

Children and Young People Portfolio – Summary

Performance Summary

1. The Portfolio has a number of performance highlights to report this quarter:

- Significant improvement in the service provided to children with a disability – as evidenced by Ofsted Monitoring Visit in September 2021.
- Workforce development activity has been implemented - including the new social work offer and de-layering of management.
- The Early Help Review public consultation concluded and the decision to provide an improved, targeted Early Help offer was taken by Cabinet in July. Formal staff consultation commenced 8th September 2021.
- Improved and more robust quality assurance and performance frameworks have been implemented.
- The implementation of the Family Safeguarding model progresses at pace. There will be 26 teams across the County and are still on target for the initial go-live in February 2022.
- Fostering improvements - phase two plans are underway with implementation planned in early 2022.
- Review of the commissioning service management and governance is underway.
- Progress has been made on the integration of electronic recording systems. The procurement process is underway and is expected to commence in October 2021.

Our Council Performance Measures

Children & Young People	2021/22 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Performance Analysis	Actions	Year End Forecast
1 Percentage of re-referrals to Children's Social Care within 12 months of the previous referral Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	23.0%	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21		Slight increase in re-referral data – this is being looked at by Service Managers across Children's Social Care and Early Help to ensure that the right support is being offered at the right point.	Review to be complete by end of November. Team level data also being scrutinised to ensure no particular teams of concern.	G
		22.3%	18.9%	29.6%	↓			
2 Percentage of Early Help Plans closed with outcomes met Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	72.0%	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21		A slight decrease of 0.1% from last month but still 4% short of target. This outcome is impacted by all that open in error, consent is withdrawn or step up. There is a focus on this area by service managers and we intend to implement a small audit specifically focused on outcomes met in November 2021.	Not applicable.	R
		68.3%	67.8%	67.7%	↓			
7 Stability of children looked after placements – (3 or more placements during the year) - WSCC position in national stability index Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	10.0%	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21		This number has remained stable, as per last month 5 of these children suffered an emergency move following the immediate closure of a group of children's homes.	The Permanence Team is focusing on the implementation of the new placement planning process as this was identified as an area of weakness for children experiencing multiple moves. We have now increased our stock of in house residential provision with the opening of Breakwater and are also seeing success with Brightstar children's home which has provided stability for some previously very unstable placements.	A
		13.5%	11.0%	11.2%	↓			

8	Support for care leavers to achieve their aspirations – percentage of care-leavers aged 19-21 who are in Employment, Education or Training Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	64.0%	2019/20	2020/21	Jun-21	Q2 results due in December 2021.	Not applicable.	G
			62.0%	53.9%	53.5%			
9	Positive outcomes on child protection in 12 months - percentage of Child Protection Plans that result in 'step-down' within 12 months Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	80.0%		Jun-21	Sep-21	There has been a steady increase in the number of children who have been "stepped down" from Child Protection plans.	This is still below the target of 80%, however we are confident that as practice improves this positive trajectory will continue.	R
			New Measure - No Data	47.2%	66.4%			

[Website link to Our Council Performance Measures here.](#)

Finance Summary

Portfolio in Year Pressures and Mitigations

Pressures	(£m)	Mitigations and Underspending	(£m)	Year end budget variation (£m)
Covid-19 pandemic forecast expenditure/ allocations to third parties. <i>(Covid-19 position is reported in Appendix 2)</i>	£0.146m	Assumed funding from Covid-19 grant <i>(Covid-19 position is reported in Appendix 2)</i>	(£0.146m)	
Placement costs for mainstream children	£0.780m	Anticipated cost avoidance once in-house disability & non-disability residential homes reopen	(£0.700m)	
Placement costs for children with disabilities	£1.140m	In-house residential staffing underspend	(£1.060m)	
Spend on vulnerable children and families under S17 Children's Act 1989 Children In Need	£2.350m	Additional grant income in relation to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children	(£0.600m)	
Friends and family fostering allowances	£0.500m	Social Care staffing underspend	(£0.715m)	
2020/21 & 2021/22 savings at significant risk (early help and lease of vacant properties)	£0.256m	Early Help staffing underspend	(£0.250m)	
		Reduction in Intentionally Homeless casework	(£0.850m)	
		Other minor variations	(£0.351m)	
Children and Young People Portfolio - Total	£5.172m		(£4.672m)	£0.500m

Key Financial Issues and Risks Arising

Key Financial Issues and Risks Arising		Narrative	Cost Driver	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Action	Trajectory
CYP 1	Placement Mix of Children We Care For (CWCF)	Despite the overall number of Children We Care For being lower than forecast, there are more children than budgeted for in more costly externally provided placements than those provided internally which cost less. This is leading to a pressure on the placement budgets. Baseline shows the % upon which the budget was set.	% mainstream children in external residential placements	10.4%	12.4% ↑	10.3% ↓	There has been a significant improvement in the placement mix of Children We Care For since Q1, particularly in relation to external residential which are the most expensive type of placement. The ratio of internal to external fostercare placements has not improved to quite the same extent, however there are encouraging signs of increased interest in becoming an internal foster carer being seen by the fostering service. As the average length of the approval process is around 26 weeks, the impact of this may not be seen until next financial year.	↓
			% mainstream children in external foster care placements	25.5%	28.6% ↑	28.1% ↓		
			% mainstream children in internal foster care placements	30.3%	28.3% ↑	28.1% ↓		

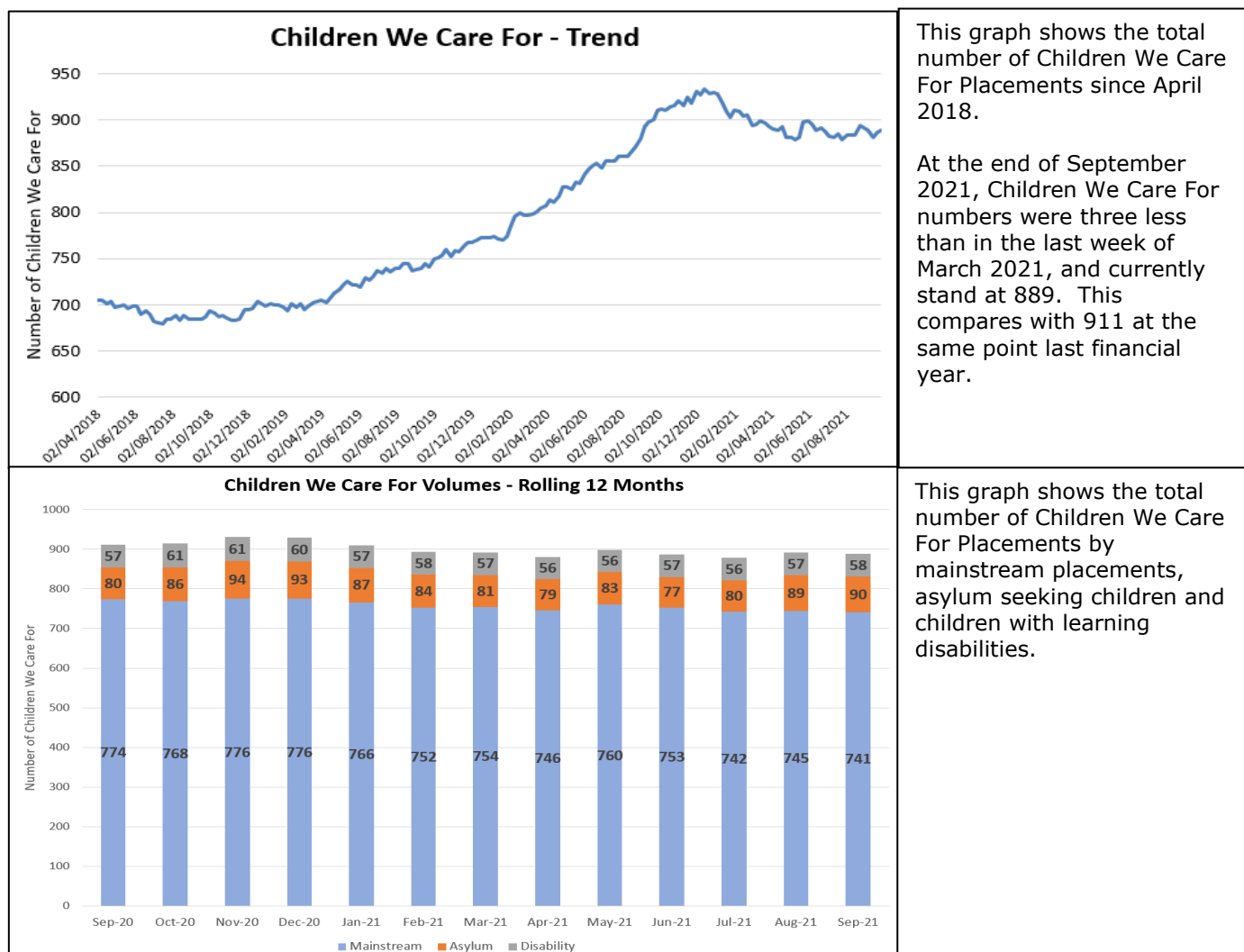
Financial Narrative on the Portfolio's Position

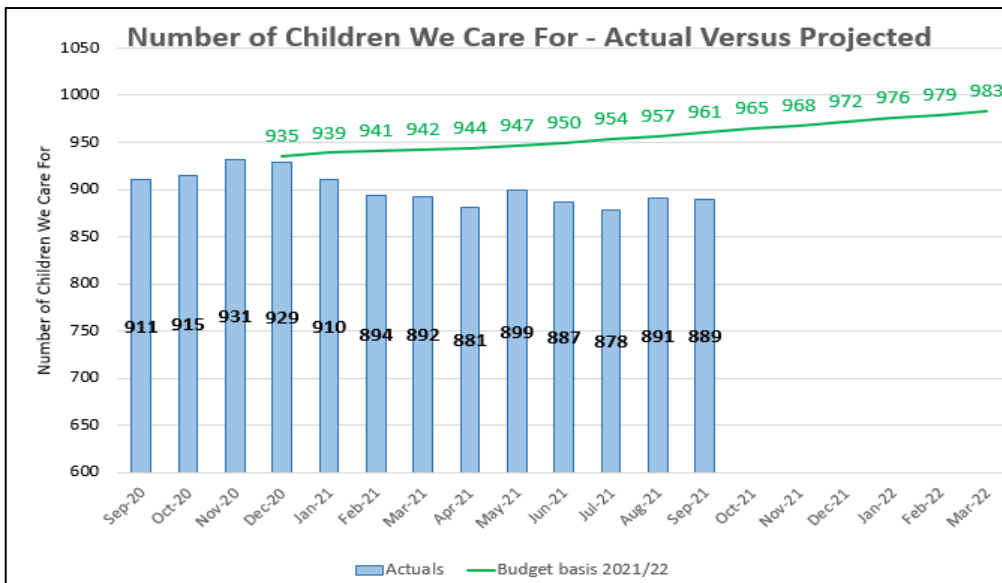
2. There has been a significant improvement in the budget position since the Quarter 1 report. The Portfolio is now projecting a £0.5m overspend, a reduction of £2.6m when compared to June. The main movements are described below:

- **Mainstream placement costs.** A significant improvement in the mix of placements for Children We Care For (CWCF) since July is now emerging, leading to a reduction of £1.0m.
- **Social care staffing.** Between June and September, there have been a higher number of vacant posts (that were not filled with agency staff) than originally forecast. In addition, the in-year cost of implementing the new social worker pay scales was lower than anticipated due to more posts being vacant when the change took place; leading to a reduction of £1.0m.
- **Intentionally Homeless.** A reduction of £0.850m is reported reflecting revised anticipated demand for the rest of the financial year.
- **Saving at significant risk - In house residential programme.** The performance against commissioning savings has improved, with some initiatives over-delivering and hence providing in-year mitigation for savings in relation to Continuing Health Care (£0.4m) and In House Residential cost avoidance (£0.2m) which were previously rated as being at significant risk.
- **Additional income in relation to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).** A further £0.3m of income is expected based on the current number of children, due to an increase in the rate of grant for over-18-year-olds provided by the Home Office.

- **Disability placement costs.** A reduction in the cost of some of the most expensive placements has emerged, totalling £0.260m, as children’s needs de-escalate.
- **In house residential service.** A further £0.260m of underspend has emerged due to delays in being able to fully recruit to the new operating model; associated with the three closed homes reopening later than initially estimated.
- **Early Help.** £0.250m of underspending against staffing budgets has emerged as the service transitions to the new operating model.
- **Spend on vulnerable children and families under S17 Children Act 1989 Children In Need.** Additional expenditure of £0.9m has arisen in this area reflecting the increased number of children subject to a child and family plan.
- **Recalculation of cost avoidance from in house residential homes reopening.** A reduction in the level of cost avoidance anticipated from reopening Bright Star, Breakwater and May House is reported, reflecting the likely timescale for young people to be placed in this accommodation.

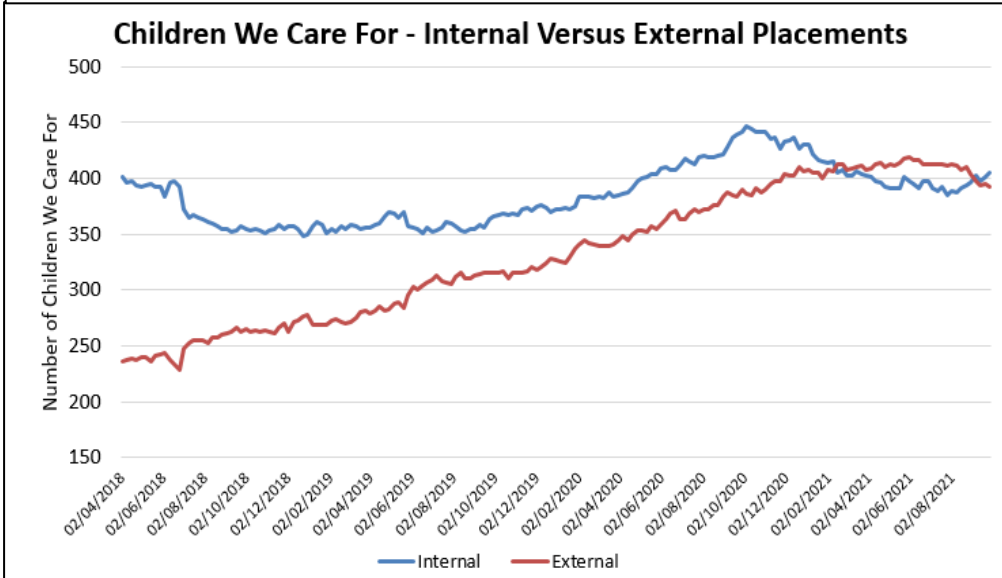
Cost Drivers Information





This graph shows the number of Children We Care For placements compared to the budgeted expectation.

The graph depicts that growth in numbers has not transpired as expected, however the shift in placement mix has led to the projected overspend begin currently reported.



This graph shows the internal and external placement mix.

The number internal placements continues to decrease, however with the newly refurbished in-house residential homes starting to take placements and the impact from the investment in second child fostering allowances expected to be seen in the second half of the year, it is expected that this mix of placement will start to reverse.

Savings Delivery Update

- The portfolio has a number of 2021/22 savings included within the budget and one saving outstanding from the 2020/21 financial year. Details of these savings are included in the table below:

Saving Activity	2020/21 Savings £000	September 2021		Narrative	2022/23
Lease of vacant properties to reduce intentionally homeless costs	150	44	G	£0.044m is the full year effect of one family who were accommodated under this scheme in 2020/21, plus the estimated in year saving from one further family moving from bed and breakfast accommodation into the second property.	G
		56	R		R

Saving Activity	2021/22 Savings £000	September 2021		Narrative	2022/23
National House Project	250	250	G	Savings are profiled to be delivered in the final quarter of the year (Q4) and the Local House project is currently on track.	G
Increase in Council's top slice of Early Years DSG to compensate for lost Central DSG grant funding used for wider benefit of children and young people	225	225	B		B
In-house residential programme – reduced independent placement costs	200	200	G	Remaining cost avoidance arising from new operating model, after re-investment in the residential service. Saving is dependent on the re-opened homes achieving the average occupancy levels for the types of children and their associated costs as identified in the original modelling. Delays in re-opening Breakwater (formerly Seaside) and May House mean that the permanent delivery of this saving will not now be possible until 2022/23. The saving can be mitigated in year however, through underspending within the residential staffing budget given the delayed timescale for reopening.	G
Reduce the number of solo placements and retainers	100	100	B	This saving has been achieved and is expected to continue to deliver further savings in year, which will provide in-year mitigation for other savings lines which otherwise would be rated as red or amber.	B
Improved commissioning for children's social care service - 16+ step down	1,800	450	B	This saving has already been achieved. This initiative is expected to continue to deliver further savings in year and hence is providing some mitigation for other commissioning savings which are currently rated as red or amber.	B
Improved commissioning for children's social care service - 16+ recommissioning		100	G		G
Improved commissioning for children's social care service - improved joint commissioning		400	G	Achievement of this saving is dependent on an increased number of children with disability receiving Continuing Health Care contributions towards the cost of their services. Q1 recharges from this year have now been agreed but do not indicate an increase in the number of children awarded continuing health care funding. Senior management discussions between the Council and Health are continuing, but it is not expected that this saving will be delivered in 2021/22. It can however be mitigated for this year only through other commissioning initiatives which are over-performing. This saving will remain an amber pressure in the 2022/23 budget until such time as clarity can be brought about its achievability.	A
Improved commissioning for children's social care service - reducing existing placement costs		650	G	This initiative is now on track to deliver a revised sum of £0.650m this financial year, with the remaining £0.050m having been moved to the 16+ step down savings line - more accurately reflecting how the savings are being delivered.	G

Improved commissioning for children's social care service - U16 step down to fostering		200	G	This initiative is now on track to deliver a revised sum of £0.650m this financial year, with the remaining £0.050m having been moved to the 16+ step down savings line - more accurately reflecting how the savings are being delivered.	G
Early help restructure (year 2 savings)	550	450	G	The decision to proceed with the Early Help redesign has now passed call-in. The increase in the number of delivery points means that the cost of the new service will be £0.2m more than previously modelled, leading to a shortfall in savings.	G
		100	R		R
Lease of vacant properties to reduce intentionally homeless costs	100	100	R	Year Two savings relating to a project to lease vacant WSCC properties to YMCA to enable accommodation for intentionally homeless families. However, the withdrawal of available grant funding by Homes England means that the project is no longer viable, and savings will not be delivered.	R
Increased grant funding towards support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children	450	450	B		B
Review of agency staff	231	231	G		G

Savings Key:

R Significant Risk **A** At Risk **G** On Track **B** Delivered

Capital Programme

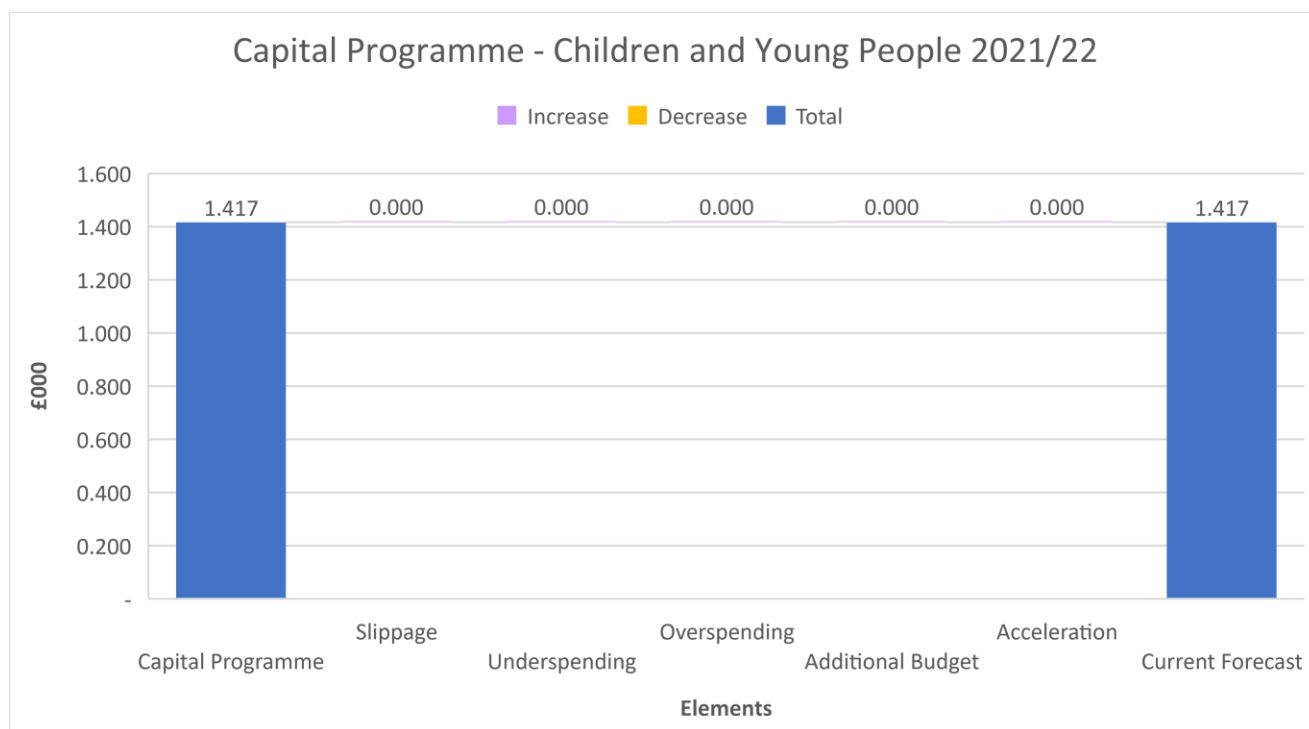
Performance Summary - Capital

4. There are six schemes within this portfolio; three of the schemes in delivery are rated green, indicating that the project is reporting to plan. There are two rated as amber, indicating that there is an issue, but that it can be dealt with by the project manager or project delivery team and one scheme is rated red indicating that there are significant issues requiring corrective action. An update on the progress of the schemes not rated green are detailed in the table below:

Scheme	RAG Status at 30th September	Reason	RAG Status at 27th October	Updated Position
Children's In-House Phase 1 – Brightstar (formerly Cissbury Lodge)	AMBER	Main construction complete. Minor issues raised during handover with service being picked up within existing programme budget.	AMBER	Final Account due end of October.
Children's In-House Phase 2 – High Trees and 40 Teasel Close	RED	Increase in design-stage cost-estimates due to expanded scope for 40 Teasel Close to provide longer-term solution. Awaiting Key Decision.	AMBER	Key Decision published on the 27 th October.
Children's In-House Phase 2 – Orchard House	RED	Main works on track. Options for contact centre building currently over budget, remain to be considered	RED	Key Decision pending.

Finance Summary - Capital

5. The capital programme; as approved by County Council in February 2021, agreed a programme totalling £1.0m for 2021/22. £0.417m of expenditure, originally profiled to spend in 2020/21, was slipped into 2021/22, revising the capital programme to £1.417m.
6. Since this time, the profiled spend has remained the same resulting in a current year end projection for 2021/22 of £1.417m.



7. The largest projects included in the capital programme expenditure plan are:
 - Orchard House Children’s Home Improvements.
 - Cissbury Lodge Children’s Home Improvements.
 - Seaside (Breakwater) Children’s Home Improvements.
8. The latest Capital Programme Budget Monitor is reported in **Appendix 4**.

Risk

9. The following table summarises the risks on the corporate risk register that would have a direct impact on the portfolio. Risks to other portfolios are specified within the respective appendices to this report.

Risk No.	Risk Description	Previous Quarter Score	Current Score
CR61	A 'serious incident' occurs resulting in the death or serious injury of a child where the Council is found to have failed in their duty to safeguard, prevent or protect the child from harm.	15	15

Risk No.	Risk Description	Previous Quarter Score	Current Score
CR69	If the council fail to make the necessary improvements to progress from the previous 'inadequate' rating, there is a risk that children's services will fail to deliver an acceptable provision to the community.	20	20
CR72	The government have stipulated that from 9 th September 2021, children in care under 16 will not be allowed to be accommodated in unregulated placements. This has strengthened existing regulations that stipulate that all children and young people who require residential care must be placed within registered children's homes. Due to a local and nationwide shortage of registered provision there is a risk that these children and young people will not be cared for in settings that best meet their needs , which could lead to safeguarding concerns and enforcement action against the providers of unregistered homes and local authorities.	NEW	16

10. Further details on all risks can be found in **Appendix 5** - Corporate Risk Register.