

## Noting Report

<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet
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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Annual Safeguarding Report – Children’s Services</b>
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children’s Services

**Contact name:** Stuart Ashley

**Tel:** 01962 846370

**Email:** stuart.ashley@hants.gov.uk

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an annual update to cabinet on safeguarding children activity within Isle of Wight Children’s Services during 2016/17. In 2014, Ofsted carried out an inspection of Isle of Wight Children’s Services safeguarding practice and associated arrangements for children in care and adoption services under their new, explicitly tougher, Single Inspection Framework. The outcome of that inspection was that the local authority’s performance was assessed as being ‘requires improvement to get to good’. This report provides an update on national developments, local performance and activity data and ongoing challenges during 2016/2017.
- 1.2 The outcomes of the pilot thematic Ofsted inspection in August 2017 identified significant improvements within the service. The areas of strength included appropriate threshold application with regards to children in need of child protection planning. The inspection identified that support and intervention was appropriately increased or reduced in response to children’s changing needs. Inspectors also identified evidence of good decisions being made during child protection conferences, strong management oversight and senior leaders who promoted a culture of continuous improvement, supported by well-motivated staff. Child protection investigations were highlighted as being comprehensive and overseen ‘meticulously’ by managers.

## 2. National Developments.

- 2.1 **Child sexual exploitation:** Following consultation, the government published in February 2017 a new definition of child sexual exploitation and non-statutory practice guidance for those working with children and families. The new definition is as follows:  
Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive

a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

- 2.2 New guidance has been published which seeks to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation, ensure all areas are working to a similar understanding, and to develop best practice in how to deliver effective services for children who have been exploited and in combatting the crime.
- 2.3 Local priorities in response to the risks that children across in the Isle of Wight face in relation to child sexual exploitation are identified in the Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Board's (IOWSCB) child sexual exploitation strategy and action plan. In summary these are:
- 2.4 **Understand and identify** - strengthen the identification and assessment of children at risk.
- 2.5 **Prevention** - raise awareness of missing, exploited and trafficked issues across agencies, children and their families and the wider Hampshire community.
- 2.6 **Intervene and support** - improve safeguarding of vulnerable children deemed to be at risk of exploitation and trafficking. Provide direct therapeutic support and access to specialist services.
- 2.7 **Disrupt and bring to justice** - lead in disrupting perpetrator behaviour and bringing those offenders to justice by building an accurate and clear picture of local trends and networks.
- 2.8 Progress in implementing the child sexual exploitation strategy and action plan is overseen by IOWSCB's missing exploited and trafficked subgroup chaired by Hampshire Constabulary. Children's Social Care are a full and active member. The IOWSCB has undertaken an assessment of partners' responses to child sexual exploitation as required by statutory guidance set out in Working Together 2015 (Department for Education statutory guidance). The self assessment presents a good position with many strengths and positive actions, taken in individual agencies. These ranged from improved awareness and understanding, through to reviewing commissioning arrangements to improve outcomes for vulnerable children. A good example of this work is reflected in the improved training of taxi drivers to ensure they are aware of the issues of child sexual exploitation. There is a 100% compliance rate for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) e-learning for taxi drivers.

### 3. Missing children

- 3.1 Two all party parliamentary groups (APPGs) undertook an inquiry into the safeguarding of the thousands of children nationally who run away from home or go missing from care every year during 2015/2016. The APPGs collected evidence from ministers, national agencies such as the Child Exploitation and Online Protection

Agency (CEOP) and Ofsted, the voluntary sector, police forces and local authorities. The final report from this inquiry was published in May 2016 and put forward recommendations in relation to improving data collection and information sharing between the police and local authorities.

- 3.2 In response to this the Department for Education (DfE) and the National Crime Agency (UK Missing Persons Bureau) with the support of the NSPCC and the Home Office, looked at the data held by the DfE and local authorities on children who have gone missing from care. It was noted through this that there were considerable differences in the numbers returned to the DfE by local authorities and those returned to the UK Missing Persons Bureau by police forces. The robustness of the local response to missing children is quality assured through IOWSCB's missing exploited and trafficked subgroup.
- 3.3 As of February 2017, there were 73 looked after children living on the Isle of Wight placed by other local authorities. This does have an impact as other local authorities placing their looked after children on the island do not always notify Isle of Wight Children's Services as required by regulation. Children's Services and the Police are undertaking further work together on these themes to continue to improve the accuracy of the data recorded and reported and outcomes for children.

#### **4. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)**

- 4.1 There are three groups of unaccompanied asylum seeking children: those who enter the UK illegally, those who enter according to the DUBS<sup>1</sup> amendment and Syrian refugees who travel legally to the UK. These children become looked after children and are the responsibility of the Local Authority they are placed in but the implications are wide reaching and complex. Health services and education are impacted as are Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as many of the children are traumatised. There are also issues around the availability and cost of translation services alongside a significant national shortage and lack of suitable placements for looked after children.
- 4.2 As at 31 March 2017, the total number of UASC (under 18 years) looked after by the Isle of Wight is six. Since July 2016, the Isle of Wight has been accepting children through the South East National Dispersal programme. The transfers through this scheme and from the closure of the Calais camp account for the large increase in UASC from July 2016 onwards. All of the children are placed in independent fostering agency (IFA) placements off island, in order that we can better meet their cultural and individual needs. The age range is from 11 years old and the majority are males. They will need to be looked after by the local authority until they reach 18 years and will then have care leaver status with continuing support from the local authority until they are 21 years of age. Whilst the Home Office provide set funding for UASC, a recent Association of Directors of Children's Services report<sup>2</sup> evidenced that the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/unaccompanied-asylum-seeking-children-to-be-resettled-from-europe>

<sup>2</sup> [http://adcs.org.uk/assets/documentation/ADCS\\_UASC\\_Report\\_Final\\_FOR\\_PUBLICATION.pdf](http://adcs.org.uk/assets/documentation/ADCS_UASC_Report_Final_FOR_PUBLICATION.pdf)

funding only covers 50% of the actual costs to the local authority. It should also be noted that approximately 40% of UASC will not be given leave to remain in the UK and as such will have 'no recourse to public funds' requiring the local authority to entirely fund all of their living costs until they reach 21 years of age.

## **5. The Social Work Innovation Fund programme**

- 5.1 This was a national programme funded by the Department for Education, which Hampshire was successful in applying for in 2015. Through the strategic partnership Isle of Wight Children's Services were able to be part of this programme and a number of initiatives were implemented across children's services. The first round of innovation funding encompassed three individual projects on the island and commenced in September 2015. All projects were pilots to test out new and innovative ways of delivering services. The programme has been externally independently evaluated by Oxford – Brookes University and their formal evaluation report was completed in December 2016. The individual projects and the impact they achieved are described below.
- 5.2 Developing a cohort of volunteers: Home Start were funded to build on their programme of volunteers to support families. They recruited 16 volunteers to work with families open to children's social care. This cohort of volunteers worked with families with children aged 0 to 18 years. There has been positive feedback and outcomes reported by the volunteers and the families and there are plans to expand the work of the volunteers further and the funding has continued through investment from the strengthening families programme.
- 5.3 Social Worker Personal Assistants: Nine were recruited for the pilot period. The independent evaluation evidenced social workers spent up to 20% less time on administrative tasks and there was improved communication with both families and external professionals. Social Workers were able to visit families more frequently and staff reported an improvement in their morale. Consequently, these roles have been mainstreamed through a business administration review and from existing resources.
- 5.4 Family Intervention Teams: Throughout the pilot period and where appropriate, adults within families received services from one of three specialist posts (domestic abuse, substance misuse and adult mental health). This improved information sharing between agencies which in turn impacted positively on the quality of assessments and plans. In some cases the level of risk de-escalated along with the need for children's social care intervention given the success of the focused intervention being delivered to support change within a family. The posts have been extended for a further 12 months to 31 March 2018 and the plan is to mainstream the adult substance misuse and adult mental health posts from existing resources.

## **6. The Wood Review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards**

- 6.1 In December 2015, the DfE asked Alan Wood, CBE, to lead a review of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) in England. As part of the review he also looked at serious case reviews and Child Death Overview Panels. The DfE has published the Wood Review along with the government response to the review with explanations of how the proposed new arrangements will be implemented.
- 6.2 A new statutory framework will be introduced, which will set out clear requirements, but give local partners the freedom to decide how they operate to improve outcomes for children. The three key local partners, the local authority, the police and the health service, will be required to make and publish plans showing how they will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the local area. So that the key partners have the flexibility to respond to existing and emerging needs, the requirement for LSCBs to have set memberships will be removed. However, if they see the current arrangements as the most effective form of joint working they will be able to continue them.
- 6.3 The Isle of Wight LSCB (IOWSCB) appointed a new Independent Chair, Derek Benson, in December 2016 following the incumbent Chair stepping down at the end of their term of office. IOWSCB is well placed to respond positively to the expected new guidance for LSCBs which is expected shortly from the DfE.

## **7. Performance and Activity levels on the Isle of Wight**

### **7.1 The number of families accessing Early Help**

The number of early help assessments received during 2016/2017 was 368 with a monthly average of 31. This compared to 468 in 2015/2016 with a then monthly average of 39. One percent of children with an early help assessment were stepped up to children's social care compared to 1.5% in 2015/2016. In 2016/2017, 34.8% of children were stepped down from children's social care to early help which meant families continued to receive the support they needed to sustain the changes they had made to safeguard their children. See below for more detail on the Early Help offer.

### **7.2 Contacts and Referrals**

The Children's Reception Team (CRT) and Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are well established and manage the 'front door' on behalf of the Isle of Wight Children's Services. There are separate telephone numbers for the public and professionals to use. The CRT takes all initial 'contacts' to answer questions about children or to receive reports or child protection concerns and resolved 79.8% of contacts in 2016/2017. The other 20.2% of contacts were progressed to MASH for further assessment and investigation.

All Section 47 referrals are subject to a strategy meeting between Isle of Wight Children's Social Care (CSC), Police and Health. Isle of Wight Health information is included in these discussions through a named Health contact on the Isle of Wight. Education information is accessed through a designated Education officer who is able

to provide education specific information and sign post the MASH Social Worker to the appropriate professionals involved in the case.

Over the last twelve months there were 17,506 contacts received from the Isle of Wight and managed by CRT. This was an average of 1,459 contacts per month arising from emails, telephone calls and CYPRs (Children and Young Person's Report). This was a rise of 2,000 from 2015/2016 when 15,402 contacts were received with an average of 1,284 per month.

### **7.3 Assessments**

There were a total of 2,635 referrals for child in needed support in 2016/2017 compared with 2,437 in 2015/2016. The percentage of assessments completed within timescales in 2016/2017 was 71%. This is a small reduction from the previous year of 77%. Timely assessments mean that children and families have their needs identified and support and interventions are delivered appropriately.

### **7.4 Child Protection Plans (CPP)**

At the end of March 2017, 200 children were subject to a child protection plan. This was a reduction from 213 children being subject to a plan at the end of March 2016 and 264 in March 2015. During 2016/2017, 15% of the children with a child protection plan had been subject to a previous plan, at any time, which was lower than statistical neighbours. This is considered good practice and reflects effective interventions that kept children safe.

Neglect remained the main category of registration with 71.2% of all child protection plans being under this category as of end March 2017. This followed the launch of the Isle of Wight Neglect Strategy and subsequent raised awareness of the impact of neglect on children. Further training and a practitioner toolkit are being developed for 2017/2018. The other categories of child abuse that child protection plans were registered under were emotional abuse 16.1% of plans, sexual abuse 8.3%, physical abuse 4.4%.

### **7.5 Full Time Children Looked After (CLA)**

At the end of March 2017 there were 226 children looked after on the Isle of Wight, compared with 204 at the end of March 2016. This increase of 22 included six unaccompanied asylum seeking children. At the end of March 2017, there were 30 children placed out of authority compared to 33 at the end of March 2016.

The rate of children per 10,000 who are looked after was 78.0 which was less than 2015/2016 when it was 81.0 but was higher than our statistical neighbour's rate of 67.8. A new team was developed in 2016/2017 called the Resilience Around Families Team (RAFT). RAFT work to prevent children coming into care through direct support to families in crisis. Further work is being developed to reunify children looked after with their families where and when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

At the end of March 2016 and 2017, 100% of looked after children reviews were undertaken within timescale. This meant that children in care had their needs discussed regularly, the progress of their plan to improve their outcomes were

reviewed and children had the opportunity to share their views about the care they received.

The number of care leavers supported by the leaving care team averaged between 108 and 114 a month. At the end of March 2017, 96% were living in suitable accommodation and between 68% and 81% were in education, employment or training during 2016/2017. The Isle of Wight Council's '123' programme continued to support care leavers with a range of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities.

## **7.6 Quality Assurance**

Managers in Isle of Wight Children's Services used a range of qualitative data to ensure that services continued to deliver good outcomes for vulnerable children. In particular, there is a regular programme of case audits. The outcomes from these are used to highlight and share good practice as well as taking action to maintain the high standards expected by the Isle of Wight. In addition to this, Isle of Wight Children's Services take part in the multi agency case audits undertaken by IOWSCB.

## **7.7 Complaints**

There has been an overall 7% increase in the number of representations received during 2016/2017 in comparison to the previous year. Of the 59 representations, 39% were managed as a statutory stage one complaint. The average time taken for a stage one statutory complaint to complete was 13.4 days, which whilst an improvement on the previous year but this is still in excess of the statutory guidance of 10 days. The majority of statutory complaints received were from parents (61%). The second largest group was children. Managers seek to resolve complaints early on prior to the statutory process. Advocacy is provided to children and sometimes to adults to support them to resolve issues both informally and formally.

Analysis of the nature of complaints, the social characteristics and the demographic of complainants is routinely carried out. There is no evidence of disproportionate representation of any vulnerable group. Children's social care, perhaps unsurprisingly, continues to register quite low numbers of direct customer compliments. As in previous years, one of the reasons for this could be the large number of interventions which are unsought and often unwelcomed by families. In addition, many compliments are delivered verbally and often not recorded. Advocacy is used where a child or young person requests an independent advocate to represent them over a particular issue. Children and young people can be referred by their social workers or other key workers or can self refer. In 2016/2017, 118 advocacy sessions were provided.

## **7.8 Beaulieu House**

As well as the Ofsted inspections referred to previously, Beaulieu House, the Isle of Wight Council's Children's Home for disabled children is routinely subject to inspection twice per year by Ofsted. The latest outcomes for Beaulieu House are as follows.

Inspection Findings					
Date	Type	Overall Findings	The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	How well children and young people are helped and protected	The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers
23/11/16	Full	Good	Good	Requires improvement	Good
9/3/17	Interim	Sustained Effectiveness	NA	NA	NA
15/8/17	Full	Good	Good	Good	Good

## 8. Local Developments

- 8.1 MASH: The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is now embedded since it became operational in 2014. It operates alongside existing services provided by Hantsdirect and the Children's Reception Team (CRT). MASH provides multi-agency assessment and triaging of all children's safeguarding concerns at the point of contact, protecting vulnerable children from harm, neglect and abuse. The average number of contacts per month to CRT was 1459 in 2016/2017.
- 8.2 Referrals meeting the threshold for statutory intervention from Isle of Wight Children's Social Care are transferred into the MASH for a multi-agency decision regarding the level and type of intervention required. MASH includes Children's Services, Hampshire Constabulary and Isle of Wight NHS Trust with virtual partners including Hampshire Probation and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service. Referrals that do not meet the threshold for a statutory service are transferred into Early Help Services or to another service as appropriate.

## 9. Early Help

- 9.1 The Isle of Wight has a comprehensive, embedded Early Help offer. Help and support is targeted specifically to vulnerable families with children who have multiple needs, often requiring the involvement of more than one agency, but who do not meet the criteria for statutory social work intervention. An early help assessment is undertaken by a lead professional resulting in a multi-agency family plan. Lead professionals are drawn from a large cohort of staff trained across partner agencies (pre-schools, schools, family centres, health professionals, voluntary sector). They are supported by local authority Early Help Co-ordinators. This well-developed approach includes; workforce development, Early Help locality hub meetings, peer supervision, surgeries, telephone consultation line, joint visiting and training opportunities to share good



practice. It has successfully built significant capacity and confidence across multi-agency practitioners in regards to early help planning and support. Interventions may include evidence based programmes, family work in the home and group work in the community. The distance travelled tool tracks progress and outcomes for all families.

- 9.2 Part of the Early Help offer is commissioned by the local authority through Barnardo's who provide a range of interventions and support through a network of 0-19 Family Centres (including the Troubled Families programme). The model of 0-19 Family Centres has been identified by the Children's Commissioner for England as a model of good practice. The Isle of Wight commissions a wide range of other Early Help provision through the Short Breaks and the Youth Offer. The Commissioning Unit is developing further opportunities for integrating commissioning across the Isle of Wight Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Public Health. Partner agencies remain confident in the assessment and effectiveness of early help. Schools, Family Centres, health visitors, voluntary organisations and school nurses undertake the majority of lead professional roles.

## **10. Recruitment and Retention**

- 10.1 A key issue continues to be the recruitment and retention of social workers. Nationally, vacancy rates are now at around 20% of all posts in this sector. In part this has been due to aggressive recruitment tactics by agencies which have played on the insecurity in social work posts brought about by critical Ofsted judgements or national reports. Social workers report being offered very high hourly rates to switch to an agency and to then work in a neighbouring authority. This is an area of local focus with an effective recruitment and retention strategy, action plan and working group. The department have been actively 'growing our own' social workers and the improvements with children's social care and use of social media marketing campaigns have seen a significant decrease over the past three years in vacancies and use of agency Social Workers. The vacancy rates on the Isle of Wight are currently 7%.
- 10.2 A Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC) agreed by the South East Regional Assistant Directors meeting came into place over 12 months ago. This is shifting the price and command of the agency market away from private agencies towards local authorities. Pay rates for agency social workers are agreed, based on London rates. The introduction of IR35 is causing some uncertainty amongst agency social workers as across the South East, it has been agreed that agency social workers fall within IR35 and this will impact on their pay. IR35 is the short name used for the 'intermediaries legislation', which is a set of tax rules that apply to those who work for a client through an intermediary – which can be a limited company or "personal service company" which is how many agency social workers operate.

## **11. Troubled Families Programme (STFP)**

- 11.1 The national Troubled Families Programme led by Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) was established in both Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

during the first part of 2012. Families with children with poor school attendance, young people offending, family members committing anti-social acts or claiming out of work benefits were targeted for support. By the end of phase one of the programme in March 2015 the Isle of Wight had met DCLG targets for identifying/engaging and 'turning families around' (315 for the Isle of Wight).

- 11.2 This performance enabled the Isle of Wight to maximise the amount of grant drawn down from DCLG both for attaching families to the programme (an average of £2,400 per family) and for 'turning families around' (an average of £1600 reward). It also ensured we commenced phase two of the programme (2015/2020) in the first half of 2015.
- 11.3 In December 2014, the Government announced phase two of the Troubled Families Programme 2015 to 2020 would significantly increase the number of families nationally to be targeted for support from 120,000 to 400,000 families. The criteria used to identify families in phase one have been extended to include families with children who need help and those experiencing domestic abuse issues or health problems (six criteria in total). This has meant a significant increase in the number of families they are required to identify/engage and where possible 'turn around' (1,000 families by 2019/2020 for the Isle of Wight).
- 11.4 The phase two targets are a significant challenge as it requires the Isle of Wight to increase the monthly figure from 105 per annum (9 per month) to 200 per annum (17 per month). In phase two DCLG reduced attachment fees to £1000 per family with £800 available as a reward for 'turning around' families against any of the six family criteria that may apply to each family. This has made the claiming of reward grant significantly harder. Barnardo's are leading on delivery of the programme, through the integrated Early Help Service. To date, 57 claims have been submitted and accepted by DCLG under the new and more challenging phase two reward criteria.

## **12. Youth Offending Service**

- 12.1 The Isle of Wight Youth Offending Team (YOT) aims to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people aged 10 -17 years. This service involves significant criminal justice statutory functions which include the assessment and supervision of children and young people subject to out of court disposals, court orders, custodial sentences and bail and remand. YOTs also have statutory duties to co-operate under the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement framework (MAPPA), and a duty under the 2004 Children Act to promote the welfare and safeguarding of children and young people.
- 12.2 At any one time, Isle of Wight YOT is working with 40-60 children and young people. During 2016/2017 they delivered approximately 160 disposals to children and young people. Furthermore, the Youth Crime Prevention Worker is working with 10-15 children at any one time, and operates a waiting list. In addition, Isle of Wight YOT works with both the victims and the parents of those children and young people. All victims of youth crime are contacted by specialist trained Restorative Justice staff within the YOT and offered the opportunity to participate in a restorative intervention if

they wish. In 2017, Isle of Wight YOT has been commended by the Youth Justice Board for what is regarded as exceptional performance in reducing the use of custody (by 92% since 2014/2015), intensive and ongoing efforts to reduce the level of offending and positive results of internal audit activity. The reduction of first time entrants has also been noted as a positive improvement.

### **13. Focused visit of Isle of Wight children's services (pilot)**

13.1 Between 31 July and 2 August 2017, Ofsted undertook a thematic focused visit to Isle of Wight Children' Services. Children's Services had volunteered to take part in the pilot with Ofsted, testing out their methodology for inspection ahead of a revised inspection framework being implemented in 2018. The inspectors examined the local authority's arrangements for children in need and child protection, specifically:

- The application of thresholds for children in need and child protection, particularly in respect of the effectiveness of practice in response to increasing or reducing risk
- The effectiveness of assessment and planning for children in need of help and protection
- The quality of management oversight, challenge and staff supervision in the provision of services for children in need of help and protection

13.2 The unpublished findings (as it was a pilot inspection) were particularly positive and reflected what we know about the continued improvements in the service. Inspectors found that children and families are receiving the right help at the right time. Social workers and their managers apply thresholds for statutory intervention proportionally and support and intervention is appropriately increased or reduced in response to children's changing needs. Child protection enquires were found to be comprehensive and overseen 'meticulously' by managers and management oversight was found to be strong. The systemic changes to the service were highlighted with senior leaders recognised for their strong focus on securing continuous improvement.

13.3 Areas for improvement included the need to enhance consistency in the quality of assessments and child protection plans, improving the quality of auditing and ensuring that evidence of staff supervision is consistent across all teams. A copy of the letter from Ofsted can be found in Appendix B.

### **14. Peer inspections**

14.1 Isle of Wight Children's Services staff have taken part in a number of peer inspections across Hampshire. This provides an excellent opportunity for Isle of Wight staff to be part of an internal inspection team and is a reciprocal arrangement with Hampshire. More recently a small number of Isle of Wight staff have been involved in supporting improvement in Torbay Children's Services, as Hampshire is the DfE appointed improvement advisor for Torbay. There is growing evidence that authorities that have

such an 'outward looking' approach benefit from sharing best practice themselves and are better placed to secure improvements in their own services.

## **15. Future Challenges and Operational Priorities**

- 15.1 The future challenges and priorities can be summarised as follows (this is not an exhaustive list and the history of this type of work is that new priorities will emerge such as child sexual exploitation and domestic abuse have done).
- 15.2 There has been an incremental reduction in the number of children on child protection plans over the past three years. This is a positive indicator of a maturing children's safeguarding partnership. However, the rates of children subject to child protection planning and who may then become looked after represent an ongoing financial risk to the Isle of Wight Council which remains considerable and which has been acknowledged by the Council's leadership. The council has reiterated the position that the right children will be taken into care where necessary.
- 15.3 The recruitment and retention of social workers will need continued focus to maintain the current good performance. Nationally vacancy rates are now at around 20% of all posts and previously have been at similar levels within Isle of Wight Children's Services. The South East Memorandum of Co-operation is now in operation and it is anticipated this will have a positive impact on the level of agency social worker pay rates. Further work on promoting resilience within the workforce and attracting experienced social workers is underway.
- 15.4 'Putting Children First' is the government's strategy to transform children's social care. The ambition is that by 2020 all vulnerable children, no matter where they live, receive the same high quality of care and support, and the best outcome for every child is at the heart of every decision made. The Children and Social Work Act is part of this strategy and introduces a number of changes ranging from a new assessment and accreditation system for the social work profession, changes to local safeguarding children boards and a new power to innovate to test where legislation, regulations and guidance might be getting in the way of excellent social work practice.
- 15.5 Transforming children's social care, delivering a new social care case management system, improving mobile working and developing multi-agency teams to support families will be a significant challenge over the next three years but will deliver a modern social work service fit for the future challenges over the next decade.

## **16. New Inspection Framework**

- 16.1 Ofsted published its response to the consultation on the future of social care inspections in February 2017. The intention is for there to be more inspections along with focused visits in-between inspections. The inspections will be shorter however at this stage there is no detail available with the framework expected to be published later in 2017. Feedback from the Ofsted pilot in August 2017 provided a helpful steer in respect of the focus, scale and burden of this new approach to inspection.

## **17. Recommendations**

- 17.1 That Cabinet notes the positive progress and continued improvements within the service with regards to safeguarding children in the Isle of Wight.
- 17.2 That Cabinet notes the commitment of a wide range of Isle of Wight Children's Services officers in achieving these continued improvements within the service.
- 17.3 That Cabinet endorses the future direction of travel identified in this report.
- 17.4 That Cabinet receives further updates on safeguarding on an annual basis.