

**Title of the Report:**

**Children's Services Transformation – The Permanency Hub**

**Executive Summary:**

The consultation programme, Walsall Right 4 Children (WR4C) - New Ways of Working, identified two core principals in respect of the future structure for children's social care services. Firstly, the need to have a structure within which front line staff were located closer to the children, families and communities that they work with and secondly, for children who may not be able to live with their birth parents, focussed services that will manage care proceedings and make timely decisions about the future care of those children. The first of these objectives will be achieved by locating staff in four locality offices; the second through the creation of a permanency hub.

This report sets out the plans for the development of a permanency hub in the context of the wider transformation of children's social care services in Walsall. In order to provide some context to the permanency hub, the briefing paper distributed to social work staff to assist them in making a choice about where they would like to work in the new structure is attached at Appendix A.

***Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board:***

To provide members of the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the implementation of the transformation of children's social care services with a particular focus on the development of the permanency hub.

***Recommendations:***

1. Members of the Corporate Parenting Board are asked to note and comment on the contents of this report.

**Resource and legal considerations:**

The transformation of children's social care services is being undertaken within existing resources. The proposed structure will enable the council to continue to meet its statutory requirements for the provision of children's social care services as set out in the Children Act 1989 and associated legislation, regulation and guidance.

**Council Corporate Plan Priorities:**

- Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.

- People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.

**Citizen impact:**

- The transformation programme will locate services closer to the communities with whom they work and create specialist services for the most vulnerable children.

**Environmental impact:**

- None

**Performance management:**

- The performance management framework will not change as a result of the transformation programme.

**Reducing inequalities:**

- Locating services closer to those that engage with them and providing specialist services for the most vulnerable children should help to reduce inequalities by ensuring that children and their families receive the right support at the right time.

**Consultation:**

- Extensive consultation was undertaken with children, young people and their families in the autumn of 2018. Consultation was also undertaken with staff.

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## Report: Children's Services Transformation – The Permanency Hub

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
1.1	<p>Following extensive consultation, a transformation programme is now due to be implemented. The new structure of the service will include two key strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help and Protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub</li> <li>○ Locality Based Social Work Teams</li> <li>○ Children with Disabilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Looked After Children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Children in Care Teams (formerly Corporate Parenting)</li> <li>○ Fostering Team</li> <li>○ The Permanency Hub</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
1.2	<p>Attached, at Appendix A, is a briefing paper that has been distributed to social work staff across the service to update them about the progress with the transformation programme and to enable those social workers and managers whose role will change to express a preference about what role they would like to be considered for, in which location in the future. Responses have been requested by early September following which a detailed plan for the implementation, with a timetable, will be put together.</p>
1.3	<p>The role and function of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, the Disabilities Team, the Fostering Team and the Corporate Parenting Team(s) will remain unchanged (other than that the Corporate Parenting Teams will be known as Children in Care Teams). The primary change will be for staff currently based in the Initial Referral Service (IRS) and Safeguarding and Family Support (SFS) who will either join one of the locality teams or one of the Permanency Hub Social Work Teams.</p>
1.4	<p>This report is primarily concerned with the role and function of the Permanency Hub.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Permanency Hub</b>
2.1	<p>The Permanency Hub will contain the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hub Social Work Teams</li> <li>• Special Guardianship Assessment and Support</li> <li>• The Family Time Service (contact service)</li> <li>• Links to the Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) and to Adoption@Heart (the regional adoption agency)</li> </ul>
2.2	<p>The Hub Social Work Teams will be responsible for managing all cases involving children in care proceedings. This will be from the point at which care proceedings are issued until a permanency plan has been agreed and is being implemented. either because the children have returned to their birth family or through the making of a SGO, long term fostering, adoption or in residential care.</p>
2.3	<p>Permanency may be achieved in a number of different ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Returning to the care of parents with a robust support plan;</li> <li>• Placement with extended family whilst subject to a Special Guardianship Order;</li> <li>• Long Term Fostering, either with extended family through matching with a foster carer;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In residential care;</li> <li>• Through adoption.</li> </ul> <p>The role of the Hub Social Work Teams will be to ensure that the right plan is made for each child in a timely manner.</p>
2.4	Where the permanency plan involves long term fostering or residential care, the responsibility for supporting the child or young person will transfer to the Children In Care Teams.
2.5	Special Guardianship assessments and support are also functions that will be undertaken in the Permanency Hub. For many children, a placement with extended family or friends will be the best way of achieving permanency if they are unable to return to the care of their parents. Locating this service within the hub will ensure that relatives and friends can be assessed and, if approved, supported by staff working closely with those in the social work teams undertaking the care proceedings.
2.6	The Family Time Service will be that which provides supervised contact for many children in care during the course of care proceedings. Staff from the this service should be working closely with the social workers in the hub social work teams in the provision of contact with parents and siblings. For this reason, Family Time is part of the hub.
2.7	Together with three other local authorities, Walsall has been successfully applied for funding to establish a Family Drugs and Alcohol Court. This specialist service will deal with care proceedings where parents have significant drug and / or alcohol concerns. Whilst some of those children will return to the care of their parents at the conclusion of the care proceedings, others will need a permanent placement, as outlined in 2.3 above.
2.8	Finally, the Permanency Hub will link with Adoption@Heart, the regional adoption agency in tracking and providing placements for children requiring a permanent placement though adoption.
<b>3</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
3.1	As outlined above, social work staff and their managers have received the briefing paper, attached, as the basis for expressions of interest in the new service structure. Once those have been received in early September, time scales for staff moving into the Permanency Hub and the Locality Teams can be determined and the new structure implemented.

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## Briefing Paper on Walsall Right 4 Children Social Care Transformation

### 1 Context

Following the consultation on “WR4C - New Ways of Working” we have now published the social care re-structure. This directly impacts staff who currently work in IRS and SFS. Staff in these areas of the service are now invited to consider deployment within our Locality Teams or the Permanency Hub.

As a result of the feedback from staff at the briefing sessions, we are providing you with a brief overview of what social work with children and families will look like post redesign and give more detail on those areas with significant change. This briefing paper aims to provide you with information about where the service area will be based, who will be working in each service area, the area of work covered and the type of work will be undertaken.

We hope this will help:

- Staff directly impacted by the service redesign to support them in making an informed decision about what team they would like to be deployed in; and
- Staff who are not directly impacted so that they can reflect on what this may mean for the work with children in their service area.

We have also arranged drop in sessions during August and early September to enable staff directly impacted to visit the venues and meet the team and managers already based in the service areas where there is significant change:

Service area	Date	Time
Permanency Hub Location: Fallings Heath – Walsall Road, Wednesbury, WS10 9SH	10.09.2019	10.00-12.00 2.00 - 4.00pm
West Locality Location: Ilmington House, Crescent Road, Wednesbury, WS10 8AE	4.09.2019	10.00 - 11.30am
North locality Location: 275 Blakenall Heath, Blakenall, Walsall, WS3 1HJ	10.09.2019	2.00 - 4.00 pm
East Locality Education Development Centre - Birchills Street, Walsall, WS2 8NG	16.08.2019	10.00 - 12.00pm
Central and South Locality SureStart Family Hub ,25 South Street, Walsall, WS1 4HE	03.09.2019	10.00 - 12.00pm

### 2 Overview: What will help and Support Services look like from a child's / family's perspective post redesign?

#### 2.1 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

The single point of contact for children who need support or protection will remain the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Once the partners in MASH have made a decision that

## **Appendix 1**

the child needs a social care intervention, the child will be transferred to a locality team to be allocated to a social worker.

### **2.2 Localities**

Each locality team will have two different types of social work teams:

- A social work team(s) that will be undertaking assessment and brief interventions as part of the assessments; and
- A social work team(s) who will support children and their families through Child in Need or Child Protection Plans.

The locality teams will therefore undertake assessments (S17 and S47) and work with children subject to protection plans, child in need plans, private fostering, court ordered assessments (S7 and S37) and children in the PLO process. Case responsibility will transfer to the looked after children service when care proceedings are initiated (Permanency Hub Social Work Teams) or when the plan for a child subject to S20 is permanency (Children in Care Teams).

### **2.3 Looked After Children**

The Looked After Children Service will consist of the following elements:

- Permanency Hub
- Children in Care Teams
- Fostering / Residential Services
- Care Leavers

Where we are unable to enable positive change and we need to escalate support and intervention through court process the support will be taken on by a team of social workers in our Permanency Hub. When the court has made a decision that children need to remain looked after they will receive the support through our Children in Care Teams (formerly Corporate Parenting Teams).

### **2.4 Continuous Review**

Our commitment throughout the transformation programme is that we will continuously review our arrangements to make sure it is making the positive difference we want it to make. So we will review the new arrangements after 12 months. Depending on the outcome of the review further changes and adjustments may need to be made. You will be actively encouraged to participate in any reviews that are undertaken.

## **3 Services Covered by Help and Protection - Detail**

The following 3 areas in our new way of working will be overseen by the Head of Service Help and Protection:

- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub - MASH
- Social Care Locality Teams
- Children with Disability Team

### **3.1 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub - MASH**

## Appendix 1

We will retain our central front door, which includes MASH and the Early Help Hub. A group manager will have oversight of this service. The staff structure will remain as is but our transformation will focus on the development of partnership working to ensure we have strong accountability for decision making and enabling the right children to get the right help (Support of Thresholds) at the right time.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub will continue to maintain the same timescales as at present to evaluate contacts and to hand them onto the most appropriate service to provide the support needed by the child / family.

### 3.2 Locality Teams

Following a decision by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, those children and families requiring a service will be referred onto one of the 4 locality teams. The 4 locality teams will be managed by two group managers, each of whom will be responsible for overseeing two localities. The social work resources will be deployed based on the demand in each locality (identified through our needs assessment). Social workers will be co-located alongside the early help teams in the localities. There will be a focus on connecting practitioners with communities and local resources, getting to know our children and families well to enable them to become more resilient and stay together.

Following consideration of feedback from staff during briefings, we have reconsidered how we will deliver our services in each locality and as a result, each locality team will have:

- Social Work Team(s) who will take Child and Family Assessments / short term interventions; and
- Social Work Team(s) who will provide support through a Child in Need plan or Child Protection Plan

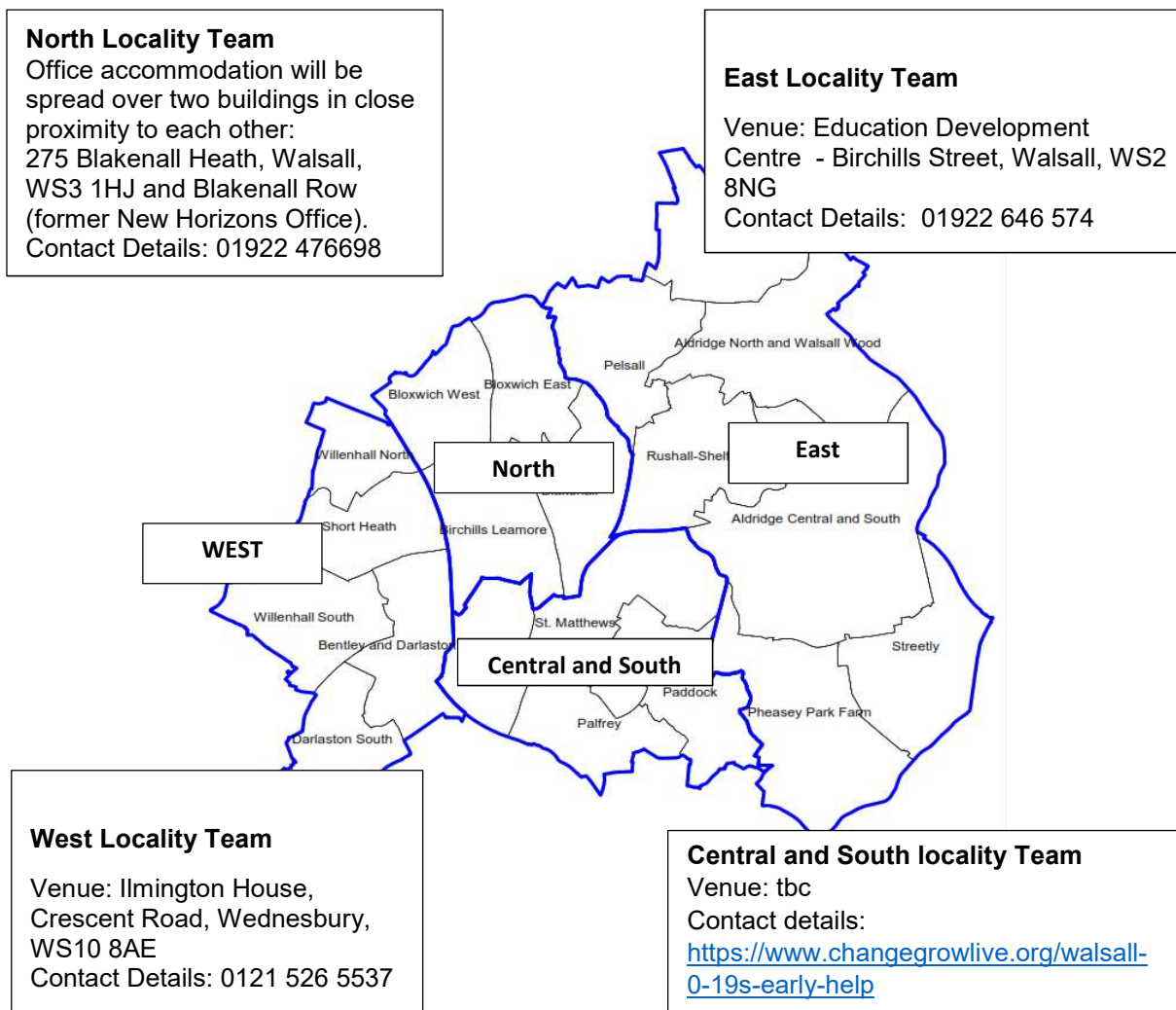
There will be further opportunities to further develop a restorative approach to social work, underpinned by additional training opportunities. Social workers will be provided with regular, high quality supervision.

We have submitted an application to be part of the DfE Strengthening Families, Protecting Children programme to develop the Family Safeguarding Model as part of our locality working. If successful, this will secure additional funding and the development of the model will enhance our locality model by bringing in additional support from adult specialist workers (mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse) as well as bring in an evidence based practice model, aligned to our restorative approach. We should find out the outcome of the bid in September.

If you want to know more about the Family Safeguarding Model and the impact that the model has made in other local authorities, please see the following links:

- Under One Roof (video) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilm7OfqGN4g>
- Community Care Article - <http://email.communitycare.co.uk/q/17HNk6oaduJJHTtEribulv/wv>

### 3.2.1 What are the localities and where will social workers will be based?



### 3.2.2 Locality Profiles

In order to realise our WR4C vision we need to do things differently, including, moving away from centrally based assessment teams to a locality model, focussing on connecting practitioners with communities and local resources, and getting to know our children families well to enable them to become more resilient and stay together.

Following the restructure there will be a workforce development programme focussed on practitioners located in localities getting to know their communities and connect with the resources around them.

The link below takes you to the locality profiles that have been created by the Walsall Insight Team - they will provide you with insight into the different demographic characteristics and challenges faced in each locality from whole population perspective providing a really good overview of the community context in which you will be working.

<https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/home/profiles/locality-profiles/>

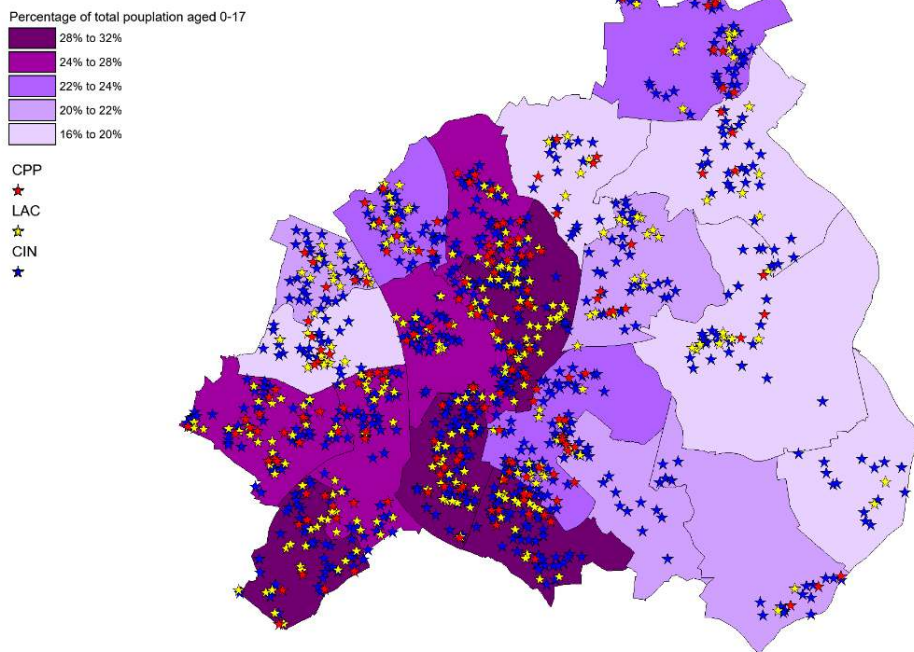
## Appendix 1

### 3.2.3 What type of work will social workers in localities be doing?

Each locality will have resources deployed based on the demand for social care assessments (both child and family assessments and section 47s), CiN Plans and Child Protection Plans. In most instances, social work teams will be working with children living in their locality. However we want to build in flexibility and integrated approach across the 4 localities and therefore at times, where a locality has greater demand than resources, other localities will be drawn on to help and support.

### 3.2.4 Children in Need by Locality

Location of All Categories 31/03/2019



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### 3.2.5 Who will social workers in localities be working with?

As well as understanding the context in which young people live, the main benefit of locality working will be enabling social workers to draw on community resources and maximise opportunities to secure sustainable change. There are already some really good partnerships established in each of the localities which will aid your social work practice.

### 3.2.6 Early Help Teams and partners already based in localities

There are already Early Help Family Support teams established in each of the 4 localities. The locality teams have a skilled workforce that social workers will be working with as well as a range of group work programmes. The link below provides an overview of the current programme available in each locality.

[http://www.mywalsall.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Targeted%20Delivery%20Sept%20-%20Dec%202018\\_pub.pdf](http://www.mywalsall.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Targeted%20Delivery%20Sept%20-%20Dec%202018_pub.pdf)

## Appendix 1

In addition to our **Early Help locality teams** we have representatives from the following partners who deliver interventions from each locality and co-locate there on a part time basis. This will enable better communication and a more coordinated approach with our key partners including:

- **Police** –PCSO's
- **Health Visitors**
- **School Health**
- **IMPACT** (advice on employment and training)
- **Positive Steps** (which is our CAHMS tier 2 service)

If you want to find out more about who you will be working with – speak to one of the team managers currently based in the locality Hubs or drop in to one of the sessions during August and September.

### 3.2.7 Schools

Schools are key partners in our WR4C journey and are keen to develop better relationship with social work teams in each of the localities to ensure better communication and better support for children and families

The link below provides an overview of the different schools you would be working with in each locality –

<http://www.mywalsall.org/walsallearlyhelp/map/>

### 3.2.8 Voluntary Sector

Each locality has many voluntary and community sector organisations that social workers will be able to build a relationship with and pull in the right support for the children and families being working with.

One Walsall, our Council for Voluntary Sector, operates a 0-19 network called 'One Voice' in each of the localities and provides a single point of contact to get to know everything about the range of organisations and groups in each locality. The link below provides some further information.

<https://onewalsall.org/what-we-do/network/>

## 3.3 Children with Disabilities Team

Children with Disabilities Team will remain as a centrally based team providing a social work assessment and care planning service to children and young people aged 0-18 years who have a 'permanent and substantial' disability in Walsall. Transformation priorities within this service area will be about strengthening the connections with the locality resources and the development of an all age disability pathway with adult social care.

The team will be managed by one of the locality group managers.

## 3.4 Adolescent Service

A new, preventative service working with adolescents is being developed. Recruitment to the posts in the service is in progress and it is envisaged that the service will open its doors during the course of the autumn. The location of the service has yet to be finalised but it will provide a service to young people from across the borough.

## Appendix 1

### 4 Services covered by Looked After Children Service - Detail

The following 4 areas in our new way of working will be overseen by the Head of Service looked after children:

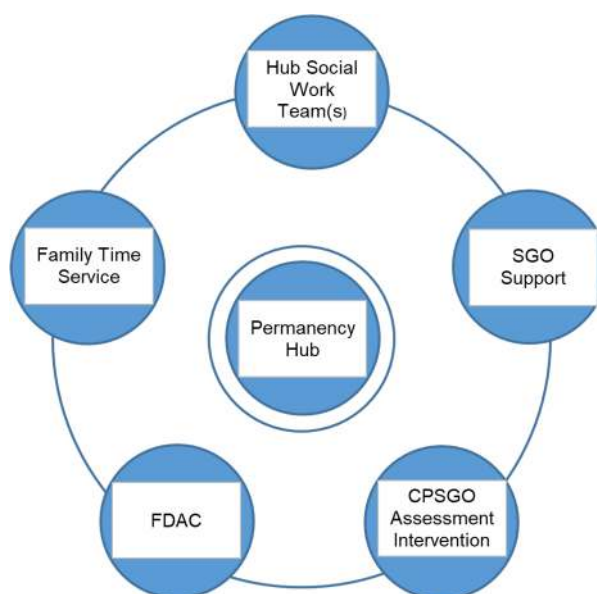
- Permanency Hub
- Children in Care Team
- Fostering / Residential Services
- Care Leavers

#### 4.1 Permanency Hub

##### 4.1.1 Working in the Permanency Hub

The Permanency Hub is a new area of development as part of the transformation and will have a focus **on** ensuring that a child has a long term, safe, secure and nurturing environment in which to grow up. Ideally that will be with their birth parents but if that is not possible, it might be with members of their extended family, a foster carer, adopter or, in some instances, a residential home.

##### 4.1.2 What is in the Walsall Permanency Hub?



The Hub Social Work Team will be responsible for managing all cases involving children in care proceedings. This will be from the point at which care proceedings are issued until a permanency plan has been agreed – either because the children have returned to their birth family or through the making of a SGO, long term fostering, adoption or in residential care

Children 'in care' living at home with parents or living within kinship and network placements are experiencing a range of outcomes, some poorer than those in non-family foster care. The Hub will focus on bringing together the key elements that cover the assessment and support pathways for these children and carers.

- Strengthening the intervention work and analysis in the connected persons' assessments
- Identifying the right type of support to achieve stability for children, young people and their families

## Appendix 1

- Unrelenting focus on safely moving children onto family orders rather than public law orders, by way of supporting special guardianship,
- Ensuring that there is good advice and support for connected cares from Grandparent Plus and the Connected Persons Support Team.

New adoptive parents need a real understanding and connection to that chosen child's history, context and family life. The Hub Social worker is a key part of that process. Hub social workers will work with the birth family network, closely with the Family Time Team and Adoption@Heart to ensure that we secure children in their permanent home as soon as possible

The Hub will work with the FDAC service from 2020 who will undertake the direct work in court with parents who have alcohol and or drugs as significant features in their cases.

### 4.1.3 Which children will social workers in the Permanency Hub be working with?

The Hub workers will be working with

- Children in proceedings
- Children and young people at home with their parents on care orders
- Children and young people with connected persons on care orders
- Children with a plan of adoption and subject to placement orders working closely with Adoption@Heart.

We will work to drive up the quality and depth of assessment across all types of care arrangements. Eventually, the Hub will work to support timely and early permanence planning by undertaking the assessments of all unborn children in the system open to social care.

We will be working closely with our colleagues in health who have agreed to be a virtual Hub in this critical area of work. We will aim to deliver evidenced informed permanency plans for children when born who require court intervention seeking to produce evidence in court that will show at first application that we have the right plan for the right children at the right time.

### 4.1.4 What type of work will social workers in the Permanency Hub be doing?

Social workers in the Hub will have the chance to **build real and connected** relationships with children and their families. Within the framework of restorative practice, social workers will have the opportunity to enhance and develop their skills in Motivational Interviewing, Mentalisation and Assessment of Adult Attachment and the opportunity to learn Trauma Based Narrative Intervention.

They will learn to work in a service informed by the AMBIT approach. More information about AMBIT can be found on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrEgDds0hNo>

Social workers in the Hub will have the benefit of continuous learning about permanency with the active support we have secured from Professor June Thoburn, international expert in permanency and the opportunity to join a community of practice being established by the Family Justice Observatory. Walsall is a proud founder of this development.

**Location: Fallings Heath – Walsall Road, Wednesbury, WS109SH**

## **Appendix 1**

### **4.2 Children In Care Teams**

The Children in Care Teams (formerly Corporate Parenting) will continue to provide support to those children and young people who will remain looked after by the council until they are ready to leave care. Their role will remain unchanged.

### **4.3 Provider Services**

Provider Services is not directly impacted within this current phase of transformation. However, following a review of the service, there is separate proposal in respect to the reconfiguration of the Teams. This includes expanding the Connected Person Assessment Sub Team to full Connected Person Assessment and Supervision of Connected Person Team

The proposal envisages that the new Connected Person Team will be co-located with Permanency Hub – although the Team will work across the Service in completion of assessments of connected person and Special Guardianship

### **4.4 Transition and Care Leavers Team**

The Care Leavers' Service will continue to provide support to young people / adults who are in the process of leaving the care of the council.

