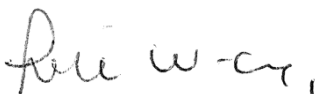


Date of issue: Monday 12 April 2021

MEETING	EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL (Councillors Basra (Chair), Kelly, A Cheema, Ajaib, Begum, Qaseem, A Sandhu, Sarfraz, Kassapian and Sayed) <u>Education Voting Co-opted Members</u> Vacancy <u>Education Non-Voting Co-opted Members</u> Paul Kassapian – Secondary School Representative Fifi El Sayed – Slough Youth Parliament
DATE AND TIME:	TUESDAY, 20TH APRIL, 2021 AT 6.30 PM
VENUE:	VIRTUAL MEETING
SCRUTINY OFFICER: (for all enquiries)	NADIA WILLIAMS 07749 709 961

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



JOSIE WRAGG
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART 1 PART I

**AGENDA
ITEM**

REPORT TITLE

PAGE

WARD

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

AGENDA
ITEM

REPORT TITLE

PAGE

WARD

CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

- | | | | |
|----|--|-------|---|
| 1. | Declarations of Interest
<i>All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary or other Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Section 4 paragraph 4.6 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed.</i> | | |
| 2. | Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 March 2021 | 1 - 8 | - |

SCRUTINY ISSUES

- | | | | |
|----|---|---------|-----|
| 3. | Member Questions

<i>(An opportunity for Panel Members to ask questions of the relevant Director/ Assistant Director, relating to pertinent, topical issues affecting their Directorate – maximum of 10 minutes allocated).</i> | | |
| 4. | Youth Offending Team Report | 9 - 46 | All |
| 5. | Slough Children's Services Trust Annual Report | 47 - 68 | All |
| 6. | Annual Safeguarding Report on Social Care | - | All |
| 7. | Positive Change to the Commissioning and Delivery of our Children & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Tier 4 provision in Berkshire | - | All |

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- | | | | |
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| 8. | Forward Work Programme | 69 - 76 | - |
| 9. | Attendance Record | 77 - 78 | - |
| 10. | 2021 - 2022 Date of Meetings | 79 - 80 | - |

Press and Public

This meeting will be held remotely in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. Part I of this meeting will be live streamed as required by the regulations. The press and public can access the meeting from the following link (by selecting the meeting you wish to view):



<http://democracy.slough.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

Please note that the meeting may be recorded. By participating in the meeting by audio and/or video you are giving consent to being recorded and acknowledge that the recording will be in the public domain.

The press and public will not be able to view any matters considered during Part II of the agenda.

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Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Tuesday, 16th March, 2021.

Present:- Councillors Basra (Chair), Kelly (Vice-Chair), A Cheema, Ajaib, Begum, Qaseem, A Sandhu and Sarfraz

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Strutton

Apologies for Absence:- No apologies had been received.

PART 1

39. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Basra declared an interest in item 7, as she was the Chair of the Covid- 19 Task and Finish Group. Councillor Basra remained in the meeting and participated in the item.

40. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 February 2021

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2021 be noted.

(With the agreement of the Panel, the Chair agreed to alter the order of the agenda).

41. Member Questions

Responses to Member Questions had been circulated to Members by email.

42. Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

The Associate Director, Place Regulations provided the Panel with an overview of the Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the context of the NEET comparison figures on pre-Covid-19 and during/post Covid-19.

The report focused on young people aged 16 to 18 in line with the Raising Participation Age agenda and the statutory duties placed upon the Local Authority.

The following points were noted:

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported the latest quarterly increase in the number of NEET young people was the largest since July to September 2011 (not 2021).

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Local authorities were responsible to support young people to participate in education, employment or training (EET) until they were 18 years old and also required to track the participation of young people in Year 12 & 13. The Local Authority had a duty to provide them with the right opportunity if they were not in EET.

Monthly reports of NEET figures had been provided to the DfE (the NEET Not Known figures were also included collectively). The NEET and Not Know figure for Slough in December 2019 in the second quintile was 4.1% compared to 7.3% in England with a slight increase to 4.7% in December 2020 compared to 7.6% in the South-East and 6.3% in England.

Of the 136 NEET young people, there were 45 with an unknown status. During the Covid-19 period, the NEET Team had actively engaged with young people online and whilst social distancing safely, had used various methods including door knocking to track young people.

The proposal to remuddle the transformation programme included the NEET team moving close to the Early Help team. The all-age Future Skills Hub would be going live at the end of June 2021 with a group of employers and delivery partners would be working together to look at a range of jobs and creating pathways for them. The Localities offer was also being developed to provide support and skills as well as encouraging young people to consider the types of careers they would like to pursue. The Early Help team and other services were working together jointly to support young people to get into education, employment and training. Work had also been on-going with schools to raise aspirations and building on apprenticeships with the aim of developing and growing 'Slough Borough's own' by investing in apprenticeship opportunities.

The Panel raised a number of issues during a wide-ranging discussion which are summarised as follows:

Members asked about the position of the 45 young people whose status were unknown. It was explained that it was not known where these young people were, and that some may possibly no longer live in the borough. However, the Council was required to provide evidence of where they were and investigations were on-going to find ways of tracking them, including knocking on doors and checking education institutions. Work would also be undertaken with voluntary partners to establish whether the children were accessing any of the services.

In answer to a Member's question, it was confirmed that ensuring that young people were in EET until they were 18, required them to be on a programme of education, employment or training as required by law. This was done by tracking and knowing where they were but was very difficult to enforce. It was

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noted that a lead youth worker who would build relationship with young people was being recruited for all localities in the Borough.

Concerns were raised about the limited number of local residents employed in regeneration programmes in Slough. It was explained that by law, the Council could not force contractors to employ local people but it was critical for a certain percentage of opportunities to be provided to local residence by developers.

Members requested to be provided a gender breakdown of the NEET figures.

Members asked about the number of employers that were on the steering group for the Future Skills Hub. It was explained that employers on the steering group, which included Heathrow, rather than employees. The Panel was informed that the NVQ Level 3 qualification had been an issue in the past and pathways were being reviewed to be able to support people to achieve this qualification.

In response to Members' query, it was explained that young people would not be forced into pursuing further studies but were required by law to be in EET until they were 18 as discussed earlier. However, they would be encouraged and supported into programmes which captured pupils who may potentially drop out to provide support to prevent them dropping out.

Members asked about provision of traineeships and it was confirmed that traineeships would be one of the pathways for employment and noted that Kickstart Scheme had been a preference for young people to traineeships.

Under Rule 30, Councillor Strutton commented on a number of issues including the need for the provision of career advisers in schools and for the Council to engage with career officers and local businesses.

Resolved – That the Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training report be noted.

43. Early Years and Children's Centre Services

The Associate Director, Children and Families introduced a report which provided an update on Early Years and Children's Centre Services.

Members noted that the Children's Centre had remained opened throughout the Covid-19 pandemic from March 2020 to date, with the exception of Early Education and a range of family services, which had been discontinued in order to comply with social distancing measures. Targeted services had been provided throughout this challenging period to ensure the needs of the community were met. The lifting of restrictions from 12 April 2021 would enable the resumption of the offer of services to smaller groups.

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It was noted that the Children's Services Centres were used by partners to deliver a range of services, such as the Healthy Early Years Accreditation and worked with Public Health to encourage healthy eating and good health practices at an early stage. Funded early education entitlement and provisions for 3- to 4-year-olds had remained and would be resumed. However, there had been a significant decrease in the take up of 2-year-old funded early education places, mainly due to home schooling.

The Department for Education (DFE) funded holiday activities, food program and Winter grant scheme (£15 per week) had been on offer whilst the children had been at home during lockdown. In addition, children that were eligible for free school meals would receive a voucher for the Easter holiday period. Holiday activities and the food programme during this period would launch the focus on healthy eating, cooking on budget and encourage the move from sedentary lifestyle. The Easter programme would take place virtually and parents would be required to participate in physical activities.

It was anticipated that the summer holiday programme would be face-to-face and would be developed further to widen the opportunities to all providers and to extend the provisions so that they could be offered to all parents with eligible children, as well as those who were subsidised.

Further update would be reported to the Panel at the conclusion of the summer programme.

The Panel was informed that the curriculum for early years would be changing in September 2021 and seven schools in Slough had been taking part in an early year's documentary programme as part of a pilot scheme.

Online services as well as early years resources had been developed and available for all and responses to evaluation of the services provided had confirmed that the services had been well received. It was noted that the positive outcome should be attributed to the effective partnership working with private, voluntary and independent providers.

The Panel raised a number of issues during a wide-ranging discussion summarised as follows:

- Members asked whether the support programmes were only available to parents on low income. It was explained that the winter programme had been available to parents of children that were eligible for free school meals.
- Members noted that 5,000 children in Slough were eligible for free school meals and asked what support was being provided to schools that were providing breakfast clubs, as a high performing school was currently funding this provision from its school budget. It was explained that a large number of schools were providing breakfast but the Council could not mandate for that provision. Breakfast provision was very costly and therefore had challenging funding implications. The

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message to encourage the provision of breakfast would continue to be promoted.

- Members noted that up to March 2021, the Children's Centres had 85% occupancy rate and asked whether the centres were now providing all services. It was explained that occupancy rate had increased during Covid-19 and services such as mental health had seen an increase and continued to rise. When restrictions were lifted, provision of services such as occupational health would be resumed.
- Members raised concerns about the level of obesity which was higher than the national average and queried whether this was due to Covid-19 and asked what measures were in place to educate parents post lockdown. It was explained that data had yet to be published but suggested that the obesity level was likely to have increased. Plans were in place to address this issue as part of the Easter holiday activities which would be offered online. Online resources and the food programme, aimed at educating parents would also be available.
- Members asked whether children of parents not on low income could join the breakfast provisions and it was noted that many schools already allowed this, but may vary from school to school.

Councillor Kelly declared an interest as he worked for a school. He remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion.

- Concerns were raised regarding the thirty to forty early years children that were stranded abroad due to the pandemic. It was explained that this number of children was not considered to be an immense problem for the Council, as many of the children were accessing remote teaching. In response to better planning to take account of junk food outlets close to schools, it was noted that the Council was committed to addressing the issue of obesity. The Associate Director, Children and Families was requested to provide a list of 2-year-olds that were eligible to 30 hours pre-school.
- Members welcomed the high level of health visitor support and targeted parents but queried that dental health was not as well targeted. It was explained that extensive work had been done with parents who accessed the service but noted that it was more difficult to support those who were not accessing the service.
- In response to a query raised about Early Years school places being withdrawn from children who were still abroad, it was explained that places would usually be withdrawn as a last resort and that children in early years were not of statutory school age and would only be taken off roll if they had been off persistently.

In response to a question as to whether health and safety checks were being undertaken, it was explained that tooth brushing programmes were being delivered virtually in addition to videos. The Health and Safety team had also been working with providers and had distributed guides to ensure Covid compliance.

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The Chair then invited Councillor Strutton to address the Panel under Rule 30.

Councillor Strutton welcomed the virtual programmes that had been provided and the resources that could be easily accessed. He raised concerns about the 30% of 3-year-olds in Slough that had higher tooth decay compared to the national average, highlighting that 170 children had undergone major surgery in 2018. Councillor Strutton asked for further details on the number of families that had traveled abroad during Covid -19 and raised concerns about potential safeguarding issues. It was explained that substantial progress had been made in addressing the issue of tooth decay prior to the pandemic but progress may have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. A tooth brushing video had however been produced to encourage dental health. Children missing education was noted as an issue that would be addressed through a multi-agency approach.

Resolved – That the Early Years and Children's Services report be noted.

44. Parenting in Slough - Multi-Agency Strategy

The Associate Director, Children and Families, provided members with an update on the on-going progress of work undertaken as part of the Multi-Agency Strategy. The report provided a detailed overview of the key areas of development.

The Panel noted that the strategy now fully in place, covered provision for children from birth up to age 25, from universal to targeted provisions. Work had been undertaken jointly with parents, providers and commissioning.

Following the conclusion of the presentation, members discussed and raised the following points:

- Members asked what was being done to inform parents that may not be aware of the information available on the Council's website. It was noted that a soft and sensitive approach was being taken to launch the offer, also presented as self-serve. It was noted that all partners had been involved in the publicity to raise raising awareness of the parenting programme and would be rolled out from September 2021.
- In acknowledging the progress that had been made in targeting 211 families, Members asked about the number of families that were still requiring support. It was noted that the Troubled Families Programme was a national programme measured by the Government, and Slough had met its annual target of 211 families from April 2020 to March 2021 under the Strengthening Families Programme. There were currently 1600 children on the Early Help caseloads and just under 2,000 social care caseloads.
- Members asked whether schools would be encouraged to identify children where parenting had been identified as an issue. It was explained the offer extended across the children's services system in

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rolling out the parenting programme. There would be 6 levels of Trouble Families' criteria and success would be measured from the outcomes of the suitable actions taken with participation over a period of time.

- Members asked about the lessons that had been learnt from the key challenges that had been faced in successfully working with 877 families from April 2015 to March 2020 that could be applied to the current programme. It was reiterated that the Troubled Families was a national programme that was due to end in March 2021 but due to its success had been extended to 2022, which indicated investing in results. The programme was referred to in Slough as Strength and Families and it was expected that Slough would reinvest into the programme utilising the resources that had been established from the Troubled Families Programme.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Strutton commented on a number of issues including the question of what was being done to maintain the progress of families that had been worked with successfully with under the Troubled Families Programme. It was explained that this was done through sustained participation and confirmed that there had been no duplication in the 877 families that had been worked with to date. It was also clarified that the Early Help caseloads (1600) were separate from the Children's Services Trust caseloads. Early Help used voluntary (for ages 1 & 2 children) and statutory (for children ages 3 & 4). Measures were in place to support families where repeat or unresolved issues had been identified in addition to work being undertaken through pathways via children's social care to activate statutory intervention.

Resolved – That the Parenting in Slough –Multi-Agency Strategy be noted.

45. Terms of Reference for Employment, Skills and COVID-19 Task and Finish Group

Councillors Ajaib and Qaseem declared an interest in item 7 as they were on the Covid- 19 Task and Finish Group. Councillors Ajaib and Qaseem remained in the meeting and participated in the item.

The Insight Analyst introduced the report which outlined the purpose of the Task and Finish group, set up to establish how Covid-19 had impacted on the skills and employment of residents in Slough. Membership of the joint working group consisted of 5 members from the various Scrutiny Panels in the Council.

The Task and Finish Group would essentially focus on identifying the current challenges to skills and employment in Slough due to the pandemic, particularly in relation to Heathrow Airport. It would investigate how to encourage residents to upskill by looking at the gaps that existed prior to and during the pandemic.

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Members were reassured that all areas, including deprived areas would be incorporated in the indicators gathered which would provide an overview of data by ward, but the main focus would be on Slough in general. The information would be gathered by the localities group. It was confirmed that work had already begun but had to be rescheduled to October 2021 due to Covid-19 restriction and the Council restructure programme.

Resolved:

That the Employment, Skills and Covid-19, Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference be noted.

Requested the Insight Officer to bring the need to produce data by ward, to the attention of the Employment, Skills and Covid-19, Task and Finish Group.

46. Forward Work Programme

Members reviewed the Forward Work Programme for the remainder of 2019/20 and agreed the items listed for the meeting on 20 April 2021.

Resolved – That the details of the report be noted.

47. Attendance Record

Resolved – That details of the Members' Attendance Record be noted.

48. Date of Next Meeting 20 April 2021

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 20 April 2021.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.32 pm and closed at 9.07 pm)

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 20th April 2021

CONTACT OFFICER: Jennifer Cail, YOT Manager, Slough Youth Offending Team
(For all Enquiries) (01753) 522702

WARD(S): All

PART I

FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION

YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM REPORT

1. **Purpose of Report**

For the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel (ECS Scrutiny Panel) to receive an update on developments within the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and the Youth Justice arena since the last report in February 2020.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The ECS Scrutiny Panel is requested to note the report.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

Priorities:

1. *Starting Well*
2. *Integration (relating to Health & Social Care)*
3. *Strong, healthy and attractive neighbourhoods*
4. *Workplace health*

The provision of Youth Justice Services for Slough directly contributes to Slough's Joint Wellbeing Strategy and is evidenced within the YOT's Youth Justice Plan. In particular priority 1 (Starting Well) and 2 (Integration) of the strategy.

Priority 1

The Youth Offending Team (YOT) provide a preventative service which identifies children and young people at an early stage who are at risk of becoming involved in offending / re-offending behaviour, or are at risk of becoming a victim of such behaviours, including being exploited. These concerns can be raised from children's social care, schools and other community agencies, parents and young people, or from police at the arrest stage. Prevention support can range from 4 to 12 weeks of intervention for young people, consistent with their identified needs and their risks of offending behaviour and vulnerability.

The YOT have developed a training offer to provide training to key non statutory partners/agencies such as schools, community groups and foster carers to support identification of young people at risk of involvement in offending behaviour, exploitation, gangs and/or serious violence.

The YOT have renewed and maintained our silver Youth Justice SEND Quality Mark for 2021. In the process of attaining this award, the YOT has forged closer links with schools, Pupil Referral Units and statutory services such as Special Educational Need (SEND) Teams, as well as demonstrating the sharing of effective practice across the networks in areas such as co- locating specialist provision and understanding the impact of complex needs.

Priority 3

The YOT have an internal risk management panel which monitors all young people assessed as posing a medium risk or higher in terms of significant harm to others or self safety and wellbeing. This is a multi-agency risk management approach which shares the risk posed by the young people and promotes working together in order to reduce those risks.

The YOT have introduced a trauma recovery model approach to support young people, linking with a clinical psychologist and senior mental health practitioner seconded to the YOT. Interventions take into account the impact of Adverse Childhood Experience's (ACEs) on the young person.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The work of the YOT helps to deliver the following from the Five Year Plan:

- Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful.
- Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs.
- Slough will be an attractive place where people will choose to live, work and stay.

The YOT works with young people who have committed crimes and also to prevent offending via services and support. This covers a wide range of needs including parenting support, substance misuse, speech and language, mental health, education, training and employment services. The YOT also works to support victims of crime. YOT staff are trained in a wide range of areas including systemic practice, trauma, bereavement, domestic abuse, restorative justice, risk and social media cyber awareness to support young people to be safe in Slough and on the internet.

The YOT delivers its work in conjunction with a wide range of partners who are integrated within the YOT and across the Slough Borough Council to ensure good outcomes for children and young people.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications of proposed action.

(b) Risk Management

The YOT Management Board identifies, considers and as a collective, reduces risks in respect of ensuring effective crime prevention services within Slough. This takes place at YOT Board meetings and is on-going.

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
The Committee is requested to note the report	<p>Risks: None</p> <p>Opportunities: Help deliver Slough's Five Year plan</p>	YOT Management Board oversees the work of the YOT team and the delivery against the YOT Justice plan	<p>5</p> <p>(Negligible severity high probability)</p>	YOT Management Board; Upcoming HMIP inspection

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) - The 'Articles' of the UNCRC that have most direct bearing on youth justice include (but are not limited to):

- A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier (Article 1)
- States Parties (governments) shall respect and ensure the rights set forth to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status (Article 2)
- Article 3, 16, 37a and b, 40(1), 40 (3)

Outcome 22 was introduced with effect from 1 April 2019 in response to recommendations in the Lammy Report about expanding the use of deferred prosecution. Outcome 22 reduces the criminalisation of children by providing diversionary, educational or intervention activity, resulting from the crime report, has been undertaken and it is not in the public interest to take any further action'.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998 - The functions of the YOT are set out in section 39(7) as follows:

- To co-ordinate the provision of youth justice services for all those in the authority's area who need them; and
- To carry out such functions assigned in the local authority's youth justice plan.

The act also refers to paragraph 7(b) of Schedule 2 of the Children Act 1989 – the local authority's duty to take reasonable steps designed to encourage children and young people not to commit offences.

Section 38(4) of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 lists a large number of items which are within the meaning of youth justice services. These include:

- the provision of assistance to persons determining whether youth caution or youth conditional cautions should be given

- the provision of support for children and young persons remanded or committed on bail while awaiting trial or sentence

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

As part of its inspection, the YOT partnership has to ensure the nature and diversity of workforce responds to local needs. 73% of the YOT team are currently female which is at odds with 93% of young people being male (December 2020). In terms of diversity, 47% of the YOT workforce are white and 26% are BAME compared to 36% and 60% respectively of young people, though young white people are more likely to commit offences. Currently YOT staff are not representative of the young people it works with, though has had a stable team of staff who have delivered good outcomes with young people.

5. **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 As we have entered a new financial year the YOT Plan for 2021/22 is currently being refreshed and so is not referenced in this document.
- 5.2 Following a recent transformation within the Trust, the YOT are in the process of amalgamating the service within the Front Door element of social care and the YOT no longer has a designated Head of Service. This amalgamation will streamline the referral pathway for children and young people for preventative interventions and for initial triage and monitoring. Statutory cases will continue to be referred to the YOT for support and intervention directly from the police and courts as applicable.
- 5.3 The YOT are developing and expanding the prevention offer in Slough to include a more bespoke offer around exploitation and extra familial harm. Young people at risk of these behaviours can be linked to future episodes of anti-social and/or offending behaviour. The YOT's prevention offer will reflect this expansion by including a contextual safeguarding approach to assessment and intervention, and it is proposed the YOT will change its name to Youth Justice and Exploitation Service. This work is under development with plans for a staged approach starting in late April 2021.
- 5.4 In making these changes the statutory function of the YOT will remain the same with a team of skilled practitioners supporting and managing young people subject to statutory police and/or court disposals. The YOT Manger will oversee both services to ensure consistency in delivery and quality of intervention for children.

Performance

- 5.5 First Time Entrants (FTE) into the criminal justice system have seen a slight decrease in 2020 as opposed to 2019, although the figures for young males into the criminal justice system remain the same for both years. *(A FTE to the criminal justice system is an offender residing in England and Wales at the time of the offence, who has been recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC) as having received their first conviction, caution or youth caution.)*

The most recent YOT Data Summary indicates the following with regard to our First Time Entrants:

First Time Entrants – Baseline Jan 18 – Dec 18				First Time Entrants Current Jan 19 – Dec 19		
	Number	2018 Population	Rate per 100,000	Number	2019 Population	Rate per 100,000
Slough	54	16,845	321	52	17,393	299

- 5.6 During the period 2019/20 the top three offences committed by males were: Violence against the Person, Drugs, and Criminal Damage. For female offenders, the top 3 offence categories were Violence against the person, Theft and Handling Stolen Goods, and Breach of a statutory Order.
- 5.7 The YOT responded to Covid-19 by risk assessing all children and young people known to the YOT to ascertain the level of risk to themselves and others. The service maintained face to face contact throughout Covid – 19 with the provision of PPE from the Trust whilst ensuring the safety of both young people and staff.
- 5.8. Despite Covid-19, the YOT successfully delivered a summer programme and a number of reparation projects. The benefits of maintaining reparation during this time gave children and young people an activity in their home and maintaining contact with the YOT. At the same time risk was being monitored through relaxed activity. The YOT also supported NHS Nightingale Ward as well as Black Lives Matter events as can be seen in Appendix B.

Review of the quality of practice and interventions

- 5.9. In March 2020 Slough Children's Trust requested Hampshire Children's Services undertake a peer review of Slough's Youth Offending Team under the Partners in Practice Sector Led Improvement support programme. The purpose of this review was to support the YOT in preparing for its inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP). Hampshire was asked to assess the quality of the work against domains two and three of the HMIP Youth Offending Inspection Criteria and look at the YOT's work in relation to serious youth violence, exploitation, gang prevention and contextual safeguarding and joint working with Children' Social Care.
- 5.10 The peer review team found the YOT staff group were a credit to the organisation, and they were enthusiastic, able to showcase their work and embraced the concept of audit and inspection. The review found the principle of 'child first' was a golden thread through all work review and they saw evidence of consistent and constructive management oversight.
- 5.11 Evidence was found of good engagement with young people, with team members spending time building relationships to support successful interventions. They saw consideration of a child or young person's diverse needs, for example, considering the impact of a female white worker on her engagement with a child from a different background.

Youth Justice Board

- 5.12 The YOT were asked in 2020 to submit a self assessment to the Youth Justice Board with regard to its adherence to National Standards and in line with our statutory responsibilities. Their moderation exercise concluded our self-assessment evidenced a true reflection of the judgements against service standards. The Youth Justice Board therefore do not intend to carry out a validation visit to our service.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

No other committees have been involved in this report.

7. **Conclusion**

Slough Youth Offending Team is meeting its prime objective to prevent young people from offending, taking a holistic and systemic approach involving partners as required. The delivery of youth justice services have been delivered in line with national standards and legislation despite the additional challenges and pressures of Covid– 19. Slough Youth Offending Team continues to be an effective service as indicated by the Youth Justice Board.

8. **Appendices Attached**

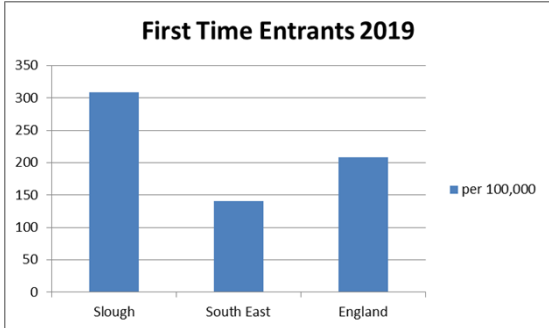
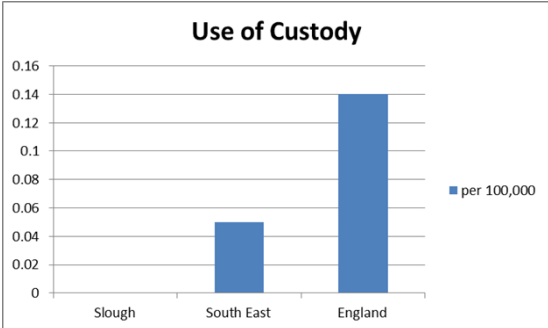
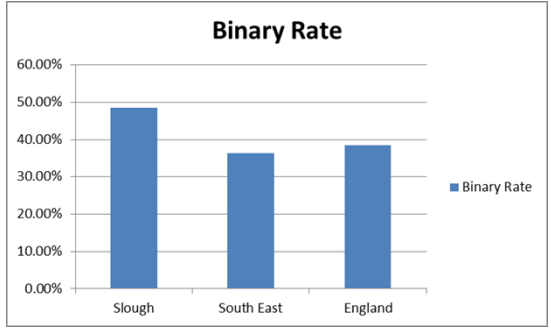
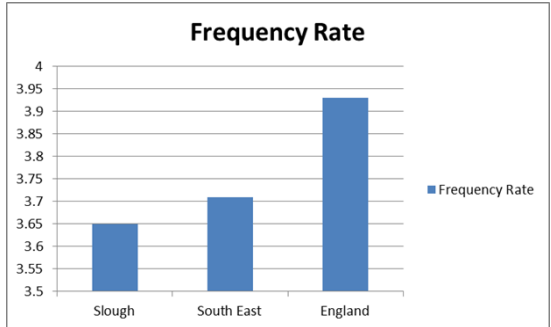
- 'A' YOT Demographic
- 'B' Remote Reparation
- 'C' Hampshire Peer Review report

9. **Background Papers**

- '1' 06 February 2020 Educational and Children Scrutiny Report

Appendix A

YOT Demographic

First Time Entrants	Use of Custody	Re-offending																																
<div><p>First Time Entrants 2019</p><table><tr><th>Region</th><th>Rate per 100,000</th></tr><tr><td>Slough</td><td>309</td></tr><tr><td>South East</td><td>141</td></tr><tr><td>England</td><td>208</td></tr></table></div> <p>The data from the latest YDA identifies that Slough had a rate of 309 per 100,000 of 10-17 population from Jan 2019 – Dec 2019 compared to 141 per 100,000 for the South East region and 208 per 100,000 for England</p> <div><p>As of March 2021, the average young person in contact with the YOT is:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">White Male (35%)Aged between 16 and 17 years (67%)Charged with a crime of Violence against the person (34% of all offences associated with an active programme in 2020 were violence against the person)</div>	Region	Rate per 100,000	Slough	309	South East	141	England	208	<div><p>Use of Custody</p><table><tr><th>Region</th><th>Rate per 100,000</th></tr><tr><td>Slough</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>South East</td><td>0.05</td></tr><tr><td>England</td><td>0.14</td></tr></table></div> <p>The data from the latest YDA identifies that Slough had a rate of 0 per 100,000 of 10-17 populations from Jan 2020 – Dec 2020 compared to 0.05 per 100,000 for the South East region and 0.14 per 100,000 for England</p>	Region	Rate per 100,000	Slough	0	South East	0.05	England	0.14	<div><p>Binary Rate</p><table><tr><th>Region</th><th>Binary Rate</th></tr><tr><td>Slough</td><td>48.6%</td></tr><tr><td>South East</td><td>36.3%</td></tr><tr><td>England</td><td>38.4%</td></tr></table></div> <div><p>Frequency Rate</p><table><tr><th>Region</th><th>Frequency Rate</th></tr><tr><td>Slough</td><td>3.65</td></tr><tr><td>South East</td><td>3.71</td></tr><tr><td>England</td><td>3.93</td></tr></table></div> <p>The latest re-offending rate is Jan 2018 – Dec 2018. Slough had a binary rate of 48.6% compared to 36.3% in the South East and 38.4% in England. Frequency rate 1 (re-offenders only) for Slough was 3.65 compared to 3.71 in the South East and 3.93 in England.</p>	Region	Binary Rate	Slough	48.6%	South East	36.3%	England	38.4%	Region	Frequency Rate	Slough	3.65	South East	3.71	England	3.93
Region	Rate per 100,000																																	
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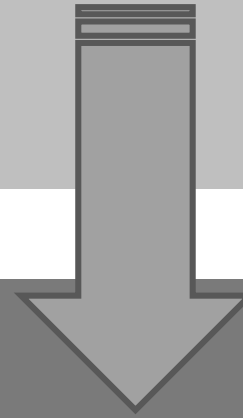
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REPARATION

Remote reparation during COVID-19

MARCH 2020

Due to the Government restrictions on movement starting March 2020 based on the need to protect people during the COVID-19 pandemic, community reparation was immediately postponed indefinitely.



A remote reparation model was therefore created to ensure the young people's court orders were not inhibited by their restricted movement.

AIMS OF THE MODEL:

Young people continue to complete their reparation hours through virtual means



The importance of reparation is continued to be reiterated to the young people



The young people are able to adhere to the government restrictions



Reparation resource packs are created and delivered to the young people's homes



Remote sessions are conducted via video with variations in theme to avoid repetitiveness



RESPONSE TO THE MODEL:

Page 20



Young people have engaged well and enjoyed the remote sessions, creating visually impressive work and engaging in discussions around the themes



Youth Offending Team staff, higher management and the YOT Board have showed approval and recognition



Community members and other Youth Offending Team staff members have responded well to the work created

Making thank you cards, letters and posters
for NHS workers and other key workers

Posters to raise awareness of Black Lives
Matter

Posters to raise awareness of the importance
of social distancing, wearing face masks and
washing hands

Tie-dyeing t-shirts and masks to donate to families
in need in Slough

Making recipes to create a YOT cookbook

Pen pal project with a local old age care home

THEMES OF WORK

NHS/KEY WORKER THANK YOU CARDS

Examples of work completed

STAY HOME
SAVE

NHS

USE CAUTION

- Avoid
- Group Gathering
 - Sleep overs
 - Visitors at home
 - Visiting elderly with children

- SAFE TO DO
- When visit Pharmacy
 - Travelling
 - Public transport
 - Go for a walk
 - Reading
 - Video calls
 - Go for a Drive

LIVES!!!

Stay home Stay Safe

The NHS are risking there lives to Save us and all they ask for in return is that we stay home!

THANK YOU
DOCTORS & NURSES

We
LOVE
NHS

2 METRE
HELP THE NHS



Thank You to
all Key workers!

THANK YOU
@NHS

The NHS have been Risking there own lives in order to save the wider Population so for this reason we are very grateful as a community for there Hard work

NHS

N H
S

THANK YOU!!!

Not all heroes wear Capes!!!

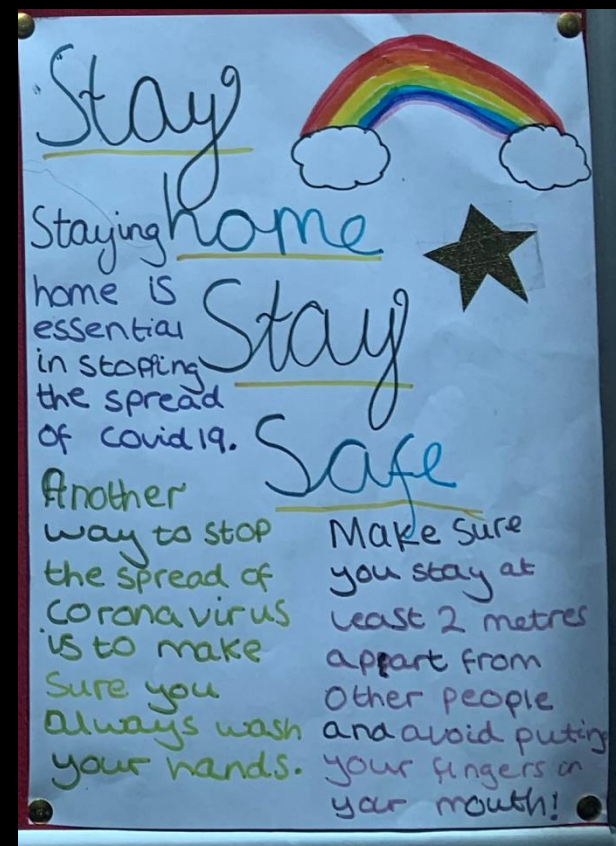
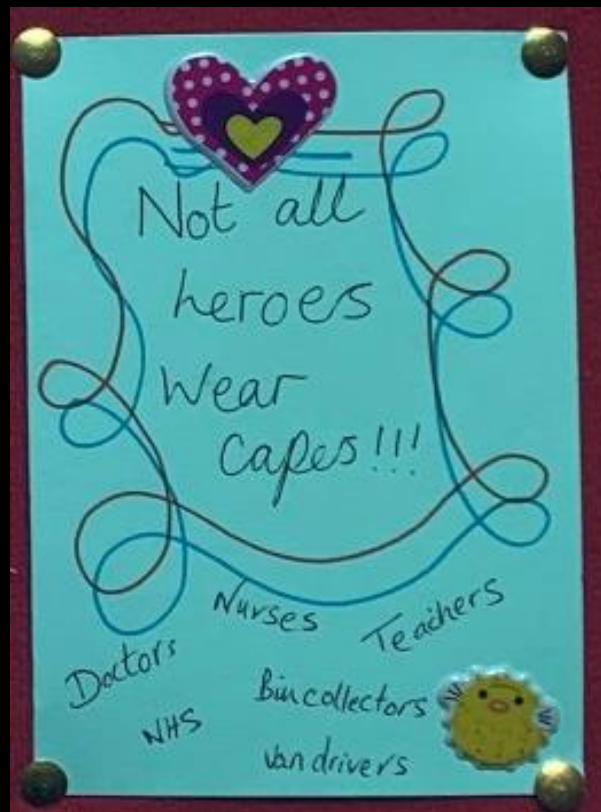
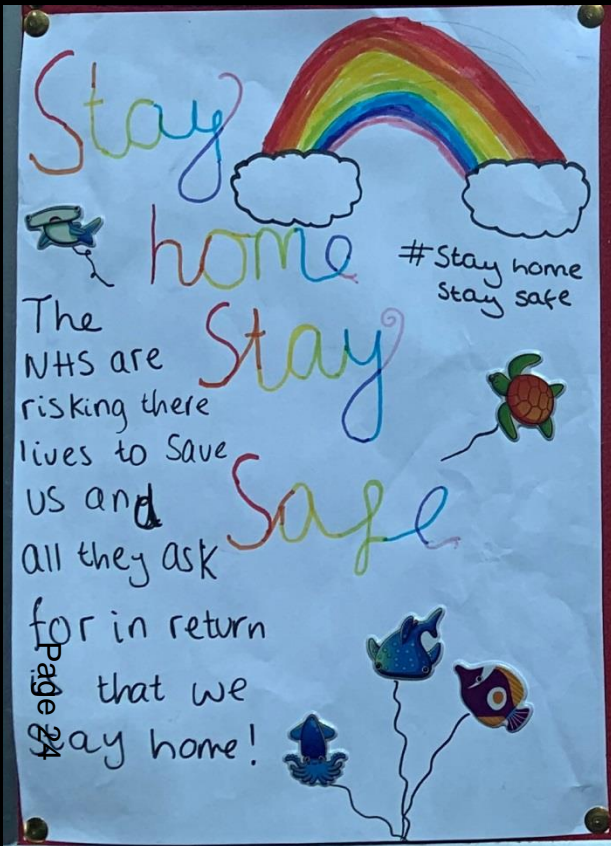
Nurses Teachers
Doctors NHS Bin collectors Van drivers

THANK YOU NHS

Stay home Stay Safe

Staying home is essential in stopping the spread of covid19. Another way to stop the spread of Corona virus is to make sure you always wash your hands.

Make sure you stay at least 2 metres apart from other people and avoid putting your fingers on your mouth!



To the YOT workers
that have been helping me,

Thank you for taking your time to help me change
the way of life before it got hectic. If it wasn't for YOT,
I'd probably be in jail.

I know that you lot have helped a lot of people
before. A lot of kids appreciate you.

Keep doing what you're doing.

You need a pay rise.

I hope you stay well.

From RS

BLACK LIVES MATTER POSTERS

Examples of work completed



BLM

BLM

Your silence is violence

No justice No Peace

Stop Police brutality


 Your silence is violence
 No justice No Peace
 Stop Police brutality
 Stop Murders
 



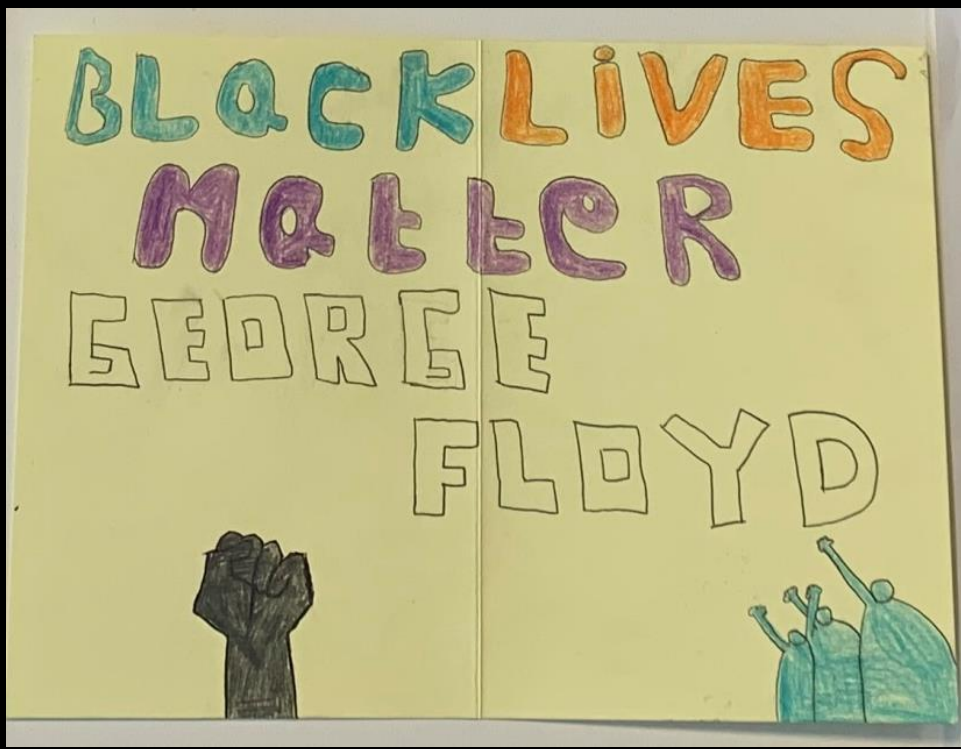
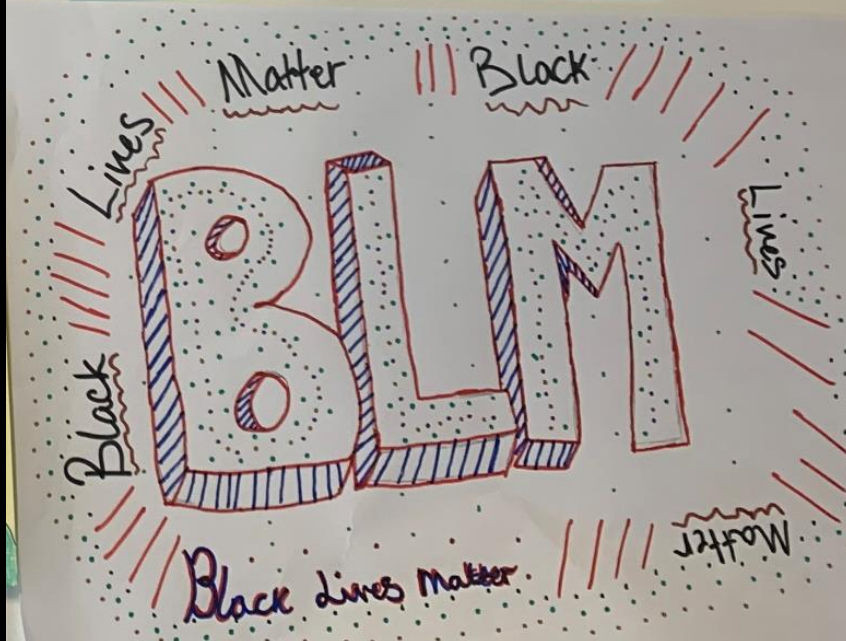
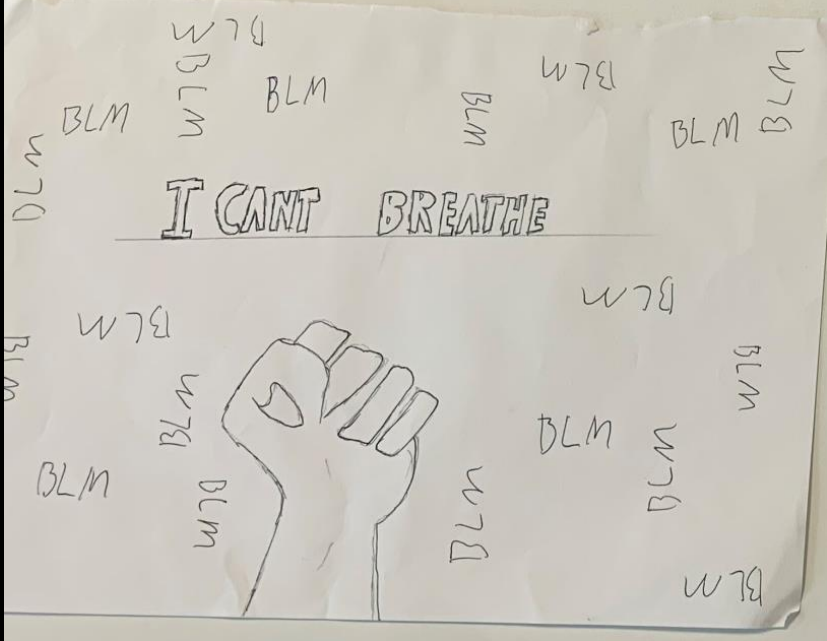
We'll say it until we don't need to say it anymore.

Hands up
means
don't shoot



#BLM

[illegible]



COVID-19 AWARENESS POSTERS

Examples of work completed

Keep your distance

2M

Wear a mask



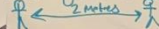
NHS

STAY ALERT - Control The Virus

CORONAVIRUS

Stay a left

- High temperature
 - New continuous Cough
 - Loss of taste
 - Loss of smell
- Keep your distance



Infection Control
= WASHING HANDS



Infection Control
in the counter
= Washing hands
+ Flu vaccination

Remember to wash
your hands after
you use the toilet
STAY CLEAN!

How to Wash
hands...
Wet
Soap
Wash
Rinse
Dry
Stop germs
spreading

PLEASE WASH YOUR HANDS



Leonie

How is covid-19 affecting Teenagers? What are they doing?

- > Loneliness
 - Contact on social media
 - Exercise
 - Keep occupied
- > Natural to feel upset / worried

You are NOT Alone!

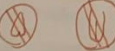
How to stay safe at school during Covid-19

- > 2 metres apart
- > Use a mask / face covering
- > Wash Your hands
- > Don't touch your face.
- > Avoid crowded places



SYMPTOMS of Covid-19

- o High Temperature
- o New, continuous Cough
- o A loss of smell / Taste



Wash your hands
Cough and sneeze into a tissue
don't meet in large groups
Keep at least 2m distance from others
Avoid busy grouped areas
Self-isolate
Wipe any surfaces
Wear a mask

Covid 19

How to Protect Yourself

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 30 sec
- Avoid touching face with unwashed hands

Avoid close contact with sick people

- Keep an sanitizer on you
 - Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing
- 2m = 6ft
stay away

- Symptoms of Covid-19
- high temp
 - New continuous
 - a loss to your sense of smell and taste
 - Fever
 - sore throat
 - Head aches

Social Distancing!

Keep Apart

Social Distancing

PLEASE KEEP 2 METRES APART

STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID 19

PREVENTION →

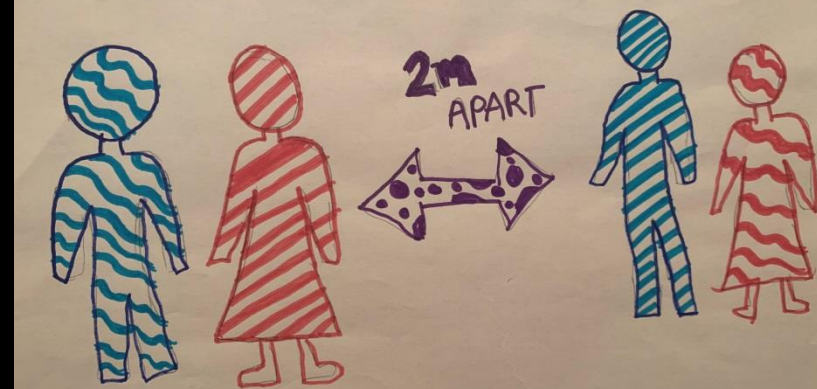
Have

Quarantined

After Your Holiday

LOI M8

PLEASE WASH
YOUR HANDS



How is covid-19 affecting
Teenagers? What could
They do?

> Loneliness

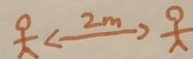
- contact on social media
- Exercise
- Keep occupied

> Natural to feel
upset / worried

You
are NOT
Alone!

How To stay safe
at school
During Covid-19

> 2 metres apart



> Wear a mask/
face covering



> Wash Your hands
Tip - carry hand
sanitiser

> Don't touch your
face.

> Avoid crowded
places

SYMPTOMS
of Covid-19

o High temperature

o New, continuous
cough



o A loss of smell
/ taste



Symptoms of Corona

- high temp
- New Continuous
- a loss to your ^{cough} sense of smell and taste
- Fever
- sore throat
- Head aches

Social Distancing!

Keep Apart

Social Distancing

PLEASE KEEP
2 METRES APART



STOP THE SPREAD OF
COVID 19

PREVENTION →

How to Protect Yourself



- Wash hands with soap and water for atleast 30sec
- Avoid touching face with unwashed hands

• Avoid close contact with sick people

• Keep on sanitize on you.



• Cover your nose when coughing or sneezing

2m = 6ft



Stay away

The young person who created these 2 made them a week after he had a session informing him of the COVID-19 restrictions, of which he had previously had little knowledge. He made this with no specific instruction, showing he had remembered the work conducted in the session.

TIE-DYE T-SHIRTS

Examples of work completed



RECIPES FOR YOT COOKBOOK

Examples of work completed

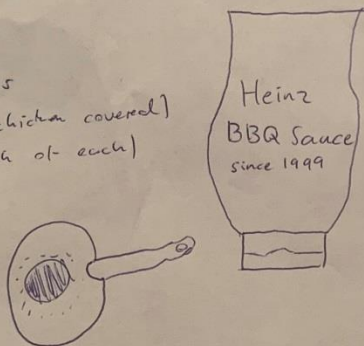
Recipe

BBQ Chicken

How to make BBQ chicken (fried)

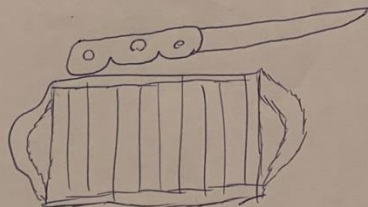
Ingredients:

- > chicken breast / wings
- > BBQ sauce (until chicken covered)
- > salt & pepper (pinch of each)
- > vegetable oil
- > vinegar
- > onions (half)



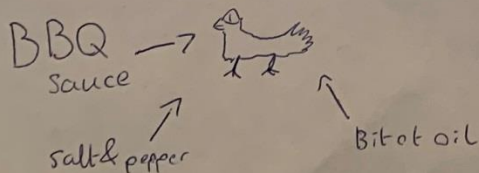
Tools:

- > ~~oven~~ frying pan
- > plates (2)
- > chopping board
- > knife
- > tongs



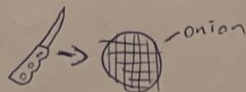
Method:

- #1 → Defrost chicken
- #2 → Cut up the chicken - (strips)
- #3 → Season chicken



#4 → start heating up frying pan

#5 → cut up onion



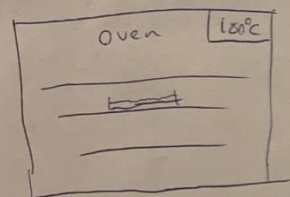
#6 → put the chicken and onions on frying pan. Flip the chicken every 2 minutes. clockwise

Step 1 - 185g butter, put into medium bowl, 185g dark chocolate, and put into bowl

Step 2 - fill small saucepan, a quarter full of hot water, put bowl on top of saucepan, stir occasionally.

Step 3: Cover the bowl loosely with cling film, put in microwave for 2 minutes.

Step 4:



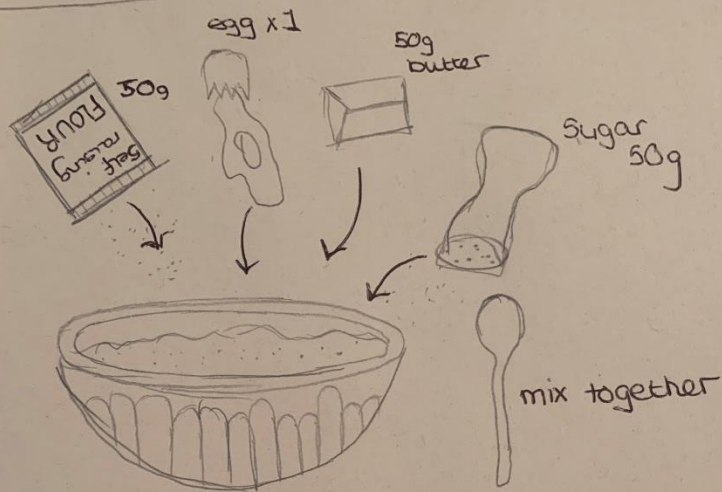
Step 5: 85g plain flour + 40g cocoa powder into medium bowl.

Step 6: 50g white chocolate and 50g milk chocolate on board.

Step 7: break 3 large eggs into large bowl, 275g of golden caster sugar. Whisk until they look thick and creamy. 3-8 minutes. beat it.

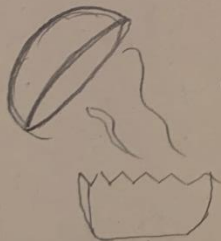
CUPCAKE RECIPE

①



Good things to Add : Chocolate, banana, jam
Not so Good : Cat hair, Roast beef, poison.

②



Fill up the
cupcake cases

③

Pop in the
oven
190°C
(15 mins)



④



Cherries

Little silver
baubles



more
chocolate.

REACTIONS TO PEN PAL PROJECT



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Peer Review of Slough Youth Offending Team

10 – 12th March 2020

Feedback Report

1. Background and Scope

In January 2020, under Partners in Practice Sector Led Improvement support, Slough Children's Trust requested Hampshire Children's Services to undertake a Peer Review of Slough Youth Offending Team (SYOT). It was agreed that the purpose of this review was to support the Trust and the YOT in preparing for their inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP), due in the next 24 months. Hampshire was asked to assess the quality of the work against domains two and three of the HMIP Youth Offending Inspection Criteria. In addition, it was requested that the review looked at the YOT's work in relation to serious youth violence, exploitation, gang prevention and contextual safeguarding and joint working with CSC.

Domain one of HMIP standards was out of scope for this review.

2. Approach to the Peer Review

The review was asked to replicate inspection conditions as much as possible in order to enable the staff to familiarise themselves with the experience.

As it was focusing on domains two and three, the review was focused on the audit of cases. It was thought that 18 cases, ten court orders (domain two) and eight out of court disposals (domain three) would be a sufficient number to provide adequate evidence. A list of cases was provided by SYOT and the audit team selected those cases which would provide the best evidence of practice i.e. cases which had been running a minimum of three months. Further, domain two, containing two custody cases were included.

It was agreed that of these 18 cases, nine would be audited together with the staff member responsible for the case. The remaining nine were file reads only. The audit tool used was based on HMIPs standards for the two domains. A timetable was drawn up on this basis in the same way that HMIP carry out inspections.

It was further agreed that the peer review team would not be giving an indication of SYOT's likely inspection outcome/grade, but rather would provide feedback on what they assessed as strengths and areas for consideration. It was also acknowledged that as HMIP's criteria was constantly under review the criteria when SYOT is inspected means it could change.

In advance of the review, SYOT provided evidence to support the reviewers to understand the operational context.

3. The review

A team of three managers from Hampshire and the Isle of Wight YOTs spent three days in Slough between 10th and 12th March 2020.

At the end of each day findings were shared with the Assistant Director of Quality Improvement Practice and Performance for the Trust, the Head of Service, and the Team Manager. The purpose of this was to explore themes that were emerging.

On the final day, the review team collated the findings into a presentation. This presentation followed HMIP's criteria and identified strengths and areas for consideration in each area.

4. Findings

Overall, the staff group in SYOT were a credit to the organisation, they were enthusiastic, able to showcase their work and embraced the concept of audit and inspection. The principle of 'child first' was a golden thread which went through all the work we reviewed.

There was evidence of consistent and constructive management oversight. Particularly, providing a footprint across a child's file and setting the direction at the point of allocation.

4.1 Assessment

It was clear that in assessing both court and out of court orders that the identification of the child's diverse needs was a strength and that this was followed through to the delivery of interventions. The type of diverse needs assessed was broad, reflecting the multi-cultural nature of the town as well as other diverse needs such as age, learning styles and health needs. One example was the assessment of the impact becoming a young father could have on behaviour and the ability to engage.

We saw evidence of the assessment of a child's motivation and their individual strengths as present in most cases. However, one area to consider would be how to evidence the assessment of a young person's level of maturity more clearly when Asset Plus does not ask this question explicitly.

One area of strength was that the majority of out of court disposals had an Asset Plus prior to a decision about disposal. However, in both out of court and court ordered disposals, there was a lack of evidence other agencies and case management systems being routinely consulted. As a result, not all relevant information was captured. This included the use of information provided by the police. In some cases, staff would allude to what they had been told but this was not

reflected in the assessment. This could be particularly relevant when assessing the nature and extent of a child's involvement in gangs or county lines. A suggestion was made to make social care case management checks a routine part of case management. One notable exception was the involvement of the education worker and the information they could provide.

With reference to the assessment of risk across the three areas, these were routinely completed. However, the reviewers thought that the justification of these ratings could in some cases be developed further. For example, by clearly evidencing circumstances, context, capacity, creating opportunities and imminence.

In two cases, the assessment of risk of harm was too low, possibly because the definitions used by HMIP were not being applied.

A further area to consider was exploring substance misuse more fully in the Asset Plus assessment. For example, this was ticked 'no', even if there were substantial police concerns around drug dealing or if there was suspected drug use. The review team thought that in saying 'no' to substance misuse question in Asset Plus, they were restricting the assessment of needs in that area. In addition, we also thought SYOT could more routinely consider the impact of cannabis use on the likelihood of reoffending and safety and wellbeing.

Finally, although team members indicated that they were ACE aware and took a trauma informed approach to practice, this was not explicit in their assessment.

4.2 Planning

In all cases, plans were present. They were also collaborative and underpinned by a planning meeting. The team were trying to improve planning through the introduction of a tool. However, there are some areas which the review team thought should be considered.

The restricted number of partners consulted at the assessment stage was reflected in the plans. Many did not refer to other agencies. Further, whilst the YOT did an impressive number of additional assessments to support delivery, such as the Learning styles and SALT assessments, these were not fully integrated. We also thought that Children's Services plans could be more fully integrated.

Plans could also better use the external controls element of Asset Plus and develop their references to victim safety planning. In addition, the multi-agency risk management meetings were not referenced within this section.

Further, we thought that interventions in some cases could be sequenced in accordance to where the young person was on the cycle of change. For example, if a YCC had identified the completion of intervention work, this was done irrespective of the fact the child may benefit first from some motivational interviewing.

4.3 Delivery of interventions

There was an impressive range of interventions which included both group, individual work, and a specific summer programme. These interventions were tailored in accordance with the child's needs.

Reparation was used widely, however on occasions the justification for imposing reparation was based on the activity being good for the child rather than as recompense for their behaviour. For example, work at a football club. We didn't think this was necessarily wrong but that SYOT could consider rebranding these interventions as Activity or Programme Requirements in some cases.

We saw evidence of good engagement with young people, with the team spending time building a relationship. Engagement, linked to the child's diverse needs for example, considering the impact of a female white worker on her engagement with a child from a different background. There was evidence also of routinely identifying the most appropriate venue to see children to support engagement. The mechanics of good external controls such as timely enforcement action and good levels of reporting in high risk cases were all evidenced.

There was some good collaboration with neighbouring YOTs especially when transfers of children between services were taking place.

4.4 Review

The reviews were timely and involved the young people. The team also thought the work done on exit planning to be thorough, however it could better evidence the involvement of young people.

When closing cases, we did not see how information was made available to partners that the case was closed (for example, Children's Services teams).

4.5 Exploitation, Knife Crime and Gangs

SYOT asked the review team to look at their approach to key issues and groups such as exploitation, knife crime and gangs. As we undertook the review, we became aware that such cases were prevalent.

When addressing learning in relation to assessment, planning, interventions and review we have attempted to make the link between our findings and the application to these specific groups. For example, in our finding that police intelligence is not routinely used to inform the assessment of risk, then the assessment of risk will not be justified and the subsequent plans and interventions to manage these risks may not be enough. A second example is that there are a range of specific interventions to address these issues and these were used regularly. However, on occasion the children attended when they were not ready; whilst they completed the intervention the impact was negligible. Undertaking some work on Motivational Interviewing with the young people may have been more appropriate before they attended.

However, SYOT's ability to engage and get alongside their children is a key strength which will form the basis of any activity to address these specific issues.

The referral of children to the NRM process was not consistently identified and applied. For example, a referral made by another YOT was not followed up. On another case exploitation was identified as a risk factor and the child was being moved, but NRM referral was not considered / discounted despite this being identified as an action in the exploitation screening tool.

4.6 Other findings

From our experience, an area which HMIP could comment on is the use of performance information and data to inform the delivery of services. We understand that this has been a challenge for SYOT.

We could not see much reference to children who behave in a harmfully sexual way, for example the High-Risk panel did not include these cases.

We wondered if colleagues in Children's Services understand the role and responsibilities of the YOT and if this was impacting on including them in providing information about, or inviting them to, meetings on young people.

Finally, we thought the use of reflective supervision could enhance practice and understand that such plans are currently underway to implement such an approach.

5. Conclusion

The review team would like to thank SYOT for the privilege of being invited into the service and are grateful for the way we were received. The review team were invited to be open and honest with our feedback and I think the content of this report evidences that we have done this.

The review team would like to wish SYOT every success in their inspection and look forward to reading the final report.

Nikki Shave
Hampshire and IOW YOT Head of Service

Sarah Herbert
IOW Team Manager

Lauren Whincop
Hampshire Assistant Team Manager

1st April 2020

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 20th April 2021

CONTACT OFFICER: Eleni Ioannides, Interim Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services

WARD(S): All

PART I

FOR INFORMATION

SLOUGH CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRUST ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2020 TO MARCH 2021

1. **Purpose of Report**

To inform the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel of the activity of Slough Children's Services Trust over the last financial year, and provide some highlights of successes and areas of focus for further improvements. The report also informs the panel of the transition to a Local Authority Owned Company and change of name to Slough Children First.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel is requested to note the Annual report of Slough Children First (formerly Slough Children's Services Trust).

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The provision of statutory children's services in Slough by Slough Children First directly contributes to the Joint Wellbeing Strategy, specifically priority one (Starting Well). The focus on the health and well-being of children and young people aligns with the priority to protect vulnerable children and young people.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

Slough Children First is aligning its strategic activity to the Council's developing Children's Plan to ensure coherence and closer working relationships to improve outcomes for children. This will enable the Council to deliver 'Outcome 1 – Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful'.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no financial implications of this report

(b) Risk Management

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
The Panel is requested to note the Annual Report of Slough Children First	Risks: None Opportunities: Help deliver Slough's Five Year plan	Slough Children's First (SCF) Board oversees the organisation in delivering its business plan. The Transition Steering Group (TSG) chaired by a DfE Commissioner has overseen the transition to a local authority wholly owned company and current improvements	5 (Negligible severity high probability)	6 weekly monitoring meeting of an agreed set of KPIs between SCF and SBC Governance meeting chaired by SBC Chief Executive Slough Children's First Board

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Under Article 8 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as given effect to in the domestic law by the Human Rights Act 1998, every person has the right to respect for his family life.

The Children Act 1989

The Children Act 2004

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

Slough Children First undertook a comprehensive equalities impact assessment for its staff as part of its Trust wide restructure in 2020 and no adverse impacts were identified.

5. **Supporting Information**

- 5.1. As part of its contract with Slough Borough Council, Slough Children First produce an annual report which reviews the last 12 months, highlighting successes, challenges and looks ahead to the next twelve months.
- 5.2. This annual report is written from the viewpoint of Slough Children's Trust as it is a retrospective look at the last 12 months although the organisation is now called Slough Children First.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

No other committees have been involved in this proposal

7. **Conclusion**

- 7.1. The report shows many areas of strength and highlights the focus for the organisation is on the quality of services children, young people, their families and carers receive. The organisation's biggest challenge is recruiting and retaining staff, an issue not just reserved to Slough Children First.
- 7.2. The new arrangements with the Council bringing together Council and Trust strategic leadership roles and integrating services, provides Slough Children First with a solid foundation to realise its ambitions for consistently good services vulnerable children and families in Slough.

8. **Background Papers**

None

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Slough Children's Trust Annual Report April 2020 to March 2021

Policy Owner:	Eleni Ioannides, Interim Chief Executive/ DCS
Version:	1
Date:	March 2021

Policy Summary:

Slough Children's Trust Annual Report April 2020 to March 2021



A hands-on approach to help children in Slough be
..... Safe, Secure and Successful

Foreword by Robert Tapsfield, Chair, Slough Children's Services Trust

Slough Children's Services Trust (the Trust) started 2020/21 dealing with the challenges of Covid-19, unsure at the time how prolonged the pandemic would be and what would be the full impact on children, families and staff in Slough. What has been clear over the last 12 months is the resilience and compassion of Trust staff who during several lockdowns have continued to provide services to the most vulnerable children and Families in Slough. The Trust Board are very proud and grateful to staff for their commitment and resilience.

The last 12 months have tested the Trust in many ways. High levels of demand for our services and more complex needs from children and families have become the norm, and this put significant pressure on our services and the improvements we made in 2019. Senior leaders took robust action and over the last year improvements have been made, with many of these described in this report. But we know there is more to do and everyone in the Trust is committed to continuously improving services to ensure children are safe, secure and successful.

On 1st April 2021, the Trust becomes a local authority wholly owned company. We have a new name 'Slough Children First' which signals the shared determination of the Trust and Slough Borough Council to continue to improve services to children and families. As a local authority wholly owned company we will be strategically aligned with Slough Borough Council whilst retaining operational independence. Our adoption service is moving to join 'Ambitious for Adoption' a Regional Adoption Agency run by Coram. We will also be implementing a new Contextual Safeguarding Team to safeguard vulnerable adolescents and are working much more closely with early help and targeted support services.

These changes are exciting ones for the Trust which puts it in a good position to focus on making sustained improvements whilst working collaboratively with the Council to improve services and outcomes for children and families. We look forward to continuing our improvement journey, taking all available opportunities to grow, innovate, and enjoy future successes.



A hands-on approach to help children in Slough be
..... Safe, Secure and Successful

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Summary

The Trust was already seeing increased levels of demand before Covid-19 but this demand continued. During 2020 the number of open cases increased every month to reach a peak on 14 December 2020 with 1891 children and young people being supported; the highest in the Trust's history. This has resulted in child protection numbers which were almost double statistical neighbours, a growing number of children in need cases and high caseloads for staff.

The Trust was clear from its own self evaluation of practice about areas which needed to improve, and it implemented a Rapid Improvement Plan in the summer of 2020 which successfully addressed specific areas. An Improvement Plan developed in September 2020 sought to embed the progress made in the summer as well as deliver sustained outcomes. This plan, underpinned by permanent heads of service and their own service plans, has led to further improvements and evidence of good compliance over the last six months enabling the Trust to focus on achieving consistent quality too.

In October 2020, the Trust received a focused visit from Ofsted to look at social care statutory services and the Trust's response to Covid. The Trust told Ofsted it would find varied but improving practice across the Trust but at the same time it would find areas of strength. This view was confirmed by Ofsted who saw during the focused visit the Trust continues to know itself well from a wide range of performance and quality assurance information. The Trust has focused significant time and resources to ensure staff are well supported and safe during Covid, and Ofsted agreed with the approach senior leaders had taken.

The Trust has undergone significant change in the last financial year and there remain further changes in the next financial year. Changes in strategic leadership will be finalised with the recruitment of a permanent Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services, and the Director of Operations role has been stabilised with a committed interim. The Trust will transition to a local authority wholly owned company, strategically aligned with the Council but retaining operational independence. Services will become more integrated when early help and targeted support join the Trust in July 2021.

The biggest challenge for the Trust remains staffing. The difficulty in recruiting good calibre staff makes it difficult for managers to promote consistent good practice and the market for recruiting social work staff is highly competitive. The Trust has seen high levels of staff turnover for a variety of reasons which it is working to reduce.

Despite such changes and challenges, the Trust remains well placed to build on improvements made over the last year and further improve the quality of services.

Getting the basics right

Our strengths and where we have seen improvements in practice

Strong practice in the Referral and Assessment Service

Ofsted spent part of their focused visit in October 2020 reviewing the Referral and Assessment Service which includes the Trust's Front Door. Ofsted noted a number of strengths including an appropriate grip on threshold applications, as well as skilled and experienced MASH managers providing clear direction and additional rigour to decision-making. Ofsted also saw strong practice in the Assessment Teams who as well as undertaking assessments provide short-term, direct interventions to address needs and build resilience in families. In addition Ofsted saw a good response to children at risk of exploitation.

Improvements in social care compliance and green shoots for quality

Ofsted saw an improvement in compliance in areas such as visiting frequency, supervision and management oversight, all of which have since further improved. Both management oversight and supervisions in timescale met their 95% targets in January 2021, improving from a low base in April 2020. This provides a stronger grip on practice and should lead to improved outcomes for children and families. Audits in the 3rd quarter (September 2020 to December 2020) have indicated ongoing signs of improvement in the quality of management oversight.

Visiting frequency for Children in Need and children on Child Protection plans both met their 92% target in late 2020 with performance sustained into 2021. The visiting frequency for children looked after hasn't dipped below its 90% target all financial year meaning children and young people are being kept safe, and benchmarks well with other local authorities.

There have also been improvements in the quality of cases audited. In quarter 3, 63.5% of the 160 cases audited were graded as Requires Improvement or better, an increase from 51.1% in quarter 1. The increase in higher quality cases is coming from more cases rated to be good and less cases rated as inadequate.

Maintained face to face visiting during Covid-19 to keep children safe

During the first few weeks of Covid all children known to the Trust were risk assessed. This was completed to ascertain risk of significant harm so face to face visiting could be prioritised for those most at risk and at the same time protect frontline staff. Further functionality was added to the Trust's social care case file

management system to enable continued visiting risk assessments to be carried out by social workers to check the safety of face to face visits. After just 8 weeks, face to face visiting became the norm again, supported by the availability of PPE for staff. The expectation of managers has been maintained throughout Covid for all visits to be conducted face to face unless risks indicate otherwise.

Positive outcomes for the education of Children Looked After

Slough's Looked After Children continue to perform well academically despite disruptions to education for all children. This success continues to be achieved as a result of a strong and effective Virtual School which is held in high regard by school leaders and foster carers.

For the small cohort of Year 6 pupils, 64% of these children performed at age related expectations for all children, which is better than other children looked after nationally. In the cohort of 15 individuals due to take their GCSE's in summer 2020, for the 8 children who had two stable years in care, their attainment was almost identical to their non CLA peers and considerably better than CLA peers nationally..

Record numbers of our care leavers are accessing university. 9 young people secured a university offer for 2020, and from October 2020, 19 young people will be at university (Slough's highest ever number) studying a range of courses including medicine, education and law.

PEPs have continued virtually, with a process seen by Ofsted as '*effective*' and excellent timeliness has been maintained (99%) for the majority of the year. Whilst children and young people were learning at home in 2020, the Virtual School distributed over 300 laptops to support learning for vulnerable children and children looked after.

There has been strong attendance of Slough CLA in school. As of 4th February 2021, 83% of primary aged Looked After Children were in school, much higher than 54.6% recorded for other South Eastern region LA's. For secondary aged Looked After Children, 57% were in schools, double the 22% for other South Eastern region LA's. It was also pleasing to see 66% of all children looked after with an Education health and Care Plan (EHCP) were in school as well. Only 2 looked after children were refusing to attend with the remaining children and young people having their educational needs met at home or on-line, or were in the process of moving schools.

Placement stability for Children Looked After

Placement stability for Children Looked After in Slough continues to outperform both Statistical Neighbours and the South East region, meaning children remain settled in a placement which is meeting their needs.

The Trust targeted itself to increase the percentage of children looked after in the same placement for 2 years or more to 75%, and it has both met and consistently exceeded this target since June 2020, peaking at 88.5% in January 2021. This is better than Statistical Neighbours (65.5%) and South Eastern region (68.0%), though their data was for the 2019/2020 financial year.

Children looked after with 3 or more placements in the last year continues to improve month on month to 4.5% in February 2021, significantly reduced from 15.7% in April 2020. This is a pleasing reduction and testament to the hard work of social workers and foster carers to keep children and young people safe, secure and happy.

Positive Peer Review of the Youth Offending Team

The Youth Offending Team (YOT) in Slough took part in a peer review in March 2020. The peer review team was provided by the South Eastern Sector Lead Improvement Partnership (SESLIP) and noted staff in the YOT were '*a credit to the organisation*' and the principle of 'child first' was a golden thread which went through all the work reviewed. From this peer review the team have developed an action plan to address areas where practice could be further strengthened. The YOT is currently working towards an HMIP inspection in 2021 where it hopes to perform well.

Impact of clinicians on work with children and families

Clinicians support frontline staff to influence planning and also carry out direct work with children and families to build family resilience, prevent family breakdowns and reunify children looked after back home. Ofsted saw in the focused visit the value of clinicians in terms of how contact for children looked after had been supported during Covid, the support provided to Care Leavers who had been struggling with isolation, as well as their direct work with families. Clinicians have also been supporting their colleagues in the Trust during Covid and have been invaluable to staff during difficult times.

Breakaway refurbishment

In late 2020, Breakaway, our six bed respite unit for children and young people with disabilities moved to a property next door to enable the existing property to be fully refurbished to address Ofsted recommendations about the living environment for children and young people. Breakaway provides overnight short breaks, after school visits and occasional day care for children from 6 years of age up to their 18th birthday. Breakaway as per other children's homes and respite units receives regular Ofsted visits, and is awaiting its next inspection. In February 2020 Ofsted noted a 'sustained effectiveness' which meant Breakaway was still achieving "good" outcomes and the work staff have undertaken at Breakaway to move premises puts it in a good position to sustain its current good judgement.

What we are still improving and how we are doing this

Improving the quality of practice

The focus for the Trust for the next year is to maintain good levels of compliance and continue to develop the quality of practice to ensure good outcomes for children and families. This will be achieved by continuing to support frontline staff to understand what good looks like, using on-line training modules, cake and learn 'bite size' sessions, whole Trust sessions and practice learning weeks which have continued throughout Covid. This is underpinned by senior leaders' efforts to provide manageable caseloads.

A previously delayed frontline management programme run by the Staff College is now able to start in spring 2021. This will be delivered jointly to Trust and Council Children's Services managers to provide a series of leadership development sessions to develop managers and strengthen management at all levels in Slough.

Improving the quality of children's plans (Ofsted area for improvement)

The Trust knew from its performance information and quality assurance activities it needs to focus on the quality of practice for children subject to child in need plans and in need of help and protection. This view was confirmed by the Ofsted focused visit in October 2020. The Rapid Improvement Plan brought some quick improvements in these areas and future, sustainable changes are underpinned by detailed service plans to promote the aim for all children and families to receive consistently good services.

Despite the need to further focus on improving practice, the low figures for repeat CP plans is good evidence of social work plans effectively resolving needs of children and families. Just 13.5% (ytd) of CP are currently repeat plans (ever), showing a much stronger performance than both statistical neighbours (20.9%) and SE region figures (23.4%) for 2019/2020. Only 5.6% (ytd) of CP plans started are repeat plans within 2 years against a target of Trust target of 10%. There are no regional comparisons for this performance indicator

Audit activity shows practice in relation to care plans is stronger. The percentage of cases rated Requires Improvement or better has remained constant between Q1 and Q3 at around 71.5%, with double the number of audits completed in Q3 indicating practice is improving.

Support and planning for Care Leavers has been consistently good with 93% of 18 – 21 year old Care Leavers living in suitable accommodation, an increase of 7% since April 2020. The proportion of Care Leavers of the same age in employment, education and training has reduced from 43% to 34% since April 2020, but this is the impact of Covid whereby many employment sectors which provide jobs for young people such as retail, hospitality and leisure are closed. A post 16 worker located in the Virtual School supported 26 out of 28 young people who completed year 11 in summer 2020 to find employment, education or training, but the employment, education and training opportunities for young people in Slough is a focus for improvement.

Making the Independent Fostering Agency 'Good'

The Trust's Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) was judged inadequate by Ofsted in April 2019. A third monitoring visit in May 2020 confirmed the IFA was heading in the right direction when all but one of the requirements were lifted (just suitable and experienced staffing remained). As a result of Covid, the regulatory inspection framework was suspended and so the IFA continued to deliver its service plan and recruited to all of its Practice Manager and staffing vacancies.

Having a stable management team and experienced staff has resulted in a stronger focus on outcomes for children rather than process and compliance. It was therefore pleasing in November 2020 when Ofsted conducted an assurance visit and lifted the

last requirement from the 2019 inspection. The inspection team confirmed the IFA *“had a focus on quality”* and *“had the vision to become good”*.

Foster Carers within the IFA continue to receive local and national recognition. In October 2020, Sam and Des Cox who are the Home Hub carers within the Trust’s Mockingbird scheme were acknowledged for their incredible work supporting vulnerable children in Slough and other foster families by receiving a ‘Make a Difference Award’ from BBC Three Counties Radio.

Also in October 2020, a foster carer within the IFA was recognised nationally for the great work she has done supporting vulnerable children in Slough. Karen Embury was shortlisted in the Outstanding Contribution to Foster Care category at the Foster Carer Excellence Awards run by national charity, The Fostering Network.

An Ofsted recommendation from April 2019 was for all children’s case files to be of a good standard and immediately afterwards the IFA re-introduced paper files which in subsequent Ofsted visits was deemed to have met the need for good quality children’s files. In 2020 Slough invested in Charms as the new case file system for the IFA in Slough and this went live in February 2021. The IFA awaits a formal judgement inspection which is expected in spring 2021 and is resolute in its intention to become “good” or better.

The provision of services for privately fostered children (Ofsted area for improvement)

In the summer of 2020, the total number of private fostering arrangements in Slough peaked at five children but this has since reduced to two. Slough has a policy of where there are identified risks, a child and family assessment is undertaken to follow a safeguarding approach instead of a private fostering assessment. This is to safeguard children and is reflective of the complex and diverse make up of families in Slough.

We refreshed our private fostering action plan in the autumn to support awareness raising activity to professionals, partners and communities. This plan has a specific focus each month so there is a regular cycle of awareness raising underpinned by social media messages. Information about private fostering, including a one minute guide has been sent to children centres, education providers, GP’s and pharmacies since autumn 2020. Activity planned for spring 2021 has a focus on community, sporting, youth and charity groups scheduled to coincide with the lockdown roadmap.

Strengthening our approach to vulnerable children and young people (Ofsted area for improvement)

An area we know as a Trust and as a partnership we need a sharper focus on is contextual safeguarding. Slough has a number of vulnerable individuals on child protection plans for child exploitation and there is a significant but complex landscape of activity at preventative, early help and statutory levels in Slough which needs to be aligned.

To bring this work together and address the needs of young people, we are setting up a Contextual Safeguarding team to reduce the impact of exploitation on young

people. This will happen in phases so that the team can become a fully functioning, multi-agency service which provides wrap around support and interventions to children, young people, their families and friends. DfE funding has been obtained to pump prime the development of this team and there are plans for this team to start in its first phase at the end of April 2021.

To support this change, the Youth Offending Team (YOT) has been integrated with the Front Door to enable it to work with a broader continuum of children and expand its preventative scope. The most recent practice learning week in March 2021 had the theme of contextual safeguarding, and was designed to increase the knowledge base of frontline staff and understand current practice so as to make further improvements in this area.

The co-location of partners in the Referral and Assessment service has strengthened communication around thresholds and enabled better identification of next steps. Covid has meant strategy discussions have been largely virtual over the last 12 months and there has been the need on occasions to instigate workarounds in response to technology and personnel issues, but all agencies are committed to making strategy discussions. Ofsted noted in the October 2020 focused visit, strategy discussions were timely, with good multi agency attendance and the outcomes of those seen were the correct ones, but did provide some areas where practice could be further strengthened. These are being followed up by the service.

Stability of Workforce

The recruitment and retention of staff is a challenge for the Trust

The turnover of staff in the Trust has been one of the biggest barriers to sustaining improvements. Turnover remained around 25% to 28% between April 2020 and August 2020 and then reached a peak of 41% in November 2020. This peak corresponded with the Trust's re-structure which saw 9 members of staff accepting redundancy, but at the same time there was turnover of other staff. Turnover has stabilised to around 30% since December 2020, but is a figure the Trust would like to reduce further, to ensure children have a consistent social worker.

There continues to be a significant challenge in recruiting experienced permanent and agency social workers despite recruitment activity and a relationship with a master vendor. Slough's historical reputation in the marketplace and speculation about the future of the Trust is taking longer to change than we would like. As a result a large number of frontline staff are relatively inexperienced, for example, in the Safeguarding and Family Support Service, 64% of permanent staff are social workers either in their assessed year of practice (ASYE) or social workers who have completed their assessed year within the last six months.

The implementation of IR35 in April 2021, postponed for a year has caused some anxiety for agency staff. Having learnt from last year senior leaders have been holding a series of drop in meetings for agency staff to understand the implications of IR35 and hear about the benefits of becoming permanent. Despite this activity, we know some staff, especially those who live a distance away from Slough, will be leaving which will increase turnover rates again.

However, there are still a number of agency staff who are committed to the Trust and there is a small core of staff who have been working in Slough for sometime. Despite the challenges of recruiting to frontline staff, all substantive Heads of Service posts are filled by permanent staff and four frontline managers in the last few months have converted from temporary to permanent staff. One excellent outcome of the hard work by senior managers to encourage agency staff to become permanent is in the Children Looked After and Support Service where all individuals in managerial posts are permanent.

What the Trust is doing to address recruitment issues

The Trust continues to try and capitalise on its success of converting agency staff to permanent whilst at the same time it is reviewing its approaches to recruitment and marketing and understanding the impact of different activities. Senior leaders are working to develop Slough's unique selling position (USP) and change the narrative about Slough as a place to work. The Trust is also re-starting recruitment activities which have been curtailed as a result of Covid, including overseas recruitment.

There is a detailed workforce action plan to deliver on the many aspects of workforce development, Trust culture, values, diversity, pay and benefits as well as recruitment. This work is scheduled throughout the course of 2021 with the aim of reducing the turnover of staff and increasing the percentage of permanent staff.

Growing our own

The Trust has created a place where newly qualified social workers want to come and work. In October 2020 we welcomed the eighth cohort of newly qualified social workers to complete our Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme.

Historically the Trust had a strong retention rate of ASYE's but in line with turnover levels, the number of ASYE's leaving after their programme has also increased. To combat this trend a post ASYE group has been introduced with nine social workers to promote their professional development and support their retention. The first meeting was a success and this group will be continued and replicated with future post ASYE cohorts.

As part of the transformation programme, a new career pathway became available to frontline staff when the Trust introduced the role of Assistant Team Manager into social work teams. The Trust was very pleased when two long standing senior social workers successfully stepped up to become Assistant Team Managers. These two members of staff were in early ASYE cohorts following the Trust's inception and have developed their careers within the Trust since that time.

The Step up to Social Work programme is successfully implemented within the Trust and we welcomed 10 new students in the last year. Our aim will be to keep as many of those on our ASYE programme next year. The Trust also offers placements to final year students as part of our recruitment strategy and four students are currently undergoing their final 100 day placement.

The Trust has offered three apprenticeships in partnership with Slough's adult social care service and three members of staff started their social work apprenticeship in February 2021. Their training is over a three year period and we look forward to these members of staff having successful social work careers in Slough.

Effective Leadership

Strong Covid-19 response

Ofsted saw in the focused visit how leaders had acted decisively to safeguard children during Covid and supported staff with effective and regular guidance and PPE. Despite high rates of infection in Slough and a diverse workforce potentially at greater risk from Covid, strategically the Trust took the decision to keep services open and operational in its main work base and maintain face to face visiting of children and families.

Early in the pandemic the Trust modelled the potential impact of Covid on its workforce and developed business continuity plans for each service area based on a worst case scenario of significant numbers of staff becoming ill or having to self-isolate. Despite approximately 1/3rd of the Trust's workforce impacted at some point by Covid either through illness or shielding, business continuity plans have only had to be enacted a few times to deep clean premises. But the Trust has to note with sadness the death of one valued member of staff in January 2021 which had significant impact on colleagues within the Trust.

The Trust maintained a commitment to employing and retaining only quality staff during 2020, despite the pressures in the market for social work recruitment. The Trust has not been afraid to move on those whose work quality is not good enough, which has contributed to the increased levels of turnover of staff and the Trust has not employed anybody who refused to carry out face-to-face visiting.

Listening and supporting staff

The Trust uses various mechanisms to hear from staff including professional development opportunities which have been reinvigorated over the last 12 months. Covid has meant face to face contact has been less frequent and in smaller numbers, meaning regular two way communications between staff and senior managers has been more difficult. The Trust has continued with staff briefings, service sessions and training events throughout Covid, but meeting virtually is no substitute for face to face engagement and conversations. Senior leaders are working to reinvigorate mechanisms for staff to meet with peers and managers through the constraints of Covid and enable staff to provide their views and feedback for the leadership to respond and act upon.

The Trust has employee groups to provide safe spaces for individuals to provide valued and respected opinions. The Employee Engagement Group has been running for several years and this year it has re-instated the monetary reward in the staff 'Thank you' scheme and suggesting ways to keep staff safe during Covid. More recently, the Values Group was set up when the Trust's new values were launched to assist their implementation. These two groups are being combined into a single

group to further increase the impact of staff working with senior managers. The Safe Space Diversity Group was set up last year by two Trust staff in response to Black Lives Matters. We are pleased to see such groups are able to flourish in Slough, run voluntarily by staff for staff.

To understand staff views about working for the Trust, each year Trust staff are invited to complete an annual health check which is benchmarked against the previous year. Nearly 60% of respondents indicated they were satisfied working for the Trust, a figure which is comparable with the previous year's survey and pleasing since the survey was completed during the difficulties of working through Covid and lockdowns. A common theme running through this and previous surveys was the need for better IT, retention of staff and ensuring better resources, whilst new areas of focus included better teamwork and communication which reflects frustrations and difficulties of remote working away from colleagues. We know our staff have experienced changes and have worked under extremely difficult circumstances over the last 12 months. The Trust has ensured staff have the support and resources required to meet the demands of Covid and to keep themselves, children and families safe. Over the next year we need to focus on the other areas to ensure more staff feel supported, all staff have the resources they need to carry out their work and we continue to improve the dialogue between staff and senior managers.

Leaders addressed rising caseloads

The impact of Covid caused a sustained increase in the volume of referrals meaning caseloads were sustained for too long at above desired levels. This was addressed by the Trust in the summer, who with the support of the Council, invested in 3 additional social work teams placed within the Safeguarding and Families Support Service who have overseen work with around 300 children between them.

These three additional teams created more capacity which reduced caseloads significantly. Between April to July 2020, some Safeguarding and Family Support teams were experiencing average caseloads of over 30 children per social worker, far exceeding the Trust target of 22 children for this service. Caseloads were reduced to an average of 19.7 children between August 2020 and January 2021, a much safer level of staff to operate.

The introduction of these teams also enabled Assessment Teams to transfer children and provide them with much needed capacity to focus on the increased demand at the Trust's Front Door. The impact of the Innovate teams has been widespread. By adding capacity and delivering stability in the level of caseloads, in doing so they have supported the focus on compliance and practice and have been a fundamental part of improvements seen over the last six months.

We are pleased funding has been agreed to enable all three additional teams to remain in Slough until June 2021 with a review to be held in May 2021, to ascertain if any teams are required for longer. As well as this significant investment in children's social care by Slough, there is agreement for a fifth permanent team in the Safeguarding and Family Support service which helps formalise these interim arrangements and will provide capacity to support the drive for manageable caseloads and good quality social work practice.

Transformation by and within the Trust

2020 and 2021 has been a time of significant change and transformation for the Trust. In early 2020, the Director of Operations took a period of extended leave before stepping down later in the year and an interim Assistant Director was appointed in late March 2020 to cover the duties of this role.

A full restructure of the Trust was able to commence in the summer after several, unavoidable pauses, and on 22nd September 2020 the Trust transitioned to a new structure based around principles of a maximum of three steps to permanence for children, building resilience and capacity, strengthening management capacity as well as ensuring effective back office support.

At the end of October 2020, the Trust Chief Executive and Council Director of Children's Services left their respective posts and a joint interim Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services (DCS) took up post at the same time in readiness for the transition of the Trust to a local authority wholly owned company in April 2021. This new role has brought together the leadership roles responsible for children's services in Slough. The intention is that this will build trust, mutual confidence and understanding, and assist the Trust and Council to work and plan together. Recruitment is currently underway for the substantive Chief Executive and DCS postholder, but at the time of writing this report, the post has not been filled. To maintain stability whilst strategic changes happen in the late spring/early summer 2021, the interim Assistant Director for Frontline Practice and Improvement has agreed to remain in post for a further 12 months.

The opportunities for collaboration and increased integration between the Trust and the Council is starting with early help, not in employment education and training (NEET) and targeted services coming into the Trust in July 2021. This is resulting in changed conversations and a collective ownership of improvements in all of Children's Services. This will serve to bring better outcomes for children and families in Slough.

In January 2021 the Trust moved from St Martins Place to join Council colleagues in Observatory House. The new offices provide an airy, open plan environment but as a result of social distancing regulations, all staff have not been able to enjoy the full benefit of the working facilities on offer. In the 2020 Trust health check, 68% of staff surveyed felt their working environment was suitable for the work they do. This was conducted whilst many staff were working from home and before the move to Observatory House, so we look forward to hearing what staff have to say about their new working environment in the 2021 health check.

On 1st April 2021, the adoption service (called a Voluntary Adoption Agency) will join a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) hosted by Coram. This move comes from a government directive mandating all local authority adoption services to join a Regional Adoption Agency. The adoption team in Slough has already enjoyed many successes in previous years in terms of the number of children adopted and with excellent timeliness in doing so. Joining a regional adoption agency will widen the pool of potential adopters for Slough children and we anticipate continued future adoption successes in Slough.

Being sustainable

The Trust's financial position

Over the last financial year there have been a number of key elements driving the financial picture

- Ensuring continued and sustained improvement in services and outcomes for children and families
- Continued focus on delivering savings, achieving 94% of the £2.5m savings target in year.
- Managing sustained high levels of demand on services
- Challenging financial context for children's services across the country.
- Challenge in recruiting and retaining good quality staff
- Setting a balanced budget and work within this financial envelope to provide greater stability
- Historical debt carried by the Trust

Negotiations between the Council and DfE on the resolution of historic net liabilities have now been concluded, which means for the first time in the Trust's history it is technically solvent with the net liability position wiped out.

This is addition to the fact there has been significant in year pressure on the budget which is recognised in year demand, funded by the council understanding the pressures have exceeded the financial support provided by central government. This has led to the Trust being able to report a break even position for the financial year; again a first.

The development of the in year mechanism has helped provide sufficient transparency of demands against budgeted assumptions to support the case for additional in year funding.

The increase in demand for all types of statutory children's services has been the new normal for a while now. Most noticeable has been significant growth in the numbers of children subject to child protection plans. At 69.6 per 10,000 population the Trust remains higher than statistical neighbours (44.6) and England (42.8) averages (these are 2019/2020 figures and pre Covid).

The Trust has also seen an increase in children subject to a child in need plan over the last 15 months. Numbers increased from 353 in August 2019 to 563 in December 2020, the highest number recorded, and this figure has only slightly dropped to 553 as of end of February 2021, and they account for around a third of all referrals.

The number of children looked after has risen resulting in a slight increase in per 10,000 population from 45.0 overall 2019/2020 to 51.1 as of February 2021. But Slough remains below statistical neighbours averages per 10,000 population (63.3) for 2019/2020.

Based on the predicative modelling of the Covid impact, the Trust were able to early identify the need for additional resources. With the support from the Council we were

able to secure three additional teams through Innovate, a model of providing established teams who have a history of working together and able to hit the ground running. Even though this proves more costly than the conventional agency route, it provided far greater stability and improved outcomes. This has added £1m of cost against budget in the financial year.

With a third lockdown currently underway, we are anticipating an increase in the number of referrals once professionals see children and families face to face once more. There has been a societal impact of Covid-19 on children and families with domestic abuse, mental health, poverty and parenting capacity coupled with substance and alcohol abuse all being reflected in the increasing complexity of referrals received.

The increase in social care activity has had an impact on the level of workforce required to meet the demands leading to the recognition and approval of an additional permanent team going forward. Recruitment and turnover continues to be a challenge and plans are afoot to address the issue, but we recognise this is not a quick win.

The Trust continues to target efficiencies and savings with £2.3m projected for 2020/2021. The summer 2020 re-structure as part of the Transformation programme delivered £0.6m of savings and the Trust is targeting £1m of savings for 2021/22. The Trust is working closely with the council to explore the scope of services delivered to ensure there is a strategy for addressing needs in the community, where possible developing the right preventative solutions to avoid the escalation of need and increases in statutory interventions at greater cost. In addition the Trust will undertake deep dive reviews of specific areas to identify any opportunities to drive more effective practice, for example legal fees.

The Trust has submitted a successful bid for funding from the DfE focused on 6 key areas of investment to deliver further improvements, address needs identified by both Ofsted and the Trust, develop services offered to children and families and improve the cost base of the company. The 6 workstreams are currently being worked into a detailed project plan for immediate delivery which will be scrutinised by an Improvement Board chaired by the Children's Commissioner for Slough, Trevor Doughty. These 6 workstreams are:

- Workforce development
- Quality of service
- Contextual safeguarding
- Developing local sufficiency
- Clinical offer to children and families to support practice
- Working with domestic violence

Sufficiency of placements and the quality of services for homeless 16 and 17 year olds (Ofsted areas for improvements)

The sufficiency of suitable placements for adolescents with complex needs remains a challenge. Rates have increased for residential care, reflecting more complex needs from vulnerable and exploited young people as a result of exploitation, gang and drug activity. This is not unique to Slough, but adds to the complexity of finding suitable

placements to match needs and a necessity to place children and young people outside the borough for their own safety.

The percentage of children looked after placed in Slough or within 20 miles of the borough has increased over the past financial year. In April 2020, 62.7% of children looked after were placed in Slough or within 20 miles and this has increased to 72.1% at the end of February, just 2.9% off Slough's 75% target. This is excellent performance given Slough is a small borough and the increasing risks of some children and young people.

The sufficiency of local placements has been supported by the Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) being in a much stronger position than two years ago. 29 in-house placements have been made between April 2020 and January 2021 and the IFA continues to account for 22-23% of all CLA placements. The IFA has continued to recruit throughout Covid and since April 2020, there have been six fostering households approved, with four more due to panel before the end of March 2021. Two further approvals have been put on hold due to Covid, which if they had progressed would have enabled the IFA to meet its annual target of 12 households. With just two resignations received throughout the whole of 2020/2021, this shows the IFA supports its foster carers well, evident in a strong retention rate of foster carers.

Slough continues its strong performance in relation to the suitability of accommodation for care leavers. 93% of 18 to 21 year old care leavers live in suitable accommodation compared to Statistical Neighbours 84.5% and the SE region 80% (both 2019/2020 figures). No care leaver lives in bed and breakfast accommodation, something the Trust is pleased to state has not happened for many years.

A fully staffed Commissioning team with a Commissioning lead has been able to embark on several workstreams to strengthen work with providers to support effective and sufficient local placements. This has included the promotion of local fostering and residential capacity, refreshing protocols to improve decision making, increased quality assurance of providers and a focus on increased value for money. The Trust has added new providers to its accredited list of 16+ semi independent provision and in May 2021 it starts a pilot for five young people aged 16+ with complex needs to live in semi-independent provision with wrap around support. All of this work has resulted in the increase in the number of placement providers, but there is still an issue with emergency placements.

Integration between the Trust and Council is enabling the joint use of funding on successful projects. Both organisations have been undertaking a joint commissioning programme for support and accommodation for young people aged 16-25 years. This has resulted in better pathways into housing and independent living for Care Leavers having an impact via a reduction in the number of care leavers in semi-independent housing at significant cost. There has also been an improvement in the assessment and provision of services for homeless 16- and 17-year-olds where these young people are assessed and offered support to meet their needs.

Going forward

In the next financial year the Independent Fostering Agency will receive its regulatory

judgement inspection, Youth Offending Services will be subject to HMIP scrutiny and the adoption service will receive its next inspection. At the same time the partnership across Slough is expecting a SEND Local Area inspection and the prospect of a Joint Targeted Area Inspection is always a possibility.

This will be against a backdrop of Covid-19 continuing and a roadmap out of lockdown. We continue to develop our understanding of the long term impacts on children, families and staff in Slough to refine how services should be delivered to meet these varied needs.

The Trust is in a different position to where it was 12 months ago. Services have improved following a dip but there still exists a level of variability in areas of practice and now is the time to push forward to ensure services are good or better. The Trust's biggest challenge is the stability of its workforce and turnover needs to be reduced to embed changes and improve outcomes for children and families.

The bringing together of Council and Trust strategic leadership roles, a maturing partnership with the Council and integration of services puts the Trust on a solid footing to realise ambitions for consistently good services for vulnerable children and families in Slough. Everyone in Slough is determined to deliver high quality services which change children and young people's lives for the better. We believe our plans to turn our ambitions into reality are clear and achievable, and we know what we need to do to get there.

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 20th March 2021

CONTACT OFFICER: Tiran Khehra, Policy Insight Analyst
(For all Enquiries) (01753) 875560

WARDS: All

PART I
FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
2020– 21 WORK PROGRAMME

1. **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 For the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel (ECS Scrutiny Panel) to discuss its 2020/21 work programme.

2. **Recommendations/Proposed Action**

- 2.1 None.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

- 3.1 The Council's decision-making and the effective scrutiny of it underpins the delivery of all the Joint Slough Wellbeing Strategy priorities. The ECS Scrutiny Panel, along with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and other Scrutiny Panels combine to meet the local authority's statutory requirement to provide public transparency and accountability, ensuring the best outcomes for the residents of Slough.
- 3.2 The work of the ECS Scrutiny Panel also reflects the priorities of the Five Year Plan, in particular the following:

Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications of proposed action.

(b) Risk Management

There are no risk management implications of proposed action.

(c) Human Rights Act and other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There are no Equalities implications arising from this report.

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 The meeting on the 20th April is the last Education and Children Services Scrutiny meeting in the 2020/21 municipal year. As such there is no future work programme for the panel to consider.

5.2 In the new municipal year the overview and scrutiny function will be rearranged to create a new organisational structure. The new People Scrutiny Panel will scrutinise topics discussed so far under the Education and Children Services Scrutiny Panel. The work programme is a flexible document which will be continually open to review throughout the municipal year.

5.3 The complete work programme for this municipal year has been provided for reference.

6. **Conclusion**

6.1 This is the last meeting of the Education and Children Services Scrutiny Panel for this municipal year. There is no future work programme for the panel to consider.

7. **Appendices Attached**

A - Work Programme for 2020 - 21 Municipal Year

8. **Background Papers**

None.

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2020/21

THEMES FOR 2020/21 DEVELOPMENT:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 1- Training & Skills Development • Theme 2- COVID-19 Impact on Education 	
Potential Task and Finish Group / Site Visits:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windsor Forest Group/ Colleges on their offer • Solutions for Health (0-19 Service) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Osbourne • Apprenticeships
Meeting Date:	
<p style="text-align: center;">21st October 2020 Theme 1</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on SBC's offer with apprenticeships (Inclusive Skills Growth Strategy) • Community Learning and Skills • Training Provider- JGA Developing Futures 	
<p style="text-align: center;">3rd December 2020 Theme 1</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Academy • Youth Offer • Slough Academy 	

4 th February 2021 Theme 1 & 2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEET- Comparison figures on pre-COVID19 and during/post COVID19 	
Impact of COVID-19 on Education:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Gaps in Primary and Secondary Schools • Safeguarding Children • Annual Education Standards report 2018/19 (due to 2020 exam cancellations there will be no performance tables) 	
16 th March 2021 Theme 2	
Impact of COVID-19 on Social Care	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years- Children Centres, staffing, families etc. • The Trust- Vulnerable children, CIP, CIN, staffing, resources • Parenting in Slough, Multi-Agency Strategy- Michael Jarrett • Youth Offending Report 	
20 th April 2021 Statutory Reports	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slough Children's Services Trust Annual Report. • Progress made since Ofsted ILACS inspection* • Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 	
Outstanding/Pending Items	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training- Employment skills and Learning Opportunities Post-16 (<i>focus on performance, outcomes for Slough students</i>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further Education Offers - Kick-Start - Local employer engagement 	

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4th February 2021
Theme 1 & 2

THEMES FOR 2020/21 DEVELOPMENT:

- Theme 1- Training & Skills Development
- Theme 2- COVID-19 Impact on Education

Potential Task and Finish Group / Site Visits:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windsor Forest Group/ Colleges on their offer • Solutions for Health (0-19 Service) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Osbourne • Apprenticeships |
|--|---|

Meeting Date:

21st October 2020
Theme 1

- Update on SBC's offer with apprenticeships (Inclusive Skills Growth Strategy)
- Community Learning and Skills
- Training Provider- JGA Developing Futures

3rd December 2020
Theme 1

- Creative Academy
- Youth Offer
- Slough Academy
- Ofsted Report on Social Care

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2020/21

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance- Focusing on Elective Home Education • The Trust's Performance • The Draft Threshold Document
<p style="text-align: center;">16th March 2021 Theme 2</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEET- Comparison figures on pre-COVID19 and during/post COVID19 • Parenting in Slough, Multi-Agency Strategy • Early Years and Children Centres • ToR- Employment, Skills and COVID-19 Task and Finish Group
<p style="text-align: center;">20th April 2021 Statutory Reports</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slough Children's Services Trust Annual Report • Youth Offending Report • Positive changes to the commissioning and delivery of our Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Tier 4 provision in Berkshire • Annual Safeguarding Report on Social Care
<p style="text-align: center;">Outstanding/Pending Items</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training- Employment skills and Learning Opportunities Post-16 (<i>focus on performance, outcomes for Slough students</i>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further Education Offers - Kick-Start - Local employer engagement - Late autumn Annual outcomes

MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE RECORD

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL 2020 – 21

	MEETING DATES					
COUNCILLOR	16/07/2020	21/10/2020	03/12/2020	04/02/2021	16/03/2021	20/04/2021
Ajaib	P	P	P	P	p	
Basra	P	Ap	P	Ap	p	
Begum	P	Ab	P	P	P	
A Cheema	P	P	P	P	P	
P Kelly	P	P	P	P	P	
N Holledge	P					
A Sandhu	Ap	Ap	Ab	P	P	
Sarfraz	Ap	Ap	P	Ap	P	
Qaseem	P	P	P	Ap	P	

P = Present for whole meeting
Ap = Apologies given

P* = Present for part of meeting
Ab = Absent, no apologies given

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EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
2021-2022 MEETING DATES

Date of Meeting
Thursday 8 July 2021
Thursday 21 October 2021
Wednesday 8 December 2021
Wednesday 26 January 2022
Wednesday 2 March 2022
Wednesday 6 April 2022

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