

Report on progress for Children, Young People and Education Committee March 2025

**Children live safely with their families**

| <b>Objective</b><br>what we want to achieve                            | <b>Requirements</b><br>what we need  | <b>Mechanisms</b><br>how we will make that happen   | <b>Action</b><br>What we need to do  | <b>Updates</b>  |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| Less children require care as they can live safely with their families | Effective and impactful child protection which reduces the need for children to be in care | Multi-disciplinary child protection teams which deliver timely and effective intervention             | Implement the multi-disciplinary child protection teams through the Families First for Children Pathfinder | In place- report presented to committee January 2025                    |
|  |  | Timely and effective decision- making in child protection cases                                       | Review the Accommodation Gateway process   | Completed – Report appended- Now called Keeping Families Together (KFT) |
|  |  |   | Introduce a standard Risk Matrix for all cases in or at the edge of care                                   | Training with staff to be completed                                     |
|  |  |   | Enhance quality assurance processes to focus on cases which do not progress to care                        | This will be incorporated into the Quality Assurance Framework          |
|  |  | Better support through times of pressure and/or crisis by having access to respite/additional support | Present an Options Paper to CYPE Committee on using Willowtree for preventative approaches                 | Date set of March   |
|  |  |   | Present an Options Paper to CYPE Committee for ‘cool-off beds’   | Scoping work underway- will be presented to March DMT                   |

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|  |  |  | Extend the capacity of the Emergency Response Team (ERT)                                | Completed- Capacity now increased  |
|  | Increased opportunities for reunification of children and young people with their families | Intensive and co-ordinated reunification support within the first 6 weeks of S.20 arrangements | Develop a reunification offer to be delivered by a pilot team                           | Emergency Response Workers will be funded by Pathfinders to test out this model- |
|  |  | Managed reunification for older young people where risk levels have decreased                  |   | In progress- this is being Managed through the KFT meeting                       |
|  |  | Discharge PWP where appropriate  | Dedicated Social Worker and Legal Officer to deliver the schedule of planned discharges | Ongoing work –7 Have been discharged Q3  |

**Children live within their family network**

| <b>Objective</b>        | <b>Requirements</b>                           | <b>Mechanisms</b>                                  | <b>Action</b>       |                                     |
|-------------------------|---|--|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| what we want to achieve | what we need                                  | how we will make that happen                       | What we need to do  |                                     |
|                         | More children being cared for through Special | The SG Offer is attractive and supportive, thereby | Review the SG Offer | Offer now in place to offer support |

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| Less children require care as they can live safely within their family network | Guardianship arrangements  | recruiting and retaining more SG                                | Establish a Carer Support Team which includes SGs  | Family Support workers completing this work   |
|  |  |   | Raise awareness of SGs within the children's workforce   | Ongoing   |
|  | More children being cared for by Connected Carers                      | Connected Care is an option which is explored early and in full | Optimise the use of Family Network Support Packages through the Families First for Children Pathfinder | Ongoing- good evidence of how this is being utilized- Report on January 25 CYPE Committee |
|  |  |   | Establish a Carer Support Team which includes Connected Carers   | Support identified and in place following work with the Foster Carers                     |
|  |  |   | Raise awareness of Connected Carers within the children's workforce                                    | Ongoing- Joint training planned with Legal March 25                                       |
|  | Courts to agree to Special Guardianship Orders rather than Care Orders | Court preparation is robust                                     | Specific training for Social Workers and Legal Officers  | Training Planned March 25   |
|  |  |   | Introduce additional layer of quality assurance  | This is in the forward audit plan   |

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|  |  |   | and management oversight to court work                               |                           |
|  |  | Effective legal representation in court | Recruit permanent Legal Officers for Children's Services             | Senior Lawyer now in post |
|  |  |   | Review a sample of SG Orders with Legal Officers to improve practice |                           |
|  |  |   | Introduce bi-monthly meetings with CAFCASS                           | Now in place              |

**Children live in a family environment**

| <b>Objective</b><br>what we want to achieve | <b>Requirements</b><br>what we need | <b>Mechanisms</b><br>how we will make that happen | <b>Action</b><br>What we need to do   |   |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
|   |                                     | Foster Carers feel valued and supported           | Deliver the Mockingbird project to improve support networks for Foster Carers | Now operational – 6 carers in the first satellite |
|   |                                     |   | Improve the Foster Carer package- financial,                                  | Financial package already implemented             |

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| When the best option for a child is foster care there is a placement available | Retain and optimise the foster care resource we already have |  | training, development, supervision  |  |
|  |  |  | Improve the offer to Fostering Households   | Enhanced support to carers including use of Emergency Response Team  |
|  |  |  | Agree and launch the Foster Carer Charter   |  |
|  |  |  | Extend support to Foster Carers by introducing an out-of-hours rota for Supervising Social Workers until 10pm | Following consultation with Foster Carers they are happy with the current support but this will be revisited in the future |
|  |  |  | Invest in Foster Carer Support Groups   | Support groups now up and running , regular newsletter covers all updates  |
|  |  |  | Establish a Carer Support Team which includes Foster Carers   | Incentives are linked to placements which covers financial support and additional support available                        |
|  |  |  | Incentivise additional beds within existing   | Operational – in last quarter 4 young people   |

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|  |                            |   | Fostering Households  | are in foster placements that ordinarily would have been in residential                           |
|  |                            | Improve relationships with Independent Fostering Agencies | Identify a Lead Officer from Commissioning Team                                 | Complete- regular meetings now in place -   |
|  | Recruit more foster carers | Attract new Foster Carers to Wirral                       | Improve the Foster Carer package- financial, training, development, supervision | Completed   |
|  |                            |   | Maximise recruitment through the Foster4 initiative                             | Still limited number of carers coming through, comms now fully operational, some delays initially |
|  |                            |   | Initiate a borough-wide recruitment campaign                                    | Campaign in development with Foster4  |
|  |                            |   | Convert Connected Carers to Mainstream Foster Carers                            |   |

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|  |  |  | Enable dual registration for connected and mainstream foster care |  |
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**Efficient and effective use of residential placements when required**

| <b>Objective</b><br>what we want to achieve  | <b>Requirements</b><br>what we need           | <b>Mechanisms</b><br>how we will make that happen | <b>Action</b><br>What we need to do   |  |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| When residential placements are used, they are the best option for the child or young person and lead to good outcomes | Effective oversight of residential placements | Clear decision-making and oversight               | Review the Accommodation Gateway process  | Completed- now called Keeping Families Together                                  |
|  |   |   | Increase level of control by requiring DCS approval of all residential placements | DCS now signs off all residential placements                                     |
|  |   |   | High-Cost Placement Panel to report to Care Programme Board and S.151 Officer     | Regular reports now in place.  |
|  |   |   | Review existing residential care packages and                                     | Commissioning Manager and Finance working together negotiating packages of care. |

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|  |   |  | re-negotiate with providers as appropriate  |   |
|  |   | Optimise use of local residential care provision   | Placements in Juno are maintained at capacity   | 63% occupancy rate  |
|  |   |  | Preparations for Lyndhurst include clear processes for identification, matching and placement | Work being led by the joint commissioner for Social Care and Health |
|  |   |  | Agree and implement a Local Continuing Care Protocol  | Completed   |
|  | Successful transition from residential to independence for older young people | Staggered and supported step down plans for older young people as they transition to adulthood | Establish a dedicated team to facilitate step down from residential                           | Continuation of Staying Close                                       |

Appendix C