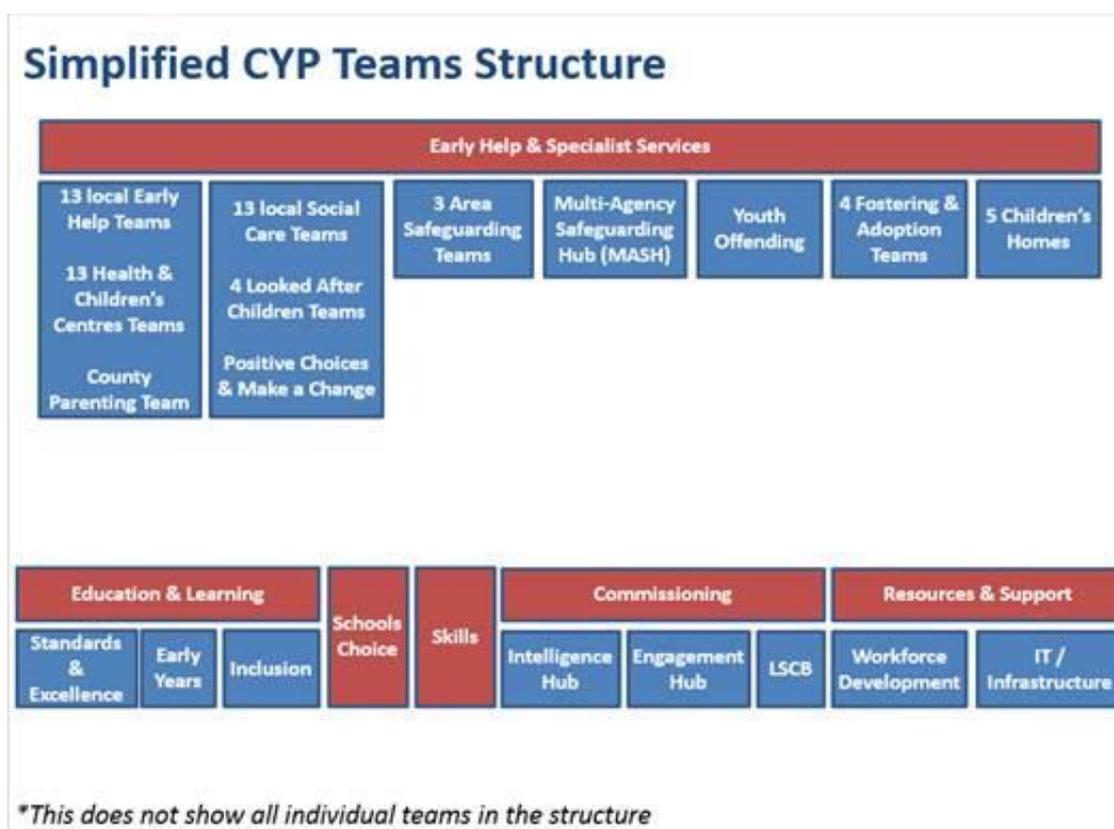


Overview

This report will cover the period April 2014 to March 2015. However there may be points where the current picture is referred to for Cabinet. This report will cover Safeguarding issues and also state the actions that are being taken to safeguard children and young people.

Introduction

As you are aware, there have been changes to the structure of Children and Young People's Services in Suffolk that took effect from April 2015 through the Making Every Intervention Count (MEIC) Programme.



Social Care Teams and Early Help Teams have been established in 13 localities in Suffolk grouped into 5 areas. A MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) Professional Consultation line has been established for professionals to discuss the most appropriate and effective ways of providing or obtaining help and support for a child or adult.

The restructure of Children's Services is only one element of the Making Every Intervention Count Programme. It is also to achieve our vision of safer, happier children and to enable families to create sustainable change for themselves.

Corporate Parenting Teams

Other key changes have taken place within Adoption and Fostering Services with 4 countywide teams organised around the following functions:

- Recruitment, Assessment & Matching
- Permanence Support
- Fostering Changes for Children
- Short Term & Intensive Fostering

Making Every Intervention Count (MEIC)

Any change to organisations can increase risk and there has been significant senior management oversight throughout the change period and beyond to ensure as smooth a transition as possible and maintaining the safety of Children and Families that we work with.

MEIC is the three year programme of work to help deliver this vision and transform the services that support children, young people and families in Suffolk. It also has a savings requirement of £11.9m - £5.1m of which has been achieved in 15/16. Despite the high level of savings there was no reduction in Social work posts.

Our vision

We want safer, happier children and to enable families to create sustainable change for themselves.

Key Principles

- Children, young people and families at the heart of what we do
- Suffolk Signs of Safety & Wellbeing (SoSWB) approach at the heart of how we practice
- Effective early help and, where needed intervention
- One Family, One Plan, One Lead Worker Making the best use of community assets and universal services
- A strong local network of professionals
- Building resilient families and communities
- A skilled and confident workforce
- We are building our services on what we know works. Together with partner agencies and community organisations, we will respond to the needs of families through a combination of universal & community services, early help and social care.

Managing demand / MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)

What's working well?

- The MASH has experienced relative stability overall in staffing within CYP.
- The MASH professional consultation line has become well established over the last four months, with over 220 calls in June. Feedback from callers is very positive, and a specific questionnaire to early years settings will try and assess the wider impact of having easy access to social work skills and support and advice.
- Systems for opening Return Interviews for missing young people are now consistent and prompt; Vulnerable to Radicalisation (VTR) (See page 21) referrals are now established within the MASH and we are working closely with the Vulnerable to Radicalisation Co-ordinator. Request for contact to families by CYP Early Help teams are also submitted direct in to their Profile database allowing us to now report on both volumes and outcomes for families.
- A new system for feedback to referrers and monitoring the timeliness of this has had a positive impact.
- A new system has been introduced to increase management oversight of multiple contacts, this is already improving the analysis of more chronic issues such as potential neglect or emotional abuse which is not centred on a single incident.
- Sampling is showing that practitioners are consistently considering the necessity of seeking consent from families for information sharing or recording where this is not being sought in order to safeguard children.
- Timeliness has improved in July 2015 following a dip in performance in June 2015, all contacts are now allocated to an individual Practitioner who will take oversight of their journey from front door to decision. A daily monitor and weekly dashboard are being used effectively by the MASH leadership team both to anticipate potential bottlenecks in the system but also to celebrate where there is sustained good performance such as completing research in a timely way to enable prompt and efficient decision making.
- Suffolk Police are about to implement a new system of managing Police contacts following a pilot to CYPS. They will triage contacts looking to see if they meet the threshold to be shared with CYP. This information will still be available within the MASH and an auditing system is being designed to regularly monitor.
- We are working with Suffolk police to develop a Domestic Abuse team within the MASH.

What are we worried about?

- The number of contacts remains high but represents only marginal increases from the same months in the previous years.
- Half of all contacts do enter the MASH for information sharing but could have been diverted by better awareness from professionals, or using a CAF assessment with a family to address concerns and seek support.
- Prevent multiple contacts. MASH will be tracking diversions to Early Help through the summer. MASH is working with partners to ensure they are stepping up in meeting their role in delivering Early Help.
- The numbers of referrals to Social Care was 20% in June which is the average rate of conversion from contact to referral for 2015 overall. We are working on an accurate reporting of the re-referral rate within the MASH but this has been challenging, we currently manually count re-referrals within the MASH which suggest a rate in line with the National Average (23%). A recent audit by the LSCB of re-referral found that in the majority of cases the threshold applied in the MASH was appropriate and a number of actions have been returned to the LSCB in response to the audit all of which were already in train.
- Currently the numbers of S.47s opened in the MASH continues to rise although there are some issues around reporting and practice around opening S.47s on siblings which needs to be embedded consistently across the MASH and Social Care Fieldwork Teams. We will be approaching this issue jointly with the Fieldwork teams and we are working the CYP QA team to implement new Practice Standards for Strategy Discussions and new Audit Tool.

What are we doing?

- We are working with partners in the lead in to the new Referral form to reinforce quality and purpose of professional contacts. We are working with Customer First on management of professional contacts and increasing their access to systems across CYP such as Profile.
- We are working with the CYP Engagement Hub on a model of seeking feedback on the customer experience for parents, carers and young people who have been in contact with the MASH.
- In August a new secondment of a MASH Co-ordinator within the CYP Intelligence Hub will assist with extending the analysis of MASH data and reporting.
- We are conducting practice sessions for decision makers within the MASH with police and social care teams to produce a consistent application of the threshold for significant harm (S.47 child protection enquiries).

We are working with Customer First and Public Health to better understand our demand in order that we are as efficient as possible in meeting that demand in the most effective and efficient way possible.

Social work caseloads.

- The numbers of children subject to CiN plans has decreased during the last 12 months - in April 2014 there were 2314 children on a CiN plan and by March 2015 there were 2138 children on a CiN plan. This highlights a trend for decline with children subject to CiN plan, this may be indicative of early help addressing issues before they reach the CiN or CP arena.
- At the end of March 2015 there were 732 LAC cases and 440 CP cases. As of the end of July 2015 there were 415 CP cases and 749 LAC cases. CP continues to reduce and currently stands at 409.
- Reasonable caseloads help facilitate the provision of a safe and effective service, allowing workers to give necessary time to tasks (especially relationship building within the SoSWB practice framework) and supervisors the capacity to provide satisfactory case oversight and support for professional development.
- Caseload reductions were highlighted in the last Ofsted inspection of the Suffolk LA's, "arrangements for the protection of children" in June 2013, as an area for improvement. It commented, "Most teams are adequately resourced to undertake their role in helping and protecting children".
- Since June 2014 Service Managers, Practice Managers and Social Workers have been working exceptionally hard to reduce the average worker caseloads, with support from Early Help Team colleagues, achieving significant success in both team and worker allocation reductions.
- A joint letter from the Deputy Director and Lead for Early Help and Specialist Services and Head of Service for Children's Social Care Fieldwork was issued to all managers on 12th August '14, expressing appreciation for the hard work to date and identifying issues to address as priorities, which included; continued caseload reduction, with targets of maximum 25 allocations for an experienced worker and 15 for an NQSW (Social Worker in their first year post qualified), intention of longer term target of 20 allocations for an experienced worker, and need to significantly reduce the allocations for Senior Practitioners so they could promote the supervisory oversight necessary for effective case work and throughput.
- Whilst Suffolk has been successful in recruiting and developing Newly Qualified Social Workers there is ongoing difficulty in retaining Social Workers to reach a point of "sufficient" professional maturity in the workforce - this is typical of the national picture (ref ADCSS Safeguarding pressures report '14). We have entirely revamped our Recruitment and Retention strategy for Social Workers. CYPS have recruited 32 NQSW some of whom have commenced employment and 20 who will start in September 2015.

What's working well?

- Increasing management oversight of demand and caseloads
- Monthly management reporting of activity in local areas
- Better intelligence from the MASH enabling targeting of agencies who refer regularly
- There is targeted and focused action taking place by the Head of Service for social work teams and the Deputy Director to reduce caseloads. The LSCB have also been made aware of this.

- There has been a significant drop in CP figures.
- We have developed and implemented a completely new strategy for the recruitment and retention of staff. There is targeted and focused action taking place by the head of service for social work teams and the deputy director in relation to this and pressures are escalated to the Director for Children's Services and the Lead Member. Suffolk have developed a microsite <https://www.socialworksuffolk.com> to attract external job applicants. We are working with the LSCB around thresholds for partner agencies, the introduction of MASH to manage demand and the use of the professional helpline, continued embedding of the early help offer and the MEIC one worker approach.
- Staff report SoSWB is having a positive impact on families and workers.
- We have a Regional agreement regarding the pay rates and practice around Agency workers to help stop the cycle of inflation on agency pay rates and workers frequently moving from one LA to another.

What are we worried about?

- After a period of reduction there has been a recent rise in some individual caseloads. This is due mainly to vacancies and is being closely monitored by senior managers.

What we are doing

- As mentioned above we have just launched a redeveloped recruitment and retention strategy for Social Work Staff. We are using agency staff to fill vacancies whilst recruitment takes place.
- We will be over-recruiting, on a temporary basis, (above establishments) by 10-15 Social workers, to reduce reliance upon locums to support the building of stability and experience within the permanent workforce.
- The Early Help offer is to manage demand so that families' needs are met at the earliest possible point.
- We have too many IT systems due to our separate histories. We are working to improve Care First, to give HVs access to Profile and implement Asset Plus. We also want to make sure that everyone has a laptop if needed. We are discussing with IT about smartphones and these are going to be piloted in Autumn to make sure they do what staff need them to do.
- Professionals are given autonomy as far as is possible and are encouraged to be creative and imaginative with the families with whom they work – whilst policy and procedure are necessary these should facilitate good practice and not restrict it.
- SoSWB friendly procedures and paperwork.

Suffolk Youth Offending Service (SYOS)

Suffolk Youth Offending Service (SYOS) is a statutory multi-agency partnership hosted by Suffolk County Council (SCC) and based within Suffolk Children and Young Peoples Services (SCYPs). Its aim is to prevent children and young people from offending and to protect the public from harm from them; at the same time, SYOS helps to protect the safety and wellbeing of the children and young people it supervises. Suffolk Youth Offending Service works with children or young people in Suffolk or normally resident in Suffolk, who

are in, or on the edge of, the Youth Justice System. It also works with the families or carers of these children or young people. SYOS also ensures victims of youth crime have an opportunity to benefit from restorative justice. The restorative justice work it does with victims of youth crime is a very important part of the Service.

As well as supervising young people sentenced by the Courts; the Service offers a comprehensive, early intervention service specifically targeted at children and young people who are at risk of offending or anti-social behaviour. SYOS delivers a “triage” model and is running a pilot enhanced triage scheme in the North of the county. In terms of specialist provision, the Suffolk Sexually Appropriate Behaviour Service (SSABs), which works with young people who display harmful sexual behaviour, is hosted by SYOS. The Service also has access to co-located mental health and substance misuse workers as well as educational psychologists.

The statutory aim of the Youth Justice System is to prevent offending by children and young people working to three outcome measures prioritised nationally by the Ministry of Justice

- Reduce the number of children and young people entering the criminal justice system (First Time Entrants) The number of first time entrants in Suffolk, (calculated by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) as the rate per 100,000 of the 10-17 population in Suffolk), has seen a steady reduction since April 2011. In the period Oct 11 – Sep 12 it was 652. In Jan 14 – Dec 14 this figure had reduced to 293; there has been acceleration in the rate of reduction since April 2013. This can, in part, be linked to the Suffolk Triage scheme, (Challenge for Change) which was piloted in Ipswich in April 2012 before being rolled out countywide in October 2013. The Triage Scheme is an alternative disposal available to the Police and aimed at keeping more young people out of the criminal justice system. Suffolk outperforms all comparator groups on this measure.
- Reduce re-offending by children and young people. In real terms, the number of young people in Suffolk both offending and re-offending continues to decrease. The Apr 12 – Mar 13 statutory cohort had 706 young people in it of which 240 reoffended, however in the latest data set for Jul 12 – Jun 13 the statutory cohort size had decreased to 670, of which 233 reoffended.
- Reducing the number of children and young people going into custody. The custody rate in Suffolk (measured as rate per 1000 of the 10-17 population) has been maintained at a very low level since October 2012. The latest data set for Apr 14 – Mar 15 of 0.31 compares very well to the national rate of 0.42

What's working well?

- The service continues to deliver performance higher than the national average on all of the national indicators
- The rate of first time entrants to the criminal justice system in Suffolk is lower than national, regional and family groups.
- SoSWB has been further embedded in service delivery and additional staff have been trained
- Restorative justice practice has been quality assessed and the service expects to be the first in the region to receive the Restorative Justice Council Quality Mark

- In a survey of young people's views of the service 97% felt they had got the help they needed to make better decisions and 100% felt they had got the help they needed to stop offending.

What are we worried about?

- The two measures for re-offending show increases in the percentage of young people on the statutory cohort re-offending.
- The Youth Justice Board has launched a consultation on the effects of in year cuts to the Effective Practice Grant.
- The service is implementing a new assessment framework ASSETplus that requires considerable training and changes significantly the way assessments are done. This may have a negative effect on performance against national indicators and case recording as the changes bed in.
- Considerable change in all partner organisations at the same time has a disruptive effect on the service.

What are we doing?

Service priorities for 2015/16 include:

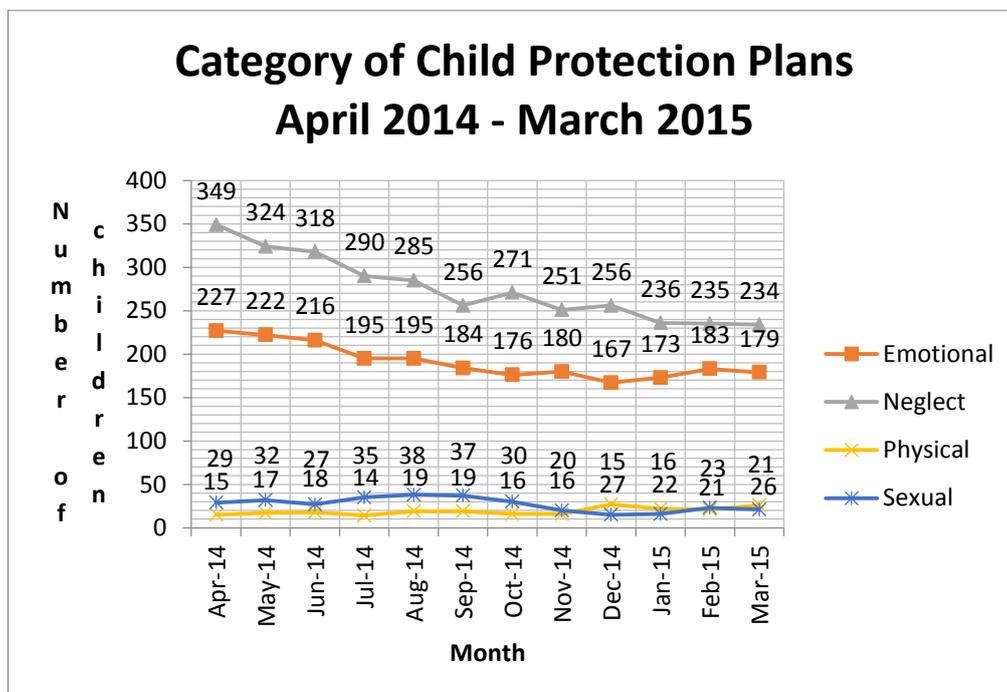
- Work to develop the management board to ensure Youth Justice Priorities are included in the strategic planning of partners
- Ensuring a focus on reducing reoffending by developing and implementing an action plan based on analysis of all available data.
- Ensuring a focus on reducing use of custody underpins the operational and strategic work of the YOS
- Ensuring a focus on reducing first time entrants and considering the findings of the enhanced triage evaluation to develop and improve practice.
- Ensuring that victims of youth crime feel valued, are empowered by the services provided and that fear of crime is reduced within the local community
- Make a contribution to partnership working on emerging issues such as domestic abuse.
- Completing the restructure of the service linked to the MEIC programme

Child Protection Conferences

A child protection conference must be held when concerns of significant harm are substantiated and the child is judged to be suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm. The table below shows the CP figures for Suffolk from 2011 to March 2015. There has been a significant decrease in CP numbers in the last 12 months. This can be related to better management and systems that ensure effective management oversight and identified drift is resolved. The use of stop and review involving senior management when a case is stuck and it may also be the impact of SoSWB and more effective early help offers as this also reflects the reduction in CIN cases.

Child Protection		
Month	2014	2015
January	596	447
February	614	462
March	607	440
April	620	433
May	595	408
June	579	402
July	534	415
August	537	
September	496	
October	493	
November	467	
December	465	

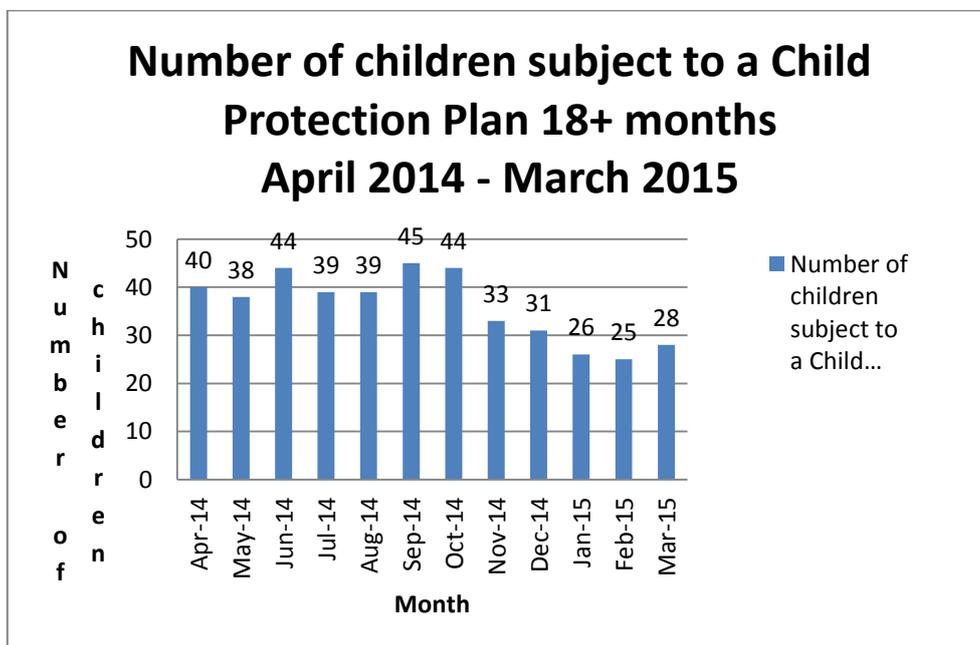
Categories of harm



The graph above depicts the categories of abuse that children have been registered under. Neglect is usually the category that contains the most children as this captures children who live with parents who have a variety of challenges i.e. drug/alcohol misuse, mental health

issues. Emotional harm often captures children who live with parents where domestic violence is a feature. Sexual abuse and physical abuse categories remain comparatively low but stable.

Children subject to child protection planning for two years or more



The percentage of children subject to a child protection plan for 2 years or more has significantly fallen, the number has halved. The percentage of children for 2013/14 in Suffolk was 5.6%; our statistical neighbours were 3.2% with the national average being 4.5%. Our percentage for year end March 2015 was 2.2% which evidences the reduction of children subject to a plan for 2 years or more in Suffolk. This is due to increased monitoring activity which ensures effective management oversight both in the social work teams and the safeguarding service. It is too early to understand the impact of SoSWB on child protection figures but this is an area being looked at within the evaluation.

Child Participation in Child Protection Conferences and Advocacy Attendance

The Safeguarding service monitors the attendance of young people age 12 and over who attend their CP meetings. Whilst we are achieving attendance for some 12+ young people to both initial and review conferences, it is evident that a significant number of young people do not attend. Of the 93 young people eligible to attend their initial conference only 42 came which is 45%. 193 young people were eligible to attend their review conference with attendance from 61 which is 31%.

An independent advocacy service receives the decisions and plans for all young people aged 12+ and will make contact with the family to offer their service and begin the advocacy. If there is no take up by the family and child then the service steps back.

What are we doing?

The system is constantly under review to ensure maximum participation of children.

- The advocacy service has been asked to give feedback on a monthly basis, as to why young people chose not to engage in the child protection process or why they have not used an advocate to attend on their behalf.
- All child protection conference invites are sent automatically to children aged 12 and over.
- Any child protection plan following the initial conference will cover how to engage the young person in the meeting.

Feedback from Children and Families

As well as the challenge in engaging young people in the conference process, it has also proven difficult to gain feedback from them.

Whilst there is low return from the young people who attend their conference the feedback that is provided is in general positive. Most of the young people (76%) report they understand the reasons why the conference is being held and 85% of them said they had an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. Two of the young people however reported that they did not have an opportunity to talk with the chairperson before the conference. Six of the young people said they had not spoken with their social worker since the previous conference. The feedback forms are reviewed between safeguarding managers and conference chairs during supervision sessions. The chair will follow up any points that need addressing with the social work team or with the young person directly.

Parents also provide feedback. Most respondents answer positively that they know what they have to do for their child to be removed from a child protection plan (87%) and what needs to change for their family (94%). They also said they had been given an opportunity to express their views within the meeting (89%).

What are we doing?

The feedback forms are analysed quarterly so that any apparent trends or themes can be acted upon promptly.

- Any identified actions from the quarterly report are actioned in the Safeguarding service or field work teams.
- If a parent or child raises a concern that they are not clear of the reasons for conference or what the plan means, either the chair or social worker will make contact with the family to ensure clarity.

Multi-agency attendance at conference

This is being monitored by the LSCB who receive quarterly reports on compliance of all agencies in attending child protection conferences and providing reports to families.

Raising of Concerns

Following the serious case review for Family A, the raising of concerns system after any meeting has been revised. A robust system for resolving these with effective management oversight is in place

LAC Reviews

Suffolk LAC Population April 2014 – March 2015

Looked After Children		
Month	2014	2015
January	731	709
February	726	724
March	710	733
April	713	745
May	727	758
June	733	757
July	728	749
August	722	
September	720	
October	733	
November	721	
December	703	

During 2014 / 2015 the numbers of Looked After Children has ranged from 710 at the end of March 2014 to 732 at the end of March 2015. They are currently standing at 749 at the end of July. There has been considerable activity within the LAC population, but from January to March the number of new accommodated children has overtaken those ceasing to be accommodated. Over the year 25 more children became looked after than ceased to be looked after.

Of the 323 children who became looked after between April 2014 – March 2015 132 or 41% had previously been subject to a child protection plan. Work will be undertaken to see whether there is any correlation between the fall in the numbers of children subject to Child Protection Plans to the rise in the LAC population. This will be commissioned from the QA Team who are looking at the intelligence behind the figures. Causal factors identified through audit for the rise of children becoming looked after are large sibling groups and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). The number of UASC has risen from 9 coming into the system in 2014 to 18 in 2015. A report has been produced from this audit and actions are being taken.

Nationally between March 2011 and March 2014 the number of looked after children rose by 5%. This Suffolk figure was a reduction of nearly 10%. At the end of March 2014, the latest date when the statistical data is available Suffolk's number of children looked after per 10,000 was below the average for our statistical neighbours.

Permanency Outcomes

Permanence means giving a child a sense of security, continuity, stability and belonging. It means that they know where they are going to be living for the rest of their childhood.

During the year 2014/15, 25% of children who left care have achieved permanency through adoption where 24% returned home to live with parents or relatives and 14% became the subject of a Special Guardianship Order (SGO). 37% left through any other reason i.e. age 18 or independent living, sentenced to custody, transferred to care of Adult Services.

Suffolk is working hard to establish permanence for Looked After Children in a timely way and operationally there has been concentration to improve performance in this area.

The IRO service monitor that there is a permanency plan by the second review. In some instances parallel planning is taking place, and they will monitor that this is followed through in a timely way. Out of the 234 2nd reviews held 83 children were recognised as not having effective permanency plans. This is of concern and robust procedures and management oversight have been strengthened to improve this performance data.

What are we doing?

A tracking system has been put in place to ensure there is effective permanency planning in place by a child's second review and where not, there is a robust system for ensuring this as soon as possible. The Permanence Tracker was introduced in August 2014. The implementation plan was to populate priority data.

To date we have succeeded in populating

- all children in Public Law Outline since Jan 2014 (satisfying both criteria) 544 cohort
- all children aged 0-14 years
- all children in foster care (current data - no retrospective data) 566

Permanent Tracker cohort:

- 148 with 2nd LAC review, 110 of these have Permanency Plans

Of the remaining 38, 5 no longer LAC – permanence already achieved and legal Status of the remaining 24 are Section 20 which means a child is looked after with the consent of those with parental responsibility and 9 are subject to Interim Care Order by the court which means we share parental responsibility with the birth parents.

The Permanence Tracker Monitoring Process (Head of Corporate Parenting) commenced Jan 2015.

- 57 children monitored

Outcome	Number
Adoption Order Granted	7
Revocation of Care Order: placed at home	1
Permanence Plan actively progressing and being monitored	29
No longer Looked after	5
Permanent Fostering Panel Agreed	13
Adoption Family finding underway	1
P Fostering family finding underway	1

Permanence Panel figures reflect the impact of the monitoring process and permanence social worker in relation to formal permanent fostering.

2014/15	April 2015 to Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 plans for permanent fostering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 matches for permanent fostering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 matches

Purpose of the IRO / Safeguarding service and legal context

The Independent Review Officers' (IRO) service is set within the framework of the updated IRO Handbook, linked to revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance which were introduced in April 2011. The responsibility of the IRO has changed from the management of the Review process to a wider overview of the case including regular monitoring and follow-up between Reviews. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of care planning for children Looked After and for challenging drift and delay.

Most of the IROs in Suffolk hold the dual role of Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and Chair of Child Protection Conference, though a small number (4) are IROs only. According to the IRO Handbook the recommended caseloads for IROs are between 50 and 70 cases. When the last annual report was written in March 2014 they were well above recommended maximum levels. During this year caseloads have reduced slightly because there has been a decrease in the numbers of children subject to Child Protection Plans. During this last quarter numbers of children who are being looked after has risen so caseloads stand at 74. The service has been strengthened by two temporary IRO posts for two years however these have yet to be recruited to. It is envisaged that these posts will create capacity within the management of the IROs ensuring further scrutiny.

Children and young people's preparation and involvement in reviews

The IROs work very hard to ensure that children and young people are prepared for their reviews and encourage them to attend wherever possible. Also since the regulations changed to allow the review to be held as a series of meetings this is often used to ensure that the child / young person is part of their review. It should also be noted that participation and attendance are not always the same thing. The annual average for attendance this year is 60.54% however the monthly participation figure for the year ranges from 92% - 100%. The IRO is expected to ensure that the child / young person's views are gained for the review whether they attend in person or not. The returns required by the DoE only count children's attendance over the age of 7, even though in practice many under 7s attend with their carers. The 'All about me' booklet is sent out to all over 7s.

What's working well?

- In the last year the service carried out 2069 Looked After children's reviews. Of these 99.6% took place within the statutory timescale which is a rise of 1.6% from last year. It is a great achievement that such a high proportion of reviews have been held within timescale considering the IROs workloads and the size of the county.
- IROs complete some reviews as a series of meetings to ensure the relevant people are involved but ensuring the meetings remain child focused and friendly
- The IROs monitor that there is a permanency plan by the second review.

- The IROs are also vigilant in checking whether Looked After Children have been missing from care, and in these cases will also consider the risk of child sexual exploitation and risky behaviour.
- Effective raising of concern where issues are not being addressed in a timely manner and with senior management oversight.

Feedback from Children and Families

- Children and young people who have returned their evaluation forms 76% said that their IRO made sure that they understood what was happening, and 79% said they understood their care plan and what was going to happen.
- 92% of the parents who completed their evaluations said they understood the plan and 98% thought the IRO had made sure they understood the meeting.

What are we doing?

- Continue to monitor provision of Initial Health checks. 2014-2015 increase of 5% from previous year.
- Support regarding the commissioning of mental health provision for looked after children, and tier 4 provision.
- Support the placement sufficiency strategy of placements for looked after children.
- Contribute to the Suffolk permanence Strategy and ensuring timescales are met.
- Continued modelling and support of the SoSWB with partner agencies to embed SoSWB in LAC.
- Ensure saving plans for looked after children are in place.
- Further work with C2C to ensure the promise is embedded in the LAC review and becomes the main focus and we continue to improve in customer feedback to improve services and meetings so they become more focused on the young person and what they want.
- Children's attendance at LAC reviews needs to increase to 65% by March 2016. We will not achieve 100% in this area as children have a choice to physically attend this meeting or participate by other means. This can be through meeting the IRO separately, giving their views to a trusted adult, use of an advocate etc. It is also the IRO role to contact children who do not physically attend their reviews to understand why and what we could do differently.

Children in Care Council (C2C)

CYP have worked with C2C on a number of areas. This includes a revision of the LAC promise involving consultation with social work teams and partner agencies in relation to the barriers that get in the way of delivering the Promise. As a direct result of this piece of work, there has been a working group set up including C2C to change the LAC review process to focus it on the Promise, ensuring that the foundations are in place for this to be achieved. C2C have also worked on evaluation and feedback from LAC reviews and CP conferences. They meet regularly with the Lead Member for Children's Services, the Director for Children's Services and the Deputy Director. Alongside this, they also meet with the Heads of Service for the social work teams and the Safeguarding Service. They have also attended IRO meetings prioritising what they would like from their LAC reviews and conferences and hold the IROs to account in delivering this.

What's working well?

- Very positive engagement with the C2C.
- C2C being involved in consultation and design of future services.
- The revision of the promise to looked after children is due to be launched at the LAC achievement awards in October. The Government has asked children's services across the country to make a promise to all young people it looks after – Ours covers things like a safe place to live, remaining in contact with important people and good health and education.

What do we need to do?

- Further Work on CP evaluation, LAC promise, Changes to LAC reviews to focus on promise, engagement groups with IROs – holding them to account.

Relationship with corporate parenting board

The Corporate Parenting Board takes its lead responsibility for being corporate parents to our looked after children and care leavers very seriously. It aims to promote a greater understanding of that responsibility among elected members, officers and partner agencies.

The Board has had a stable membership for the past year and although several elected members have moved on to become cabinet members they will take with them their commitment to being corporate parents to our children in care.

Board Meetings are held every two months and have continued to have a themed focus; health, education, employment and training opportunities, sufficiency of suitable placements and accommodation. Much of the work is referred to in the evaluation of progress against the Corporate Parenting and C2C priorities but other areas complement the picture of what is required to provide a comprehensive and safe service.

Priorities for 2015 – 2016

- Core priorities - education, suitable placements and housing, health, employment and children particularly vulnerable to exploitation; missing children, those at risk of sexual exploitation or radicalisation and those in secure accommodation or custody.
- Councillors' feedback from Adoption & Fostering panels. The opportunity to see first-hand the experiences of fostering and to hear individual case examples of children in care and those being placed for adoption or under a Special Guardianship Order.
- Virtual School Governing Body - developing the work and focus
- Suffolk's Promise and Care Leavers' Charter. Monitoring the impact of its relaunch and implementation.

Signs of Safety and Wellbeing (SoSWB)

Much has been achieved in implementing SoSWB. We have a breadth of understanding across the partnership which is being spread both through the training programme we have provided and significantly through the range of formal and informal briefings between individual workers and through experiencing the shift in the way meetings are now being conducted using SoSWB. Suffolk is being supported in its implementation by Terry Murphy, a former Director-General of Child Protection and Family Services in Western Australia who himself led a system wide implementation of the model. His feedback has been that “Suffolk County Council are doing this faster, deeper and more holistically than anyone else”. Having achieved the first year milestone of providing a baseline understanding of the model, we are now focusing on deepening our understanding of the model and embedding practice consistently across all services. We are therefore placing more emphasis this year on applying the model into practice. Training continues, but reinforced by coaching to ensure that the most critical elements of the approach are consistently in place. These elements being identifying the heart of the issues for families in language they can understand, reaching judgments around risk and creating plans which focus on behavioural change within the family not solely on service delivery plans – are consistently in place. Suffolk’s participation in a DFE Innovations funded project “Transforming children’s services with SoSWB at the Centre” is helping to bring additional financial and intellectual resource to this work. The project is led by Terry Murphy, Dr Andrew Turnell (founder of the SoSWB approach) and Professor Eileen Munro and Suffolk is one of 10 local authorities across England engaged with the programme.

What’s working well?

- Feedback from families, our own staff and partners is very positive on the impact SoSWB has had on families.
- Families are better engaged in the process of assessment and understand the concerns, and in the best examples, own the process themselves, including safety planning. Early involvement of the family’s network very helpful
- Structure to guide the work and to be clear about concerns, facilitated by use of plain language
- New supervision style reinforces SoSWB practice and helps co-production of next steps
- Feel more confident about risk management – supported by managers
- Growing commonality of approach across and between teams – helpful to families
- It has built on existing good practice and celebrates skills of staff
- Proud of Suffolk’s commitment to this approach as shown through the level of investment and sense of recognition of work being done outside the County
- Child is always kept central – tools like 3 Houses and Words and Pictures reinforce and support this

What are the worries?

- The variability of take up in different parts of the service is becoming more apparent, as is inconsistency within teams – examples given included ICPC, LAC and LAC Reviews, adoption of new supervision approach, transfers between teams, ways managers model/ support this way of working.

- Time pressures for reflective sessions; to work with families in this way; to build trust in the new teams ; to replicate some of the good mechanisms that have developed in this past year are sustained
- Opportunities to share success and learning – felt more needed

What we are doing

- Continuing to embed SoSWB within social work practice, conferences and LAC reviews by building on the application of the framework.
- Developing and deepening skills in improving the quality of intervention using the SoSWB framework.
- Encouraging the sharing of good practice and developing ways to do this more easily for staff.

Relationship with Local Safeguarding Children Board

There is a strong working relationship between the LSCB and CYPS. We are key partners in ensuring children are safe in Suffolk. The LSCB is made up of partners and stakeholders from a range of agencies that commit to the work of the LSCB and bring a range of knowledge, experience and expertise under the leadership of an Independent Chair Person.

CYPS are an integral part of the LSCB. The Director of Children's Services, the Deputy Director and the Head of Safeguarding are standing members of the full Safeguarding Board. Gordon Jones - Cabinet Member for Children's Services - also attends the full LSCB as a participating observer to offer challenge to all organisations involved in keeping children safe in Suffolk.

The LSCB has a number of sub-groups which meet to focus on key areas of safeguarding. These consist of LSCB Executive Group, Learning and Improvement Group, Case Review panel, Child Death overview Panel, Planning, Policy and engagement Group, Child Exploitation Strategic Group, and the Health Executive Group. These groups are attended by a number of Early Help and Specialist Services staff.

The Safeguarding and Reviewing Officer Service has been monitoring the Child Protection Conference service and its effectiveness through a set of standards that has been adopted by the LSCB. They report to the LSCB on attendance, effective planning, drift and concerns over multi agency practice. They also attend conferences as observers ensuring a good line of sight in monitoring the effectiveness of the standards.

The LSCB coordinate Section 11 audits which is an organisations self-assessment in how an organisation meets its safeguarding requirements. The County Council completed its audit in February 2015. We were graded at amber with areas to improve mainly in relation to robust commissioning arrangements. There is an action plan and a senior management group working on getting the self-assessment to green.

There have been two serious case reviews that Children and Young People's Services have been involved with in the last year. The first was ensuring the learning from the Family A review has been embedded in to day to day practice within the service and providing evidence of compliance to the LSCB. The second serious case review is that of a death of a 17 year old girl who died at home whilst on home leave from a mental health unit. CYPS have been involved in this serious case review looking at both the learning and

implementation of this. Any learning for children's services is identified and monitored by senior managers and the LSCB to ensure evidence of compliance.

Exploited Childrens Group

The LSCB co-ordinate a strategic group to address issues of children who go missing at risk or are at risk of child sexual exploitation and from gang involvement thus ensuring connectivity of the risks.

The Department for Education describes a young runaway as 'a child or young person up to the age of 18 who has run away from their home or care placement, or feels they have been forced to leave, or whose whereabouts is unknown'.

In November 2013 Suffolk Police introduced the new definition of 'missing' and 'absent' in line with ACPO guidance:

Missing: Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established, and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be a subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or others.

Absent: A child (person) not at a place they are expected or required to be, when the behaviour is out of character and there is no apparent risk.

Data collated by Suffolk Constabulary and Suffolk County Council Children Young People's Services indicates that the number of children reported missing has continued to decrease across the last 3 years, with a significant decrease in 2014-15 of 149 from the previous year.

In 2014-15 there were 1278 episodes of children classified as missing from home and care (and 236 as absent), alone or with families about whom there were concerns. This involved 588 children – a significant decrease from the 723 children in 2013-14, 852 in 2011-12 and 804 in 2012-13. Another 71 children were classed as absent only.

Since November 2013 following the introduction of the new police definitions there was an initial sharp decline in number of children classified as 'missing' which then began to return to a level similar to previous year. Police colleagues are investigating the reasons for this change and whether classifications are being made according to definitions. Suffolk's children's homes operate a rigorous approach to children going missing.

Since April 2015, a new 'Tasking and coordinating meeting' has replaced the 'Top 10' lists sent out to teams of missing children. The Group reviews those children who went missing and are felt to be the highest risk (selected from those children who went missing more than once in the month and for longer than 24 hours), ensuring management oversight is focused on those children where there are safeguarding issues.

What's working well?

- Tasking and coordination meeting is going well and focussing on risk and effective senior management oversight.
- There have been some successes in Suffolk children's homes supporting some young people to achieve stable routines and caring relationships thereby reducing missing episodes. However, there have been children who have been repeatedly going missing causing concern for Police, carers and social workers. These incidents have resulted in the Head of Children's Accommodation Services and Police currently working on a joint approach.

- MASH undertaking strategy threshold discussions where children not currently open to social care teams have been missing more than once in 30 days or for longer than 24 hours.
- 'Complex' strategy discussions chaired by safeguarding managers are being held, where groups of children are felt to be at risk. The new police led Tasking & Co-ordination Group will be providing an overview of high risk cases to support this.

What we are doing?

- A working group to address the substance misuse issues for Looked After Children has been convened with key stakeholders, facilitated by the Health Improvement Commissioner- Children & Young Peoples Services/ Public Health
- The arrangements for the provision of return interviews is currently under review, led by the Head of The Engagement Hub. This includes the commissioning of independent return interviews, information for young people and a review of systems to promote good practice within early help and social care. This will include recording systems. The review will be completed by August 2015.
- A new training programme on responding to children who go missing from home and care started in July 2015, for all CYPS staff.
- Particularly for older children, information about friendship groups / associates may help identify risk, aid group work and potentially help identify any patterns that may suggest organised exploitation could be taking place.
- Further development of arrangements within CYPS to ensure this such analysis takes place is required. An ICT system that highlights links between friends and associates would assist workers in recognising the links between various children at risk and act more effectively.
- Interventions by early help teams to be identified, including offer of return interviews, and greater management oversight to be applied by Early Help managers.

Child Sexual Exploitation

The LSCB completed a self-assessment in December 2014 in relation to all agencies effectiveness in relation to child sexual exploitation (CSE). There have been two multi-agency audits completed in relation to recognition of child sexual exploitation. The results of these audits show that there is a good awareness of CSE in front line practitioners in CYPS. The Make a Change (MAC) team has been moved in to CYPS and that team is dedicated to working with practitioners where it has been recognised that a child is at risk of CSE.

We have recently participated in a peer review with Essex County Council to look at our response to CSE. Their findings are similar to that of the LSCB audit and actions that we need to take are incorporated within this report.

What's working well?

- Good awareness of CSE in practitioners
- Good working relationships with the police
- MASH use of CSE tool for identification where appropriate
- The multi-agency tasking and co-ordinating group considers CSE in relation to missing children.

- Senior Management oversight in CYPS and the Police
- Links between missing / CSE and gang related issues are being made.

What we are doing

- Widening safeguarding enquiries to become more holistic and not just incident focussed.
- Making better use of data and joining this up more effectively
- Building relationships with children where concerns are evidenced but an immediate disclosure is not forthcoming
- Greater awareness of the range of options for the police/legal options, including disruption activities.
- Links between CSE and schools attendance/exclusion being raised with all practitioners

Domestic Abuse

Domestic violence – abuse that takes place between family members or intimate partners regardless of gender or sexuality. It can encompass psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse and so called ‘honour’ based violence. This is underpinned by a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviours aimed to subordinate, exploit and deprive intimate partners and family members of independence and resistance by regulating their daily lives.

The procedure for Domestic Abuse states a referral must be made direct to CYPS if it seems reasonable to suspect that:

- A child sees, hears, experiences or is otherwise aware of domestic abuse, i.e. that domestic abuse is part of their experience of family life. This applies regardless of whether they actually witness any particular event or are physically harmed, and
- The non-abusing parent will not be able – for whatever reason – to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their child without significant professional assistance and support.

Domestic Abuse dominates the main risk factors associated with adult behavior in referrals to CYPS. There is a County Domestic Abuse Partnership made up of lead statutory and voluntary agencies that considers statistics and trends. These continue to indicate increases in reported incidents to Suffolk Constabulary of domestic abuse year on year. (12.6% increase 2014/15) Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership has committed to work in collaboration at operational and strategic level with CYP and LCSB in recognition of the impact domestic abuse has on children. There are also local forums that respond to local needs and they feed into the County Partnership. CYP have representation on all forums.

There is an annual programme of domestic abuse training supported by CYP Workforce Development (safeguarding) which includes courses focused on the impact of domestic abuse on children and the impact on young people of teenage relationship abuse. All courses underpin safeguarding.

A system has recently been agreed enabling these reports to be shared with schools and health ensuring the psychological impact on young people can be addressed.

Honour Based Violence / Forced Marriage / Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is also known as female genital cutting, female circumcision or initiation. FGM is a form of violence against women and girls and as such, it is against UK law to undertake or arrange FGM either within the UK or abroad.

There have been two cases between April 2014 and March 2015 involving children with female genital mutilation in Suffolk

Barnardos are setting up an FGM pilot centre within Suffolk and have been recruiting. This centre will be linked in with Social Work teams and discussions are happening between Suffolk County Council, Voluntary sector, and Police. The lead implementation officer for Barnardos is a member of the stakeholder group.

Public Health have also set up a multi-agency group in consultation with the LSCB to enable a better understanding and clarity about the role of different organisations and department's involvement with FGM.

Forced Marriage is a marriage conducted without the full and valid consent of both parties and where duress is a factor – may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

There have been 5 cases between April 2014 and March 2015 involving children where forced marriage is the presenting issue.

'Honour based violence' is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'.

There have been four cases between April 2014 and March 2015 involving children in relation to HBV within Suffolk this year.

Vulnerable to Radicalisation

PREVENT is a part of the government's counter-terrorism strategy that **aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism**. It is considered to be "the only long term solution" to the threat from terrorism. PREVENT is about **supporting and protecting** those people that might be susceptible to radicalisation, ensuring that individuals are diverted away before any crime is committed.

As a local authority, we have a duty to have "**due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism**". We work with partners in Suffolk to provide support to individuals who have been identified as being at risk through a multi-agency panel called Channel.

Channel Panel

Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by:

- a. identifying individuals at risk;
- b. assessing the nature and extent of that risk; and
- c. developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

A Channel meeting is held every 6 weeks which is chaired by the Head of Safeguarding for CYP for the purpose of discussing new referrals and managing existing cases both children and adults. Formal meetings have been taking place since July 2014. To date, 26 cases have been heard at panel. There is a core of attendees, including housing, adult and children safeguarding, health, education, YOS and police and cases are brought before the panel to assess the options available to support each individual having assessed their suitability for support under Channel. The panel is recognised in the eastern region as being well established and used as a good practice model.

Local Authority Designated Officer

The Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) are involved in the management and oversight of individual cases where there are allegations against someone in a position of trust ranging from suitability to abuse. They provide:

- Advice and guidance to all of the above agencies and services,
- Liaison with the police and other agencies, and
- Monitoring of the progress of the case to ensure that all matters are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process. These posts have until recently been held by the three County Safeguarding Managers. We have just appointed to one new LADO post and are in the process of recruiting to another.

In 2014/15 the total number of LADO referrals was 523. 27 of these have had previous referrals.

252 referrals were resolved by the LADO after consultation and consideration and without the need for a meeting leaving 271 referrals needing one or more strategy meetings.

This data confirms an increase of 21% in referrals.

Employment Outcome

	Number of cases
Continued to work	173
Dismissal	24
Resign	19
De-registered/Cessation of Use	14
On-going	41

These figures do not tell the detailed story behind individuals who remain in work with improvement plans or are subject to disciplinary or capability proceedings. However they do show that 57 individuals, slightly less than 20% of all adults discussed who were the subject of concerns/allegations that resulted in a meeting, are now no longer working in the setting where the concern arose. This is a significant number and highlights the benefit of the LADO process in managing out individuals who pose significant safeguarding risks.

This is a service that continues to be of benefit in safeguarding children by advising and guiding employers on how best to manage allegations and concerns about their staff.

At a time of increasing concerns about the potential for adults to exploit positions of trust, the data shows increasing demand on LADOs to both support and manage processes that reduce this likelihood of harm being caused. Two full time LADO posts have been agreed in recognition of this and have been appointed.

E-Safety

We currently have an E Safety Strategy which was developed taking into account Suffolk's vision for keeping our Children, young people and vulnerable adults safe whilst using modern technology. The strategy will continue to be developed in response to changes in national policy and expectations, and as a result of ongoing consultation, monitoring and evaluation. It is expected an updated version will be available in the Autumn.

This is an increasing challenge as the digital world changes so quickly. Currently the lead member chairs the multi-agency strategic group for E Safety. CYPS have strong representation on this group.

This group monitors both local and national issues in relation to E Safety and ensures good awareness through regularly updated training building on creating E Safer Communities

For the last four years CYPS have commissioned an annual e-Safer Suffolk Cyber survey

In the 2014 survey a total of 2,988 young people responded, of whom 54% were boys and 46% were girls. Key results and findings from the 2014 cyber survey have been considered in the strategic group and an action plan has been devised to address some of the key issues.

The strategic group are also responsible for the Annual E Safety conference. The conference for 2015-2016 is set for 2nd February. Key note speakers have been booked and the focus will be on playing your part for a better internet.

Legislative changes

The Practice Development and Quality Assurance Team horizon scan for any legislative changes and changes to procedures are actioned following sign off by the CYPS Quality, Engagement and Performance Board. These are disseminated to practitioners by the Practice Development and QA Team.

Conclusion

We have achieved a significant number of things this year.

We know through a comprehensive audit process within CYPS that Safeguarding is at the centre of our work.

We know that SoSWB is positive for our families, staff and partner agencies though feedback received, Suffolk is embedding SoSWB faster, deeper and more holistically than anyone else.

The MASH is working well with partners ensuring consistent thresholds for Safeguarding.

We have revised and implemented a completely new strategy for the recruitment and retention of staff.

We know through our commitment and attendance at the LSCB that there is a clear focus on safeguarding being everyone's responsibility. The message for partner agencies is being confident in their ability to safely manage risk and only where appropriate refer. The introduction of the MASH and the professional helpline it designed to address this.

MEIC the re-structuring of services to ensure we are more in line with what families want.

Post MEIC events have shown we have committed, skilled and passionate people working for Suffolk – this is an invaluable asset for the children, young people and families of Suffolk

We also have key challenges in the forthcoming year.

- Next stages of continued embedding SoSWB and ensuring good practice, particularly in identifying the heart of the issues for families and in reaching judgments around risk and the quality and the nature of plans.
- Staff recruitment and retention, continuing to build on the strategy ensuring we are in line with our neighbouring authorities so we maintain an experienced and established staff group.
- Reducing caseloads to within more reasonable levels (next target of max 20 children per post AYSE social worker), facilitating more in-depth and effective work with children and families – to be supported via recruiting above establishment
- Realising fully the potential of the MASH on managing demand and gathering data and producing intelligence and better use of data and intelligence in understanding demand on services and future planning.
- Better IT infrastructure and building on mobile working
- MEIC has 2 years to run and there are still significant savings to be made.
- Reduction in CYP budget having an impact on front line staffing, as well the effect of budget reduction across all agencies involved in Safeguarding posing a potential risk in managing the capacity within this area of need. Cabinet will need to reassure themselves of the impact of delivering safe and effective services to the children and families of Suffolk.
- Impending Ofsted inspection.

