

People and Communities Department

Children and Young People's Specialist Service

A Service Statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is a Service Statement for the Children and Young People's Specialist Service (CYPSS). It details how these services will be delivered from 1st April 2013, and will inform the continuous development, evaluation and review of the Service and the continuous development of our workforce. It details how these services will be provided to any child, young person, parent or carer who needs to use them, and how a focus will be maintained upon the child's experience of the Service and the outcomes to be achieved. It reiterates the standards to which the whole Service will operate and the professional standards which all staff will be expected to apply. In doing so it recognises that our staff are our greatest resource and makes a commitment to ensuring effective and constructive staff supervision, training and continuous professional development in a learning organisation in which these principles are put into practice. The Statement articulates and underpins the culture of the Children and Young People's Specialist Service.
- 1.2 Our arrangements for the provision of the Children and Young People's Specialist Service (which will be outlined in detail below) is the culmination of work over the past two years to re-design the provision of Children's Social Care Services, and were consulted upon within the paper 'A model for the future delivery of Children and Young People's Specialist Service Provision – 25th September 2012' – as part of the wider consultation process for the proposed People and Communities Department. The re-design of our Service was part of a wider change programme for the Council – the restructuring of the Council into three departments (People: Places: Resources): a future arrangement whereby the Council will be strategic rather than operational: will be more of a commissioner and enabler of services (and guardian of standards) than a direct provider. This is reflected in the proposed structure for the People and Communities Department, with clear arrangements for strategic planning, commissioning, quality assurance, safeguarding, and the provision of specialist and preventative services.
- 1.3 The Children and Young People's Specialist Service will be established from 1st April 2013 and will be the first part of the People and

Communities Department to be implemented – the rest of the structure will be implemented during 2013 – 2014. The Service will operate as a provider unit within the developing commissioner – provider arrangements in the Department. An initial Service Level Agreement will be established for the delivery of Children and Young People’s Specialist Services, which will be used to inform future SLAs for the Service.

- 1.4 Our arrangements have been informed by lean review of social care processes and the contents, key messages, and recommendations of the reports from the Munro Review of Child Protection and takes account of the Government’s response to these; the outcomes, recommendations and actions taken subsequent to the Ofsted Inspection Safeguarding and Looked After Children’s Services conducted in January 2012. Further, it incorporates the key findings of the Frank Field Review and Graham Allen Review which emphasised the importance of early intervention and prevention, and the provision of early services to children and families. It is underpinned by the changes that the work of the Social Work Reform Board will bring to the social work profession and anticipates the changes that will follow from the Family Justice Review: the Adoption Action Plan, the revision of Working Together to Safeguard Children, and the changing framework for the inspection of safeguarding and children in care services.
- 1.5 Between 2009 – 2013, the Service experienced significant increases in the number of referrals for services, initial and core assessments, children and young people in care and care leavers. As a result, the Council has invested in additional social worker and front line management capacity (which has enabled the Service to increase capacity for the Children and Families Assessment and Intervention Team and the Disabled Children’s Team) and made provision for growth in the children in care placement budget and care leavers’ services budget. This increased capacity and planned budget growth has been maintained within the People and Communities Department’s Medium Term Resources and Service Plan 2013 – 2016.
- 1.6 Our model for Children and Young People’s Specialist Service will deliver services to children and young people in need, with disabilities, at risk of significant harm, in or having left the Council’s care within a continuum of services provided to children and young people, parents and carers by agencies across Bath and North East Somerset (universal – targeted – specialist – targeted – universal). The responsiveness, flexibility and robustness of those services working with families to prevent the need for Social Care interventions and to provide continuing support to those who require it subsequent to Social Care help, is central to the success of our model. How we provide informed consultation and manage the transitions into and on from Social Care Services will be crucial and will rest upon our professional expertise and judgement. The Service will need to be continuously aware of the impact of any budget changes upon the provision of these preventative and continuing services. Our model will also enable us to provide consistent and high quality services to children

and young people in care and care leavers, and to deliver the Council's Fostering and Adoption Services.

2. Who we are providing services to – the narrative

- 2.1 In any one year we can expect to receive 1300 referrals: undertake 800 initial assessments and 340 core assessments: provide services to 650 children and young people in need: provide 100 new care placements: provide services to up to 170 children and young people in care: support up to 90 care leavers: make new protection plans for 100 children and young people and provide services to up to 100 children and young people with existing protection plans: support 95 – 100 foster carers and adopters: recruit foster carers and adopters. These numbers have increased steadily, some significantly, during the past three years and there are indicators that this trend will continue.
- 2.2 As stated above, the Children and Young People's Specialist Service delivers services to children and young people as part of a continuum of services provided by agencies across Bath and North East Somerset, and its services are designed and will be delivered to reflect and facilitate the child's journey – into, through and beyond the services – with a focus from the outset upon expected outcomes. The voice of the child, and an informed understanding of the daily life experienced by the child, will inform all assessments and plans for services. Our focus will be upon the impact that our services have, and the difference they make to the lives of children and young people.
- 2.3 At every stage of the child/young person's journey, we will provide social work services and support which will enable them to live and thrive within their family or, in circumstances when this cannot be safely or appropriately achieved, will make arrangements for alternative care and support. Our aim will be to promote, or provide, stable and secure care within families (birth, extended or substitute) which will meet all children and young people's need for permanency. We will ensure that suitable plans are in place for all children and young people who receive our services, and those who move on to other services – and that these are regularly reviewed. We will provide services to parents to support, develop and help to overcome any difficulties in their parenting of their children.
- 2.4 For those children and young people who come into care, we will seek carers with the capacity to meet their identified needs, immediately and into the future, and support those carers to do so. Plans will be made from the outset to ensure that all children and young people's cultural, identity, health and educational needs are met, and to promote contact with family members and friends in line with their best interests and care plan. Children, young people, parents and family members will contribute to, and participate in, care planning and review of arrangements. We will pursue high ambitions for all children and young people in care, and provide comprehensive and tailored support to young people leaving care.

- 2.5 Plans for permanency will be made and completed for all children and young people in care. We will ensure that we recruit, train and support a pool of experienced, skilled and local foster carers, and that we can access other foster care placements as required. We will recruit, train, identify and support adoptive families who will be matched with children being placed for adoption.
- 2.6 We will work with children and young people, for however short or long their journey is through children's social care services, to make a real difference to their lives and their experience of daily life; and with parents, extended family carers and substitute carers to promote their care of children and young people in order to achieve stability, security and good outcomes. This range of work will call upon all our skills and expertise, and emphasises the need for continuous development as a workforce and a Service.

3. What we will provide

3.1 The Service will provide a combination of specialist services that will:-

- 3.1.1 Provide professional consultation to other services and agencies as to whether the child has met the threshold for social care services or his/her needs can continue to be met by the provision of existing or additional services by other agencies, and ensure that social work expertise and consultation is consistently available.
- 3.1.2 Provide an immediate response to those cases that meet the threshold for social care services: undertake assessments to inform plans to provide social care services in line with the child's needs.
- 3.1.3 Make provision for social care staff to invest their time in establishing relationships with children, young people and families to undertake face-to-face work on a planned basis and in unplanned circumstances.
- 3.1.4 Ensure that the Service meets its statutory duties in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children and the 1989 and 2004 Children Act.
- 3.1.5 Provide the Social Work expertise required to initiate and manage child protection plans and care proceedings in respect of those children at risk of significant harm.
- 3.1.6 Provide a dedicated Social Work Service for disabled children and young people and the provision of a children's duty service to the RUH.
- 3.1.7 Provide dedicated services to, and progress permanency plans for, children and young people in care and provide services to those young people leaving care and to care leavers.
- 3.1.8 Deliver the Council's Fostering and Adoption Services (including Family Link) in accordance with the National Minimum Standards, and through the recruitment, training and support of foster carers and adopters provide a range of placements for children and young people in our care.

- 3.1.9 Provide services to meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people and help them to develop into resilient and independent adults.
- 3.1.10 Prepare plans for on-going support services to children, young people and families following the conclusion of social care services, and monitor the take up of those services, to ensure continuity of appropriate support.
- 3.1.11 Ensure effective planning for those young people who may require continuing services as adults, and a smooth transition to those services.
- 3.1.12 Ensure effective interfaces with the Emergency Duty Service and the provision of any out of hours services.
- 3.1.13 Ensure close working arrangements and contacts with agencies who know the child/see the child frequently.

4. The staffing resources

- 4.1 The Service has been able to make the case for increasing staff capacity through the creation of 1 Deputy Manager post and 2.5 Social Worker posts, and budgets have been provided for this within the Council's Medium Term Resource and Service Plan. The additional posts have increased capacity in the Children and Families Assessment and Intervention Team and the Disabled Children's Team, and have enabled us to maintain the staffing levels within the rest of the Service. Through the design of the Service, we have created a Deputy Team Manager for the Disabled Children's Team. The Service has also created, and recruited to, the post of Principal Children and Families Social Worker. Further, we have established Senior Practitioner posts in key areas of the Service
- 4.2 The staffing resources in the Service reflect the commitment of the Council and the People and Communities Department to the provision of Children's Social Care Services, at a time when very significant savings are being made across Council Services.
- 4.3 The number of staff per team are illustrated in figure 1.

5. Caseloads and supervision ratios

- 5.1 The Service is committed to attaining optimal caseloads for qualified social workers and all other practitioners, to enable effective working relationships to be established with children and families and outcome focussed work. This is in the context of the increased demand for services outlined above and the additional capacity established for the Service. It will require front line managers to have effective overviews of work, and practitioners to plan, progress and complete work in line with the child's needs. Good supervision, and effective use of that supervision, will be central to achieving this.

- 5.2 Newly Qualified Social Workers will have a protected caseload within their assessed and supported year in employment. Our intention is that Qualified Social Workers' (FTE) caseloads will ordinarily be no less than 20 cases and no more than 25 cases, across the Service. In determining this, due consideration will be given to the relative complexity of cases. The Family Placement Team will determine the minimum and maximum number of carers and assessments per worker. Team Managers will determine the caseloads for Family Support Practitioners within their teams, but they will reflect the above numbers. All teams carry out additional tasks beyond caseloads, and whilst it is difficult to calculate their impact upon individual teams' workloads, it is likely that these are fairly equal across all teams.
- 5.3 The additional Deputy Team Manager capacity within the Service means that we have been able to attain our proposed ratio of approximately 6 practitioner staff to each Manager. This has been designed to provide sufficient scope for management oversight of work, supervision and reflective practice, and a focus upon staff's continuous professional development.
- 5.4 All CYPSS staff will receive supervision at least monthly. Specific arrangements will be made for induction periods and assessed and supported years in employment to include more frequent supervision (weekly or fortnightly). All staff will have a contract for supervision. All supervision sessions will include scope for reflection and learning. Records will be made of all supervision sessions, by the supervising manager, and signed off by both parties. Arrangements will be made for observations of supervision sessions by Line Managers, and feedback provided to inform learning. Records will be regularly audited by Line Managers with a focus upon frequency and quality of sessions.

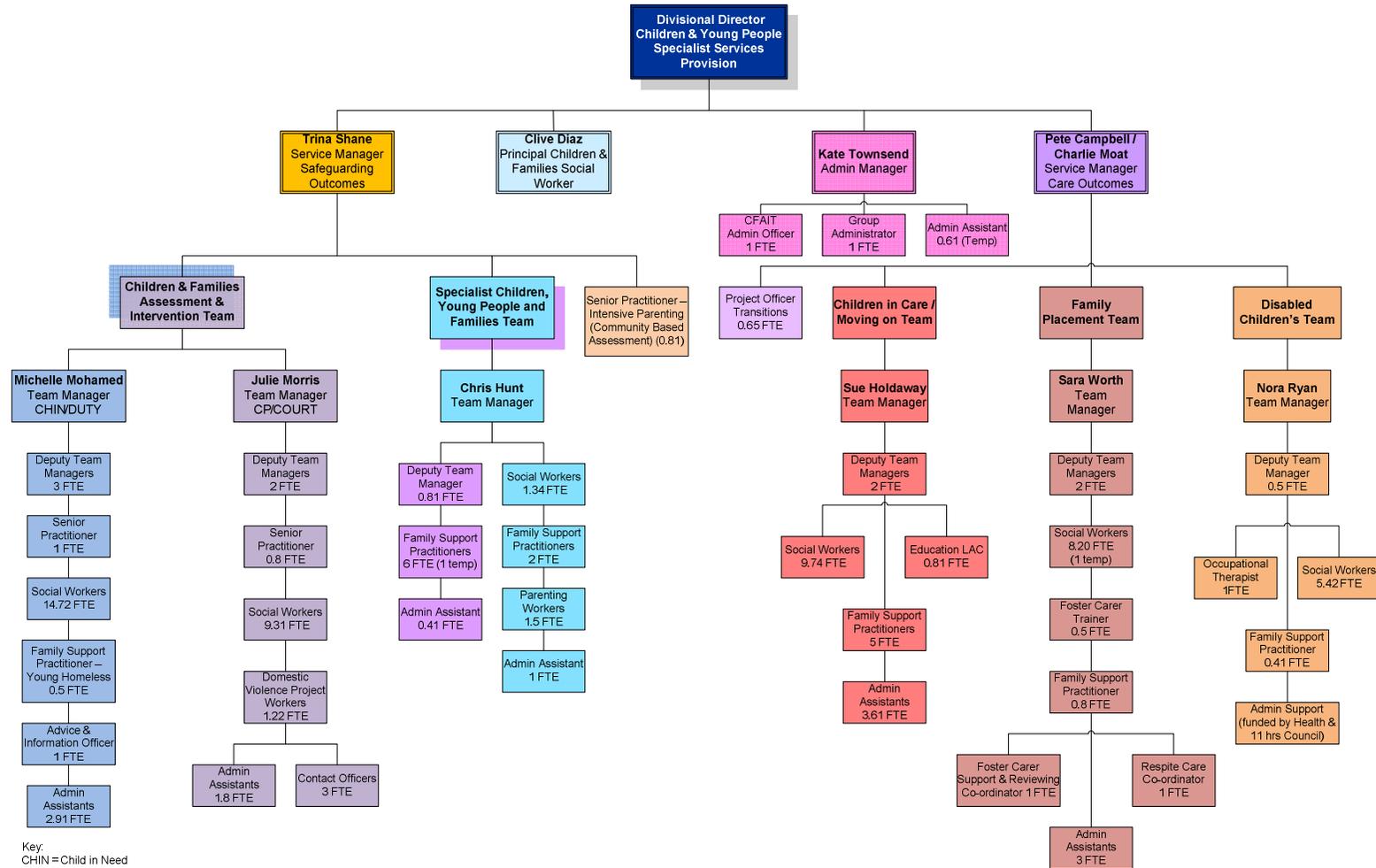
6. How Services will be delivered

The Children and Young People's Specialist Service will be delivered through five teams, as follows:-

- 6.1 A Children and Families Assessment and Intervention Team (CFAIT) that will provide front of house arrangements and services that follow (including court and child protection plans) to identified children in need, at risk and newly in care.
- 6.1.1 The CFAIT will comprise:-
- The contact, referral and assessment service and Children in Need Service, which will incorporate the New Way service. A Team Manager will have an overview of all work within the Service and lead responsibility for performance management.
 - The Child Protection and Court Service. A Team Manager will have an overview of all the work within the Service and lead responsibility for performance management.

- 6.2 The Specialist Children, Young People and Family Team which will sit adjacent to the CFAIT and will provide a range of services and interventions to supplement those provided by the CFAIT to prevent family breakdown and avoid unnecessary admissions to care for 0-19 year olds – and will include 117; brief solution based therapy: specialist child and family support services: community based assessments.
- 6.3 A Disabled Children's Team which will provide the hospital duty service to RUH and the social work and occupational therapy services to disabled children and young people.
- 6.4 Children in Care and Moving on Team which will provide services to, and progress permanency plans for, children and young people in care: and services to young people leaving care and care leavers.
- 6.5 A Family Placement Team providing the Council's Fostering (including Family Link) and Adoption Services.
- 6.6 All teams will be supported by administrative staff who will provide comprehensive back office services and knowledge of the teams' functions, to underpin the work of the whole Service.

Figure One – Children and Young People’s Specialist Service Provision



Key:
 CHIN = Child in Need
 CP = Child Protection
 FTE = Full Time Equivalent
 TEMP = Temporary Contract

7. Team Functions

7.1 Children and Families Assessment and Intervention Team

7.1.1 Purpose: To provide social work services and support which will enable children and young people to live and thrive within their family or, in the circumstances when this cannot be safely or appropriately achieved, make arrangements for alternative care and support.

7.1.2 Scope of work

- To receive and respond to all contacts, requests for services, referrals in respect of children, young people and families across Bath and North East Somerset (with the exception of those made directly from the RUH to the hospital duty service within the Disabled Children's Team).
- To provide consultation to referring agencies in cases where the threshold has not been met for Social Care Services, and other on-going services are appropriate.
- To respond to each referral in accordance with the Service's duties as outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children and the South West Child Protection Procedures, the Care Planning Regulations, and the Children's Service policies, procedures and practice guidance.
- To undertake assessments in respect of all referrals in partnership with the child, young person, parents, and other agencies/services to produce, and share, a plan for help and services to meet the child/young person's assessed needs.
- To present those assessments and plans to other forums as required, for example:-
 - Child protection case conferences
 - Looked after children planning meetings and reviews
 - Court proceedings
 - Children in need planning meetings
 - Annual Reviews of foster carers
- To provide services to the child/young person until their assessed need for Social Care Services has been met or plans have been made for permanent substitute care – i.e. to provide services for all
 - Children in need (see notes below re disabled children and care leavers)
 - Children subject to protection plans
 - Children in care until permanency plans are established
- To review all plans for these services to children and young people.
- To establish with other Services, any help required to meet the child's needs subsequent to the cessation of Social Care Services, by means of step down arrangements.
- To provide continuity for the supervision of children seeing their parents/relatives in line with orders for contact.

7.1.3 Process of work

- The **Contact, Referral and Assessment Service** will receive all contacts: determine those to be accepted as referrals: provide advice and guidance to referrers about those which do not meet that threshold: and make arrangements to allocate referrals for initial assessments.
- The Contact, Referral and Assessment Service will be provided by Qualified Social workers within the 3 Duty Teams operating on a rota and managed by a Deputy Team Manager, who will have responsibility for allocating work and recording management oversight and actions.
- The duty rota will make provision for a minimum of 2 QSWs per session and ensure that same day/next day responses are made as required.
- The Contact, Referral and Assessment Service will complete all initial assessments and core assessments for children in need, section 47 investigations and new care episodes. All new referrals will be responded to within a maximum of 24 hours during which initial contact will be made with the family and assessments commenced. The child will be seen within a maximum of 5 working days and this will be recorded in Care First – if it is not achieved an explanation must be recorded.
- Initial assessments will be completed within 10 working days and core assessments within a further 35 working days. Core assessments triggered by section 47 investigations which have resulted in initial child protection conferences will be completed within 15 working days. All initial and core assessments will be signed off by the Deputy Team Manager prior to completion.
- The allocated social worker within the Duty Teams will be the case holder until the help and services provided to a child or young person in need has been concluded: for a child protection case until the initial case conference and a protection plan is made: for new care episodes (section 20) until the 4 week review meeting: for care proceedings until the first hearing. The Child Protection and Court Team will make arrangements for all cases to be transferred to an allocated social worker at these points.
- Deputy Managers/Team Managers will convene strategic discussions in respect of potential Section 47 investigations and distribute action notes within 24 hours.
- Social Workers will convene planning meetings for children and young people about to come into care and ensure notification to the Independent Reviewing Service so that future reviews can be planned, and notify health, education and schools.
- The allocated Social Worker will in conjunction with the Independent Reviewing Service, ensure that preparations are completed for all child protection case conferences, looked after children planning meetings and reviews and ensure that reports are shared with all parties in advance.

- The Team Manager/Deputy Manager will quality assure and sign off all assessments, plans and reviews, and reports for child protection case conferences, looked after children planning meetings and reviews, and to Court prior to their submission to the Independent Reviewing Service or Legal Team/Court.
- The Contact, Referral and Assessment Team will continue to provide services to children and young people in need until those needs have been met and they are eligible for step down services. The allocated social worker will ensure that such services are in place when closing the case and 3 months later will contact the service to ascertain whether they remain appropriate to the child/young person's needs or require review.
- The Deputy Team Managers will monitor the number of children in need cases within the Duty Teams to ensure that there is always capacity for providing the contact, referral and assessment services.
- The **Child Protection and Court Service** will receive cases from the Contact, Referral and Assessment Team as outlined above and will progress and review all child protection plans and care plans in accordance with Working Together and the Care Planning Regulations.
- Deputy Team Managers/Team Managers will convene any strategy discussions required in respect of existing cases and distribute action notes within 24 hours.
- At the conclusion of child protection plans and in the cases of children returning to their family's care, the Child Protection and Court Service will make arrangements for any continuing services or step down services in line with the child's needs, and keep this under review as outlined above.
- The allocated Social Worker will in conjunction with the Independent Reviewing Service, ensure that preparations are completed for all child protection case conferences, looked after children planning meetings and reviews and ensure that reports are shared with all parties in advance.
- The Team Manager/Deputy Manager will quality assure and sign off all assessments, plans and reviews, and reports for child protection case conferences, looked after children planning meetings and reviews, and to Court prior to their submission to the Independent Reviewing Service or Legal Team/Court.
- The allocated social worker will ensure that core group meetings are held at the required timescales between case conferences and that actions are recorded, distributed, and reported to the subsequent case conference. The Deputy Team Manager will record management oversight of these.

- At the commencement of all care proceedings where a child has been removed or the plan is for the removal of the child, the Team Manager will contact the Children in Care Team Manager to determine the timing of the involvement of a Social Worker from that team so that appropriate plans are progressed for permanency options.
- Permanency plans will be established for all children in care (accommodated under section 20 or subject to Orders) at their 4 month review.
- When permanency plans have been confirmed, the allocated Social Worker from the Children in Care Team will continue as the case holder and Social Worker for the child/young person.

7.2 Specialist Children, Young People and Families Team

This team sits adjacent to the front of house. Its services can be accessed by all teams.

7.2.1 Purpose: To provide a range of additional support services and interventions to meet the identified and assessed needs of children, young people, parents and carers to prevent family breakdown and avoid unnecessary admissions to care.

7.2.2 Scope of work

- To provide immediate and/or on-going support services to children, young people, parents and carers in line with immediate plans for intervention and on-going plans for children in need: children with protection plans: children in care plans. To include qualified social workers undertaking initial assessments as required.

Services include:

- 117
- Brief Solution Focussed Therapy – an evidenced based programme to intervene where young people are faced with potential family breakdown.
- Specialist Child and Family Support Service – providing intensive support to parents and children in line with existing case and/or protection plans to prevent family breakdown and avoid unnecessary admissions to care.
- Community Based Assessment – established as an alternative to residential placements providing an intensive multi-agency parenting assessment mostly where care proceedings have been initiated.
- To present reports about this work to other forums as required or planned, for example:-
 - Child protection case conferences
 - Looked after children planning meetings and reviews
 - Court proceedings
 - Children in need planning meetings

- To contribute to reviews of all plans for services to children and young people in need with whom the Support Services Team is involved.
- To provide parenting support services as part of the range of such services across the Local Authority area.

7.2.3 Process of work

- Requests for services will be received by the Team Manager and Deputy Team Manager (Specialist Child and Family Support Service): responded to within 48 hours (or same day if required) and allocated to an appropriate member of the Team.
- The Team Manager/Deputy Team Manager will quality assure and sign off all assessments, plans and reviews, and reports for any child protection conferences, looked after children planning meetings and reviews, and to any court proceedings prior to their submission to the Independent Reviewing Service or Legal Team/Court.
- At the conclusion of work with a child, young person, parent or carer the Service will ensure that provision has been made for any continuing or step down services.

7.3 Disabled Children's Team

7.3.1 Purpose: To provide social work and occupational therapy services and support to enable disabled children and young people to live and thrive within their family or, in circumstances where this cannot be safely or appropriately achieved, make arrangements for alternative care and support.

7.3.2 Scope of work

- To provide help and services to disabled children and young people in Bath and North East Somerset in line with their assessed needs – up to the age of 24 as required. To liaise with CFAIT to determine when direct referrals can be made to the Disabled Children's Team and/or when Social Workers from the Disabled Children's Team can contribute to assessments.
- To provide to the RUH the hospital duty service for children and young people (on behalf of Bath and North East Somerset / Somerset / Wiltshire) and ensure that appropriate referrals, assessments or plans are relayed to the relevant Local Authority or Service within Bath and North East Somerset and any required actions are taken on their behalf.
- To respond to each referral in accordance with the Children's Services policies, procedures and practice guidance, and in accordance with the Service's duties as outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children and the South West Child Protection Procedures, and the Care Planning Regulations.
- To undertake assessments in respect of all referrals in partnership with the child/young person, parents and other

agencies/services to produce, and share, a plan to meet the child/young person's assessed needs, aspirations and capabilities.

- To present those assessments and plans to other forums as planned, for example:-
 - Child protection case conferences
 - Looked after children planning meetings and reviews
 - Court proceedings
 - Annual Reviews of foster carers/family link carers
- To provide services to the child/young person until their assessed need for Social Care Services has been met or plans have been made for their transition to adult services so that their aspirations can be met and their capabilities realised.
- To assess and identify resources relating to direct payments and set up arrangements to meet identified needs.
- To review all plans for these services to disabled children and young people within a care pathway that ensures smooth transitions to any continuing support services required.
- To determine, and with other Services arrange any help required to meet the child/young person's needs subsequent to the cessation of Social Care Services.

7.3.3 Process of work

- The Team Manager/Deputy Team Manager will allocate all cases and maintain an overview of the allocation of work.
- The Hospital Social Work Service will be provided by a rota of Social Workers.
- All new referrals will be responded to within a maximum of 48 hours, during which initial contact will be made with the family, assessments commenced, help outlined and commenced. The aim will be to see the child within a maximum of 5 working days and recorded on Care First, if this is not achieved an explanation must be recorded.
- All new hospital referrals relating to children and young people residing in Wiltshire and Somerset will be responded immediately and referred to the appropriate Local Authority who will assume case responsibility within 24 hours.
- If the child/young person has been admitted to hospital the duty social worker will visit the ward on the same day.
- All new referrals relating to disabled children and young people will be responded to within 48 hours during which contact will be made with the family. The aim will be to see the child within a maximum of 5 working days, and recorded on Care First – if this is not achieved an explanation must be recorded.
- The allocated Social Worker will be the caseholder until the help and services provided to the child or young person has been concluded.
- The Team Manager/Deputy Team Manager will liaise with the Team Manager/Deputy Manager in the Children and Families

Team Service to convene strategy discussions in respect of potential Section 47 investigations and distribute action notes within 24 hours.

- The Social Worker will convene planning meetings for children and young people about to come into care and ensure immediate notification to the Independent Reviewing Service, and notify Health, Education and Schools.
- The allocated Social Worker will in conjunction with the Independent Reviewing Service, ensure that preparations are completed for all child protection case conferences, looked after children planning meetings and reviews and that reports are shared with all parties in advance.
- The allocated social worker will ensure that core group meetings are held at the required timescales between case conferences and that actions are recorded, distributed, and reported to the subsequent case conference. The Deputy Team Manager will record management oversight of these.
- The Team Manager/Deputy Team Manager will quality assure and sign off all assessments, plans and reviews and reports for child protection conferences, looked after children planning meetings and reviews and to Court, prior to their submission to the Independent Reviewing Service or Legal/Court.
- Where there are plans for continuing support to the young person as an adult, contact will be made with the appropriate adult service by the time the young person is aged 14 following the Year 9 transition review in order to inform commissioning.
- If a case is closed and arrangements have been made for step down services to meet the needs of the child/young person, the allocated Social Worker will (three months subsequent to the closure) contact the child/young person and family to determine whether the step down services remain appropriate or require review.

7.4 Family Placement Team

7.4.1 Purpose:

- To provide the Council's Adoption Service in line with national minimum standards, regulations and guidance.
- To provide the Council's Fostering Service in line with national minimum standards, regulations and guidance.
- To provide a range of foster care and family link placements for use by the Children's Social Care Teams to meet the identified needs and care plans of children and young people in care.
- To provide a range of adoption placements for matching with the needs of children and young people approved for adoption in Bath and North East Somerset, and those approved in other Local Authority areas.

7.4.2 Scope of work

- To receive and respond to all enquiries about fostering, adoption, and family link carers, and provide appropriate information and advice about each.
- To undertake assessments of prospective foster carers, relative carers, and family link carers in line with national standards, regulations and guidance and present completed assessments to the Fostering Panel.
- To undertake assessments of prospective adopters in line with national standards, regulations and guidance and present completed assessments to the Adoption and Permanence Panel.
- To work alongside Children's Social Workers to carry out viability assessments of connected persons.
- To undertake the Professional Advisor roles to the Fostering Panel and to the Adoption and Permanence Panel.
- To train, support and undertake annual reviews in respect of all registered foster carers and family link carers, and present annual reviews to the Fostering Panel.
- To train and support prospective adopters, and provide pre and post adoption support services to adopters in line with the Council's policy.
- To provide advice and, as required, section 51 counselling services to adults who have been adopted.
- To present reports to other forums as required, for example:-
 - Looked after children reviews
 - Court proceedings
 - Child protection case conferences
 - Fostering Panel
 - Adoption and Permanence Panel

7.4.3 Process of work

- The designated Social Worker takes the lead in promoting the recruitment of foster carers.
- The Team Manager determines how all enquiries about fostering and family link are responded to and allocated to staff accordingly.
- The Team Manager/Deputy Manager allocates all new assessments of prospective foster carers; relative carers, family link carers and adopters, and maintain an overview of the allocation of work.
- The Team Manager/Deputy Manager provides consultation, supervision and direction throughout the assessment process.
- The Team Manager/Deputy Manager will quality assure and sign off all assessments and reports prior to their submission to the Fostering Panel or Adoption and Permanence Panel.
- The Team Manager allocates registered foster carers and family link carers for support and annual review. All annual

reviews are quality assured and signed off by the Team Manager/Deputy Manager prior to their submission to the Fostering Panel.

- The Team Manager will convene a disruption planning meeting in respect of any disrupted placement.
- The Team Manager will allocate cases for pre and post adoption support, and for section 51 counselling.
- The Team Manager/Deputy Manager will quality assure and sign off all reports presented to other forums – e.g. looked after children reviews, court proceedings, child protection conferences.
- The Team Manager/Deputy Manager will provide the Professional Advisor services to the Fostering Panel and the Adoption and Permanence Panel.

7.5 Children in Care and Moving on Team

7.5.1 Purpose:

- To provide Social Care Services and support to children and young people in and leaving care to help them achieve the best possible outcomes.
- To provide services to ensure that all permanency plans in respect of children and young people in care are progressed, reviewed and (if required in line with their assessed needs) revised, to their completion.
- To provide services to ensure that all children and young people are prepared for leaving care – to adoption, residence orders, special guardianship orders, into independent living, or on occasions returning to their family care – and supported in doing so.
- To support young people leaving care to develop as resilient and independent adults.
- To support young people to make the successful transition into independent adult life and to access appropriate adult care services (in line with their assessed needs) through the provision of leaving care services.
- To support young people to develop employability skills and to access work placements and work opportunities.

7.5.2 Scope of work

- With the Children and Families Assessment and Intervention Team, identify all cases where permanent substitute care has been assessed as an option and allocate a Social Worker to jointly progress assessments from the earliest possible date.
- To undertake and present child permanency reports to the Adoption and Permanency Panel.
- To progress all permanency plans for children and young people in care to their completion.

- To provide services to all children and young people in care in line with their assessed needs, placement and care plans.
- To provide services to all children and young people preparing to leave care, and to care leavers – to help them access suitable accommodation training/further education, and employment.
- To review care plans, placement plans, personal education plans, health plans, and pathway plans in line with statutory requirements, through the Independent Reviewing Service, with the active participation of children/young people, parents and carers.
- To present assessments, plans, reports or reviews to other forums as required, for example:-
 - Looked after children reviews
 - Pathway planning meetings
 - Court proceedings
 - Child Protection Case Conferences
 - Annual Reviews of foster carers
 - Adoption and Permanence Panel
- Note: the Service to young people who are homeless will be provided by the Children and Families Team.

7.5.3 Process of work

- Team Manager allocates cases for joint assessments and planning of permanency options, as these arise.
- Team Managers/Deputy Managers allocate all children and young people in care with permanency plans and young people eligible for leaving care services to Social Workers across the Team and identify cases in which the Social Work Assistant will be the lead worker. The Team Manager/Deputy Manager will maintain an overview of the allocation of all work.
- The allocated worker will be the caseholder until the services to the child/young person in care or the care leavers have been concluded.
- The team will have collective responsibility for all children, young people and care leavers allocated to the Team, and will ensure the provision of a timely response to requests for help if the allocated worker is not immediately available.
- The allocated worker will, in conjunction with the Independent Reviewing Service, ensure that preparations are completed for all looked after children review meetings and that reports are shared with all parties in advance, and that these reviews are completed within the statutory timescales.
- The Team Manager/Deputy Team Managers will quality assure and sign off all plans and reports to looked after children reviews, court proceedings and any child protection case conferences prior to their submission to the Independent Reviewing Service or Legal Team/Court and all reports to the Adoption and Permanence Panel.

8. Role and purpose of administrative support service

The role and purpose of administrative support is to provide a comprehensive administrative, clerical, and typing services and support to staff providing social care services. It is essential for a successful Service to have good arrangements to effectively support staff, provided by skilled and competent administrators with clear expectations and guidance.

Administrative staff:

- Underpin the work of the Service.
- Support social care staff and the work of the team.
- Act as a point of contact, providing accurate and appropriate information especially when social care staff are out of the office.
- Contribute to knowledge and skills of the team, helping to anticipate potential difficulties and offer solutions to organisational and processing tasks.

This proposal represents Children's Social Care Service arrangements within the Children and Young People's Specialist Service Provision. There will be flexible use of administrative support services across the provider services. Future arrangements will also be informed by any reviews across the People and Communities Department.

9. The Principal Children and Families Social Worker

The Principal Children and Families Social Worker (PCFSW) is a newly created post, in line with the recommendations of the Munro Review, and will have the lead role for the continuous professional development of front line social work managers and practitioners (including newly qualified social workers), and report the views and experiences of the front line to all levels of management and to the Lead Member. The PCFSW will lead the development of Service and individual social work expertise required to work effectively with children, young people and families, and ensure that leading edge research in practice, policy and guidance is accessible to all social workers to underpin child-centred practice. The PCFSW will work with operational and off-line safeguarding teams and managers to identify and respond to training, practice and developmental needs in order that practice is continually updated to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. The PCFSW will work alongside front line practitioners and managers to provide consultation, coaching and challenge re the management of complex cases and, in exceptional circumstances, undertake joint work or directly case manage such complex cases; and will lead and manage the provision of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment for newly qualified social workers, in accordance with national guidance and requirements. The PCFSW will lead and manage the delivery of reflective practice workshops for practitioners and managers, and promote the active use of the latest evidence based research, policy and guidance in everyday practice; and will work with Service Managers to ensure that quality assurance results in quality improvements across the Service, and that these are

sustained. The PCFSW will provide reports to the People and Communities Team, the Lead Member Children's Service and the Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on front line social work issues and challenges and on practice developments, and within these anticipate any trends, opportunities or vulnerabilities and make recommendations as to how these can be effectively addressed.

10. Continuous professional development

10.1 The continuous professional development of all staff, at every level and every stage, is central to the delivery of our Service. The recruitment, training and development, and retention of front line staff, supervisors, managers and support staff, and succession planning runs throughout our workforce development programme. This will be based upon effective safer recruitment and selection processes: comprehensive induction processes for all staff: the assessed and supported year in employment for newly qualified social workers: constructive and reflective professional supervision: a comprehensive and tailored training programme to meet identified training needs: skills set assessments and personal development plans: coaching and mentoring: the promotion of job swaps and secondments: the promotion and use of research based evidence and personal study.

10.2 We will need to ensure that we have the skills to deliver our existing services, and the skills we will require in the future. We must be able to respond to changes in legislation, policy, expectations and national guidance as well as develop the skills required to operate as a provider service. We have introduced skills set assessments to underpin the achievement of these.

10.3 Skills set assessments are the basis by which all staff will be supported to develop and to increase their individual skill base and thereby increase their team and the overall Service skills base. They are at the centre of our commitment to being a learning organisation. They will involve all staff in preparation, reflection, assessment, identifying evidence, providing and receiving constructive challenge, identifying actions and providing support to achieve outcomes and improvements in skills – and will be a continuous process. They are focussed upon the skills which social care staff require to carry out their duties, and will be an important way for all registered social workers to evidence their continuous professional development and fitness to practice to the Health and Care Professionals Council.

11. Professional Standards and Service Standards

11.1 All staff will work to the Council's Code of Conduct for employees and standards for personal behaviour, with particular regard to the use of social media. Further, staff must keep to the standards of conduct, performance and ethics required by the Health and Care Professionals Council, specifically:-

- To act in the best interest of service users.
- To respect the confidentiality of service users.
- To keep high standards of personal conduct.
- To keep professional knowledge and skills up to date.
- To act within the limits of their knowledge, skills and experience and, if necessary, refer the matter to another practitioner/manager.
- To communicate properly and effectively with service users and other practitioners.
- To keep accurate records.

11.2 All staff must work in accordance with guidance set out in the South West Child Protection Procedures and the Service Child Care Quality Manual. The Service has established good practice guidance and standards for core tasks such as assessments, chronologies and reports to case conferences/looked after children reviews, for use by all staff.

Maurice Lindsay
Divisional Director

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15th March 2013