from monthly returns to show how constellations experienced this year.

APR
2021

We had children from two satellite homes for a sleep over together this month – the children previously lived in a home together and it was really lovely to have an over night time together following a long time of not seeing each other due to covid restrictions. Hub Home Carer

Mockingbird Map

These maps show the distribution of 62 Mockingbird partners with 119 constellations as of January 2023, click the regional circle to zoom in.



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	Established Partners	Constellations	
NORTH	29 Barnardo's Scotland Fostering, Edinburgh	1	
	50 Darlington Borough Council	1	
	51 Durham County Council	1	
	52 Hartlepool Borough Council	1	
	53 Metropolitan Borough of Gateshead	1	
	54 Middlesbrough Council	1	
	56 North Tyneside Council	1	
	11 North Yorkshire County Council	2	
	57 Northumberland County Council	1	
	58 Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	1	
	27 South Tyneside Council	3	
	35 Together for Children Sunderland	2	
	CENTRAL	31 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	3
		30 Cheshire East Council	2
		15 Bradford Children and Families Trust	1
2 Doncaster Council		4	
23 Flintshire County Council		3	
8 Fostering People		1	
40 Hull City Council		1	
34 Kirklees Council		1	
1 Leeds City Council		10	
38 Rochdale Borough Council		1	
20 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council		3	
28 Sheffield City Council		2	
7 Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council		3	
12 Suffolk County Council		3	
37 Together4Children Regional Permanency Partnership		4	
32 Wakefield Council	3		
13 Walsall Council	5		
26 Warrington Borough Council	3		
14 Wigan Council	2		

	Established Partners	Constellations
SOUTH	42 Buckinghamshire Council	1
	44 Devon County Council	1
	45 Dorset Council	1
	9 Hertfordshire County Council	6
	10 London Borough of Barking & Dagenham Council	6
	16 London Borough of Hackney Council	3
	33 London Borough of Haringey Council	1
	25 London Borough of Merton Council	1
	3 London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council	2
	17 London Borough of Waltham Forest Council	2
	4 (NFG) Heath Farm	5
	19 NFG London & South East	1
	21 North Somerset Council	4
	5 Oxfordshire County Council	2
	39 Portsmouth City Council	4
6 Royal Borough of Greenwich	4	
18 Slough Children First	1	
22 Surrey County Council	2	
48 West Sussex County Council	1	

Partners in development		
NORTH	36 Isle of Man Government	
	55 Newcastle City Council	
	59 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	
CENTRAL	24 Manchester City Council	
	62 Bury Council	
SOUTH	60 Achieving for Children Windsor and Maidenhead	
	61 Gloucestershire County Council	
	41 London Borough of Lambeth	
	46 Southampton City Council	
	43 Southend-on-Sea City Council	
	47 South Gloucestershire Council	
49 Wokingham Borough Council		

North

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Established Partners	Constellations
29 Barnardo's Scotland Fostering, Edinburgh	1
50 Darlington Borough Council	1
51 Durham County Council	1
52 Hartlepool Borough Council	1
53 Metropolitan Borough of Gateshead	1
54 Middlesbrough Council	1
56 North Tyneside Council	1
11 North Yorkshire County Council	2
57 Northumberland County Council	1
58 Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	1
27 South Tyneside Council	3
35 Together for Children Sunderland	2

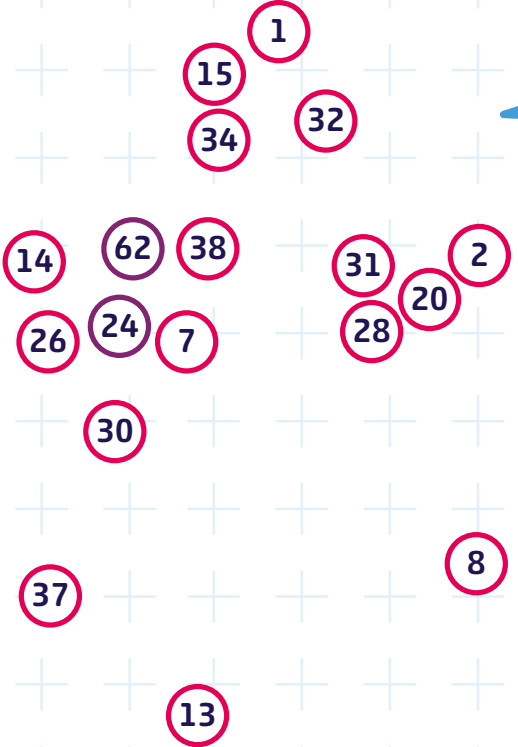
Partners in development
36 Isle of Man Government
55 Newcastle City Council
59 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Central

Established Partners	Constellations
31 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	3
30 Cheshire East Council	2
15 Bradford Children and Families Trust	1
2 Doncaster Council	4
23 Flintshire County Council	3
8 Fostering People	1
40 Hull City Council	1
34 Kirklees Council	1
1 Leeds City Council	10
38 Rochdale Borough Council	1
20 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	3
28 Sheffield City Council	2
7 Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	3
12 Suffolk County Council	3
37 Together4Children Regional Permanency Partnership	4
32 Wakefield Council	3
13 Walsall Council	5
26 Warrington Borough Council	3
14 Wigan Council	2

Partners in development
24 Manchester City Council
62 Bury Council

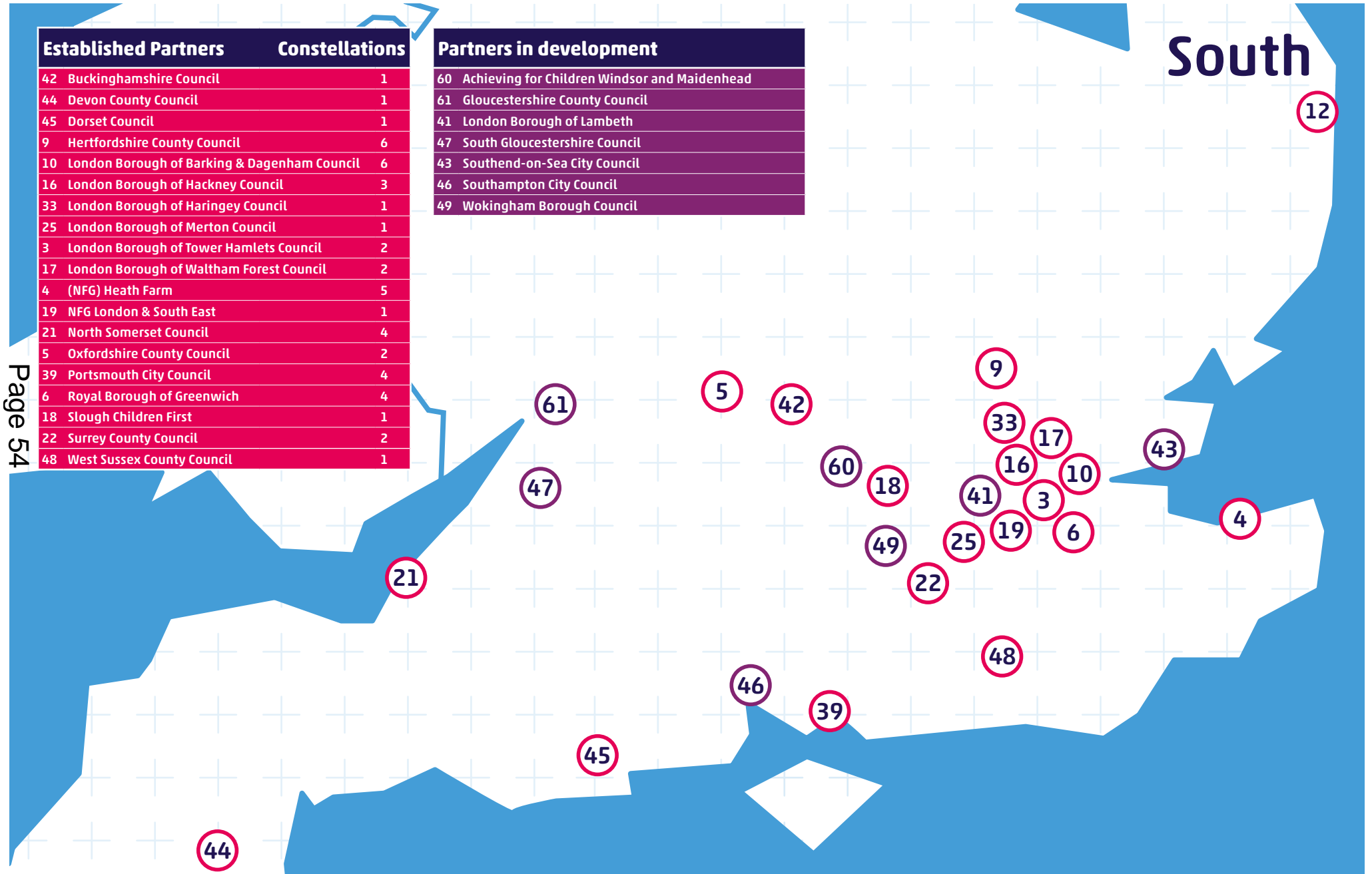
23



Established Partners	Constellations
42 Buckinghamshire Council	1
44 Devon County Council	1
45 Dorset Council	1
9 Hertfordshire County Council	6
10 London Borough of Barking & Dagenham Council	6
16 London Borough of Hackney Council	3
33 London Borough of Haringey Council	1
25 London Borough of Merton Council	1
3 London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council	2
17 London Borough of Waltham Forest Council	2
4 (NFG) Heath Farm	5
19 NFG London & South East	1
21 North Somerset Council	4
5 Oxfordshire County Council	2
39 Portsmouth City Council	4
6 Royal Borough of Greenwich	4
18 Slough Children First	1
22 Surrey County Council	2
48 West Sussex County Council	1

Partners in development
60 Achieving for Children Windsor and Maidenhead
61 Gloucestershire County Council
41 London Borough of Lambeth
47 South Gloucestershire Council
43 Southend-on-Sea City Council
46 Southampton City Council
49 Wokingham Borough Council

South



Mockingbird Population

This page shows point in time programme population from 89 active constellations in 36 partners in March 2022. Data collected from those constellations is summarised on the following pages.



MAY
2021

We had our first meeting since lockdown! It was an Eid Party at the hub home. Everyone bought food and it was lovely to be together again. Liaison Worker

Six of the 11 young people in the constellation are from an Eastern European background and none of the carers share their first languages. To support our constellation we are building a library of CDs, books, magazines, games and are searching for comics and books in the young peoples first languages. The aim is that over time the whole constellation will add to the library and get involved in exchanging and sharing ideas, activities, and joint experiences. Hub home carer

Community support

As the country moved beyond social distancing restrictions, constellations grasped opportunities to connect and have fun together again, with 1,190 social activities taking place in 2021-2022, well over double the number that took place in the previous year.

Nationally, we saw 347 training sessions taking place in constellations and hub home carers providing 321 mentoring and coaching sessions.

The number of sleepovers nearly doubled to 596 overnights in 2021-2022.

When comparing instances of planned sleepovers, emergency sleepovers and daytime support in 2021-2022, 55% of all instances were daytime support, 41% were planned sleepovers and 4% were emergency sleepovers.



over 14,000 instances of one-to-one support

In addition to sleepovers and daytime support, this year we captured data on one-to-one support in person or via phone call, video call or text message. There were over 14,000 instances of one-to-one support recorded across the national programme.

This year also saw an increase in the number of birth family and sibling visits supported through Mockingbird, with 226 recorded.

“My children and I are really enjoying seeing each other at Sali’s house! Our last visit was lovely as we all felt we could finally be ourselves without someone constantly watching us in a clinical environment.

Sali’s house gives us somewhere where we can feel more at home and relaxed. The children and I didn’t stop laughing at our last visit.... we all had so much fun!

Sali and her partner are very welcoming and put us all at our ease. I’m really looking forward to seeing my children there again. It’s amazing how much better we all feel going to Sali’s. I’m very grateful to Mockingbird for giving us this lovely space where my children and I can have far better-quality time together!”

Birth mum’s feedback after having family time supported by a Mockingbird hub home carer at their home.

JUN
2021

I am really enjoying being a part of Mockingbird and can’t sing its praises any higher! Every foster carer should have this in place, not only is it fantastic for the children to be a part of but also the support and reassurance it provides for the carers too. Satellite Carer

School Bubbles keep ‘bursting’ which means carers and children are isolating and have missed out on events and visits. We try to find other ways to do things online so everyone is supported, it’s not the same but it helps. Liaison Worker

I can’t believe all these kids are in care like me. It’s amazing, I thought it was just me. Young Person

A really big family

With nearly 1,500 children and young people in Mockingbird constellations, there are thousands of stories of individuals and communities providing each other with support, love, guidance and new opportunities.

Being part of a national community also offers young people the opportunity to try new things, meet new people and make their voices heard.

During the long winter 2021 lockdown, six young people: Intisa, Hawau, Liam, Lilly, Mariam and Tom who were part of Mockingbird constellations across the country, came together online to form a production team and collaborate on an animated film to share their stories and experiences of being part of Mockingbird.



Watch the finished film here [Mockingbird: A really big family](#)

AUG
2021

There are a few year six children going up to secondary school next month so the hub home carer invited them for tea at his house with Sam, one of our teenagers who could share his experiences of going up to high school. Sam is happy to look out for the younger ones as they settle in. This is not only brilliant for those moving up but also for the self esteem of the older child. Liaison Worker

SEP
2021

The fuel shortage cancelled our trip to seaside, but we planned Sunday lunch instead. It felt like an extended family with everyone getting along and the young people making an effort too. Home Hub Carer

Mockingbird Nest

Since 2019, young people from Mockingbird constellations across the UK have been joining together for a series of creative activities and projects supported by professional guest artists and theatre practitioners.

Young people joining the Nest programme have co-designed and taken part in a wide range of workshops, including: animation, jewellery-making, drumming, rap, filmmaking, painting, print-making, graffiti-writing, glass painting, cake making, collage, mad science and more.

Lockdowns and social distancing meant Nest sessions had moved online in 2020 with art materials sent to members at home. In October 2021 everyone was finally able to get back together in real life and attendees took part in a collaborative painting workshop at Midlands Art Centre (MAC) in Birmingham.

Since then, a blended approach has been taken with both online and

in person sessions offered. We are excited that from 2023, Nest will be offered regionally to give more young people the opportunity to be involved.

The success of the online Nest sessions inspired us to offer a series of adult creative wellbeing sessions called Mockingbird Chorus, between December 2020 – March 2021 76 carers and liaison workers attended sessions.



OCT
2021

This month saw the return of Nest in real life. It was lovely to take two of the children from the hub and we had so many firsts. First time on a train, first time on a day trip to Birmingham and the first time they took part in Nest. At first they were unsure, but both had a fantastic time. They both enjoyed the art workshops and produced some interesting paintings. They have also formed a lovely friendship and I am hoping they continue to be a positive influence to each other. Hub home carer

Growing up in Mockingbird

When I joined Mockingbird, I was 15. At that point I did not know what to expect from it. I was very nervous. The first person that I met was my hub carer Judith – she is amazing and loves everybody equally. She makes me feel welcome and I enjoy being in her presence. She makes me feel at home.

When I met the rest of the constellation of Mockingbird it was unusual, but it was very exciting to meet new people who were just like me. All the adults and children were accepting of everyone no matter who you were or what you looked like, this is because of us all being in the same boat.

Over time I have made relationships with more and more people and have met new friends. From my point of view Mockingbird is more of a family: it is a collection of likeminded people all sharing ideas and thoughts and making amazing things happen. I have become more confident with groups of people and have explored new things such as performing with the Nest group.

Our constellation do activities together and I get support from all the carers, including my carer. We go all over the country to explore, for example day trips out sightseeing in London or going to stay at Castleton for the week and going on walks to see the amazing surroundings with all your friends that you have made from being within Mockingbird. So, from my point of view Mockingbird is amazing.

I'm at university currently, Mockingbird has improved my relationships with people and boosted my confidence. I thank the Mockingbird team for making a difference.



OCT
2021

One of our children told his carer that he “feels like he has a friend now”. He’d requested a play date with hub home carer’s grandson, and they went to the cinema together. It is lovely to see.
Home Hub Carer

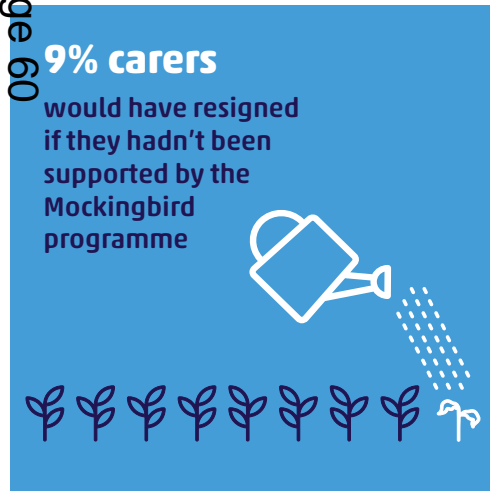
Our hub home carer supported a planned return home for a mother and baby. Without Mockingbird the level of support to allow them home together would not have been available.
Liaison worker

Retention and stability

Relationships formed in Mockingbird constellations offer countless opportunities for supportive and restorative interventions led by the hub home carer and liaison worker with the aim of maintaining stability in satellite families.

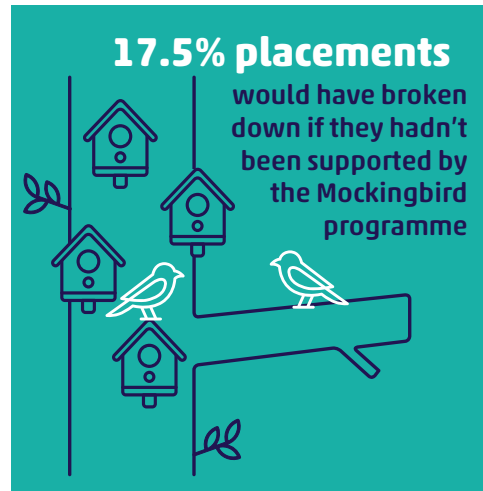
Key data is captured to allow an understanding of how Mockingbird activity contributes to the stabilisation of relationships and therefore placements that may have otherwise resulted in a young person moving or a carer giving notice.

Page 60



Of the 1,775 satellite carers participating in the programme between May 2018 and March 2022, services reported 162 would have resigned without the support provided by the Mockingbird programme.

Of the 2,175 children and young people in placements participating in the programme between May 2018 and March 2022, services reported 382 placement breakdowns have been avoided



11 year old Lewis and his long-term foster carer of six years joined our constellation last year. Lewis has learning difficulties and during repeated COVID lockdowns Lewis and his carer became incredibly isolated and lonely. The carer was clearly burned out but had refused respite prior to joining Mockingbird as they were worried that Lewis would have not be able to form a relationship with another carer or cope well away from them.

We began spending time with Lewis at home to get to know him and learn about his needs and what he enjoys. Last week Lewis came on his first Mockingbird sleepover, we had his favourite film to watch and followed his bedtime routine, it went very well! The foster carer has told us they feel less stressed after a day to themselves and were reassured that Lewis was being cared for by people he knew, and had enjoyed himself on the sleepover.

Hub home carer

NOV
2021

It was my first Mockingbird social this month. It's so reassuring to know that there is support, help and advice on hand, if needed. Particularly as I am a single carer and family can't always support us. Thank you so much everyone. Satellite Carer

I love the forums they are really informative with brilliant ideas from other hub carers. It is great to be able to share experiences and talk to others about various issues including the activities hub home carers run and engage young people. Hub home carer

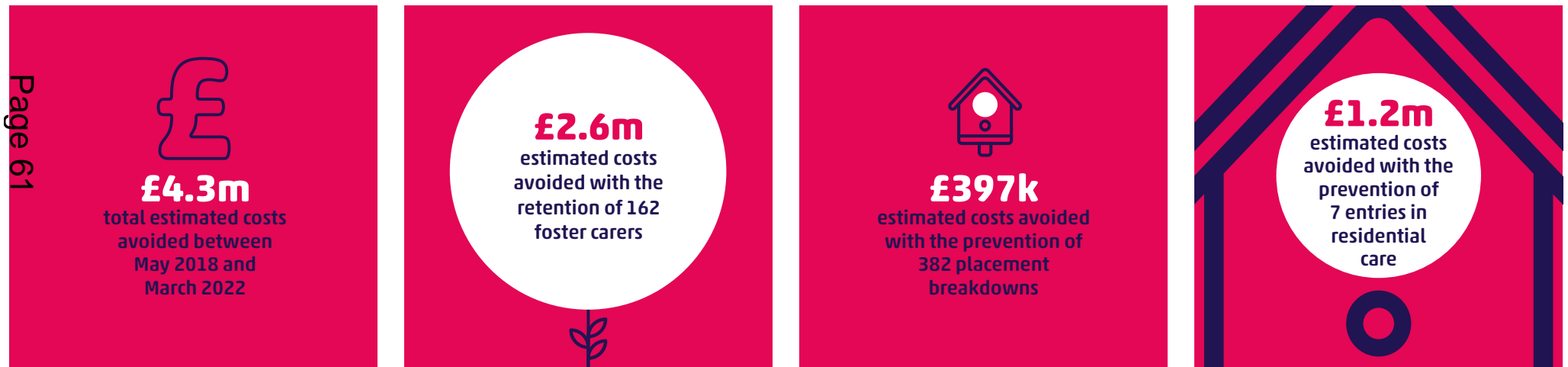
The friendships our children are making are priceless, these will be constant throughout their young lives. Hub home carer

A Sustainable System

Mockingbird is an invest to save model. Independent evaluation of 12 services between 2017-2020 found that for every £1 invested in the programme by a fostering service there has been a saving of 99 pence.

[Read the full independent evaluation 2017-2020 here.](#)

The infographics below show cumulative estimated costs avoided using data collected 2018 – 2022. The programme has grown each year and some satellite carers and children and young people will have joined or left in a particular year, or continued participating through multiple years.



DEC
2021

I love going to the hub house. We get to have sleepovers and make things, play games this week I got to pick our dinner. We have parties too. My favourite was at Christmas we got to see Santa and had lots of party food. The hub is amazing. I have made friends there too and like them. Young Person

JAN
2022

This month our hub home carers came down with Covid. It was wonderful to see how the whole constellation rallied around, offering both practical and emotional support to the hub home carers and each other, just like an extended family should. Liason Worker



The Fostering Network is the UK's leading fostering charity. We are the essential network for fostering, bringing together everyone who is involved in foster care.

We support foster carers to transform children's lives and we work with fostering services and the wider sector to develop and share best practice.

We work to ensure all fostered children and young people experience stable family life and we are passionate about the difference foster care makes. We champion fostering and seek to create vital change so that foster care is the very best it can be.

 [thefosteringnetwork](https://www.facebook.com/thefosteringnetwork)

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

 [@thefosteringnetwork](https://www.instagram.com/thefosteringnetwork)

thefosteringnetwork.org.uk

Registered office 87 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HA

Registered charity in England and Wales 280852 and in Scotland SC039338

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company no. 1507277 VAT Registration 231 6335 90

Regional Fostering Recruitment and Retention Hub

Summary slides

Policy background (DfE)

Three reviews were published last year, provided impetus and vision to transform children's social care.

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The
Independent
Review of
Children's
Social Care



National
Review into the
murders of
Arthur Labinjo-
Hughes and
Star Hobson



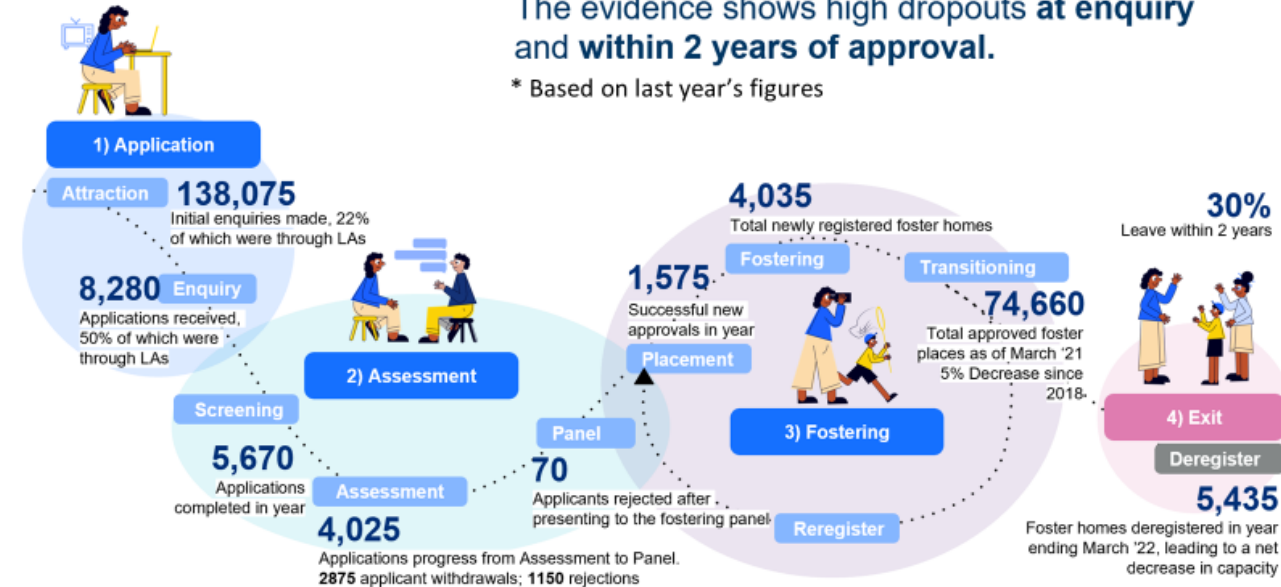
The
Competition
and Markets
Authority study
into Children's
Social Care
Placements

In the DfE's response we pledged to put loving homes at the heart of children's social care, and in the publication of Stable Homes, Built on Love, **we announced an investment of £27m in a fostering recruitment and retention programme to reform the foster carer's journey, offering additional support through known weak points in the system.** That funding has been spent on a pathfinder project, Foster with North East, and 9 additional regions.

In developing our response, we mapped the foster carer's journey through the system which shows high dropouts at enquiry and within two years of approval.

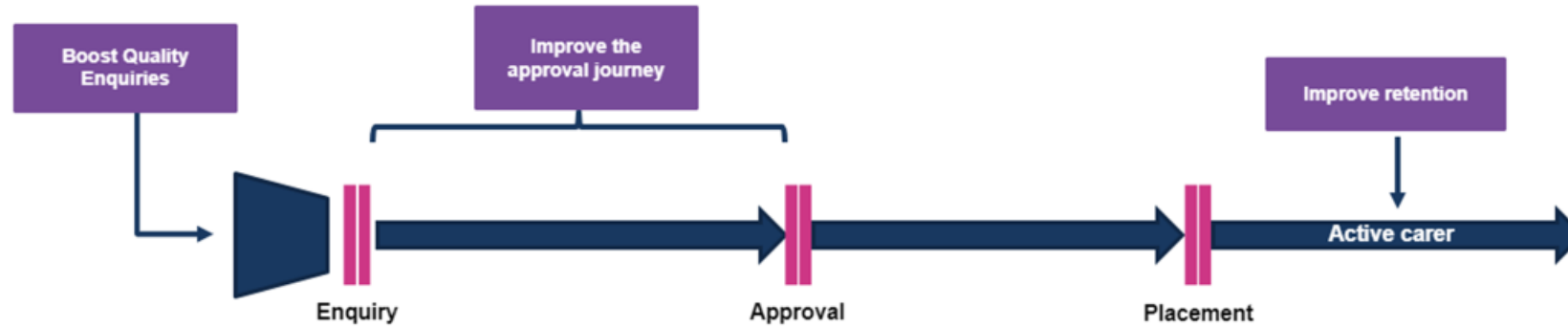
The evidence shows high dropouts at enquiry and within 2 years of approval.

* Based on last year's figures



Context

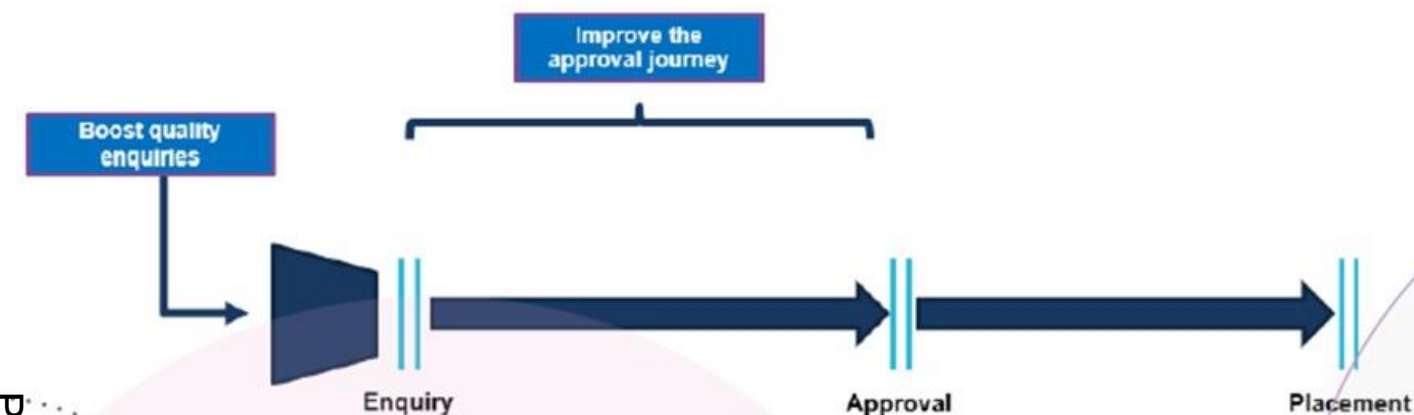
- The **programme is designed to deliver end-to-end improvements** that support boosting foster carer numbers.



- The programme includes:
 - A **recruitment support hub** to provide information about fostering and support alongside the assessment and approval process to maximise the number of people who take forward a fostering application
 - A **marketing campaign** to attract new foster carers
 - Roll out of **Mockingbird** - an evidence-based programme across the region **to support retention**

Fostering Recruitment & Retention Programme – Recruitment Support Hub & Communications Campaign

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Recruitment Support Hub

- **Increase completed fostering applications from target group** to broaden the demographic of carers. Information from the support hub will look to address misconceptions about who can foster and different fostering options
- **Increase the number of quality enquiries** ensuring those who progress through to application have the skills and appropriate intentions to enter into foster caring
- **Increase the conversion rate from initial enquiry to application**, given the increased volume of enquiries, measured by data gathering and evaluation
- **Regional collaboration** to set a consistent and coherent narrative, and to lay the groundwork for regional care cooperatives in the longer term, should this be taken forward

Communications Campaign

- **All communications** across the region (including existing LA activity) to lead prospective foster carers to your regional recruitment support hub
- **Regional Message** - The communications campaign will have a clear, coherent message. E.g: Foster with North East
- **As well as not instead of** - The regional campaign will run alongside your pre-existing campaign work in individual LAs, utilising the regional branding to simplify the user journey



Fostering Recruitment & Retention Programme - Mockingbird

Improve retention

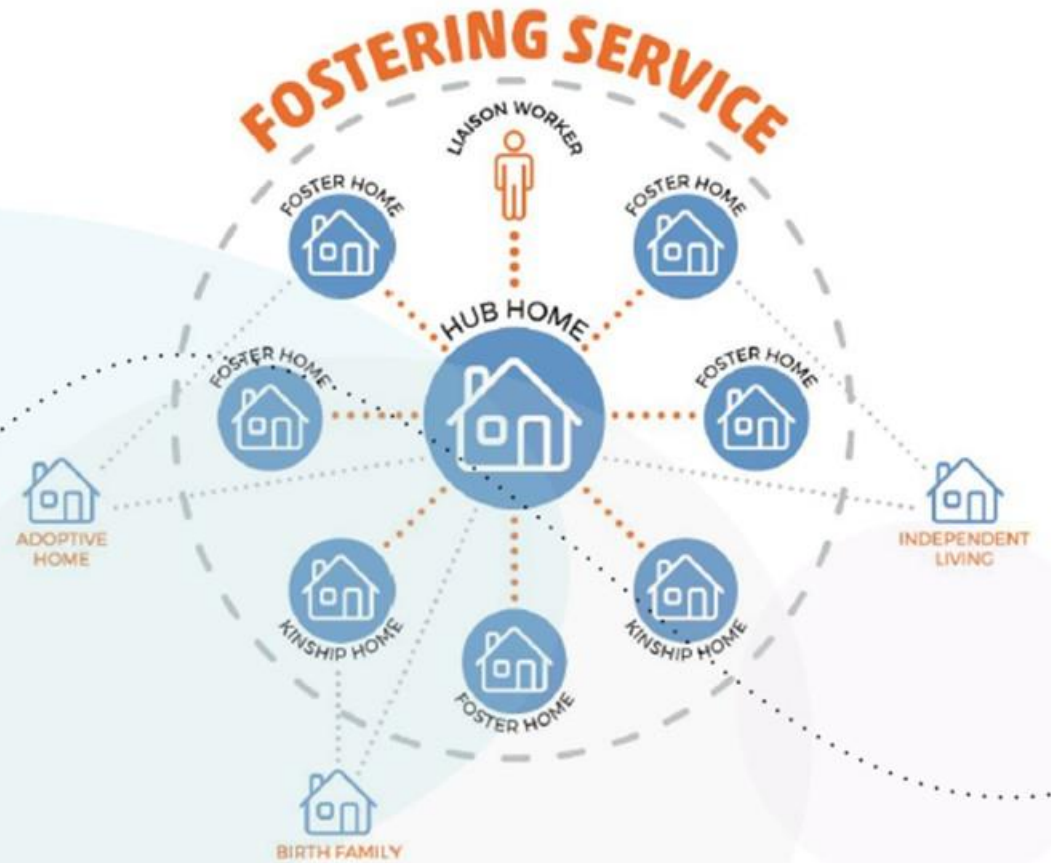


Active fostering

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This programme is funding new 97 constellations across 90 LAs (7 to 10 carers in each constellation)

- Those who participated in Mockingbird were 82% less likely to de-register than households who did not participate.
- This will mean England has the most constellations in the world



The Fostering Network



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Appendix 7(c): The Mockingbird Model

What is Mockingbird?

Mockingbird is a global award winning and pioneering programme led by The Fostering Network in the UK. It delivers sustainable foster care through an evidence-based model structured around the support and relationships an extended family provides. The model nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families supporting them to build a resilient and caring community.

Led by a hub home carer and liaison worker, the constellation community offers vital peer support and guidance alongside social activities, planned and emergency sleepovers and learning and development opportunities to strengthen relationships and permanence.



Mockingbird's impact

- A strong, robust and resilient structure able to support children, young people and fostering families through times of crisis and transition
- Improved placement stability – reduced placement breakdown
- A network of strong and authentic relationships able to replicate the support offered by an extended family
- Improved experience of peer support
- Improved sibling contact
- Improved process and experience of sleepovers (planned and emergency)
- Improved skills, confidence and role satisfaction for foster carers
- Improved levels of carer retention and recruitment
- Improved experience of birth family contact
- Costs saved and costs avoided

Mockingbird fidelity

Mockingbird is an evidence-based model supported by clear fidelity criteria. The Fostering Network provides a full breakdown of all of the fidelity requirements, but some of the key components are listed below:

- 6-10 satellite homes in a constellation.
- Each constellation provides care to 6-18 looked after children and young people.
- Constellations (both adults and young people) should be diverse – representative of the service's wider fostering population and encompassing age, gender, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, religion, experience and needs. Constellations should never become 'single-focused' (for example, just for teenagers, just for children and young people with a diagnosis on the autistic spectrum, just for new carers, just for adoption or just for the children and young people with the most complex placements etc.).
- Constellations are supported to build a micro community based on an extended family concept.
- Hub home is geographically close to the satellite homes.
- Hub home has two protected Mockingbird beds, only available for sleepovers by the constellation's children and young people.
- Hub home carer is available nearly 24/7.
- Hub home carer hosts monthly constellation meetings and provides planned and spontaneous opportunities for social events and interactions between the hub home and the satellite families.
- The 'Mockingbird liaison worker' role is a key support for hub home carer to prevent burnout.
- Collaborative working – the service must support the hub home carer and members of the constellation to problem solve.

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Kirsty Fisher, Engagement and co-production lead for Our Children
Date of meeting:	27 March 2024

YOUNG INSPECTORS' PROGRAMME

1.0 Purpose of the report

1.1 To provide an update on the work of the young inspectors' programme.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 To review the information provided, identifying any recommendations for the programme or future scrutiny work.

3.0 Reason for recommendation(s)

3.1 To ensure scrutiny oversight of the programme.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered

4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience

6.0 Background and key information

6.1 What is a Young Inspector?

A Young Inspector is a volunteer aged 16 plus who is care experienced and may have or is living in a semi-independent home. Young Inspectors support the quality monitoring of accommodation by visiting the homes where our young people live. They speak to the

young people living there, using The Charter Mark and their own experiences they assess the quality of the support they receive and most importantly how well cared for the young people feel.

6.2 How do young people get involved?

We are always on the lookout for future Young Inspectors. At the moment recruitment is mainly targeted but as the programme has become better known, young people are volunteering and are excited to get involved. We have also recruited during inspections visits the young people we speak to are often interested in the programme and get to see first-hand what is involved. We can answer any of their questions and then invite them along to a training session.

The short training session has been co-produced with our inspectors. All new recruits have to attend the session before they can come out on an inspection. We cover safeguarding and confidentiality as well as what to expect on an inspection visit.

6.3 What's good about being a Young Inspector?

These are some of the things our young inspectors have told us they get from being an inspector.

- Improved our confidence and self-esteem.
- Raised the quality of our semi- independent homes.
- Give us a sense of achievement and makes us feel proud.
- Learning new skills around communication, problem solving, information gathering and public speaking.
- Making a positive difference for other young people like me
- Training/development
- Rewarded for the work I do
- It is great to write about on my CV, employers are very interested in what I have done.

6.4 Activity and new developments

The Semi- independent Charter Mark has been co- produced with young people and is now used in all visits to inspect against. (See attached)

All our commissioned semi- independent providers have now been inspected and all but two homes have been awarded The Charter Mark. Feedback has been given to these homes and improvement plans developed together with provider on how they can achieve the Charter Mark.

Young Inspector's feedback is now going to be published and shared with workers and young people to help inform their decision making in finding the right home to meet their individual needs. A profile of each home and what they offer will be given to social workers and personal advisors to share with their young people, we hope that this will help to give them a better understanding of what that home has to offer as well as any charges they may have to pay, how good is the wifi, when the staff will be there, any

expectations of them and the homes unique offer etc.

6.5 Our Achievements...

Changes to house rules Poor quality home no longer used

Front door keys given

More flexibility around meals and cooking

Giving young people the opportunity to share their experiences

Sharing of good practice Reduced service charges and utility bills

Presented and held a workshop at a National Commissioning Conference

6.6 Future plans and challenges

- Extension of activity to include residential children's homes and inspection of Children Services internal provisions.
- Joint working with commissioning to embed the programme in to the Quality Monitoring Processes of all accommodation based services for young people.
- Young Inspectors to be involved with any tendering for accommodation in the future.
- Young Inspectors to continue to inspect our semi-independent homes.
- To embed the inspection outcomes in our home finding processes.
- Share good practice and continue to raise standards where our young people live.
- Reward young inspectors as paid sessional workers for their expertise and time.
- Create Lead Young inspector post to maintain current work and future developments to ensure programme embedded in our social work and commissioning practice.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

7.0 List of appendices

7.1 Appendix 8(a): Charter Mark

8.0 Financial considerations

8.1 None as a result of this report.

9.0 Legal considerations

9.1 None as a result of this report.

10.0 Risk management considerations

10.1 None as a result of this report.

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people

11.1 Young people co-produce this work.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations

12.1 None as a result of this report.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers

14.1 None.

Blackpool Young Inspectors

THE CHARTER MARK

Ensuring all our young people live in a good semi- independent home where they feel safe and cared for, able to develop skills for adult life, supported by trusted adults who care about them.

THE PEOPLE

- ✓ I feel like the staff care about me.
- ✓ I get to spend time with staff and they are there when I need them
- ✓ I know when staff will be out of the home and I can get hold of staff when I need them.
- ✓ I have built trusting relationships with staff and know I can go to them if I need any support.
- ✓ The staff have a variety of skills and abilities so they are able to support me
- ✓ The staff are empathetic and have a good understanding of my past experiences
- ✓ The staff are responsive to me if I am having a difficult time, they can see when I am upset or overwhelmed and will actively offer support.
- ✓ Staff are proactive and can manage situations and make decisions with me without always relying on the support of my Social Worker or Personal Advisor
- ✓ Staff work well together with other people who support me, they will advocate for me if I need them to
- ✓ Staff are enthusiastic and motivated, the staff stick around so I don't keep having to get used to new workers all the time
- ✓ Staff are positive and creative, they can think outside the box and will go the extra mile to support me
- ✓ I believe the staff are positive role models and act like a good parent to me
- ✓ The staff appear resilient and confident, I can trust them to support me
- ✓ I am involved in the recruitment of new staff with other young people in the home.
- ✓ I can help to interview new staff, together we are able to have the deciding vote and feel fully involved in the whole process
- ✓ My views are regularly asked for and are included in the homes and staff development and are included in staff's supervisions/IPA's



THE PLACE

- ✓ The home is decorated and maintained to a high standard, it feels warm and welcoming. Decoration/furnishings any damages are repaired quickly
- ✓ I can walk to the local shops
- ✓ I have good links to public transport
- ✓ I have a say in how my bedroom is decorated and I can contribute to the general appearance of the home.
- ✓ I was given a Welcome Pack which includes new bedding, towels, and basic toiletries.
- ✓ I feel safe in the home.
- ✓ There is access to a communal space where I can spend time together with other people and staff in the home.
- ✓ I have access to a house computer/laptop for my studying.
- ✓ I have access to free Wi-Fi.
- ✓ I have access to Netflix, TV package.
- ✓ My friends and family can visit in the communal space.
- ✓ There are Clear Rules on visitors and overnight stays.
- ✓ I have access to an outdoor space and I am encouraged and supported to spend time outdoors.
- ✓ I can have time out in my room and my privacy is respected.
- ✓ The use of CCTV has been discussed with me and is only used to monitor entrance/exits to the home. I have a key to the front door and my room.
- ✓ I have access to a fully equipped kitchen at all times and lockable storage.
- ✓ There is a place to wash and dry my clothes. I have access to an iron, ironing board and outdoor drying space
- ✓ I am supported to eat a healthy diet, I am given choices on the food I eat.
- ✓ I have access to basic food essentials in the kitchen at all times.
- ✓ I understand the rules of the home, they are clear and fair.
- ✓ I know what money I have to pay each week. The costs are reasonable and I understand what I am paying for?



ME

- ✓ Staff understand that I am learning to become independent and that I still have things to learn. I am working towards being Independent by the time I leave.
- ✓ I am supported to learn about my own emotional wellbeing and ways to become more resilient.
- ✓ I am supported to learn about healthy friendships/relationships.
- ✓ I am supported and encouraged to see my family and friends, staff understand that I may need help in maintaining and understanding these relationships.
- ✓ I am supported to create good support networks around me.
- ✓ I know and understand my individual support plan. I have been fully involved in the writing of it and it is the right plan for me.
- ✓ I am supported to learn independence and skills for life which are individual to me and the areas I need support in.
- ✓ I am supported to be healthy and make good choices.
- ✓ I am encouraged to be ambitious.
- ✓ I am supported to make plans for my future.
- ✓ I am encouraged and supported to try new things and get involved in my local community.
- ✓ The level of support is individual to what I need, it is recognised that I may need more support when I first move in.
- ✓ My successes and special occasions are celebrated.
- ✓ There are fun activities to do and I am given choices about what we do.
- ✓ I am supported to access any support services that may help me.
- ✓ I am supported to move on and helped to settle in my new home.
- ✓ Staff will keep in touch and check in on me to see how I am doing.



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Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager.
Date of Meeting:	27 March 2024

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To note the ongoing workplan for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year and consider the update to previous Committee recommendations.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To confirm the workplan for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year.

2.2 To monitor the implementation of the Committee's recommendations/actions.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

3.1 To ensure the Workplan is robust and fit for purpose.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background Information

6.1 Scrutiny Workplan

The Committee’s Scrutiny Workplanning Workshop was held on 18 July 2023 and considered items for inclusion on the Committee’s workplan for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year. The workplan is a flexible document that sets out the work that will be undertaken by the Committee over the course of the year, both through scrutiny review and Committee meetings.

Committee Members are also invited to suggest topics at any time that might be suitable for scrutiny review through completion of the Scrutiny Review Checklist. The checklist forms part of the mandatory scrutiny procedure for establishing review panels and must therefore be completed and submitted for consideration by the Committee, prior to a topic being approved for scrutiny outside of the workplanning workshop.

6.2 Implementation of Recommendations/Actions

The table attached at Appendix 9(b) has been developed to assist the Committee in effectively ensuring that the recommendations made by the Committee are acted upon. The table will be regularly updated and submitted to each Committee meeting.

Members are requested to consider the updates provided in the table and ask follow-up questions as appropriate to ensure that all recommendations are implemented. The table also includes the work and recommendations of the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

6.3 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 9(a): Scrutiny workplan
Appendix 9(b): Implementation of Recommendations/Actions

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities and the impact of this decision for our children and young people::

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

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Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee - Work Plan 2023/2024	
June/July TBC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children's Services Performance data – update on performance against the Council Plan Key Performance Indicators 2. CSAP Annual Report 3. Children's and Young People Strategic Partnership Plan 4. Children's Social Care Update including improvement, transformation and key subject areas such as neglect, permanency of placement, family hubs, financial performance of the service against the MTFS 5. Young People Classed as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) To review the progress and impact of the work outlined at the NEET Review Panel held 26 September 2022. To also include Young People Aged 16-18 referral from the SLB, to look at what the law says, the options for young people at this age and what support is provided to those that are NEET by the Council.
September 2024 TBC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family Safeguarding Model a report on the implementation and initial impact 2. Annual Children's Services Complaints report 3. Corporate Parent Panel Annual Report 4. Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools To review the provisions within schools to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils. Potential link to SEND target of: <i>'Children and young people with SEND to enjoy good physical and mental health and wellbeing emotional health.'</i> Include access to CAMHS? Referrals schools – those that are rejected.
November 2024 TBC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better Start – to receive an annual update on the work of Better Start. Additional two years funding, links to the family hubs, creating sustainability. 2. Educational Attainment – an overview of attainment for 23/24 3. Children's Services Performance data – update on performance against the Council Plan Key Performance Indicators 4. Children's Social Care Update including improvement, transformation and key subject areas such as neglect, permanency of placement, family hubs, financial performance of the service against the MTFS

Scrutiny Review Work	
2 October 2023	Children, Young People and Families Plan - Completed To consider and input into the development of the plan.
21 November 2023	Place Based Safeguarding Approach - Completed To receive information on the new approach to the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership. To then review the effectiveness of the approach in a further 12 months.
TBC 2024	Sufficiency Strategy To feed into the development of the new strategy. To potentially cover viability of Council run children's homes.
TBC	Effectiveness of Partnership working across services To hold a general meeting with all partners to discuss partnership working, whilst also considering the issue of partnership working through individual issues at Committee meetings such as Early Help and Youth Justice.

TBC	Looked After Children in Blackpool – Children’s Homes Consideration of the viability of Council-run children’s homes. To potentially be included within the Sufficiency Strategy meeting.
TBC	Transition of Young Adults with SEND
TBC	Community Engagement in Schools – To consider work to engage with local communities in schools (Referred by 15 September 2022 Audit Committee)
TBC	Early Help Strategy Development

CYP Scrutiny Training	
TBC September 2023	Journey of the Child
18 September 2023 (at the start of the pre Committee briefing)	15 minute briefing on: Legislation in Education
6 November 2023 (at the start of the pre Committee briefing)	15 minute briefing on: the role of the LADO
23 January 2024 (at the start of the pre Committee briefing)	15 minute briefing on: Special Guardianship Orders
25 March 2024 (at the start of the pre Committee briefing)	15 minute briefing on:

Appendix 9(b): Monitoring of Scrutiny Committee recommendations

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
1	09.12.21	That further consideration be given by the Committee to the findings of the 'Child of the North' report and the potential impact on Blackpool.	TBC	Vicky Gent	Vicky has requested that Members revisit this action due to the wide ranging nature of the Child of the North report. To be discussed at the next Committee meeting.	TBC
2	08.12.2022	To include an item on the work programme to look at the resource capacity of the Young Inspectors Team.	April 2024	TBC	On the agenda.	Completed
3	22.06.2023	The Committee agreed to request a presentation from the health provider on the issues regarding waiting times and access to services in relation to EHCPs, speech and language therapy and any other service for special educational needs.	January 2024	TBC	Completed in January 2024	Completed
4	21.09.2023	To receive the domestic abuse review report when available. To consider the improvement plan progress in early 2024. To receive an updated copy of the improvement plan following the meeting once it had been updated to include the missing detail.	March 2024	Chris Coyle	Received at January 2024 meeting.	Completed

Appendix 9(b): Monitoring of Scrutiny Committee recommendations

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
5	21.09.2023	To contribute to the development of the new early help strategy in due course.	TBC	Joanne Stewart	Timescale needs identification.	Not yet due.
6	21.09.2023	That a report on the implementation and initial impact of Family Safeguarding model be received in approximately 12 months with further reporting following in order to measure success.	September 2024	Vicky Gent	To add to workplan.	Not yet due.
7	9.11.2023	To receive an update from Ms Gent on whether previous foster carers had been contacted since the pandemic to determine if they wished to take up the role again.	December 2023	Vicky Gent	Update requested. A fostering update is included on the agenda and therefore this question can be posed again.	Ongoing
8	9.11.2023	That Ms Gent consider the 'target' field within the Council Plan Key Performance Indicator data to determine whether an aspiration, a view of the direction of travel or a sense check could be included in place of a target in the next report to Committee.	31 July 2024	Vicky Gent	To be included in next report.	Not yet due
9	9.11.2023	The Committee agreed to receive a written response on	December 2023	Vicky Gent	Updated requested.	

Appendix 9(b): Monitoring of Scrutiny Committee recommendations

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
		the child death data for Blackpool.				
10	25.01.24	That details of “no-shows” for Speech and Language Therapy be provided to members of the committee for information; and That details of waiting times for those referred on from the Neuro-Development Pathway be provided for information to members of the committee.	31.03.24	BTH	Response requested 8 February and followed up 18 March.	Ongoing
11	25.01.24	That details of work with private sector organisations be provided to members of the committee for information	31.03.24	Charlotte Baron	<p>The main engagement in terms of working with the Private Sector is found via the Supported Internship Programme (Project Search). There are a number of companies that we currently engage with. A full list was circulated to members via email.</p> <p>In addition to the ‘true’ Private Sector companies we also have long standing relationships with other organisations in/around Blackpool. Again a full list was circulated by email.</p> <p>All of the organisations named provide excellent (and supportive) placement opportunities for all of our interns. They provide a varied range of work experiences for young people and</p>	Completed

Appendix 9(b): Monitoring of Scrutiny Committee recommendations

	DATE OF REC	RECOMMENDATION	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	UPDATE	RAG RATING
					encourage and support them to develop a wider set of skills in preparation for employment. The team are always looking to work with new employers and would welcome any introductions that could be recommended to them.	
12	25.01.24	That a deep dive on the Transition of Young Adults with SEND be added to the Committee's work programme.	31.12.24	Sharon Davis	To be added to workplan.	TBC
13	25.01.24	That the Independent Scrutineer be invited to a pre-committee briefing.	31.12.24	Sharon Davis	Appropriate timescale to be determined.	TBC