

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 23rd September 2013 at 6.00pm in Meeting Room 3, Darby House, Telford.

PRESENT: Councillors M. Ion (Chair), G. Green, J. Loveridge, J. Pinter, C. Turley (part) and Co-optees A. Atkinson, R. Aveley and S. Rayner.

Attending: Cllr. P. Watling, Cabinet Member Children, Young People & Families; L. Johnston, Director Children & Family Services; C. Jones, Assistant Director Family & Cohesion Services; S. Hosking, Group Manager Youth Offending Service; A. Mason, Chair Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Children Board; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Officer.

CYPSC-13 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 15th August 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CYPSC-14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. A. Mackenzie and Co-optees S. Ali, S. Harris and M. Ward.

CYPSC-15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CYPSC-16 LGA PEER REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING

The Director of Children & Family Services (DCS) presented the reports circulated as Appendix B1 and B2 on the LGA Peer Review. A briefing note on the peer review process and a diagram of the "Getting to Good" Improvement Cycle were also tabled. The following points were highlighted:

- The first peer review was three years ago. Peer reviews are a "critical friend" process to test the authority's understanding and self-awareness of the service and what needs to be done. Additional lines of enquiry were agreed over and above the standard process at the service's request, including whether the planned reduction in the number of children on care plans had reduced safety, and an audit validation. Cllr. Watling explained that he holds weekly meetings with the Director, but he also talks directly to staff on the front-line, without senior managers present, to hear their views which was important to him as lead member. He had asked the peer review also to focus on the early help arrangements, including Family Connect, to ensure young people and families get the right help at the right

time. In the early days he had not been convinced about the Family Connect approach, but he was now convinced this was the right direction.

- A peer review cost around £20,000 but the Council had paid nothing. It was part of a sector-led improvement programme funded nationally by the Children's Improvement Board. The funding had now been withdrawn, and Telford & Wrekin had been one of the last authorities to benefit.
- The review team was led by an Interim Director of Children's Services. Ideally, reviews would be led by an active DCS but this would have created a delay resulting in incurring costs, and the Interim DCS was a good lead. The team also included a Lead Member (ex-Lambeth), a Safeguarding lead, a Data Analyst, a Health lead and LGA support staff. The Health lead was considered important with all the changes in the health system.
- The review had taken one week in June. Cllr. Watling, the DCS and Assistant Director Cohesion & Family Services had been trained as peer reviewers.
- Appendix B2 provided a summary of the process, findings, strengths and areas for improvement. Mr. Mason confirmed the Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) had been involved in commissioning the peer review and was in agreement with the findings.
- The DCS said it was pleasing that there had been no big surprises in the findings and that they fitted with the service's self-assessment showing there was a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses. She summarised the key findings:
 - The review had recognised the huge amount of work that had been done on the recruitment and retention of social workers. Having a permanent workforce of skilled and qualified staff was fundamental to addressing quality issues raised by Ofsted. With this in place the service was ready to start the next stage of the journey to embed systemic improvement. Cllr. Watling said that this was also a priority in the Cost Improvement Plan and important for providing consistency to the children and young people in care.
 - The service had got better at using data to understand and drive improvement internally and across partners.
 - Partnership support was good, but there was a need for more challenge.
 - The reviewers were pleased with the Council's financial commitment to safeguarding and the additional investment in the service and had scrutinised the Cost Improvement Plan.
 - Leadership was aspirational and political leadership valued.
 - Commissioning needed development, particularly the collaborative approach with partners and health. This was already known.
 - Integrated practice was still emerging. There had been huge changes in the borough and the early help offer had started but needed pace and focus.
 - The reviewers noted that reflective practice and case recording needed to be better. It was happening, but needed to be evidenced and audited.
 - The service could move from information to action too quickly, for example the

lift and shift approach to joining up the Transition and Care Leavers teams. This had already been known and a review was being carried out.

- The pace of change was too slow. The DCS accepted this, but said that the development of the permanent workforce was the priority and had taken time – they would not invest in training agency staff. There had also been issues with finding the right people to lead change, but this had hopefully been sorted out. The point was that this needed to be done well and there was no point in having urgency without quality.
- There was a disconnection between the aspiration of senior managers and front-line practice. Steps were being taken to address this. The Managing Director and DCS had held an engagement session with front-line staff to marry up. There would be three staff briefings a year involving the DCS, Assistant Directors and Lead Member to ensure the leadership aspiration is clear to social workers.

In response to Members' questions, the following additional information was provided:

- Cllr. Turley was alarmed by the reference on p.10 of Appendix B1 to “the disbanding of the Child Protection Team”. The DCS clarified that this referred to the re-design of the service. Under the old structure, Child Protection (CP) social workers carried out initial assessments and then referred cases to the Assessment and Case Management Teams for core assessments and case management so their involvement was short-term and the child was moved from one social worker to another. Bringing the teams together meant the service was built around the child – the first social worker continues to work with the child through different stages, providing continuity and a better service for the child. Cllr. Watling said the change had been a difficult journey for staff but the old system had not been right – for children coming into care we want the team to remain around the child and for the child not to have switches of social worker. This was one of the key areas where serious case reviews had found fault.
- Cllr. Turley was concerned about the fact that Walk-In GP surgeries use different IT systems and do not receive alerts of children on child protection plans. The DCS agreed this was a concern and said it had been picked up by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The CCG executive lead for safeguarding had been involved in the review and had taken this up to address. Cllr. Ion also expressed concern and that this was potentially “an accident waiting to happen”, and while he understood this was not within the Council’s remit, he wanted to know what pressure was being put on the CCG about this. The DCS said it would be picked up as part of the improvement model (illustrated in the tabled document “Getting to Good” Improvement Cycle). There is a named strategic lead for each action, and the CCG safeguarding lead leads on the health issues. She will report back with a set of actions and timescales, but this has yet to be defined. The service defines what needs to be done – the outcomes – and the strategic lead tells us how it will be done and is accountable for those actions. The outcome in this case might be for all GPs to be aware of children on child protection plans.
- The Chair asked about the role of the LSCB in this. Mr. Mason said the LSCB was streamlining processes and a new Quality Performance & Operations sub-group

had been set up, chaired by the CCG safeguarding lead, to review actions and progress. The sub-group would meet for the first time in November. The cycle of LSCB and sub-group meetings had been reviewed to accelerate actions and improve reporting – the Board would meet every two months and the performance sub-group will meet 2 weeks in advance to feed actions into the Board. The Board will review the peer review action plan, and the DCS will review the actions for the Council.

- The Chair referred to the Key Areas of Focus and felt that point one (identifying and reflecting in decisions the needs of children and young people from minority ethnic communities) was a huge concern. The DCS said this had also been picked up in other inspections and action was already underway. There was some good work going on but there was a mixed picture. They were talking to front line staff about this and they were helping to identify what needs to be done. Cllr. Ion said this came back to the issue of having a shared understanding of the leadership vision and common understanding of what we mean by vulnerable. Mr. Mason said it was good that the Council had flagged this up for the peer review to look at. Cllr. Watling said it was clear we need to be working on this. Work had been done but it was not as effective as it should be and this was being looked at as part of the improvement model.
- Cllr. Green was worried by the point on p.8 about not having operational experienced staff on the Family Connect duty desk. The DCS said there was a newly qualified on the desk, but with supervision and management oversight of the process which was good. Skills were being developed across the service.
- The DCS explained more about the “Getting to Good” Improvement Cycle. The idea was to move away from having action plan after action plan (e.g. Ofsted Improvement Plan, peer review action plan) and developing key strategic themes or objectives led by senior managers. Data is gathered on each theme to help understand the issues, and then taken to front-line staff to get the story behind the data and discuss their views on what could be done so that actions can be embedded in front line practice. A Service Improvement Manager had been appointed to the Delivery & Planning team to coordinate the work, but reporting directly to the DCS. The Manager would visit all the front line staff. For example, on the diversity issue, data and evidence had been gathered, and the Service Improvement Manager was now visiting staff to drill down into the data at team level to see what was happening, how work was reported and why work that was happening was not being recorded. The Manager then pulls all the information together in a One Minute Brief with the teams’ recommendations to be implemented.
- The Chair asked why the brief was “Getting to Good” and not “Getting to Outstanding”. The DCS said that “Outstanding” was just too aspirational under the new Ofsted inspection framework. Ofsted ratings had changed to “Outstanding”, “Good”, “Requiring Improvement” or “Inadequate” (i.e. there was no longer an “Adequate” rating) and the standards to achieve “Good” were had been raised. Currently, around a quarter of authorities were rated “Good”, about half were “Adequate” and a quarter “Inadequate”. Most were striving to achieve

“Good” under the new framework and were not trying to achieve “Outstanding” because the bar was too high. Mr. Mason agreed “Outstanding” was too aspirational and that setting such an unrealistic goal could de-motivate staff - improvement had to be made step by step. The LSCB was focussing on improvement and had set up a Professional Practice task and finish sub-group, including the Service Improvement Manager. This group was one of the three priority task and finish groups reporting to the Board. Cllr. Watling had attended a regional meeting for Lead Members and many of the authorities rated “Adequate” were quite concerned about the new framework and fearing the worst. The reality is that it is hugely expensive for authorities rated “Inadequate” which would cost far more than the work being done in Telford & Wrekin now – it was about saving money later on and not about overspending. Cllr. Green said that it is important to convey to members of the public what “adequate” means.

- The Chair asked the DCS and Cabinet whether they would say the peer review had delivered £20k of value – was it worth it? The DCS said yes because regionally authorities wanted to explore all ways of having robust challenge without the cost. The DCS, lead Member and other senior officers had been trained as peer reviewers, so the idea was that in future they could agree reciprocal arrangements for peer reviews to reduce the cost. Cllr. Watling said it had been worth it because it gave a snapshot of where we are now and what needs to be done. As lead member this was important because it meant he knows what the issues are and where to challenge the DCS. It was also helpful because it showed what we do well and where we are moving forward. Mr. Mason said it was useful to the LSCB because it shed light on activities that needed a focus that wasn’t there before, and meant that they were focussing on the right things and not just ticking boxes.

When there were no further points on the peer review, the Chair moved on to the Leaving Care Grant (LCG). He reminded members that at the last meeting they had heard Telford & Wrekin had fallen behind other authorities and the Committee had recommended lifting the grant from £1,000 to £2,000. He asked the DCS how and when a decision would be made. She explained that the budget for the LCG fell into Care & Support but accountability lay with her. She had asked the team to review the grant which they had done in consultation with the Care Council. A recommendation had been made to uplift the grant to £1,750 with a £250 emergency fund, and the scrutiny report had been considered at the same time. The increase been agreed by the Adult Leadership Team, but still had to be agreed by the CYP Leadership Team, and reported to the Senior Management Team to note the additional pressure on the budget. The DCS fully expected the recommendation to be accepted and progressed. Cllr. Ion said this was very encouraging, but as it was still at the intention stage he suggested a fuller report come back in November with the new policy and procedure and the additional information requested at, and following, the last meeting. Cllr. Green asked when the uplift would be introduced and the DCS said they were hoping to bring it in sooner rather than later. Cllr. Green asked for clarification about who paid the LCG to care leavers placed in the borough by other authorities who may decide to settle in the borough, and Cllr. Watling confirmed that Telford & Wrekin was not liable for the LCG for other authorities’ care lavers even if they are in the borough.

The Chair drew members’ attention to the Children in Care Performance Dashboard

circulated as Appendix B3 which the Committee receives on a regular basis for on-going monitoring. He said there was some good news in the report and it was encouraging to see the balance between internal and agency foster carers was moving in the right direction. Cllr. Watling also pointed out that unit costs were going in the right direction. The Chair suggested members give the report further detailed consideration and bring questions to the next meeting.

Concluding the item, the Chair thanked Cllr. Watling and the DCS.

Cllr. Turley left the meeting.

CYPSC-17 UPDATE ON MISSING CHILDREN AND RETURN INTERVIEWS

The Chair invited officers to make remarks on the report on Missing Children and Return Interviews circulated as Appendix C. In addition to the information provided in the report, the Group Manager made the following points:

- The report was in response to recommendation 2b of the Committee's report on the Children in Care Placement Strategy, and summarised progress since the presentation of the Missing Children Protocol to the Committee in January alongside a presentation from DI Shakesheff, West Mercia Police lead for missing children.
- In June DfE had issued statutory guidance on missing / runaway children and definitions of "missing" and "absent" which would be adopted by West Mercia Police from October. The police were recruiting a Missing Person Co-ordinator and there would be conversations once the person was up to speed.
- An Ofsted report had highlighted the lack of reliable missing children data collected by local authorities (a sample of 10). Telford & Wrekin had good data collection but it was being analysed by the LSCB Missing Children Sub-group (MCSG) to evaluate against Ofsted's recommendations.
- The protocol was being updated in accordance with the new DfE guidance and ACPO and Ofsted reports (and would be known as the Runaways Missing From Home and Care Protocol). The protocol would be made fit for purpose for providers from the time a child is placed with them until they left the provider's care. Other authorities have a duty to notify Telford & Wrekin when they place a child with a provider in the borough, but the expectation will be that providers also notify the Council. The providers also need to be aware of other authorities' protocols. Local practice and expectations will be discussed with providers at the conference on 9th October. The protocol will be a thick document but will be comprehensive for social workers to use.
- Until the new definitions are adopted, the police will continue to notify the Council of absent children through Family Connect who record the data. Data is shared with the Group Manager in Cohesion Services and with the police.
- The report showed data collected on Return Interviews for March-August 2013. Ten out of 41 required return interviews had not been completed. The old protocol gave social workers discretion to decide with their line manager if a return interview was needed or not. The template would record the decision (yes or no) but not the reason for the decision and the template had been adjusted to capture

this information.

Members were also given the following information in response to questions:

- Of the 87 missing episodes, there should have been 41 Return Interviews of which 10 were outstanding. Members were told that a timeline for completing return interviews had been written into the protocol so those that were overdue would be chased up and data recorded within the month of the missing episode.
- Data about the care home the child had gone missing from was not shown in the report but was captured so homes with a disproportionate number of police call outs could be identified. The MCSG was putting together a definitive data set, but we have this information. Data collection in Telford & Wrekin was good. It was captured on the Protocol database by Family Connect, the emergency duty team or other staff and shared with the police.
- There were 87 missing episodes for 71 children. There had been a reduction in the number of repeat episodes over the last 12 months.
- The 5 children “not known to this or another authority” were children who had not previously been known to social services.
- Take-up for the provider conference was good – around 80-90%. At the Chair’s request, it was agreed that members of the Committee could be invited.
- Members requested a list of the distribution of children’s care homes by ward to be provided after the meeting.

When there were no further questions the Chair thanked the officers for providing the detailed report and remarked that the service had come a long way.

Cllr. Watling and officers left the meeting.

CYPSC-18 WORK PROGRAMME AND CHAIR’S UPDATE

The Chair updated members on a number of points:

- Following the first statistical release of (provisional) Key Stage 2 results on 19th September, a summary report had been circulated as Appendix D. A detailed breakdown by school, and schools below floor standard, would come to the Committee in November along with KS4 and CCSE results. Data for looked after children was released separately in January but would also be reported to the Committee. In the meantime the Chair asked members to consider the report and come to the November meeting with questions.
- With regard to the review of primary place planning, there were three main lines of enquiry: ensuring there will be sufficient capacity; issues related to admissions and

appeals for governing bodies; the link between expansion and quality of provision. The Chair said that data and evidence gathered so far had led him to conclude that there was no “runaway train” in Telford and Wrekin, that the borough was well served in terms of pupil place planning and he had been reassured that there would be sufficient capacity.

Cllr. Aveley said he remained unconvinced there would be enough places given all the housing development and cited Wellington as an example. Mr. Atkinson said he thought the number would depend on the type of housing and was difficult to estimate. The Chair said it was important not to conflate two issues: the requirement in terms of planning additional places from birth rates and housing development, and Basic Needs capital to fund additional places created by housing development. After seeking clarity on developer levies in Telford & Wrekin, Mr. Rayner made the point that the Council relinquishing S106 money could create an issue with funding the necessary expansion from housing development because Basic Needs capital was allocated based on birth rates and not housing growth. The Chair agreed this was a big concern and a possible area for the Committee to make a recommendation.

Mr. Atkinson said it would be interesting to know more about migration and if people were moving within or from outside the borough. The Chair said this had been raised as a national issue but data he had seen so far showed this was not a challenge in Telford & Wrekin in the same way it was in other parts of the country. Cllr. Green raised concerns about mobility and inward migration clustered in geographic areas putting pressure on schools from sudden admissions as had been seen at Woodside Primary.

An additional working group meeting would be arranged to explore the issues of S106, the role of governors and heads in admissions and the issue of expansion and quality. Dates would be circulated in due course.

- The Chair reminded members that the next item for in-depth review was Youth Services including the Youth Offending Service and there would be an initial presentation at the November meeting.
- The Scrutiny Officer reminded members about the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee meeting on 22nd October to monitor progress on delivery of the Cost Improvement Plan and members of this Committee were invited to avoid duplication.

The meeting ended at 7.30pm.

Chairman:.....

Date:.....

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 NOVEMBER 2013

BRIEFING REPORT PROGRESS OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REPORT OF Jo Britton, Service Delivery Manager, Safeguarding Advisory
Service

This briefing report provides an update of progress relating to recommendations made by the CYP Scrutiny Committee in June 2013.

Recommendation 2 Quality Assurance of Systems and Processes - “RAG system for rating Care Plans by IROs to be reviewed”

There are a number of mechanisms in place to quality assure both the IRO Service and the quality of care planning activity.

There is a dedicated quality assurance computer programme in place where IROs record and store all the RAG documentation (the quality assurance documents that are completed by the IRO following each child's Child in Care Review). The system has been reviewed in conjunction with IT and refinements made, which now enable the user to quickly view the child's journey in terms of the quality assurance document. There is also now a facility for the IRO to update the RAG document.

The RAG quality assurance document reflects the rating of the child's Care Plan, the narrative that demonstrates the activity that is undertaken i.e. how a red Ragged Care Plan moves to a green is now recorded on the IRO case note on the child's file. The RAG document is forwarded to both the child's Social Worker and Team Manager.

Recommendation 3 “That the current review of the IRO Service should consider the management arrangements and the option of moving the service into the Scrutiny Team, consistent with scrutiny's role in providing objective review and challenge”

The service review considered the management arrangements and recognised the need for the IROs requirement of independence. It was identified that a move from Safeguarding would assist the IRO service in further developing the IRO role of challenge and case monitoring.

The IROs have a dual aspect to their role of chairing both Child Protection Conferences and Child in Care Reviews. This was significant when considering where the Service should be positioned. Working Together 2013 states that the “Child Protection Conference Chairperson is accountable to the Director of Children and Families Service”. Furthermore it was identified that it should be an area that is accustomed to delivering a quality assurance and improvement work.

The Safeguarding Advisory Service, with the responsibility for IRO’s, moved to Education and Corporate Parenting in July 2013. This has enabled the Service Delivery Manager, Safeguarding Advisory Service, to work alongside Service Delivery Managers involved in the wider delivery of School Improvement. The Assistant Director: Education and Corporate Parenting meets regularly with the IRO Team and Service Delivery Manager which has provided opportunities to consider and further develop aspects of service provision.

Proposal

A further briefing report to be provided at the 27/01/14 meeting, which will include an update of the Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report.

Jo Britton

8 November 2013

Analysis of 2013 Unvalidated Data for Scrutiny Committee November 2013

Andy Cooke, 7th November 2013

Early Years Foundation Stage

Headlines

- In Telford and Wrekin 45% of children achieved the good level of development measure, 5 percentage points lower than West Midlands (50%) and 7 percentage points lower than England (52%).
- In Telford and Wrekin the average total points score for all pupils was 32.5 points. This is lower than the regionally and nationally, both with an average TPS of 32.8 points.
- In Telford and Wrekin the mean score for the lowest 20% of achievers (inequality gap) was 20.7 points, the same as the West Midlands and 0.9 points lower than for England (21.6 points).
- In Telford and Wrekin the percentage of children achieving at least the expected level in literacy was 55%, compared to 60% in West Midlands and 61% for England.
- In Telford and Wrekin the percentage of children achieving at least the expected level in mathematics was 61%, compared to 64% in West Midlands and 66% for England overall.

Phonics Screening Check

Headlines

- In 2013, the percentage of the Borough's Year 1 pupils reaching the required standard was 67%, below the national (England) average of 69%.
- The 2012 figure was 51% compared to a national average of 58%, so not only has the result in 2013 shown a significant improvement, but it has also significantly narrowed the gap on national.
- By the end of Year 2, 84% of Borough pupils had reached the required standard, compared to 85% nationally.

Key Stage 1

Headlines

- The proportion of students achieving a Level 2 in reading has increased from 85% in 2012 to 88% in 2013 closing the gap on the national average of 89% in 2013.
- In writing the proportion achieving a Level 2 has improved from 81% in 2012 to 86% in 2013 we have moved from being 2 percentage points below national to 1 percentage point above.
- In speaking and listening the 2013 results of 89% show a 3 percentage point improvement on 2012 and now matches national.
- In 2013 the proportion of students achieving a Level 2 in Maths was 91%, an increase of 2 percentage points, this has now closed the gap to equal national averages
- In Science 91% of students achieved a Level 2 in 2013, an increase of 4 percentage points now at least equalling national average.

Key Stage 2

Headlines

- The new anchor measure of Reading, Writing and Maths combined at Level 4 is 1 percentage point below the National Average and 1 percentage point above the West Midlands average. At Level 5 this is equal to the National Average.
- In Reading, the proportion of students attaining a Level 4 or above is 1 percentage point below National; with 2 Levels of Progress having fallen and now 2 percentage points below National.
- In Writing, the proportion of students making 2 Levels of Progress has improved and is now above National.
- In Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling, the proportion of students attaining a Level 4 or above is 5 percentage points below National.
- In Mathematics, the proportion of students attaining a Level 4 or above is 2 percentage points below National; with 2 Levels of Progress static at 3 percentage points below National.

Schools Below Floor

Centre	Y6 NOR	% Meeting Floor Standard			
		L4+ R/W & Maths (DFE Nat)	2 Levels of Progress Reading (NCER Nat)	2 Levels of Progress Writing (NCER Nat)	2 Levels of Progress Maths (NCER Nat)
National Threshold		60	90	94	91
Dawley Church of England Primary School	17	59	82	82	88
Ladygrove Primary School	40	55	82	92	64
Wombridge Primary School	27	56	89	93	63

Key Stage 4

Headlines

- The Headline figure of 5A*-C including English and Maths has fallen from the 2012 figure of 61.3% to 58.3%. Nationally this increased by 1.3 percentage points to 60.4%, so in 2013 the Telford and Wrekin results are now below the national average.
- The proportion of students attaining 5A*-C has increased again to 87.9% and is well above the national figure of 82.7%.
- The proportion of students achieving the 'English Baccalaureate was 22% a big increase from the 16.6% in 2012 and broadly in line with the national average of 22.7%.
- 67.4% of students made expected progress in English in 2013, an increase of 1.6 percentage points but still below the national average of 70.2%.
- 66.2% of students made expected progress in Maths in 2013, a decrease of 2.8 percentage points and below the national average of 70.6%.
- The average capped point score in 2013 was 348.8 this is above the national average of 341.6.

Schools below Floor

	5 A*-C inc. En & Ma	Eng 3LP	Ma 3LP
National Benchmark	40%	70%	70%
Lakeside Academy	34%	44%	49%
Phoenix Academy	36%	39%	57%

Key Stage 5

Headlines

- The proportion of students achieving at least 2 A Levels, or equivalent 'substantial' qualifications, has decrease from 90.7% in 2012 to 88.0% in 2013. This is against a background of a greater decrease nationally, so whilst still below the national rate of 89.8% we are closing the gap.
- The proportion of students achieving 3 A*-A is 9%, whilst this measure has fallen by 2.5 percentage points since 2012, this is 0.5 percentage points above national.
- In 2013, 16.5% of students achieved grades of AAB or better, whilst this measure has fallen from the 2012 figure of 17.3%, this is still 0.2 percentage points above national.
- The proportion of students achieving AAB or better in 'facilitating' subjects in 2013 was 7% this represents a 2 percentage point drop from 2012 and is now below the national rate of 7.4%.

Meeting:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 26 November 2013
Report title:	Fostering Inspection Progress Report (Ofsted Inspection date 21-24 January 2013)
Service Area:	Children’s Safeguarding – Fostering
Report Author:	Angela Yapp, Service Delivery Manager

1. Purpose of this Report

To provide a progress update in relation to the Fostering Action Plan arising out of the Ofsted Inspection which took place in January 2013.

2. Recommendations

To note progress made and to receive a further update in July 2014, after the next submission of the Ofsted annual fostering data set.

3 The Inspection Process

The Ofsted Inspection Framework for Fostering took account of the National Minimum Standards for the provision of Fostering Services and Regulations (both 2011). There are 31 Standards and 45 regulations with 7 accompanying schedules. The inspection activity covered a review of key fostering service documents and performance information, casework analysis, interviews with foster carers, children and young people, children’s case managers, independent reviewing officers, health and educational professionals. The gradings that can be awarded by Inspectors for specific aspects of provision were outstanding, good, adequate or inadequate. (N.b as from November 2013 future inspections of the fostering service will be included in “Inspections of children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers”)

4 Ofsted findings and gradings in 2013

4.1 Ofsted inspectors commended a number of areas of current service provision:

- Foster carers act as good role models and advocate as a good parent would
- Children and young people led busy lives outside their school day and at weekends.
- Children and young people’s health outcomes were good.
- Educational support for children and young people in care is good.
- Young people have established good relationships with their foster carers and are given the opportunity to remain with their foster carers post 18.
- The Fostering Panel was acknowledged as well established, experienced representative professionals and that foster carers are fully conversant with the panel process.

- The management team of the fostering service learn from listening to what foster carers, children and young people and social workers tell them and welcome the feedback received to improve practice.
- Children and Young people missing from fostering homes is rare as a consequence of effective partnership working between the child's social worker, the foster carers, the police and fostering team. A senior police officer commented to the inspectors '*They like to get it right*'
- The recruitment and vetting of adults who wish to become foster carers or existing foster carers was considered to be sound.
- The fostering service knows the key achievements in the past year and it has made improvements to: capacity; placement stability, recruitment; developing staff skills; matching and reduction in placement disruptions.
- The fostering service works effectively with other agencies

4.2 However, a period of turnover within the management of the service (which has now been resolved) prevented us making the progress we were aiming for quickly enough to meet the more stringent inspection criteria to retain our previous good rating. The overall gradings are as follows

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| • Overall effectiveness: | Adequate |
| • Outcomes for children and Young people: | Adequate |
| • Quality of Service: | Adequate |
| • Safeguarding children: | Adequate |
| • Leadership and management: | Adequate |

5 Recommendations made for Service Improvement and Development

Maintain progress on recruitment of Foster carers

11 New fostering households were approved in 2012/13 providing a maximum of 26 placements. This should be exceeded this financial year: In the current year to date 8 households have been approved, providing a maximum of 17 potential placements. Since the 1st April 2013 we have received 133 enquiries. 8 Form F assessments are being progressed and 6 applicants are attending the skills to foster care training commencing next week. At the end of September numbers placed with T&W mainstream carers reached a peak of 130, 15 more than at 31/03/13. This is on target to achieve 20 more by year end, although numbers have reduced since then mostly through adoption or returning home/leaving care coupled with fewer admissions

Delegated Authority

The pilot of the British Association and Adoption and Fostering tool resulted in a more streamlined approach and a decision to prioritise the children that would benefit most, ie those of school age and in long term matched placements. 71 effective delegated authority agreements have been completed for mainstream and kinship foster carers and plans are in place for the remainder. At the recent provider conference 3 agencies volunteered to assist us in developing consistent arrangements for those children in external agencies.

Supervision of foster carers

We provided training to our fostering social workers in April 2013 and revised our supervision forms. Our Advanced SW Practitioner for fostering is auditing the quality

of supervision with foster carers regarding meeting the needs of children placed, in particular to take account of child's wishes and feelings and that carers develop their competencies. Early findings suggest that SW practice has improved although it is still not consistently good, and a key area for developing competencies for foster carers is managing difficult behaviour.

Training of Foster carers

The training policy for foster carers has been revised, increasing the number of training sessions per annum required and ensuring that both carers attend. 100% of new foster carers have achieved the Children's Workforce Development accreditation within timescale. We have reviewed the training policy to make clearer the pre and post approval training requirements and the consequences of not achieving them. We have reviewed the training programme and are considering how best to deliver it to maximise take-up, eg use of e learning.

Unannounced visits to foster carer's homes

Robust monitoring is in place to ensure that unannounced visits are taking place. The service has met the standard by ensuring than all carers have had one unannounced visit since the inspection and we are working towards achieving 2 per year.

National Children's Rights Director

All children in placement at the time of the fostering inspection were sent a letter with this information and for new admissions since then – the details are contained in the admissions pack.

Performance Management and Service Improvement

Monthly meetings are in place to review the progress of foster children and the service has developed a RAG rating to make sure those with the most complex needs are kept under close scrutiny. We continue to have regular consultation meetings with foster carers association and with the family and friends carer support group. The opportunity of the annual conference was used to publicise a survey of all carers. (The findings will be available by early in the new year). A visit to VOICE (care council) has given us 4 priorities for improvement;

- Make sure use of the flex card doesn't make children in care stand out as different
- What children call their foster carers in front of friends
- Some children wanted to be clear about when they could be left in the foster home without the foster carer being present.
- Ensuring foster carers are always sensitive about what they say about birth parents

6 Conclusion

The service has made good progress in delivering the recommendations although there is more to do particularly in the area of delegated authority.

Appendix 1

West Midlands Children's Strategic Commissioning Group LA Fostering Service Unit Cost Project 2013

LA Fostering Service Information Collection Template June 2013

Please enter the information for your LA and return to nigelexell@warwickshire.gov.uk by 21/06/13

Guidance Notes

Financial Reporting Period: Please base figures on actual costs for 2012-13, but build in anticipated increase for 2013-14 (e.g. increases in pay or allowances).

Do not include costs or activity relating to Family and Friends/Connected Person/Kinship Carers

Service description (i.e. staff levels): please enter actual 2012-13

Activity data (placements) please enter the actual activity for period 01/04/12 to 31/03/13

COSTS INCURRED IN DELIVERING AN LA FOSTERING SERVICE			
Name of LA:			
CATEGORY	REF	ITEM	Cost - £
STAFF Costs ¹	1	Fostering Service Social Work Staff Salaries (qualified and unqualified)	
	2	Fostering Service Management Staff Salaries	
	3	Other Management Staff Salaries (Strategic – include proportions of senior management up to DCS or equivalent, and list on page 5)	
	4	Admin Staff Salaries (including placement matching team)	
	5	Staff travel costs (including vehicle lease and/or cost of ownership including depreciation)	
SERVICE OVERHEADS ² (not direct carer / client related costs)	6	CRB checks	
	7	Staff training (not foster carers)	
	8	HR Services (including Staff Recruitment and specialist software licences such as CIPHR)	
	10	Financial and Cost Accounting Services (including any specialist software licences)	
	11	Legal Services	
	12	Registration fees (e.g. Ofsted)	
	13	Insurances (staff and public liability)	
	14	Membership Fees (e.g. Fostering Network)	
	15	Advertising - sales/marketing of fostering service but not including carer recruitment	
	16	Buildings Costs ³	
	20	Office Furniture and Equipment (not ICT)	
	21	Admin Expenses (Stationary, Office Supplies, Photocopying and Postage)	
	22	Information Communications Technology (including specialist software licenses) ⁴	
CARER / CLIENT COSTS	23	Carer Recruitment and Development ⁵	
	24	Foster Carer fees	
	25	Child Maintenance Allowances paid to Carers (including clothing grants and festival payments etc. where applicable)	
OTHER	26	Travel	
Other costs not covered above (please specify)	27	Childminder Fees	
	28	Respite	
	29		
TOTAL			

Notes	
<p>1) Salaries covers - Basic Pay, NI, Superannuation and Agency Staff costs</p> <p>2) Enter where costs are in addition to staff costs. Depending on how your organisation is structured, some of the detailed costs requested in categories may be held corporately/centrally rather than locally to the Fostering Service. Where this is the case, please include them under overheads or 'Other' if no overhead category is suitable.</p> <p>Where the 'internal foster placement matching team' and 'carer payment function' are part of the core fostering service, Staff costs they should be included there, otherwise these should be covered in the overheads. Please make it clear below where these costs have been included in your above response:</p>	
Costs of 'Placement Matching' function included in	
Costs of 'Carer Payment' function included in	
<p>3) Including utilities (heat, light, water), maintenance, rent/mortgage, Business Rates, building insurances</p> <p>4) Include equipment - computers and printers; internet connection charges; telephone equipment and line charges; general software licenses (e.g. MS Office); Specialist Carer Records Management Software (including specialist software such as Carefirst) and Specialist fostering service management software (e.g. CHARMS) and ICT support.</p> <p>5) Includes Carer recruitment - advertising; Carer recruitment - initial screening; Carer assessment/approval including panel costs, IRM and medical reports; Carer Training.</p>	

<u>Details of Fostering Service</u>	
Name of LA	
Activity	
Number of Fostering Households at 31 March 2013	
Service capacity (maximum possible number of children at one time)	
Number of LAC in internal fostering placement at 31st March 2013	
Total number of placement/bed nights (units) 1/4/12 to 31/3/13 inclusive (one unit is one night when one child is placed with a foster carer; e.g. one child placed with a carer for the entire year equates to 365 units)	
Direct Staff	
Number of FTE <i>qualified</i> SW Social Work Staff	
Number of FTE <i>unqualified</i> SW Social Work Staff	
Number of Fostering Service Management Staff	
Number of Fostering Service Admin Staff (including placement matching team and payment team)	
Planned Ratio of FTE Social Workers Supporting Carers : Carers (i.e. how many carers are allocated to each FTE supporting SW?)	

Please go to next page

Please list below the staff structure and FTE employed in the Fostering Service, including strategic management up to DCS or equivalent:

Financial Management and Reporting (the Dashboard) – Internal Care reported cost for Scrutiny

The table below is an extract from September’s Children in Care Dashboard report, detailing Unit Costs for each placement type.

Placement Type	Children in Care at 31.03.13	Weekly Unit Cost 2012/13	Children in Care at 31.07.13	Weekly Unit Cost 31.07.13	Children in Care at 31.08.13	Weekly Unit Cost 31.08.13	Children in Care at 30.09.13	Weekly Unit Cost 30.09.13
Placed for Adoption	14	N/A	12	N/A	13	N/A	14	N/A
Relative/Friend Carer	36	413	33	£409	33	£412	33	£408
LA Carer	114	416	126	£451	128	£452	130	£446
Agency Foster Carer	94	£821	91	£846	90	£841	84	£824
Residential Placements	45	£2,910	45	£2,685	45	£2,684	45	£2,649
Placed with Parents	14	N/A	9	N/A	9	N/A	12	N/A
Supportive Lodgings	3	N/A	4	N/A	4	N/A	3	N/A
Other Placement	0	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	0	N/A
TOTAL =	320	£888*	321	£858*	323	£862	321	£847

The revised methodology for calculating both the Internal Fostering and Relative/Friend carer Unit cost is then broken down for information in the table below.

This is modelled on the first completion of the West Midlands Children’s Strategic Commissioning Group LA Fostering Service Unit Cost Project. A copy of the proforma is attached at Appendix 1 for information.

<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Internal Fostering</i>	<i>Relative Carers</i>
Staff Costs	£700,805	£174,357
Service Overheads	£293,725	£73,078
Carer/Client Costs	£1,896,932	£471,949
Other	£110,641	£27,527
Total Costs	£3,002,103	£746,911
Divided by Total weeks for children in care	6,739	1,832
Weekly Unit Cost £'s	£446	£408

The changes in unit cost from application of the West Midlands approach is shown in the table below.

Placement Type	Weekly Unit Cost at year end 2012/13 - no Overhead included	Weekly Unit Cost 30.09.13	Increase/ (Decrease) in Unit Cost
Relative/Friend Carer	£413	£408	(£5)
LA Carer	£416	£446	£30

Relative Care Unit cost is a lower rate than Internal LA Carer due to reduced marketing and recruitment costs.

Guy Stanton

Accountancy Team Leader - Schools and Care Services

November 2013

UPDATE FOR CYP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 NOVEMBER 2013

Vivianne McKay - Interim Service Delivery Manager, Commissioning

Provider Forum on Wednesday, 09 October 2013

1. Attendance

The event was well attended by invited independent providers of residential, foster care and supported accommodation provision in Telford & Wrekin.

Residential	Attended	Supported Accommodation	Attended	Foster Agencies	Attended
Action for Children	2	ABC Care (& RESIDENTIAL)	2	Action for Children	2
Bettercare Keys	4	Clay Housing	1	By the Bridge	1
Bryn Melyn	2	Impacting Lives	0	Care Tech Fostering	2
Care Tech	2	Jordan Xavier Ltd	1	Childcare Bureau	Apols
Castle Care	2	Life 2009	2	Clifford House	0
Cove Care (& FOSTERING)	2	Living Springs	1	Family & Family Care	0
Positive Outcomes	2	Next Steps	1	Family Foster Care	2
Horizon Care	1	SAAIL	0	Core Assets	2
MGM	0	STAY	1	Foster Care Co-Op	0
Options Group	1	The Leaving Care Company	0	Fostering Solutions	1
Overley Hall	2	Theo Langston	0	Freedom Fostering	1
Reflections Group	1			NFA	0
Unity	2			Orange Grove	1
				Pathway	0
				Phoenix Foster Care	2
				Priory Fostering Services	0
				Red Kite	0
				SWIIS Foster Care	0
				TACT	2
TOTAL	23		9		16

2. Agenda

The agenda for the meeting covered these topics:

Provision of information and engagement/feedback

Opportunity to meet and speak with partners and individuals from the Authority

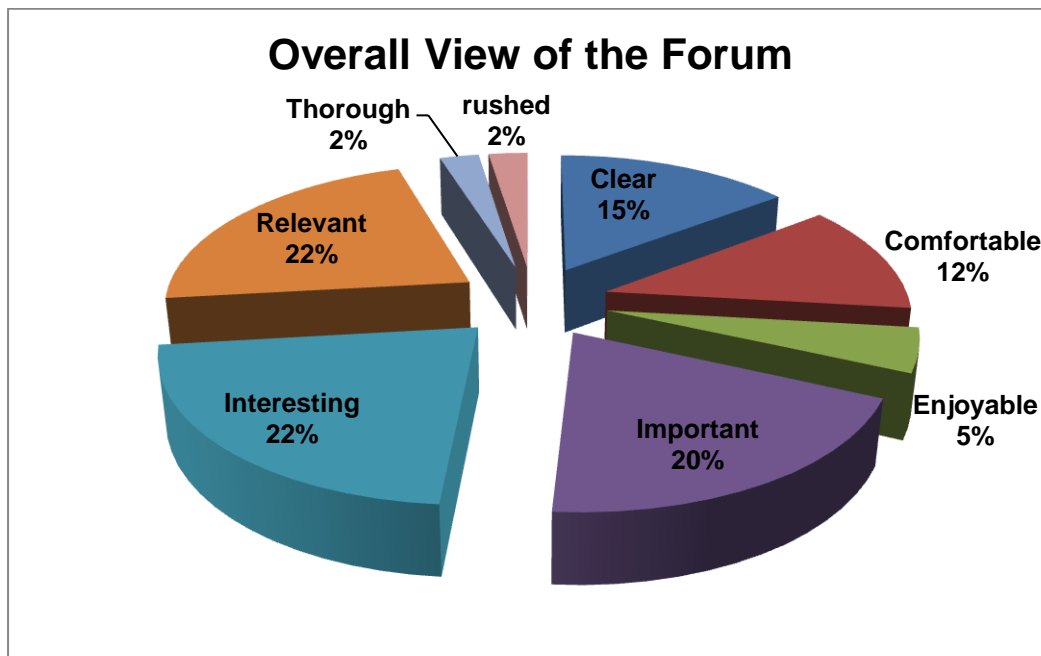
Presentation from Council Officers relation to:

- *Our priorities/services*
- *Commissioning – needs data and our requirements/plans*
- *Implications of New Legislation – care planning regulations and care homes*
- *Runaways and Missing from Home and Care Protocol*

Market stalls were set up to provide useful information for children and young people in the care of providers such as substance misuse services; sexual health services; Family Connect, Domestic Violence; Lado; healthy eating; smoking etc.; TLC card and the new information guide for providers.

3. Outcome of the Forum

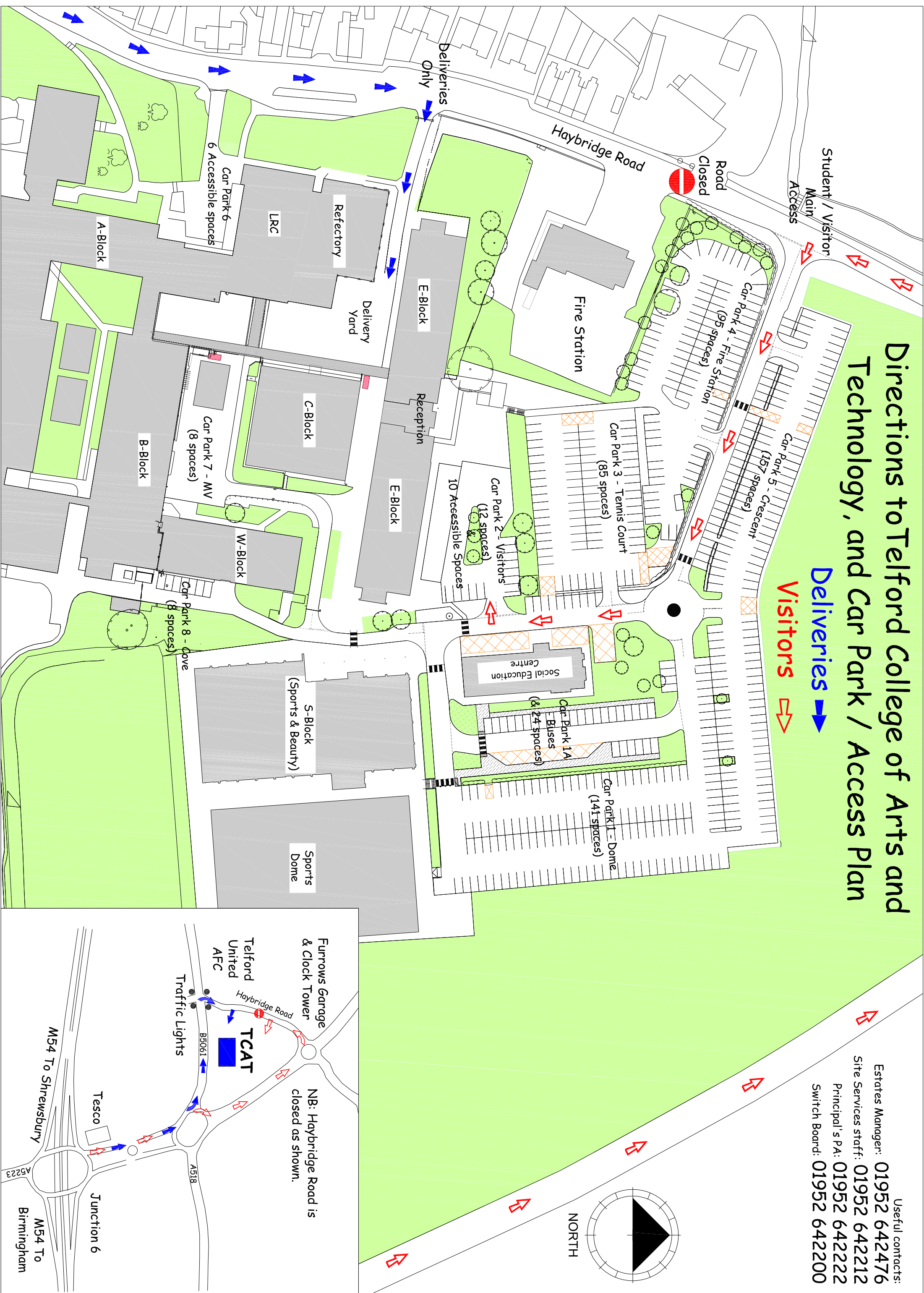
The event was well received by attendees and it anticipated that we will organise a similar event next year.



Directions to Telford College of Arts and Technology, and Car Park / Access Plan

Deliveries 

Visitors 



Useful contacts:
 Estates Manager: 01952 642476
 Site Services staff: 01952 642212
 Principal's PA: 01952 642222
 Switch Board: 01952 642200

