

AGENDA FOR

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



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**To: All Members of Children and Young People Scrutiny
Committee**

Councillors : D Berry, C Boles, A Booth, U Farooq, N Frith,
J Lancaster, L McBriar, T Pilkington, J Rydeheard and
M Whitby

Dear Member/Colleague

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee which will be held as follows:-

Date:	Thursday, 22 September 2022
Place:	Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bury, BL9 0SW
Time:	7.00 pm
Briefing Facilities:	If Opposition Members and Co-opted Members require briefing on any particular item on the Agenda, the appropriate Director/Senior Officer originating the related report should be contacted.
Notes:	

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3 MINUTES *(Pages 3 - 10)*

Minutes from the meeting held on 30th June 2022 are attached for approval.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A period of 30 minutes has been set aside for members of the public to ask questions on the agenda for tonight's meeting.

5 MEMBER QUESTIONS

A period of up to 15 minutes will be allocated for questions and supplementary questions from members of the Council who are not members of the committee. This period may be varied at the discretion of the chair.

6 IMPROVEMENT PLAN, DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION VISIT AND THE OFSTED MONITORING VISIT *(Pages 11 - 18)*

Report attached from Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

7 SOCIAL CARE RECRUITMENT *(Pages 19 - 24)*

Report attached.

8 ATTAINMENT HEADLINE OUTCOMES 2022 (PROVISIONAL) *(Pages 25 - 36)*

Report attached from Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

9 FOSTERING SUFFICIENCY *(Pages 37 - 40)*

A report is attached from Linda Evans Interim Director of Social Care Practice.

10 URGENT BUSINESS

- Minutes of:** CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- Date of Meeting:** 30 June 2022
- Present:** Councillor C Boles (in the Chair)
Councillors A Booth, S Donnelly, U Farooq, N Frith,
J Lancaster, L McBriar, T Pilkington, J Rydeheard, M Smith and
M Whitby.
Helen Chadwick, Trade Union Representative
- Also in attendance:** Councillors R Bernstein, C Birchmore, L Smith and D Berry.
Jeanette Richards, Executive Director for Children and Young
People
Michael Kemp, Strategic Lead for Inclusion and SEND
Isobel Booter, Director of Education and Skills
- Public Attendance:** 1 member of the public was present at the meeting.
- Apologies for Absence:** Georgia Murphy, Youth Cabinet Representative and
Amanda Nellist, Parent Governor (Primary).
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1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence are listed above.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Lancaster declared an interest as she is a Member of Bury together

All other declarations remain the same from the last municipal year.

3 MINUTES

It was agreed:

1. The minutes from the meeting held on 17th March 2022 were agreed as a correct record.
2. The minutes from the meeting held on 23rd March 2022 were agreed as a correct record subject to adding Helen Chadwick, Trade Union Representative's attendance.

4 MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Lancaster requested she receives a response regarding the Fit and Fed Scheme and Defibrillators as this has been raised four times.

In response Isobel Booter, Director of Education and Skills advised the fit and fed information has been sent so this will be looked into. However, the defibrillator request is a longer piece of work as the service are working with local schools.

Councillor McBriar asked if the Inclusion Ambassador role has been filled yet, and if not what steps are being taken to fill the role. In response Isobel Booler, Director of Education and Skills advised the role is now part of the Youth Participation Team and they are in the process of recruiting. Isobel advised she will report back on where in the process they are.

Councillor Rydeheard stated it was agreed that Jeanette Richards would provide an update to this committee on care leavers and housing. In response Councillor Smith advised that she requested this report went to the Corporate Parenting Board in September.

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There was one member of the public in attendance at the meeting.

Ms Harrison presented the following question to the Committee regarding response times.

I am pleased that steps have taken place to make improvements, but I do have a concern. The improvements that have been communicated to me through parent engagement sessions seem to be gradual, long-term improvements. This is not helpful for families like mine who need better services now and I am sure it is not helpful for yourselves as the workload pressures you must have due to complaints because the services are lacking now. To put this into an example for you, I know there is a new team and new leadership but every reasonable request that has been asked over the past 10 weeks has ended with a complaint as the communication has remained poor. Even with the new team and leadership the support for my family and the out-of-borough school that my son attends has been poor. We have tried to arrange support for an urgent Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) review as there are concerns that my son's needs are not being met and we have not been supported in progressing this. We have left emails and phone messages that have not been actioned over the past ten weeks.

The question is why, with a new team and new leadership in place, why are the services still poor and what should be put in place to support families and schools who are experiencing immediate improvement needs.

In response Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People firstly apologised for the distress caused on her family and thanked her for recognising long term plans are in place. Michael Kemp, Strategic Lead for Inclusion and SEND advised the current process is about trying to ensure our staff have the right empathy and attention to detail. He advised the service are currently offering monthly face to face drop-in sessions with Bury2gether that he attends, along with monthly webinars and surgeries. As the engagement is person centred there is a limited number of families who can be worked with in any day and therefore the speed is not as quick as the service would like.

The phone line the service has is covered and phone messages are attended to within the 24-hour deadline. The difficulty we have is sometimes families use workers direct lines and then this is where messages can get lost so we are trying to communicate a message to centralise contact made.

Councillor Boles, Chair asked if Ms Harrison has a supplementary question. In response Ms Harrison asked; I would remind you that I've not had a response

within 10 weeks. Do you think it's appropriate to revisit those time frames and make immediate improvement?

In response Michael Kemp, Strategic Lead for Inclusion and SEND advised he is conscious that this meeting is a public forum and offered to meet outside the meeting with Ms Harrison to discuss specific issues and concerns. In addition, Councillor Smith advised, no we don't need to review the timescales, we need to meet them.

In conclusion Councillor Boles, Chair, thanked Ms Harrison for attending as whilst the Committee receive many reports it is also important to have the lived experience of parents and families too.

6 MEMBER QUESTION

Notice had been received of 1 question.

The Chair gave an undertaking that the questions and responses would be made available on the Council Web Site, following the meeting.

Questioner	Topic	Responding
Cllr Bernstein	Social Worker Casework	Cllr Smith
Cllr Birchmore	Achievement Gap	Cllr Smith

7 OVERVIEW ON SEND GREEN PAPER

Isobel Booter, Director of Education and Skills provided an overview of the SEND Green Paper. In February, the Government published its Levelling Up White Paper, setting out its ambitions for social and economic reform across the regions.

This was followed on the 28th March by a Schools White Paper, and on the 29th March by a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Green Paper. Subsequently, the Schools Bill was introduced to Parliament on 12th May 2022. The Schools Bill sets out the proposed changes to the statutory framework impacting on the role of local authorities, on schools, and on Trusts.

Councillor Pilkington questioned where the extra funding will be prioritised; in response Michael Kemp, Strategic Lead for Inclusion and SEND advised the service wants to move to a need's led service rather than a pathway to an Education Health and Care Plan. He stated that we must align what we are doing and need partners to look at how they offer their therapies.

Councillor Rydeheard asked how much investment Bury had received. In response Isobel Booter, Director of Education and Skills informed the Committee that the Capital investment through Project Safety Valve (PSV) was £3.47 million. In addition, the PSV agreement has 5 aspects which, if met the Department for Education (DfE) have agreed that additional funding. In 2020/2021 £6 million was received in 2021/2022 an additional £4 million was received and 2022/2023 £4 million. There is also additional money for transformation which will be provided to the Committee following the meeting.

Councillor Whitby questioned if more Teachers need to be recruited to deliver on targets set withing the Green Paper. Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People advised that inclusive education is essential for everyone to thrive. Nationally there is issues

with the recruitment of teachers that are out of our control at a local level but what can be done is to help current teachers understand inclusivity and inclusive education.

Isobel Booler advised the Committee that the Service is doing a launch event in October with offers around the graduated approach to inclusivity.

Councillor Boles, Chair of that Committee outlined that in Green Paper it documented that parents were not clear what to expect from a Local Authority. He asked what we can do to clearly explain the offer a Local Authority can provide. In response Michael Kemp, advised that within the document of a graduated response it provides an outline of what teachers, Schools and parents can expect from a Local Authority. Councillor Smith also advised members that newsletters are now circulated along with meetings and workshops Michael Kemp is running for parents.

It was agreed:

1. Councillor Smith and Isobel Booler be thanked for their update.
2. To continue to update on Project Safety Valve.
3. To continue to update on the development of Special Education Needs and Disabilities in Bury.

8 PROGRESS UPDATE ON SERVICE DELIVERY FOR EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS

Isobel Booler, Director provided an overview of the service deliver for Education, Health and Care Plans. Advising Bury is committed to a programme of transformation and is determined to continue its work on co-production with parents to improve both outcomes and the experiences of children, young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families.

There is a service commitment to improve both the Education Health and Care Plan Assessment Process and the Review Process and to ensure that services work in a person-centred way. Although recent progress has been made regarding statutory compliance there is still much to do to improve the EHCP process starting with advice, though parental experience to the plan process and the review process.

Workforce priorities include continuing recruitment, up skilling, and stabilisation of the EHCP team to reduce reliance on agency staff.

The Chair then opened to questions from the Committee.

Councillor Lancaster questioned if there are any more up to date figures on figure 2g, as these only go up to February 2022. Isobel Booler advised that up-to date data can be circulated following the meeting.

Councillor Lancaster outlined that figure 2.3.8 states primary needs of SEND children in Bury and shows substantial anomalies in Bury to national figures; Councillor Lancaster asked if we as a Local Authority underdiagnose Autism and over diagnose Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. Michael Kemp, responded by explaining part of the reason for this is there are different pathways for diagnosis, there are issues on diagnosing Autism as it is a complex process. We are currently reviewing the neurological pathway with the parent community. We have asked Schools to come back as this may be due to the way Schools document a Childs

needs in data form, for instance they may not go back and add the most significant record not just the primary diagnosis.

Councillor Lancaster, referred to the comment on Parents reporting 'gate keeping' services in Bury by third sector provides such as first point and family support services who are commissioned by CAMHS and Early Break; Councillor Lancaster asked when both contracts were last reviewed, when will the next review be, has there been any consultation on if parents find the services necessary and if Bury finds their services are necessary, will the contract go out to tender. In response Michael Kemp, Strategic Lead for Inclusion and SEND advised that Commissioning Team in Health are the people who cover this, however Michael Kemp will be doing the contract monitoring with them on these services. 1st will take place on the 08th of July and then will be moving across to do the rest of them sequentially. Spoke to chair of parent forum who will be part of that contract monitoring going forward as want that lived experience there will be a requirement that reports submitted to us will cover compliments and complaints submitted by parents and carers.

Councillor McBriar referred to document pack page 53, point 2.3.6; he asked if we have Greater Manchester comparative rates to demonstrate Bury having higher rates of EHC Plans in Bury. In addition, there was a request made for the same on page 55 point 3.3.2 and the higher-than-average parental requests. In response Councillor Smith stated that we do not yet hold all comparative data as the deep dive is yet to be done. Michael Kemp advised that the service has began a deep dive audit to look at the theme of requests. He advised he is keen to analyse if those requests go through to an assessment and how to make the form more parent friendly. Michael advised the Committee that we do have access to a comparison site that shows Bury and Rochdale are higher for EHC Plans in the region, this is to be expected because of deprivation indicators.

Councillor Rydeheard requested that in future reports the Greater Manchester figures are included along with national figures for context. A question on Page 50 of the agenda pack (2.3.2) was asked by Councillor Rydeheard; what Bury anticipate the rate of requests for EHC Plans will continue at. In response Isobel Booter advised the previous 12% will increase; this year we are already seeing an increase on the last five months of 45% and the risk register is typically seeing increased demand from the effects of the COVID Pandemic.

A further question was asked regarding page 56, (3.8.1) the complaints dropping is welcome, but the Committee sought assurances that work is taking place to address the decisions and process. In response Councillor Smith advised that complaints about staff attitude have changed for the better so there is a demonstrated culture change with staff.

Helen Chadwick, Trade Union Representative sought assurances on three service areas which appear to lack capacity the impact of which may sometimes need to be picked up in classrooms: Education Psychology, CAMHS and private Nursery Provision. In response Councillor Smith advised that the Council has just commissioned a new service regarding Educational Psychologists to increase the staff. CAMHS we are not the commissioners as Children's Services.

Councillor Boles stated that we are now seeing improvement but asked when will our focus turn to monitoring implementation. Isobel Booter, Director of Education and Skills assured the committee that this piece of work is being done currently. The work is being completed in co-production with parents and advice with partners.

Councillor Smith questioned; with the 45% increase in care plans and idea to take people centred approach; if you have agency staff, how are they going to build a relationship with families. In response Michael Kemp, advised the permanent staff do face to face work and agency staff do the panel writing.

It was agreed:

1. To thank Councillor Smith, Isobel Booler and Michael Kemp for their update.

9 CHILDREN SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Jeanette Richards, Executive Director for Children and Young People Provided an overview of the report.

The Department for Education reported back:

1. that they had observed good quality of practice.
2. we have a highly engaged, motivated, loyal and committed workforce.
3. they could see improved morale and culture within the department.
4. there was a strengthened and visible leadership team, with staff reporting that they felt well supported.
5. Work is ongoing to strengthen our communication with staff.
6. There is still an over reliance on agency staff which is impacting on the quality of practice and the progression of plans for children and young people.
7. The DfE acknowledged that we need to continue our focus on the recruitment and retention of staff
8. There is further work to do to strengthen partnership working.

The committee then opened to questions:

Councillor Rydeheard sought assurances on the input the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Parenting Board will have in the LGA Peer review. In response Jeanette Richards confirmed they will collaboratively engage with the groups to hear the child's voice at all stages through the process.

Cllr Whitby questioned the difficulties of recruitment and retention of social workers. In response Jeanette Richards advised the national context it is really challenging, and it is regularly discussed at Greater Manchester level. She informed the Committee this is an issue for Councils rated as outstanding and lower the rating it becomes more challenging. The independent review for Children's Services that has been recently published calls for the Government to influence the market and the Government will respond to the report in Autumn. In addition, local authorities across the Northwest have written to the child's minister for help.

In addition, Jeanette Richards took the opportunity to site the committee on the Ofsted visit that took place on the 21st and 22nd June. As an authority judged as inadequate, Ofsted will continue to undertake monitoring visits. They focus of areas of concerns and once they are satisfied, they will close their key line of enquiry on that topic.

The areas that were covered are:

1. The Multi Agency Hub, they reported significant improvements in the team coming together
2. Application of thresholds and decision making; they reported stronger decision making
3. Triaging: they felt more work is needed.
4. Referrals resulting in no further action and repeat referrals; they saw there is more work to do.
5. They looked at concerns out of hours team; they were pleased this had improved
6. Response to abuse concerns; they were pleased with the improvement here

7. The impact of leaders – they saw clear understanding of the vision, standards and practice.

We now wait to receive a letter on the 26th July 2022 which is not a published letter.

Members sought assurances on what we should expect to improve on before the next Ofsted visit. In response Councillor Smith advised improvements are expected

Members questioned why we failed in the areas documented in the report and sought assurances on what is being done to turn this around. In response Jeanette Richards advised that on occasion it was ensuring the right performance information was available; in addition, she informed the Committee that Bury Council is currently out to recruit to a senior role who will have the capacity to identify key issues and trends. A further reason for previous failure was capacity across partners to come together in a timely way this is being managed by understanding daily which key partners are available to meet within the 24-hour time frame.

It was agreed:

1. Jeanette Richards be thanked for her update.

10 WORK PROGRAMME

It was agreed this item will be taken outside of the meeting.

11 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR C BOLES
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 9.15 pm)

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SCRUTINY REPORT



MEETING: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: THURSDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: IMPROVEMENT PLAN, DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION VISIT AND THE OFSTED MONITORING VISIT

REPORT FROM: CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

CONTACT OFFICER: JEANETTE RICHARDS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress of the Children's Services Improvement Plan that was put in place in response to the findings of the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services that was carried out by Ofsted between 25 October 2021 to 5 November 2021 and judged services to be inadequate. The Inspection report was published on 17 December 2021.
- 1.2 To provide an update on the progress review of Bury Children's Services from the Department for Education that took place on 25 May and 26 May 2022.
- 1.3 To provide an update on the Ofsted Monitoring visit that took place on the 21 and 22 June 2022; this was the first visit since the local authority was judged to be inadequate in December 2021.

2.0 ISSUES

Children's Services Improvement Plan

- 2.1 The Improvement Plan is set out in seven priority areas:
- Strengthening the effectiveness of multi-agency governance and partnership arrangement and support provided to children, young people, and their families.
 - Establishing a stable and effective leadership and management team.
 - Build a skilled, confident, and experienced workforce.
 - Improve Performance Management, QA, and Management Information Systems To develop and support good Social Work Practice.
 - Identify and effectively support children in need of Help and Protection.
 - Ensure purposeful and timely care planning that direct proportionate and effective interventions for children and their outcomes.
Develop a strategic and co-ordinate approach to providing support for care leavers to improve their outcomes.
- 2.2 The progress of the Improvement Plan is overseen by a Children's Improvement Board that meets monthly and is chaired by an Independent Chair, Linda Clegg who is also our DfE Advisor. The Board has full and consistent representation from the Lead Member, Cabinet

Member for Children and Young People, Department for Education case lead, Members, Chief Executive, Executive Director of Children's Services, Children's Services Directors/Assistant Directors, Council departments and partners including Greater Manchester Police, Health and others involved in delivery of the improvement plan.

- 2.3 The last Board meeting held on the 23 August 2022 and a detailed update was given on the progress of the Improvement Plan, Children's Services and Partners were asked to report on the quality of practice and services to children and families, how we know what the quality of practice is like, plans to maintain and improve practice and any barriers to improvement. A full and detailed discussion took place, and a summary is set out below in sections 2.4 to 2.25.
- 2.4 There has been significant work undertaken to strengthen the effectiveness of multi-agency governance and partnership arrangements and support provided to children, young people, and their families. There has been a review of the Bury Integrated Safeguarding Partnership (BISP) led by Jane Shuttleworth aimed at strengthening multi-agency governance and partnership arrangements and there is now a clear structure in place. The next stage of this review which has started is to ensure the business unit that supports the BISP has the right resources, skills, and experience to drive forward the new arrangements.
- 2.5 The Principal Social Worker, will from September Chair a multi-agency Operational Implementation group aimed at bringing partners together to improve safeguarding practice
- 2.6 A new continuum of need has been developed which will assist practitioners and managers across the partnership to identify a child's level of need and/or risk and match that need to the right support, at the right time, by the right person and in the right place. Professionals can use the tool and guidance to support quality conversations about levels out of need and risk - and it can be used in professional reflective supervision and in multi-agency discussions to support decision making. The new continuum of need document will be launched in September 2022 at a partnership event.
- 2.7 The permanent Director of Social Care Practice, Sean Walsh will take up post on 6 September 2022. This means Bury Children's Services now have a permanent Senior Leadership Team. In addition, Board was advised James Mason has achieved an internal promotion and has taken up the post of Principal Social Worker having worked for Bury as a Service Manager for several years.
- 2.8 Our priority is to build a skilled, confident, and experienced workforce. We continue to face challenges recruiting permanent Social Workers, embedding good practice is impacted by recruitment challenges, with a high agency rate and a high agency turnover rate. We continue to have three project teams supporting the services pending recruitment of permanent staff. For some Social Workers caseloads are too high and beyond our aspirational caseload average of 15. High caseloads for some Social Workers are impacting on the quality of practice in all areas of the service. At the time of the Board meeting the highest Social Work caseload was 34.
- 2.9 Following discussions at the last Board meeting, the Interim Director of Children's Social Care Practice was asked to provide an update on re-referrals as our performance data highlighted that our re-referral rate was higher than the National Average (22.7%) and Statistical Neighbour rate (21.9%). Board was advised the re-referral rate had reduced to 30.1% in July from a high of 36.3%. A review of re-referrals carried out in July 2022 at the request of the Improvement Board highlighted that there are some internal processes that are inflating our re-referral rate and action is being taken to address this and to improve step-down practice to make sure other support is in place when children no longer need the support of a Social Worker.
- 2.10 There is improvement in the practice of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which will be explored more in the Ofsted Monitoring Visit section of this report. There is improved timeliness with 84% of contacts being screened within one working day and clearer decision

making in the MASH. The MASH and the Complex Safeguarding Teams are now co-located with the partners at the Police Station and this is supporting effective multi-agency working.

- 2.11 We are developing our performance and quality assurance approaches and a Strategy Assurance and Reform Officer who will take up post in October 2022 have been appointed to support this area of development. We have a suite of performance data that helps us to understand service performance and to take required actions. We need to develop data reports in such a way that they can be easily accessible and used at team and practitioner level. We have in place a quality assurance framework and a programme of audit activity which is supporting us to understand the quality of practice however more needs to be done to ensure good quality auditing is embedded and the application of practice standards are being consistently applied in audit. We have refreshed our practice standards, and these will be signed off in September.
- 2.12 The Principal Social Worker has now introduced the Bury Commitments, which set out those areas of practice that will have the greatest impact on practice and outcomes for children and families. The Bury Commitments set out an expectation that we will have a relentless focus on improving the quality of supervision to practitioners, improving the quality of assessments and the information we use to inform assessments. Our own audit findings demonstrate that we need to improve the quality of assessments and consider historical information, impact chronologies that help us to understand the impact of significant events in a child's life, the quality of plans and how we review them, direct work with children so we fully understand their daily lived experience and wishes and feelings and that this understanding is used to inform plans.
- 2.13 The Workforce Development team that reports to the Principal Social Worker is strengthening learning and development plans. A new programme of training that targets the Bury commitments and areas of practice that require development and improvement is now in place, training has included Strategy Discussions, S47 enquiries, assessment, planning including permanence planning.
- 2.14 We have now moved away from Signs of Safety and have agreement to progress with the Hertfordshire Family Safeguarding Model that has been described as a 'real strength' by Ofsted and was cited in 'The Independent Review of Children's Social Care - The Case for Change' as effective at preventing children from becoming looked after and reducing the numbers of children on child protection plans. The model aims to improve how these services work with families, and outcomes for children and their parents. DfE have approved 130 days through 2022/23 to support implementation of the Family Safeguarding model they have established a project board. There is an expected 10-month implementation period, workforce capacity is necessary to proceed.
- <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2022/07/31/impact-of-family-safeguarding-model-hailed-as-councils-improves-to-outstanding/>
- 2.15 We have now refreshed the recording forms that practitioners use; the new forms will help practitioners to be more focussed and supports good practice and recording. These forms will be further developed as we move forward with the family safeguarding model. Practitioners are reporting that they are finding the new forms more helpful and that they are better supporting their work.
- 2.16 We need to improve our arrangements when children transfer from one social care team to another. We need to ensure transfer is timely and that the quality of work transferring is of a good enough standard and up to date but more importantly we need to ensure the experience of children and families is improved and that any change is well communicated, and introductions take place routinely as part of handover from one practitioner to another.
- 2.17 We have strengthened our Public Law Outline procedures and standards from July 2022, and we are working to improve practice and embed new ways of working to ensure families are clear about our position, what needs to change and what support is available to them.

We are now better tracking the progress of pre-proceedings which will reduce the risk of drift and delay for children. Legal team have experienced staffing challenges which are being addressed; Senior Solicitors are now providing advice to legal gateway which is ensuring more consistent legal advice and there will be a representative who can attend face to face pre-proceedings meetings going forward. We have reset expectations in relation to the reports that should be available to legal gateway both in terms of quality and timeliness, this has been inconsistent and is being kept under review.

- 2.18 The quality of child protection planning is inconsistent and needs to improve. The Child Protection Conference Chair are being supported to provide more consistent scrutiny and challenge in relation to the progress of child protection planning. The Social Worker and partners need to work together more closely with the parents/carers and support the development and delivery of the child protection plan via Core Groups to ensure more timely work is undertaken to reduce risk. We have been provided with additional capacity to support improvement in this area and we have engaged an independent professional from another local authority to undertake a peer review which will support multi-agency practice development and improvement.
- 2.19 We are developing insight and understanding of permanence planning including early permanence planning and this forms part of the learning and development programme. We have put in place a Permanence Tracker that supports to ensure there are timely permanence decisions made for children that secure emotional and legal permanence for them. A new permanence panel chaired by the Director of Social Care Practice will be established in September, this panel will provide oversight of permanence planning and strengthen practice in this area.
- 2.20 Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) are a statutory role that is in place to ensure the local authority is meeting its statutory responsibilities to looked after children and that care planning for them is meeting their needs. IROs are working with us co-operatively to develop their role and impact and they are being supported to escalate concerns when they have concerns.
- 2.21 Placement stability for most children is good, with less than 10% of children having 3 or more placement moves in 12 months. Placement sufficiency is a challenge as we do not have access to the range of placements needed for children which can mean we have no option but to place children in external placement and out of area which is costly to the local authority. Placement sufficiency is a challenge for all local authorities, and we are taking the following actions to address this: we are developing our in-house fostering service and aim to increase the number and availability of foster carers as well as implementing a specialist fostering model as an alternative to Independent Fostering Agency Placements and residential care and we are engaged in work on a Greater Manchester basis to improve placement sufficiency. We have established a weekly placement panel, the initial work of the panel is to consider children in residential placements to ensure the right children are in residential care, their individual needs are being met and to ensure children who can be cared for in a family placement are supported to achieve that.
- 2.22 We have approval from Cabinet to establish an edge of care service and will be working with Essex as an improvement partner late autumn on this. The edge of care service will support children to remain in their own families when it is safe to do so and will support us to safely reduce the number of looked after children we have.
- 2.23 Virtual school has driven improved Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion during the last year and an improvement in the quality of the PEP has been observed. Lack of stability in the Social Workforce is having an impact on maintaining the quality of PEP's and difficulties finding placements for some of our young people with complex needs.
- 2.24 We have agreement as part of restructure proposals to create dedicated care leaver teams which will support us to be focussed on meeting their needs and providing them with the help and support that every good parent would provide via a published local offer. We need to improve the quality of Pathway Plans (the plan in place to support the young person's

transition to adulthood). It is positive that the service is in touch with 98% of Care Leavers aged 19 - 21 years, we are working with others to ensure Care Leavers have the range of education, employment and training opportunities post 18 years. We need to improve our placement sufficiency for Care Leavers by increasing the number of Staying Put arrangements (where young people can remain in their foster placement post 18 years, increasing access to semi-independent accommodation and supported lodgings. We are engaged in the Greater Manchester House Project and are working to secure 5 tenancies which will increase sufficiency.

- 2.25 There are delays in the young people who need support from adult social care and there is a review of transition pathways under review which will see more timely transitions.

Department for Education Review

- 2.26 The Department for Education (DfE) undertook a review of progress since the Ofsted Inspection of children's services on 25 and 26 May 2022; the review led by Linda Clegg in her capacity as DfE Improvement Adviser, Kelly Knott (Head of Northern Region) and Charlotte Harker (DfE Intervention Lead). During the review discussions took place with frontline practitioners, social workers, service managers, strategic leads, and representatives from partner agencies.

Key Findings

- 2.27 It was evident throughout the review that staff are dedicated, loyal and committed to working in Bury. Staff morale was reported as good across the service, though the challenges Bury faces in recruiting and retaining social workers presents a risk and this was clearly articulated by staff. It was recognised that the recruitment of a permanent workforce is fundamental to implementing sustainable improvements.
- 2.28 It was reported staff described leaders of children's services as visible and approachable and they felt well supported by managers, something they reflected had not always been the case. The appointment of Jeanette Richards, as the permanent Director of Children's Services, is a positive step in establishing a stable leadership team and this was welcomed by staff and partners.
- 2.29 The vision for children and young people in Bury, and the plan to deliver this, was not well understood by staff or partners, it was noted there had been recent communication. It was recommended that it would be beneficial to review your communication and engagement strategy,
- 2.30 The introduction of the new workforce strategy was viewed as a positive step, but we will need to monitor the impact of this closely. Leaders were asked to reflect on whether HR processes are hindering the timely recruitment of staff to all roles across Children's Services.
- 2.31 Partnership working in Bury was said to be underdeveloped. It is evident that the lack of a strategic partnership approach is hindering the work of frontline staff in supporting children and families. The refreshed focus, on the delivery and improvement of children's services, by the Police was viewed as positive and the understanding of Health statutory responsibilities was less evident during the review. The review being undertaken by Jane Shuttleworth into integrated safeguarding arrangements was viewed as key to developing a stronger partnership.
- 2.32 The DfE recognised that a threshold document was in existence, they also recognised that it was not being applied consistently and advised further work is needed to remedy this. Work has progressed to refresh the Continuum of Need, see section 2.6.
- 2.33 The DfE acknowledged that there is a lack of clarity about the model of social work practice being used. Children's Services are moving away from signs of Safety and now have Cabinet approval to implement the Hertfordshire Family Safeguarding Model, see 2.14.

- 2.34 Overall, the DfE were encouraged to hear the commitment, from corporate and political leaders, to improving children's services. However, it was stated that this needs to translate into tangible action and investment in sustainable improvement that drives longer term efficiencies. Furthermore, it was recommended that Political leaders should distinguish their role further in developing their effectiveness to provide support, scrutiny, and challenge, and not be drawn into operational decisions.

Ofsted Monitoring Visit

- 2.35 The Ofsted Monitoring visit carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework took place on 21 and 22 June 2022, this was the first visit since the local authority was judged to be inadequate in December 2021. The monitoring visit focussed on Step-up from, and step-down to, early help, contacts to the MASH, referrals, and re-referrals, strategy discussions and section 47 enquiries, child in need assessments, the management of allegations of abuse against professionals who work with children, the emergency management of concerns for children outside of normal office hours and the impact of leaders and managers.
- 2.36 A range of evidence was considered during the visit, including electronic records, performance management information, case file audits and other information provided by senior managers. In addition, inspectors spoke to a range of staff including social workers, managers, and the local authority designated officer.

Key findings

- 2.37 Ofsted noted a more stable leadership team, and the appointment of a permanent Director is having a positive impact on the workforce. Senior Managers are appropriately focusing on building the foundations to improve practice. However, this was not yet having an impact for children and weaknesses in safeguarding practice and partnership arrangements were observed.
- 2.38 Significant challenges in the recruitment of social workers were found to be impeding our ability to improve practice and services.
- 2.39 Additional capacity to the out of hours Emergency Duty Team service (EDT) and the Designated Officer was said to be leading to swift action being taken to protect children.
- 2.40 Ofsted recognised there are a wide range of services to support children and families in need of early help. When children are referred into the MASH, their needs are appropriately identified through effective screening and consistent application of appropriate thresholds. It was acknowledged that more needed to be done to ensure partners share information with the MASH in a timely way and to prevent needs from escalating, and a refreshed early help strategy is due to be launched imminently to support this.
- 2.41 Partners need to act promptly and refer into the MASH, or the emergency duty team when outside of normal office hours when there are concerns about children being at risk of likely or actual significant harm, to keep children safe.
- 2.42 Delays in strategy discussions taking place were referenced and a significant amount of work has been undertaken to improve the quality and timeliness of discussions. This has included mandatory training to staff, discussions with partners and briefings being shared with partners via the Improvement Board.
- 2.43 The quality of assessments and plans for children was found to still be an area for improvement and work is ongoing to improve the quality. Training is being offered to all staff that will highlight the importance of considering all information including history, considering each individual child's diverse needs and a full analysis of risk and need. This will enable Social Workers to gain a deeper understanding of children's needs to inform effective planning.

- 2.44 Social Workers reported positively on the support they receive through supervision, this was however found to be inconsistent, not reflective or helping Social Workers to consider concerns and share the risks. Actions were found to be too task focussed.
- 2.45 Ofsted acknowledged the quality assurance framework had been refreshed and establishing regular performance management meetings and routine audit activity. However, analysis of data needs to improve so it can be used to identify and understand emerging issues and what this means for children.
- 2.46 It was recognised that auditing has been strengthened however it was said that more needs to be done to further strengthen moderation and to ensure learning from audit is driving practice development and improvement. We have now introduced learning circles and new communications to support learning from audit and we have put in place tighter arrangements to monitor actions from audits are completed.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Progress of the Children’s services Improvement Plan will continue to be monitored at the monthly Children’s Improvement Board chaired by an Independent Chair, Linda Clegg.
- 3.2 The findings of the progress review of Bury Children’s Services from the Department for Education that took place on 25 May 2022 and 26 May 2022 have been considered alongside the improvement plan. Linda Clegg, Department for Education Advisor is required to provide a six weekly report and a further six-monthly progress review will take place in November 2022.
- 3.3 Findings from the Ofsted Monitoring visit that took place on 21 and 22 June 2022 have been considered in the improvement plan. We are expecting a further Ofsted monitoring visit in October 2022. This visit will focus on child protection planning, children subject to Public Law Outline and the impact of managers and leaders.

List of Background Papers: -

Ofsted Inspection of Bury Local Authority Children’s Services Inspection dates: 25 October 2021 to 5 November 2021. Report published on 17 December 2021.

Contact Details: -

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Tel no: 0161 253 7562

Executive Director sign off Date: _____

JET Meeting Date: _____

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SCRUTINY REPORT

MEETING: CYP Scrutiny

DATE: 22 September 2022

SUBJECT: Social Care Recruitment

REPORT FROM: Adam Peluch

CONTACT OFFICER: Jeanette Richards, Executive Director, Children's Services

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides a summary overview of recruitment activity in relation to Children & Young People Social Care
- 1.2 At a national, regional and local level, there are acknowledged and long-standing challenges for employers in securing sufficient numbers of suitably qualified and experienced qualified social workers to undertake a range of roles with Children's Social Care.
- 1.3 Recruitment and retention difficulties are particularly pronounced in respect of frontline Social Workers (Level 2 and Level 3), but also to some degree amount other roles such as Team Managers and Independent Reviewing Officers. Recruitment and retention challenges are particularly pronounced in the frontline child protection functions of Safeguarding and Initial Response.
- 1.4 As a result, the service remains dependent of the use of specialist Project Teams and expensive agency workers to provide sufficient capacity to deliver essential statutory services.
- 1.4 Following the ILACS inspection, sufficiency and stability of the social care workforce has been highlighted as an area requiring intervention to ensure consistent and high-quality services can be provided to children and their families.

2.0 Recruitment – Actions to Date

- 2.1 Since the inspection, a number of steps have been taken by the Directorate to support recruitment and retention activity. There are summarised below:
- 2.2 Development and deployment of an improved recruitment campaign, including:

- specific promotional pages on the Greater. Jobs recruitment website supported with video messages and through social media channels
- a rolling recruitment programme for Social Workers, ensuring an advert is always live
- Monthly “drop in” recruitment sessions for prospective social workers to attend and find out more about working for Bury.
- Increasing service visibility at recruitment events / fairs.
- promotion of the broader bury offer and the benefits of working for the Council.

2.3 Introduction of targeted market interventions to ensure our employment offer is attractive and competitive, including:

- Recruitment and retention payments for targeted roles within the workforce
- Payment of professional Social Work England fees for post requiring registration as a condition of employment.
- Provision of free car parking to Social Workers who are based in town centre locations
- Increase in the rates payable to social workers becoming Practice Educators and supervising student social workers
- Completion of a salary benchmarking exercise to ensure remuneration levels are competitive with our peers.
- Promotion of the agile working offer
- Maintenance of market supplement payments where there a demonstrable need to ensure alignment with the external market.

Market interventions remain under continuous review to ensure they are effective and will be amended to account for changes in market condition and organisational requirements.

2.4 Improving the conditions for social work by:

- Establishment of, and appointment to, a new role of Principal Social Worker to lead on the development of social work.
- Establishing a programme of engagement events, such as the “Voice of the Workforce” group.
- Development of a new organisational structure (currently in consultation) designed to facilitate the reduction of caseloads held by workers to an average of 15 and provide improved levels of support and supervision. This includes the establishment of a significant number of additional posts in the structure.
- Introduction of the role of Advanced Practitioner across all service areas to manage complex casework and support the development of other social workers.
- Establishing a strong and stable senior leadership team.
- Developing a Social Work Academy to bring together the Social Work Career Pathway and workforce offers.
- Strengthening and developing the overall learning and development offer.

2.5 Growing our own social workers through:

- Developing the Social Worker Apprentice programme, with an aspiration to increase numbers from 3 to 9 places on the programme.
- Developing the pool of Practice Educators to enable the Directorate to host more students
- Strengthening our involvement in the Step up to Social Work programme.

2.6 Strengthened capacity and processes regarding recruitment through:

- Investment in additional dedicated HR capacity to support recruitment activity.
- Developed protocols on conversion of agency staff to substantive employees to encourage transfer.
- Regular reporting of recruitment and onboarding activity to Improvement Board, and ongoing work to minimise the time between interview and new employees commencing in role.

2.7 Further work on supporting recruitment activity is in progress, with an emphasis on a number of innovative approaches:

- Undertaking initial work on introducing international recruitment, with the support of a specialist external partner. This is anticipated to include significant target recruitment within particular countries, with a prospect of appointing up to 20 qualified and experienced social workers into hard to fill roles over the medium term.
- Improving the “candidate experience”, with improved communications and onboarding processes.
- Detailed consideration of the introduction of further highly targeted interventions to specific workforce sectors that continue to present particular recruitment and retention challenges, which the Directorate will engage with trade unions and the workforce over in the coming weeks.
- Piloting of an enhanced business support offer to social workers, with a view to allowing social workers to focus on core responsibilities and potentially hold higher caseloads safely.
- Exploring further opportunities to strengthen and expand routes into social work with Bury, including opportunities for employees from other parts of the business to retrain and transition into the sector in a supported manner.

3.0 Recruitment Activity

3.1 Targeted recruitment activity has been planned and delivered since the first quarter of 2022. A programme of rolling adverts for Social Workers has been implemented, with associated media and marketing, along with timetabled selection activity to ensure candidates are assessed and on-boarded at pace.

The first advert of the rolling process went live on 27th April 2022 and remaining adverts are scheduled until 4th January 2023. Shortlisting and interviews take place on a weekly basis.

3.2 In respect of Social Workers, the rolling programme has produced:

Advert Live	Advert Closed	Candidates Applied	Candidates Shortlisted	Interviews	Offers Made	Offers Accepted
27/04/22	13/05/22	3	3	20/05/22	3	2
13/05/22	06/06/22	1	1	10/06/22	1	0
07/06/22	17/06/22	2	2	24/06/22	0	N/A
17/06/22	01/07/22	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
01/07/22	15/07/22	1	1	29/07/2022 > rescheduled to 04/08/2022 > rescheduled to 18/08/2022	1	1
21/07/22	27/07/22	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
28/07/22	03/08/22	3	2	12/08/22	0	N/A
04/08/22	10/08/22	2	1	19/08/22	1	1
11/08/22	17/08/22	1	1	26/08/2022 > rescheduled to	0	N/A

				02/09/2022		
18/08/22	24/08/22	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
25/08/22	31/08/22	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
01/09/22	07/09/22	2	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

3.3 From a broader perspective, and encompassing recruitment activity across the full range of Children's Social Care posts, employees have been engaged as detailed below:

Starters	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Total
Advanced Practitioner	0	0	0	1	0	1
Child & Family Worker	1	0	0	0	2	3
Early Help Practitioner	0	0	0	1	1	2
Principal Social Worker	0	0	0	0	1	1
Standby Advanced Practitioner	0	0	0	2	0	2
Team Manager	1	1	0	0	2	4
Total	2	1	0	4	6	13

3.4 The following table summarises the range of adverts that have been posted, the response rates and numbers of applicants appointed:

Role	Advert Live	Advert Closed	Candidates Applied	Candidates Shortlisted	Interviews	Offers Made	Offers Accepted
Experienced Social Worker (MASH)	20/04/22	02/05/22	6	5	30/06/22 & 01/07/22	1	1
Children's Rights Projects Worker	20/04/22	20/05/22	3	2	15/06/22	1	1
Children's Services Team Manager	20/05/22	07/06/22	4	2	17/06/22	2	2
Family Support Worker	25/05/22	08/06/22	7	6	23/06/22	3	2
Advanced Practitioner	25/05/22	08/06/22	1	1	24/06/22	0	N/A
Family Support Worker – Fixed Term	25/05/22	08/06/22	5	5	23/06/22	1	0
Principal Social Worker	25/05/22	08/06/22	7	2	06/07/2022 due to candidates being on holiday	1	1
Child & Family Worker	08/06/22	22/06/22	11	4	26/07/22	3	3
Children's Improvement Manager	20/06/22	03/07/22	7	2	27/07/22	1	1
Head of Service (IRT)	25/06/22	08/07/22	1	1	26/07/22 &	1	1

					17/08/22		
Advanced Practitioner (Practice Improvement)	06/07/22	20/07/22	2	2	18/08/22	2	2
EDT Advanced Practitioner	19/07/22	02/08/22	1	1	09/08/22	1	1
Head of Service (CASS & Leaving Care)	20/08/22	07/09/22	2	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Head of Service (Safeguarding)	20/08/22	07/09/22	4	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Advanced Practitioner	20/08/22	07/09/22	4	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Adoption Social Worker (Temporary)	23/08/22	06/09/22	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Adoption Social Worker (Permanent)	23/08/22	06/09/22	1	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

3.5 In respect of promotional events

The Greater Manchester Social Work Academy held a social work careers event on 17th June 2022 to allow students to meet different employers virtually, along with workshops on how to complete application forms and prepare for interviews. Linda Evans, Interim Director of Social Care Practice, presented to the students talking about why they should come to work for Bury once they are qualified.

A regular twilight recruitment event has been developed to encourage the current social care workforce to actively support and engage with attracting talent. These twilight sessions will take place on the second Tuesday of each month and will be reviewed periodically to determine the effectiveness.

The first twilight recruitment event occurred on 12th July 2022, where one person attended and three people registered their interest in the event.

The second twilight recruitment event occurred on 9th August 2022. Six people attended this session; those in attendance were individuals who were aspiring to be Social Workers.

A third twilight event is scheduled for week commencing 12th September.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The Directorate has made significant progress in strengthening the employment offer to potential candidates considering joining the Directorate and has developed an improved approach to attracting and retaining employees.

4.2 The broader market for social work qualified professionals remains challenging, and the strengthened offer has not yet yielded significant tangible benefits in terms of decreased reliance on agency workers and project teams.

- 4.3 Full implementation of the proposed new structure, delivering reduced caseloads, opportunities for Advanced Practitioners and smaller supervision groups, is anticipated to further improve the attractiveness of the Bury employment offer and should support recruitment efforts going forwards.
- 4.4 A full review of market interventions is required to ensure they are aligned to market conditions and supportive of delivery of service priorities.
- 5.5 Further development in respect of international recruitment and the strengthening of programmes to develop our own Social Workers are anticipated to significantly contribute towards successful population of vacancies over the medium term.

List of Background Papers:-

Contact Details:-

[Report Author]

Executive Director sign off Date: _____

JET Meeting Date: _____

SCRUTINY REPORT

MEETING: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 22 September 2022

SUBJECT: Attainment Headline Outcomes 2022 (provisional)

REPORT FROM: Councillor Lucy Smith, Cabinet member for Children and Education Services

CONTACT OFFICER: Isobel Booler, Director of Education and Skills
Paul Cooke, Strategic Lead (Education Services)

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Summer Term 2022 saw the return to the use of Standard Attainment Tests (SATs), the Phonics Screening Check and statutory reporting for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 in primary schools. We also saw the return to formal examinations, GCSEs and other qualifications, in secondary schools and A Levels, and other qualifications, in post-16 education.
- 1.2 In primary schools what constitutes the expected standard at age 5,6, 7 and 11 remained the same as when pupils were last statutorily assessed in 2019. There was no allowance made for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore the 2022 outcomes do give an indication of the impact of the pandemic on Bury's primary aged pupils.
- 1.3 2022 was the first year that primary schools were required to administer the Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check, in 2021 this had been optional. This check is an on-screen assessment which determines whether pupils are able to fluently recall their multiplication tables up to 12 through a set of timed questions, 25 questions each with 6 seconds to answer. There is no defined threshold for this check.
- 1.4 Secondary schools and colleges returned to the formal examination period following the use of Centre Assessed Grades in 2020 and Teacher Assessed Grades in 2021. The methodology in each year was different. In 2020 the Centre Assessed Grades were expected to inform the final grades awarded to students however Ofqual had to make changes to this following the release of the A level grades and, in the end, the Centre Assessed Grades were used. As in 2020, schools and colleges had clear and robust systems, in line with Ofqual guidance, to generate grades however, in this case, knowing from the outset that these grades would be the ones issued to students on results day.
- 1.5 Following the submission of Teacher Assessed Grades in May 2021, Bury LA quality assured the process for generating these grades in four maintained high schools. The schools took up the offer of quality assurance and the processes,

in terms of thoroughness, challenge and level of scrutiny, used by the schools should be commended.

- 1.6 It should be noted that the students completing their post-16 studies in 2022 did not sit GCSE examinations in 2020.
- 1.7 Ofqual announced in September 2021 that overall the 2022 A level and GCSE results would be lower than in 2021, when grades were based on teacher assessment, but higher than those awarded in 2019. The DfE stated that this was in recognition of the disruption caused by the pandemic. In addition, the approach taken to awarding grades for vocational and technical qualifications would be broadly the same.
- 1.8 Given the significant disruption to studies over the last 3 years, changes were made to GCSEs including changes to coursework, choice of content being offered in some subjects, and formulae and equation sheets being provided in maths and science. In addition, exam boards published advance information in February about the topics that would be examined. Ofqual stated that this was to help students to focus their revision and make the exams feel less daunting.
- 1.9 2022 GCSE and post-16 outcomes cannot be compared with the last two years. At this stage we have self-reported data only. The LA will receive the full data set for GCSEs, and other qualifications, for Year 11 in late October 2022. However, the headline data reported by our schools and from Bury College and Holy Cross Sixth Form College are largely between 2019 and 2021 outcomes as Ofqual had stated.
- 1.10 **All data in this report is provisional and therefore subject to change.** National, regional and statistical neighbour comparative data for EYFS, Phonics, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are based on emerging figures as we await the release of validated outcomes from the DfE. There is no valid comparative data at this time for GCSE outcomes.

2.0 PRIMARY OUTCOMES 2022

- 2.1 2019 data has been included as a comparator. As stated above apparent 'dips' in performance, given that thresholds remained unchanged, gives an indication of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact was disproportionate across the country, within the borough of Bury, between classes & year groups in our schools and indeed from pupil to pupil. Analysis of the data identifies LA-wide priorities and will inform strategies through the self-improving school-led system.

2.2 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Since 2012 schools have been following the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The 17 Early Learning Goals within the EYFS are organised across 7 areas of learning with 3 **prime** areas of learning:

- personal, social and emotional development;
- physical development and;
- communication and language

and 4 **specific** areas of learning, namely literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design.

Each area of learning is made up of two or three Early Learning Goals (ELGs). These are set out in the table below:

7 areas of learning (prime in bold)	Early Learning Goals
communication and language	Listening, attention and understanding; Speaking
physical development	Gross motor skills; Fine motor skills
personal, social and emotional development	Self-regulation; Managing self; Building relationships
Literacy	Comprehension; Word reading; Writing
Mathematics	Number; Numerical patterns
understanding the world	Past and present; People culture and communities; Natural world
expressive arts and design	Creating with materials; Being imaginative and expressive

Children are assessed against the ELGs and judged to be at one of two levels; either **emerging** or **expected** level of development. To achieve the national **Good Level of Development** (GLD) measure, children must achieve at least the **expected** level in each early learning goal within the prime areas of learning, literacy and mathematics.

EYFS Outcomes

In 2022, 63% of Bury's children, attending schools and private, voluntary and independent settings, reached a good level of development. This is 2% below national and is 8% below that of 2019. However, it should be noted that in that period changes had been made to the Early Years and direct comparison should not be made. Bury's 'dip' is in line with Greater Manchester (GM) but 1% greater than national, which 'dipped' by 7%.

Whilst below national in 2022, Bury is 2% above the GM average and 1% above the North West (NW) average. Our ranking against GM has fallen from 2nd in 2019 to 4th in 2022 whilst against the NW (23 local authorities) Bury has fallen from 5th in 2019 to 7th in 2022.

In relation to the 7 areas of learning, Bury children attained slightly below national in all areas except communication and language, physical development and expression arts and design which are in line with national.

Vulnerable Groups – Good Level of Development

Girls underperformed relative to national (4% below) whilst boys, although achieving a lower GLD than girls, were in line with boys nationally.

1% more of Bury's children eligible for free schools meals reached a good level of development compared with this group nationally. However, Bury's children not in receipt of free school meals are underperforming compared with this group nationally by 4%.

Children with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) are 1% below the national for this group with those on SEN Support being 2% below whilst those with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) attaining in line with their peers.

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) attained below their peer group nationally by 3% whilst English First Language (E1L) were 2% below their peer group nationally.

In relation to ethnicity, White British children and White Other were 1% and 2% below their peer groups nationally. However, for the other groupings the gaps were much greater. Further analysis included a greater breakdown of ethnic codes and the size of these cohorts in Bury is to be undertaken.

2.3 Year 1 Phonics Outcomes

In June 2022, Year 1 pupils underwent the Phonics Screening Check. This check is conducted by suitably qualified staff in the schools on a one-to-one basis. Working at or above is the expected standard nationally and it requires a score of 32 or more, out of 40. Pupils are given both pseudo words e.g. vair and real words e.g. coin.

During the pandemic, Year 1 pupils did not take the Phonics Screening Check in June 2020 nor in June 2021. The DfE made it a statutory requirement for schools to test their Year 1 2019/2020 and 2020/21 cohorts in the second half of the autumn terms when they were in Year 2 using a past version of the check. These results were submitted to the LA. Any pupils who did not reach the threshold in Autumn 2021 were re-tested at the end of Year 2 in June 2022.

Percentage passing phonics screening check (Year 1)	June 2019	Autumn 2020	Autumn 2021	June 2022
LA	82	80	80	77
National	82	78	79	76
Difference	0	2	1	1

Bury’s percentage of pupils working at or above is 1% above national in 2022, an improvement on our position in 2019. This places Bury 4th in GM compared with 2nd in 2019 and 10th in the North West, compared with 5th in 2019.

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check – Vulnerable Groups

The percentage of both boys and girls reaching the expected standard in 2022 were 1% above their peer groups nationally with the Bury gender gap narrowing by 1% from 2019 with girls outperforming boys by 7%.

3% more of Bury’s children eligible for free schools meals reached the expected standard compared with this group nationally. However, Bury’s children not in receipt of free school meals performed in line with their peer group nationally.

Children with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) are 3% above the national for this group with 41% reaching the expected standard, the same as in 2019. The gap between SEND and non-SEND pupils has narrowed by 5% between 2019 and 2022.

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) attained in line with their peer group whilst English First Language (E1L) were 2% above their peer group nationally.

2.4 Year 2 Phonics Outcomes including Vulnerable Groups

The pupils undertaking the Phonics Screening Check at the end of Year 2 in June 2022 were those who had not reached the expected standard in Autumn 2021. The number taking the check was 492 representing 21% of the 2021/22 Year 2 cohort.

44% of pupils taking the Phonics Screening Check in Year 2 reached the Year 1 expected standard which was in line with national; 5% of pupils were disapplied and did not take the check.

45% of boys and 43% of girls reached the expected standard for Year 1, 4% above and 5% below that of their peer groups nationally respectively.

4% more of Bury's children eligible for free schools meals reached the Year 1 expected standard compared with this group nationally. However, Bury's children not in receipt of free school meals performed 2% below their peer group nationally.

Children with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) were in line with the national for this group.

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) were 3% above their peer group whilst English First Language (E1L) in line with their peer group nationally.

2.5 Key Stage 1 Outcomes

Key Stage 1 outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are teacher assessed. Schools have 'pupil can' statements, alongside national tests in reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling and mathematics, to support this process. The grammar, punctuation and spelling test is optional. The tests used are marked and assigned a scaled score of between 85 and 115. A scaled score of 100 or more indicates that the pupil has met the expected standard in the test. In addition, teachers submit a teacher assessment for writing (working towards, at expected standard or greater depth) and in science (has not met the expected standard or working at the expected standard). In reading, writing and mathematics schools can also use codes indicating that a pupil is working pre-key stage. For pupils operating below pre-key stage a newly introduced engagement model, published by the Standards and Testing Agency is used. This model uses 5 areas of engagement (exploration, realisation, anticipation, persistence and initiation) and is also available for Year 6.

In 2022, 51% of Bury's pupils reached the expected standard in each of reading, writing and maths (RWM), 2% below the national average. In individual subjects the gaps to national were 2%, 3% and 2% below respectively. This placed Bury 5th in GM and 11th in the North West which is an improvement from 7th & 14th in 2019.

3% of Bury's pupils achieved greater depth in all three subjects compared with 6% nationally representing a dip of 5% for both Bury and national from 2019. This placed Bury 7th in GM and 19th in the North West which is the same position in GM as in 2019 but a dip of 4 places against the North West.

Key Stage 1 Outcomes – Vulnerable Groups

The percentage of boys reaching the expected standard in RWM is 6% below that of girls however when compared with peer groups nationally Bury's boys are 1% below whilst Bury's girls are 4% below. Girls are also 4% below in the three individual subjects compared with the peer group nationally whilst boys are in line in reading, 1% below in writing and 1% above in mathematics. At greater depth, Bury's boys and girls are both 3% below national for their group in the combined measure with the greatest gaps at individual subject level being girls in reading and boys in maths.

1% more of Bury's children eligible for free schools meals reached the expected standard in RWM compared with this group nationally. However, Bury's children not in receipt of free school meals performed 4% below their peer group nationally. In individual subjects the largest gap is for non-free school meals pupils in writing (4% below) with free school meals pupils being 2% above their national peer group in the same subject.

Children with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) are 2% below the national for this group with 59% reaching the expected standard, a drop of 12% since 2019 in Bury, similar to the national drop of 13%. Pupils receiving SEN Support were 3% below national yet those with an EHCP were in line with their peers. At individual subject level, the largest gap is for SEN Support in reading (6% below) then in mathematics (5% below). Pupils with an EHCP performed above their national peer group in writing and mathematics (both 1% above) and were in line in reading.

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) were 7% below their peer group nationally whilst English First Language (E1L) were 2% below for the expected standard in RWM. The largest gap for EAL pupils was in writing (8% below), then reading (6% below) then mathematics (5% below). This needs to be explored in more depth against ethnic groups.

2.6 Key Stage 2 Outcomes

The **Multiplication Tables Check (MTC)** was statutory for all Year 4 pupils for the first time this year via an on-line assessment.

In May 2022, Bury's Year 6 pupils took the **Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs)** in reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling and in mathematics. Each pupil is then assigned a scaled score for reading and mathematics which is aggregated up to school, LA, regional and national level. Scaled scores range from 80 to 120 with the national expected standard being a scaled score of 100 and greater depth 110 or higher.

Year 6 writing outcomes are teacher assessed using the 'pupil can' statements as the guide. Pupils need to meet all of the statements within a particular standard.

In 2022, 59% of Bury's pupils reached the expected standard in each of reading, writing and maths (RWM) which is in line with the national average. This is down from 65% in 2019 mirroring the national picture. In individual subjects the gaps to national were 2% above in reading, 2% below in writing, 1% above in grammar, punctuation and spelling and 3% above national in maths. The average scaled scores are all in line with national for the tested

subjects. We await the ranking information against GM, North West and Statistical Neighbours.

4% of Bury's pupils achieved greater depth in all three subjects compared with 7% nationally representing a dip of 4% for both Bury and national from 2019.

Key Stage 2 Outcomes – Vulnerable Groups

The percentage of boys reaching the expected standard in RWM is 7% below that of girls however when compared with peer groups nationally Bury's boys are 1% above whilst Bury's girls are in line with national. Girls are below their peer group in writing (2%) and grammar, punctuation and spelling (1%) whilst boys are 4% above their peers in reading and maths and 2% above in grammar, punctuation and spelling. At greater depth, boys were 1% above their national group in all but writing which was 4% below. Girls were below their peer group in all subjects; writing (7%), maths (5%), grammar, punctuation and spelling (4%) and reading (1%).

2% more of Bury's children eligible for free school meals reached the expected standard in RWM compared with this group nationally with Bury's children not in receipt of free school meals performing in line with their peer group nationally. In individual subjects, the largest gap is for non-free school meals pupils in writing (4% below) with free school meals pupils being 4% above their peer group in grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Children with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) are 1% below the national for this group with 17% reaching the expected standard, a drop of 4% since 2019 in Bury, in line with the national drop. Pupils receiving SEN Support were 1% below national whilst those with an EHCP were 2% above their peers. At individual subject level, the largest gap is for EHCP at 7% above their peers for reading.

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) were 2% below their peer group nationally whilst English First Language (E1L) were 2% above for the expected standard in RWM. The largest gap for EAL pupils was in writing at 4% below.

In relation to ethnicity, at the expected standard in RWM, the largest gaps below the peer groups nationally are for Asian heritage (8%) and White British heritage (6%). White Other outperformed their peer group by 1%. Across the six reported groups the Mixed ethnic group performed well against their peers nationally. Reading was the most positive subject across the groups with only Asian heritage being below their peers. As with Key Stage 1 there is further work to be done in analysing the performance of specific ethnic groups against cohort numbers.

2.7 Moderation of Primary Outcomes in 2022

Whilst statutory moderation did not take place in 2020 and 2021, as an LA, we offered local informal moderation across Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

In 2022, there was no requirement on the LA to moderate the Early Years Foundation Stage due to changing methodology and the introduction of the Reception Baseline Assessment. Schools were encouraged, as is the norm, to moderate internally, across MATs and clusters.

At Key Stage 1 there is a statutory requirement to moderate 25% of maintained schools and 25% of academies with 10% of pupils within each of those schools being sampled. Schools are notified 24 hours in advance of the pupils selected based on data shared by the schools with the LA.

Schools are selected based on when they were last moderated and if there were any areas for improvement linked to best practice identified in the previous moderation year. Moderation includes reading, writing and maths. The LA moderation team is led by a former Bury headteacher, other moderators are current practitioners. Moderators visit school in pairs to undertake the process and there were no issues requiring further action. Judgements were found to be accurate. An audit panel takes place at the end of the process taking direct feedback from the moderators; a report will be shared with schools.

A similar moderation process for writing takes place at Key Stage 2. However, in each school 15% of pupils are sampled. For one school there was an agreed follow up visit, linked to the limited evidence base initially presented. The follow up visit included the moderation manager, a former LA specialist English consultant, and agreement was reached. As above, the audit panel met at the end of the process and the findings, strengths and areas for development, will be shared with schools.

Moderators reported, at both key stages, that schools indicated their satisfaction with the process in that they found it to be both fair and supportive in affirming teacher assessment judgements.

2.8 Monitoring of the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

The LA is required to monitor 10% of maintained schools and 10% of academies. Visits were conducted by the LA's Phonics Moderation Manager with some visits being shadowed by the Quality Standards and Performance Officer (Primary). The visits included observation and checking of completed scripts. The LA includes this check, and the SATs monitoring (See 2.9) in the training offered to all schools on the moderation process (See 2.7).

2.9 Monitoring of Key Stage 2 tests in 2022

It is a statutory requirement for the LA to monitor the administration of the Key Stage 2 tests including a pre-test check (security of papers), the administration itself and a post-test check (storage of papers). The monitoring includes checking on the use and storage of Key Stage 1 test materials which are used by schools to support teacher assessment.

The LA is required to monitor at least 10% of maintained schools and 10% of academies. The team included the three Quality Standards and Performance Officers and the LA's Key Stage 1 Moderation Manager. The Quality Standards and Performance Officer (primary) led the process including training colleagues prior to the visits. Schools visited received both an official monitoring form and verbal feedback on best practice.

2.10 Key Stage 4 School Reported Outcomes

At this stage in the academic year, GCSE information is limited to the self-reported outcomes from the schools against key headlines. We are grateful to the schools for sharing the data on GCSE results day, Thursday 25th August

2022, enabling us to calculate provisional LA level averages for the headline measures.

Provisional results indicate that Attainment 8 is 4 points higher than in 2019 and 2.8 points lower than in 2021. At 47.5 this indicates that on average each Bury pupils achieved a grade of 4.75 for their 'best' eight subjects including English, maths, 3 subjects from the English Baccalaureate (Sciences, Humanities, Modern Foreign Languages) and 3 other subjects.

The percentage of pupils gaining a good pass (Grade 5+) in both English and mathematics at 46% is closer to the 2021 Teacher Assessed Grades than the 2019 examination results. In terms of a standard pass (Grade 4+) the figure is half-way between the 2021 and 2019 figures at 67%. English performance continues to be higher than mathematics.

2.11 Key Stage 5 College Reported Outcomes

Bury College and Holy Cross Sixth Form College provided headline outcomes on A level results data, Thursday 18th August 2022. The overall picture reported was similar to predictions and above the 2019 outcomes. Holy Cross Sixth Form College highlighted that more students had completed A level courses this year i.e. retention was higher than in previous years.

3.0 PROVISIONAL HEADLINES (Primary Only)

We are proud of the work of our children and young people, and the staff in Bury schools, in gaining these outcomes particularly given the challenges of the last three years and the disruption to learning. Nevertheless, whilst we can celebrate the relative performance of some of our most vulnerable young people e.g. those eligible for free school meals there is work to be done in raising standards including addressing the gaps resulting from disrupted education.

The performance of our pupils at Key Stage 1 remains too low and uncharacteristic given the performance at other points within the primary phase. Our need to increase the percentage of pupils gaining the highest levels is also a priority although it may be that closing gaps in knowledge so that pupils met expected standards has been the focus for our schools since pupils returned fully.

The performance of pupils with English as an Additional Language needs further exploration including through more in-depth analysis of ethnic groups.

Our pupils on SEN Support do not perform as well as their peers nationally whilst our children with Education Health and Care Plans perform in line with their peers.

As a borough we aspire through our Let's Do It for children plan to be better than average and to be 'one of the best.'

Note 1: The 2022 primary school outcomes for individual schools will not be published as tests returned for the first time since 2019, without any adaptations. It is the DfE's intention to publish primary assessment data on the performance measures website in 2023.

Note 2: In December 2022, DfE intends to produce, but not publish, the normal suite of Key Stage 2 measures for multi-academy trusts.

Note 3: No primary progress data is included as yet. In 2016, new assessments were introduced and 2020 would have been the first year for the new progress measures to be applied. As there was no testing in 2020 nor 2021, 2022 is the first year for the new progress measures to be calculated. The technical guidance for these calculations was released on 6th September and we await the methodology being applied by the National Consortium for Examination Results (NCER), so that the data is available to us prior to the DfE release.

Note 4: The 2021/22 academic year saw a rise in pupil absence. Improving attendance is a key strategic priority which is inextricably linked to raising attainment.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 We have shared the data headlines with Chairs of Governors through the Chairs' Briefing held on 7th September 2022. These headlines will also be shared through the self-improving school-led system via the Education Improvement Partnership. This will enable system leaders and partners providing professional development to be aware of the LA wide priorities.
- 4.2 The Education Data Team will produce the one-page **School Education Profile** for all primary schools. The profiles include contextual information, attendance and attainment outcomes.
- 4.3 The primary assessment booklets, circulated to the buyback schools prior to the start of the autumn term, will be updated to include Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 progress data, which will also be included on the School Education Profiles, when this data is available.
- 4.4 This Autumn Term, as was the case in Autumn 2021, we are offering all schools, maintained and academies, a universal visit from one of our highly qualified Quality Education Professionals. Uptake in Autumn 2021 was high, and this is replicated in 2022. The agenda will include discussion of the schools' outcomes (strengths and areas for development) and a focus on attendance, including the school's readiness against the *Working together to improve attendance guidance* which applies from September 2022.
- 4.5 Categories of support criteria have been reviewed and consultation will take place on the suggested changes prior to implementation. Work with identified Category 3 (targeted support) and Category 4 (intensive support) maintained schools is continuing with support plans being refreshed.
- 4.6 Committee members are asked to consider and comment on the information in this report and the planned next steps.

List of Background Papers:-

Contact Details:-

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Executive Director sign off Date:

JET Meeting Date:

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SCRUTINY REPORT

MEETING: CYP Scrutiny

DATE: 22 September 2022

SUBJECT: Fostering Sufficiency

REPORT FROM: Linda Evans

CONTACT OFFICER: JEANETTE RICHARDS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 This report provides an update on Bury foster carers and foster carers engaged via Independent Fostering Agencies.

2.0

2.1 For the few children where it is not safe for them to be cared by parents or extended family, we believe that children should have the opportunity to be care for in a family setting within their community. It is our belief that this affords them of the best opportunity to maintain their identity, links to support services, schools and health. Foster carers offer children and young people a safe, loving, and nurturing home when they cannot live with their birth families. This means foster carers have a unique chance to make a real difference to a child's life. For these reasons the development of our internal fostering service is a priority.

2.2 On 1 September 2022 Bury Council looked after 362 children and young people. 237 (67%) of looked after children are cared for by foster carers. A lower percentage of children and young people are cared for in foster placements in Bury when compared to our Statistical Neighbours, 68% and England average, 71%. We are working to increase the number of children and young people being cared for by foster carers.

At the time of writing this report there are:

- 60 fostering households caring for 77 children.
- 44 Family and Friends fostering households caring from 74 children.
- There are currently 7 general foster care assessments being undertaken and 9 family and friend foster care assessments. Whilst numbers are low the recruitment of general foster carers compares well to other local authorities.

2.3 Of the 237 looked after children, 46% are being cared for by Bury approved foster carers; this is lower than our Statistical Neighbour, 53% and the England average, 48%. Therefore, we have fewer children being cared for by Bury foster carers and we have more children

being cared for by independent fostering agency carers. We need to increase the number of children and young people being cared for by Bury foster carers and reduce the number of children and young people being cared for by independent fostering agency carers.

- 2.4 Independent fostering agencies are private organisations that recruit, train, and support foster carers. Foster carers in the UK can choose to register with either a local authority or an independent fostering agency. The application, assessment and check requirements have the same rigour whether the foster carer is a local authority foster carer or independent fostering agency carers and will not only ensure you are well-suited to fostering but will also highlight what types of placements the carers may be suited to and any additional training and support you might need. Typically, the fostering fees and allowances offered to carers for independent fostering agencies are higher than local authority foster carers.
- 2.6 The Fostering Service in Bury sits under the Care and Support Service. The Children's Services restructure that was approved at Cabinet on 13.07.22 is currently subject to consultation ending on 30.09.22. The restructure proposal acknowledges the need for investment in the fostering service, this includes the creation of a Head of Service Role to lead the fostering service, and increased management capacity and social workers with dedicated teams focusing upon the separate activities of growing our internal fostering capacity through recruitment, assessment, and retaining and further developing the skills of our carers with additional support, and adopting an evidenced based mode of foster care, recognised as best practice.

Following the conclusion of the consultation period we intend to establish a programme board leading and overseeing the development of our fostering service and this will also include a review of our support package provided to foster carers and exploration of models of fostering that are innovative. We have approached Stockport Council with a view to engaging them as Sector Led Improvement Partners to support our improvement journey and consider adopting the Mocking Bird Model of foster care as to consider the model focuses upon the importance of relationships and nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families supporting them to build a resilient and caring community of six to ten satellite families called a constellation, recognising the demands and complexities of the fostering task.

- 2.7 The need to develop placement sufficiency for looked after children is critical and recruiting more foster carers and retaining the dedicated foster carers, we have is key. We are developing a communication strategy that will build on our existing recruitment approaches. However, we are aware that the fostering market is very competitive, and we need to ensure that we are offering foster carers the right incentives and good quality support.
- 2.8 At Bury fostering service we benefit from Foster Carer Ambassadors who are approved Foster Carers themselves and are best placed to share lived experiences about being a carer and provide information about Fostering with Bury as well as answering any questions/queries people may have. Since Covid restrictions have been lifted Ambassadors attend community events across the borough.
- 2.9 All foster carers are allocated a Supervising Social Worker to provide support and guidance on approval. All foster carers are also provided with the equipment they require when a child is placed, and a fostering allowance and fee that is competitive with other Greater Manchester local authorities. It is important to note Foster Carers are not employees and therefore are not paid an hourly rate, this is the same in all local authorities.
- 2.10 A comprehensive package of training is offered to carers and a training manual is provided with a suite of sessions provided over the calendar year. All foster carers are required to undertake regular post foster care approval training as part of the professional development. Mandatory training is to be completed every three years and this includes – Safeguarding, Paediatric first aid, CEOP, Safe Sleeping, equality, and diversity, promoting family time, recording. Nonmandatory training includes, understanding Year 6 SATS, Knife crime and associated risks, attachment, creating readers, anti-bullying, hate crime, managing

allegations. In the Autumn 2022 we will be offering specialist Trauma Informed training to all Bury Foster Carers that will support them to respond to the emotional well-being of children. Attendance at training is reviewed in the annual fostering reviews. The service continually work to offer a varied and interesting training programme to support foster carers in their role and carers are invited to contribute ideas and suggestions.

- 2.11 The council fund the membership of all approved Foster Carers in Bury to the Fostering Network which is an independent service, as part of this membership carers can seek independent, confidential advice and support on fostering matters and related legal issues. The advice and mediation service offers confidential independent advice and support to foster carers. By purchasing this service Bury is acknowledging that foster carers are an essential part of the professional team around the child and recognise that foster carers are uniquely vulnerable and may at times require additional independent support.
- 2.12 Silver Cloud and PAMs support is also funded for all carers, this service offers 24/7 helpline support to assist with emotional health and well-being.
- 2.13 There is a foster carer forum that meets twice yearly, foster carers set the agenda for the the forum and it provides an opportunity to discuss things that are important to them and for the service to update them on new guidance and developments.
- 2.14 We are conscious of the cost-of-living crisis and the financial struggles faced by families and foster carers; an annual 2.3% uplift was applied this financial year. In recognition of the increased fuel costs the mileage payment has increased to 45p per mile, and this has been backdated for this financial year (01.04.22).
- 2.15 Jeanette Richards Executive Director of Children’s Services has recently met with the Chair of our fostering forum, this has been helpful and has provided insight into the challenges and rewards of fostering, future development of the service will need to be a collaboration between officers and our foster carers and young people.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Recruitment and retention of foster carers is a priority and implementation of plans and progress will be closely monitored.
- 3.2 If we are to be successful in our recruitment campaigns the full support of the Council and its partners are required.
- 3.3 Bury is a foster friendly employee which means that any approved Bury foster carer receives time and support to fulfil their role and to support children and young people in care.

List of Background Papers:-

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