

Sure Start children's centre summary self-evaluation form  
for a centre or group of centres:

## Okehampton & Hatherleigh Children's Centre Self-Evaluation Form



## Section A. Self-evaluation

Access to services by young children and families	1	2	3	4
Grade:		x		

Okehampton & Hatherleigh have gradually merged Children's Centres over the past year increasing access to services for children and families. The office in Okehampton is part of a multi-agency hub enabling good partnership working and the Hatherleigh site is based with the local pre-school. Therefore access to services for children and families is good.

The area is very rural consists of the main market town of Okehampton with smaller towns Hatherleigh, North Tawton, Chagford and many outlying villages some on Dartmoor. This makes access difficult if families don't drive and public transport only covers main routes. Therefore sessions are planned within pre-school and school times to ensure as many families as possible can attend sessions and bus times are also considered.

### Identifying families and those from target groups:

For staff at Okehampton & Hatherleigh Children's Centre a multi-agency approach is integral to their practice and the strong relationships built up with partner agencies ensure easy identification of families needing support.

- Data from Devon County Council (DCC) demonstrates that most of families with children under five in the reach area are known; 92%, 1077 out of 1171 children registered and that over the past year 660 children, 56.4% have been seen by the centre. This is higher than the Devon average.
- Through the effective and appropriate sharing of information between partners via the Strategic Advisory Board or individual meetings, target groups are identified and priority families referred.
- The majority or large majority of families from priority groups within the area are registered and have access to information, advice and guidance about early childhood services through the centre, its partners or its outreach work.

	Registered	Reached June 14 - July 15	Percentage
Teenage parents	13	18	138%
Children with additional needs/delayed development	20	13	65%
Fathers	714	136	19%
Lone Parents	47	31	66%
Largest Minority Ethnic Children Group + white other (Polish)	35	21	60%
Families with financial difficulties who have accessed our CAB service	n/a	Awaiting stats	

Children known to be affected by domestic violence	23	23	100%
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High registration rates are achieved by:

- Joint delivery of ante-natal classes with midwives and health visitors for first time parents and prospective parents signpost to the centre by the midwives for support or vitamins
- 'Tell us once' information on new births received from registry office
- Health visitors complete DAF1s (Devon Assessment Framework) on their first post-natal home visit and share these with the centre with parental consent including new families moving into the area
- The centre has good relationships with Local Authority (LA) Housing Services who signpost families to the centre and work with us when a family is in crisis
- An effective range of promotional methods have attracted 1354 different parents and children attending the children's centre over the past year:
  - A comprehensive newsletter is produced on a quarterly basis with information on all regular sessions and any new interventions or courses
  - 'Text anywhere', email and the Friends Facebook page is used to inform parents of changes to programme or health warnings, e.g. rubella in the area
  - Website is kept up-to-date and accessible in other languages with links to partners or relevant services
  - Regular editorials with photographs are put in the newspaper to reach a wider audience
  - Leaflets and posters distributed in outlying villages, GP surgeries, shops, etc
  - visits to Toddler Groups and Early Years Settings, help reach a wider audience
- The centre uses a variety of strategies to contact parents less likely to engage, such as 2gether funding, special events, 'detached' working within the community, especially with families known to Social Care.

### **Establishing and maintaining contact with priority families**

- Priority families from the target groups are identified through data received from DCC, local knowledge, and regular liaison with Public Nurse Health team, Social Care and Educational settings and occasional meetings, including Practitioner's Forums with Housing, Job Centre Plus and other local agencies to ensure they understand the scope of our work. This has resulted in good working relationships and easy referral processes in both directions. This increased noticeably with the set-up of the Targeted (Troubled) Family Support Programme now Early Help.
- Last year's data set show 94% of children in Greatest Need registered across the cluster and 73% have sustained their engagement with us. The centre aims to meet their needs through parenting programmes, pattern changing courses, specific interventions for their children addressed with assessment tools and tracking systems (see later section on assessment), access to two year old education enabled as appropriate, encouraging the parent to complete qualifications and have high expectations, individual family support – a tailor-made package for each family working seamlessly with partner agencies.
- The centre is working with the vast majority of all children subject to Child Protection (CP) plans or Child in Need (CIN) in the area and attends all Initial CP Conferences invited

to. There are currently 6 CP, 13 CIN cases open. Any new referrals are allocated on a weekly basis, if there is capacity to do so, by the Project Worker Lead. Our close working relationship with Public Health Nurse Team (PHNT) and Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) ensures that intervention is not duplicated unnecessarily. E.G. If a Family Practitioner is regularly visiting a family then the CC will step back and support family to access services rather than overwhelm them. This means that a relationship is still being built with the family for when the case is de-escalated and CYPS pull out and the parent is increasing their social network and support and seeing some good parenting role models. Generally all families with children at this level will be seen on a weekly or fortnightly basis and the depth of work done by the project workers is well-respected by other professionals.

- There has been an increase over the past year on children requiring DAFs particularly those with additional needs of some kind. The centre has been involved with 44 DAFs over the year and initiated 20 and is the lead professional in majority.
- There are currently 60 open parent and 63 open children case files for family support. As parents' needs can easily take over the focus on home visits, at least every other visit the project worker has to focus on the child; play activities, Thrive assessment, Bookstart Corner with parent and child etc. This emphasises to the parent why we are there.

#### Identifying Need & Vulnerable Families and Tailoring Support

Outreach is provided through:

- Individual family support; project workers with a wide skills base work across the area to support families and regular caseload supervision and peer supervision ensures that skills and knowledge of other project workers are used to good effect
- Regular Estart database searches monitor if priority families are accessing services, followed up by 'text anywhere' invitations. E.g. recent trawl has identified that only 21 of 35 'white other' children registered are accessing sessions presently. Invites are being sent to a special one off event to re-engage and consult with them
- Currently targeted sessions are delivered for: young parents (Mini Me), women affected by post-natal depression or struggling with low mood (Dandelions), families with children who have additional needs or delayed development (Oasis), children with delayed speech and language (Let's Talk More), women affected by domestic violence (Pattern Changing), and for parents finding play difficult (Bookstart Corner courses).
- Families attending targeted groups are encouraged to access the universal sessions to encourage integration and inclusion and help prevent isolation and stigmatisation
- Consultation with parents, referrals, outreach work, universal services, observations, assessments and discussions are used effectively to identify needs and match families to the services they need, including specialist services.
- Use of Outcomes Star to encourage greater family involvement in process

Universal activities operate to enable:

- Identification of need is the same for all families, those seen as a priority or those not identified as a priority: Centre staff understand the importance of building up relationships with both families and practitioners which research shows is key to making a

difference.

- Information is shared regarding services available; individual support, CAB, sessions, etc. and refer the families for more in depth intervention as necessary.
- Project workers are skilled, trained practitioners, not afraid to challenge or have open and honest discussions to unpick issues and identify need.

### **Close partnership working with specialist services:**

- **Citizens Advice Bureau:** centre has a service level agreement with CAB and an advisor attends sessions each week where parents can be booked in for individual appointments. Regular reports show impact and how the families have been helped.
- **Rethink Mental Health charity** are involved in offering support to a parent who set up a peer-support session for women with post natal depression or low mood with the Children's Centre. It has evolved from 'Beat The Blues' to 'Dandelions' as a safe place for women to come however they are feeling to find support and engage in some positive activities and focused discussions. Rethink have also provided a staff and volunteer mental health awareness session and a session for parents and staff on Mindfulness. Outcomes are that staff are more aware and the parents are slowly building a support network and getting braver at sharing.
- **Student Counsellor Placement** from the Iron Mill Institute/University of Worcester to assist with the Dandelions group and offer free one to one counselling for a number of parents. This enables families to access basic counselling in the CC without incurring costs they can't afford or be on a long waiting list following a GP referral. Outcomes are that one mother has come to terms with a new long term diagnosis, another has explored the reasons for her constantly recurring depression and is more positive in her outlook and another is on-going
- **SPLITZ service** for women affected by domestic violence – regular liaison and joint visits enable women to move on and make changes. Splitz worker bases herself and does visits in the centre
- **RISE alcohol and substance misuse service** referred to as appropriate to help parents overcome addiction and co-ordinator from Breaking The Cycle a support approach has delivered a staff training session and accompanied project workers on home visits
- **Job Centre Plus** work out of the centre on a monthly basis for parents to book appointments around training, employment, benefits advice

### **Monitoring:**

- We have effective systems for monitoring access to services, attendance and participation using the Devon County Council Estart database. It can identify any priority families that fail to participate regularly and reminders of sessions are then sent through the use of 'text anywhere', flyers and posters.
- We monitor attendance of targeted activity via the above and by bringing the data to team meetings so that staff are aware of any families needing extra encouragement or support. The centre is presently achieving approximately 68% of priority families accessing services, , as evidenced above.

The strategies used to promote early childhood services and engage families, especially those who would otherwise be unlikely to participate, result in this large majority of priority families accessing the centre and engaging with relevant services because staff address factors such as

low self-esteem, financial difficulties, worklessness and geographical isolation:

Addressing low self-esteem:

- Adult education courses delivered by Learn Devon with crèche provided by CC resulted in 8 parents passing ICT, Maths or English exams in the last year
- Local knowledge shows that many women suffer from poor mental health hence the partnership with Rethink to set up the Dandelions support group
- University placement for a student counsellor.
- Workshops; Mindfulness, Self-Esteem
- Pattern changing courses address low self-esteem and encourage assertiveness
- First Aid and cookery courses
- Evidence based Parenting Courses

Tackling worklessness

- Many families within the reach have no regular family income due to the amount of part-time work or lack of jobs or are single parents, and 18% children are living in poverty which is 2% above the Devon average. The centre provides regular input to sessions from CAB to help with benefits advice, etc., advertise current Job Centre Plus/DCC vacancies, signpost parents to Free Fridays (access to computers) in the library, have a public access ipad available for parents to access training and employment opportunities, the benefits calculator, universal job match etc. and support families on the Targeted (Troubled) Families programme to get to interviews etc. which has resulted in families saving money and getting employment. Many families on the TFS programme have achieved Payment By Result for employment
- As well as providing a crèche for adult education course we run workshops such as Fork to Plate, Family Thrive with Learn Devon and First Aid courses through a local provider. The centre is working on Learning Journeys for parents to increase confidence and show distance travelled. Across the cluster we are piloting Parents with Prospects accredited course with Tavistock CC
- Barnardo's has a strong Employment Training and Skills service which is now offering bespoke services to its children's centres. Family Action Programme advisors have supported some of our families enabling them to access employment.
- Barnardo's has a strong volunteering ethos and a system to develop and support volunteers into work. Our centres have recruited 11 volunteers over the last 6 years; 2 found work with us, another 2 became As & when play workers, completed NVQ2s and are still working here, another trained to NVQ3 level and gained fulltime employment in an early years setting and another 2 who by volunteering built up the confidence needed one to retrain as a nurse and gain fulltime employment and the other to work in an early years setting. 4 are retired.

Mitigating geographical isolation:

- 44% of households in the area live in rural isolation according to the Okehampton Area Profile (DCC) and therefore many of our families do not live in easy reach of public transport, and access to Exeter the nearest large town is expensive (£7-£10 for one adult). The centre provides regular sessions in the larger outlying towns of North Tawton and Chagford, attend the toddler groups in the smaller villages and put on one off events particularly in the holidays in village halls. In this way we can access as many areas as possible.
- The centre has obtained grants to enable families to access courses using taxis such as the parenting course last year.

## Child Development and school readiness:

- The centre has close relationships with preschools, day-nurseries, child-minders and nursery schools in the area with regular visits for liaison and support. Most children in the area (95%) take up the free entitlement to early 3/4year old education and a large majority 76% of priority families have taken up the 2gether funding entitlement for disadvantaged two-year olds.
- The centre sends out the two year funding information to all families in the area who might be eligible from information received from DCC with offers of support to the family should they need any. They are also offered the 2year old Bookstart bag available from the centre – take up for this has been slow and a special event is to be planned.
- Each Early Years setting uses the two year assessment tool developed by DCC to write a report on the child and meetings are held once a term with them to liaise over priority families and any in need of support are referred to the CC. Meetings are held with the largest primary school over transition.
- The expertise of the play team and project workers ensures that children with any kind of developmental delay are identified as early as possible. They are encouraged to attend the Oasis group that focuses closely on developmental progress and where each week is tailored to the needs of the children present.
- All children in targeted groups and crèches will now be issued with a Tapestry account so that they can be assessed and reviewed using this new app. Learning Journeys/ Progress Reports will be given to parents at the end of a piece of work or a course. Parents are encouraged to take photos and feed information into the app to evidence learning in the Home Environment; it is hoped that this will encourage them to get excited and enthusiastic about their child's development as it did when a local nursery introduced the app.
- Two trained practitioners carry out Let's Talk More screening assessments where staff, parents or Early Years Settings (EYS) have identified possible speech and language delay. Children then have 8 follow up sessions either individually, in their EYS, or in the LTM session and are reviewed and referred to Speech Therapy where appropriate following liaison with the Health Visitor. This is done in partnership with the Public health Nurse Team assistant. Children also have a Schedule of Growing Skills assessment from the health team. This collaborative approach to assessment at age two, identifies which children are most in need of early intervention and the centre works hard with families and other agencies to enable most children identified through this process to access the help they need.
- Use of Thrive assessments to identify baselines and set goals for parents and settings so that a child can be supported to reach their potential
- **Areas for development include:**
- Working with our commissioners and partners to secure an increased volume of reliable data to support our practice
- Work with Public Health Nurse Team so that midwives provide centre with detailed registration information at pregnancy registration visit – especially important for new

parents to the area or second/third time mothers

- Maintaining good reach to minority ethnic groups
- Getting full use of the Tapestry app
- Looking at registering births at the Children's Centre

<b>The quality and impact of practice and services</b>	1	2	3	4
Grade:		x		

The quality and impact of practice and services is good with some areas of outstanding practice. Okehampton & Hatherleigh Children's Centre staff are passionate about making a difference in the lives of the families they work with. Any intervention has to be meaningful, structured but still flexible, impact measurable and creative. The Project workers are tenacious in their approach to family support especially when working with families on the Troubled Families programme and are aware that 'one size does not fit all'; any number of tools or approaches should be explored to encourage the family to engage and find the method of support that best suits them to affect change. The centre works closely with schools, health visitors and social care teams, pre-schools, etc. sharing information (with consent,) and combining visits where appropriate so that families receive a collaborative and holistic approach, intervention is not duplicated and outcomes improve

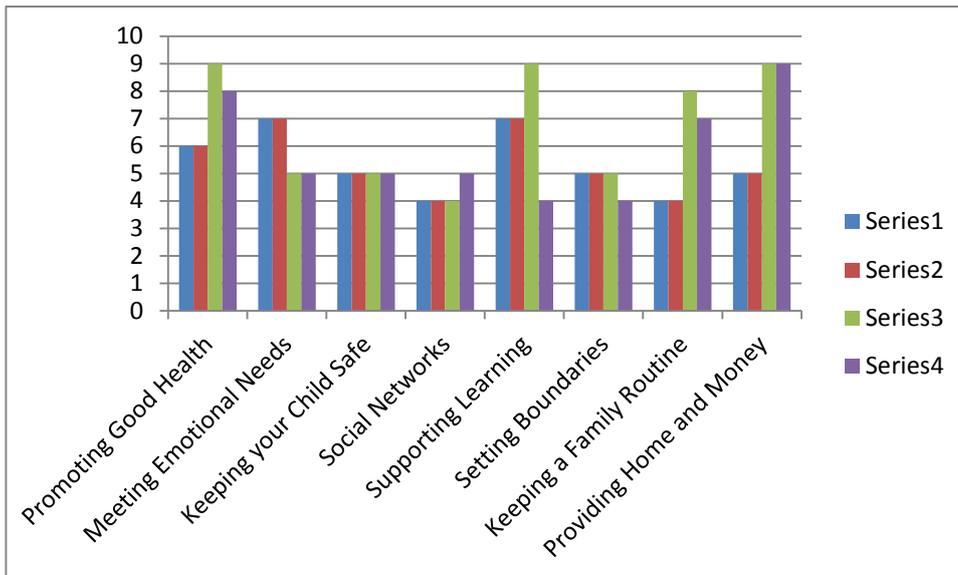
**The strengths of our centre in ensuring quality of impact** of practice and services include:

**Family Support and Assessment:**

Our planning, observation, assessment of progress and tracking are effective and demonstrate a clear focus on improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for a majority of young children and targeted families, through the following assessment tools:

- **The Family Outcome Star and Outcome Star Plus** are used as tools to identify family strengths and needs in partnership with the parent. They result in action plans for family and are monitored 6 monthly by the centre and DCC. This very visual approach makes it clear for parents to see the achievements they have made and for improvement to be tracked. The Outcomes Star is cross referenced with **Barnardo's outcomes** and reviewed on a six monthly basis and reports run to monitor that this has been done; in the past year 286 outcomes have improved, 224 stayed the same and 55 degraded.

**Outcome Star Case Study:** Low=0 High =10



Family Profile

Family Dynamics: 2 children  
Parental Status: Lone parent  
Length of Intervention: 5 years  
Family Status: Child Protection  
Vulnerability Categories:  
Domestic abuse, mental health  
Ethnicity: White British  
Preferred Language: English  
LSOA: E01020322 Okehampton

Centre Intervention/  
Barnardo's Added Value

Solihull Course  
Pattern Changing Course  
Thrive assessment  
2gether funding

- Recent acquisition of **Tapestry**, an app to assess and track a child's development to be used in crèches, targeted groups and for children subject to child protection or child in need plans.
- **Let's Talk More (LTM) screening assessments** are carried out by trained practitioners within the centre, the health team notified and 8 week follow-up takes place in specific LTM sessions or on a one to one basis
- Accredited **THRIVE** practitioners for under-fives use the electronic assessment tool to assess the emotional development of children, set action plans and review and monitor progress.

These last three tools will be used to ensure the voice of the child is heard in the Child Protection arena and on transition to school where assessment can be continued.

**The Five to Thrive approach** is used with all families individually and in sessions from ante-natal onwards to inform parents about their babies brain development and how they can support their baby to reach their full potential and show them how to make positive changes if necessary in the way they care and interact with their child.

- Over the past year 27 priority families in the area identified as needing to develop and extend their parenting skills have completed a Solihull Parenting course and all 18 of those referred from other agencies completed over 80% of the course. Parents are

invited to a 6 month evaluation and catch-up session to discuss and show the positive sustained impact of the course on their family life.

- 21/35 of our registered mostly Polish 'white other' are well integrated into the community and attending sessions and courses regularly. One has recently passed her English exam with Learn Devon and is progressing with ICT. This has been the aim of the centre having ceased to run the Kaleidoscope group for ethnic minorities established in the early days of the CC.
- The centre aims to help all adults supported by the centre to develop a good understanding of their responsibilities for their children's well-being using the Five to Thrive approach and Bookstart Corner and how to ensure the safety of their families. Case studies show that targeted intervention, prevention and early help provided through the centre or partner agencies have a significant and positive impact on children:
  - Families are referred to the Fire Service for free Safety Checks,
  - To Housing for better accommodation
  - To Splitz, Relate, counselling or other relevant services
  - Grants are obtained from Barnardo's young people's grants, Buttle Trust, Okehampton United Charities, Refurnish and other charities to help find furniture, carpets, equipment etc., particularly when families are rehoused and to pay for counselling
  - Practical tips on managing behaviour are given and demonstrated
  - Routines and setting boundaries discussed and implemented
  - Parents are encouraged to take an interest in their child's development and invited to targeted sessions such as the Bookstart Corner course or Oasis.
  - Parents are involved in assessments such as Outcome Star, Thrive, Let's Talk More and the use of Tapestry app so that they are engaged with the process

### Education:

- Data from our local primary schools shows that a large majority of children have good levels of development when completing the Foundation Stage Profile assessment in their personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language skills including those from targeted groups so that most children are working within age-related expectations when starting school:

<b>EYFS Profile</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Devon</b>	<b>Okehampton &amp; Hatherleigh Learning Community</b>
Autumn 2014			
Personal, Social + Emotional	81%	86%	90%
Physical	86%	90%	94%
Communication + Language	77%	84%	90%
Good Level of Development	60%	67.8%	68.2%

Figures have improved in all areas over the past year and a foundation stage teacher has noticed a difference in children's development levels when they start at the nursery since the children's centre was established. Close liaison with schools where there are DAFs in place identify where input may be beneficial with younger siblings and to identify trends.

- Recent quote from the SENCO of a local school:  
*"The parenting courses you run, the Pattern Changing and also the Solihull course – it is phenomenal! We have a few parents at the school who have attended the course and we can actually see:*
  - *A difference in their behaviour with their children*
  - *And added to that is that the kids are succeeding in school and are more settled*
  - *And our relationships with the parents are better as well."* June 2015
- The centre provides access to adults identified as needing help to acquire the learning, training, qualifications and advice necessary to improve their economic stability and chances of employment. Learn Devon deliver courses and the centre provides the crèche with results as stated in previous section. A large majority, 98% last year, of adults who accessed courses completed them and tracking shows that targeted adults improve their literacy, numeracy and/or language skills and/or the qualifications or skills needed to improve their chances of employment.
- The centre regularly visits all Early Years settings to provide effective support, advice and training which is improving the quality of linked early years provision in the local area as evidenced through the take up of 3+4 year old grant and 2gether funding, the gradual increase in referrals, the good relationships. The CC attends all the Early Years network meetings run by DCC to network with EY settings and child-minders, to inform them of latest initiatives and to arrange separate liaison meetings if there are individual issues that need input; Let's Talk More, Thrive assessments etc. All are invited to any relevant continuous professional development training the centre is delivering. All Toddler Groups are also visited regularly and invited to support meetings.
- The centre's work with children with any kind of developmental delay, including speech and language is outstanding. There is a weekly support group, Oasis, for parents to find support and learn strategies for managing their children that incorporates I Can and Let's Talk More principles and strategies. It is led by a project worker who has specialised in children with additional needs at university level and is taking a lead on all individual family support where a child has been identified as having additional needs or delayed development. This has meant the initiation of many DAFs over the past year and on being the lead professional. She has also written a Bookstart Corner course that was upheld at a recent County Bookstart meeting as evidence of good practice and is used to encourage parents to take more part in their children's play and to embed the principles from the Solihull Parenting courses. She has also delivered training to staff so that it can be used on home visits by all.. She is assisted by an extremely competent Play leader who is also a LTM assessor
- The most vulnerable children from targeted groups or those on Child Protection/Child in need plans are tracked using the Tapestry app, Thrive assessments, Let's Talk More assessments. Action plans are made and progress monitored all the time involving the child's parent and Early Year's setting

## **Safety:**

- With high levels of domestic violence in the area a Pattern Changing course is an annual fixture with good levels of attendance. Only one person dropped out last year due to a difficult pregnancy. When considering participants for the course all partner agencies are contacted to make referrals, project workers nominate women from their local knowledge and MASH enquiries involving domestic violence are cross referenced.
- See list above regarding work ensuring children's safety
- For safeguarding see leadership section

## **Health:**

- Almost all of the centre's health-specific targets are met as a result of services provided directly by the centre, or by services provided by partner agencies. The centre is working with the Public Health Nursing Team to create regular displays and planned discussions in Busy Baby and Explorer groups to address all issues on a rolling programme entitled 'Keeping your child well':
  - Breastfeeding 85%
  - Two year old checks delivered by Health Team, child development displays including speech and language development, leaflets given to parents
  - Healthy eating/weight management – weaning sessions, healthy eating sessions, all snacks healthy, HENRY principles used, Project worker trained in weight management, displays
  - Accident and emergency admissions analysed and safety displays regularly used with input from Health Team and safety services as appropriate. Fire and Police services attend sessions. Bi-annual safety event held with RNLI, Road Safety, Dartmoor Rescue, Police, Fire, etc.
  - Smoking cessation referrals are offered, permanent 'Please do not smoke near us' boards are clearly displayed at both sites, dangers of smoking display
  - Alcohol & Substance misuse management – centre works closely with Rise and Breaking the Cycle, displays on alcohol and substance misuse awareness and the effects on children and the unborn.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Participation:**

- The cluster currently has a Quality, Evaluation and Data Manager who oversees regular evaluation of sessions and services
- Assessments of need, case files and records are maintained to a high standard, are up-to-date and reflect the targeted families' views and wishes and the involvement of other professionals through their action plans. No paper files are kept and secure electronic case files are monitored through monthly caseload supervision. Project workers have recording training to ensure that files are factual, detailed and show actions completed and next steps taken.
- The ***Reflecting on Quality*** tool is being introduced in the centre to regularly monitor and evaluate with children, parents, staff, and partners. It has many different levels and approaches and is an exciting participation approach too early to evidence impact as yet.
- Participation is an important part of the centre's ethos and parents are regularly consulted; when the service plan is written for their thoughts and ideas, over changes

to programme, on recruitment drives, on general running of sessions. Their thoughts and insight are invaluable and respected and are used to inform practice and shape the service.

- Our centre is a hub for the community and a majority of parents from target groups actively contribute to the development of activities; young parents are involved in the planning of their sessions and parents are consulted in all other targeted groups. A few volunteer in the centre as general volunteers or as breast-feeding peer supporters.
- All parents are able to establish their own informal networks of support and contribute new ideas to sessions.
- Achievements such as gaining Let's Cook certificates, passing Learn Devon exams or parenting course certificates are regularly celebrated and individuals are encouraged to build on these in order to improve their life chances. Children's individual achievements are also celebrated and parents are encouraged to notice 'Wow' moments in their child's everyday life.
- Our balance of universal and targeted services successfully engages a majority of families in the area, 56.4% and makes a good contribution to their personal development and well-being whilst 92% are registered and know where they can come for support

### **Volunteering:**

The centre has a good track record with volunteers and 5 parents who have been volunteers have later gone on to become employees either with Barnardo's or with local early Years settings. We currently have 5 active volunteers and 17 breast-feeding peer supporters who receive regular peer supervision and updates. One parent volunteer was instrumental in contacting Rethink to set up the group to support parent's well-being.

### **Areas for development:**

- Securing robust and accurate baseline data from our commissioner and partners to ensure our evaluations of impact and progress are sound. However to mitigate any gaps in data received, we gather data and information locally from partners which we have used to evidence our judgments above
- Better tracking of child development and adult learning
- Better monitoring of targeted families and progress made and outcomes achieved

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and governance</b>	1	2	3	4
Grade:		*		

Okehampton & Hatherleigh children's centre's strengths in effective leadership and governance are good as evidenced by:

**Targets:**

- Our local authority, other relevant agencies and our advisory board agree and implement appropriate, precise and challenging outcome and performance measures, based on a secure and accurate analysis of the needs of targeted families in the centre's area, and have ambitious aspirations for them. A very large majority of performance measures set by the Local Authority were met last year and lead to sustained and demonstrable improvements for families, especially those in target groups. E.g. DAF targets, registration and reach targets, outreach to vulnerable families, engagement with CYPS. The vast majority of targets set by partners and Team Manager were also achieved as can be seen in the final quarter's updated plan.

**Governance:**

- Governance arrangements are well-embedded and the multi-disciplinary Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) is made up of partner agencies, community members and parents and meets on a quarterly basis. The board has had a change of chair over the past year and is becoming more proactive in effectively challenging reports and data and demonstrably driving the centre's continuous improvement. The breadth of agencies represented means that information and statistics can be shared and that the Children's centre is represented in wider arena; Health Team Lead, Head Teacher, Parents, Early Years and Childcare Advisor, Community Rep, Local Councillor, District Councillor, Children's Services Manager, Team Manager, Learn Devon Co-ordinator, Children's Centre Advisor, Community Lynx (TFS, pre-schools, Parent Support Advisors). The SAB report is circulated to anyone who cannot commit to attending meetings such as Job Centre Plus and Citizen's Advice Bureau.
- Barnardo's is also very rigorous in monitoring targets and outcomes achieved through regular monitoring of files and use of Discoverer Viewer reports to check for compliance

**SLA's and Partnerships:**

- There are effective service level agreements, partnership agreements and other protocols in place at strategic and local levels to enable good cooperation and information sharing between the centre and its partners. Managers monitor cross-agency partnerships to make sure there are no barriers to information sharing or access to the services families need, discussing any issues in staff supervision meetings and this contributes to good or strongly improving outcomes for those families most in need.
- Children and Young People's Services: Liaison can be challenging as the team are based in Tiverton over an hour's drive away. Following difficulties in contacting Social Workers and the concerns over lack of actions or meetings with some families the Team Manager arranged for the Social Care Team, to have their team meeting at the centre. Good discussions ensued; the CYPS team, new for the Okehampton area with many agency social workers, were able to see the level of service we provide and interventions we

use and the CC team were able to understand fully the pressures CYPS are under and liaise face to face with social workers. Social workers will now be working from the centre whenever they need a base as they can access wi-fi there.

- Public Health Nurse Team: Managers meet on a regular basis and organise occasional lunch or breakfast meetings to foster close working relationships and discuss practice issues. Project workers and health visitors liaise constantly. Joint delivery with Health Visitor or Health assistant weekly to Busy Babies, Antenatal Bump & Beyond, Early Days, Let's Talk More and occasionally Solihull Parenting Courses
- Schools and Early years Settings: Regular meetings and support offered particularly regarding DAFs and any children with special educational needs. The centre has a project worker who is a specialist in this area and who is also the link with pre-schools and nurseries. Liaison meetings regarding children receiving 2gether funding or on transition. Joint initiatives with local school are in the planning stages. Partnership agreements have been signed by most establishments in the area.
- Job Centre Plus: Have a 'surgery' session monthly in the centre to explore training opportunities, employment and benefit needs.
- CAB: Visit different sessions on a weekly basis and parents in need are invited to meet the advisor there. She will also accept telephone referrals to make a one off call to a parent to discuss immediate need especially where there is a crisis.
- Rise and Breaking The Cycle: team training, joint visits, referrals both ways
- Splitz: Use the centre to meet families, co-deliver Pattern changing Course, referrals both ways.

### **Safeguarding:**

- The culture of safeguarding is embedded and robust policies, procedures and practices are in place and ensure that safeguarding and the welfare of children remain at the forefront of the centre's purpose. The centre works collaboratively with partners to reduce the risk of harm to children successfully and is not afraid to challenge parents or to refer to MASH and MARAC immediately there is concern. All safeguarding concerns are reviewed through monthly caseload supervision and immediate concerns are brought to the Team Manager as they arise or discussed and reflected upon during operational supervision.
- All staff have attended safeguarding courses: Level 1 – administrators, Level 2 - play workers, Level 3 – project workers and Play Leader, Level 4 – Team Managers and all attend an annual safeguarding event
- All staff have enhanced current DBS certificates for working with vulnerable children and adults and sign a document declaring that there is no one in their household who is subject to criminal investigation concerning children
- Team Manager also has a Safer Recruitment certificate and there is a robust recruitment process followed, including checking employment gaps and this is monitored by Barnardo's recruitment team.
- Senior management have also received Barnardo's Supervision training which is based on the Tony Morrison model. This is to ensure that they make informed decisions regarding safeguarding concerns, referrals, and offer the correct support and challenge for staff on the front line. This also ensures that the staff have a key person who is able to challenge decisions and where practice is deemed unsafe, LADO processes may have to be followed.
- All Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) enquiries are logged on the Family Support

Monitoring spreadsheet which provides details of the families and reasoning for referral. The completed enquiry sheet enables us to identify if the family has been seen in the past six months and what input the Centre has had and details fed back to the enquiry agency (EYCS or Early Help).

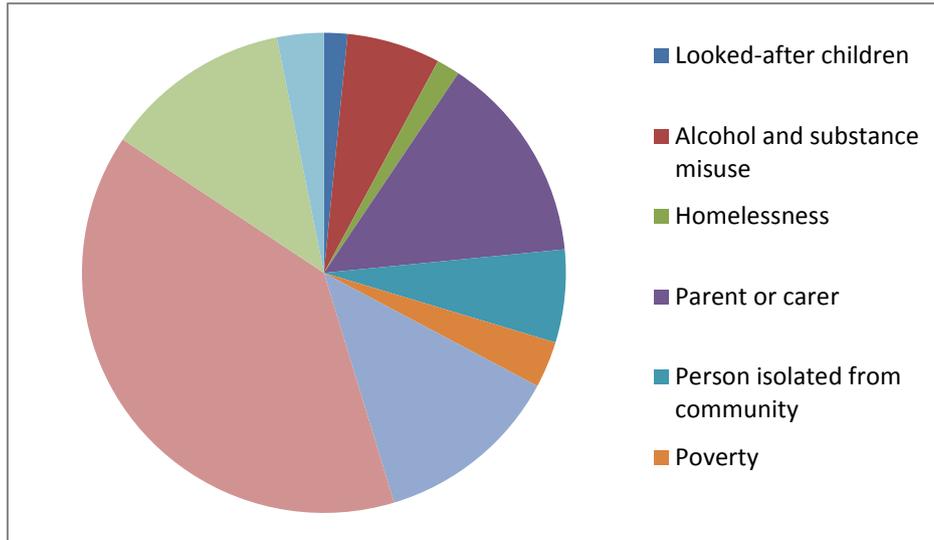
- There have been 43 MASH enquiries received in the last 6 months from the Early Years Childcare Service and 93% were known to the centre. (Devon average 89%) The statistics also confirmed our local knowledge that there are many parents, the vast majority women, who are victims of domestic violence; 30% of MASH enquiries for Okehampton showed domestic violence was involved and 13% in Hatherleigh. The Devon average is 21%. Pattern Changing courses are delivered annually in partnership with Splitz to address this and project workers trained to support women and children affected by domestic violence and to refer immediately to Splitz and MARAC.
- 20 DAFs have been initiated by the centre over the past year and we have been involved with 44. This highlights the level of need in the area and the number of children with special educational needs. Many are at a high level but for one reason or other do not meet the Devon Threshold Tools assessment matrix
- Project Workers regularly use the Threshold Tool and the Protective and Risk Factor assessment triangles to assess the level of concern with managers, alongside other approaches such as Kolb or Appreciative Inquiry to reflect on the family's strengths and needs. The graded care profile tool is also used to measure neglect as well as the tools mentioned previously to capture the voice of the child and keep everything child centred.
- When referrals are made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub the Children's Centre have a clear procedure, which includes support to staff, referral discussed and checked by safeguarding lead/team manager and authorisation by the Children's Services Manager. In the past quarter we have had to make 3 referrals, two met threshold for initial assessment and both proceeded to child protection and the other was sent to Early Help and a DAF is being initiated.
- Recent quote from SENCO of largest primary school in area: "I think your work on supporting kids where there are safeguarding issues around them is fantastic as well. You pick up on things very quickly and working closely with us – it's just great." June 2015

### **Monitoring & Evaluation:**

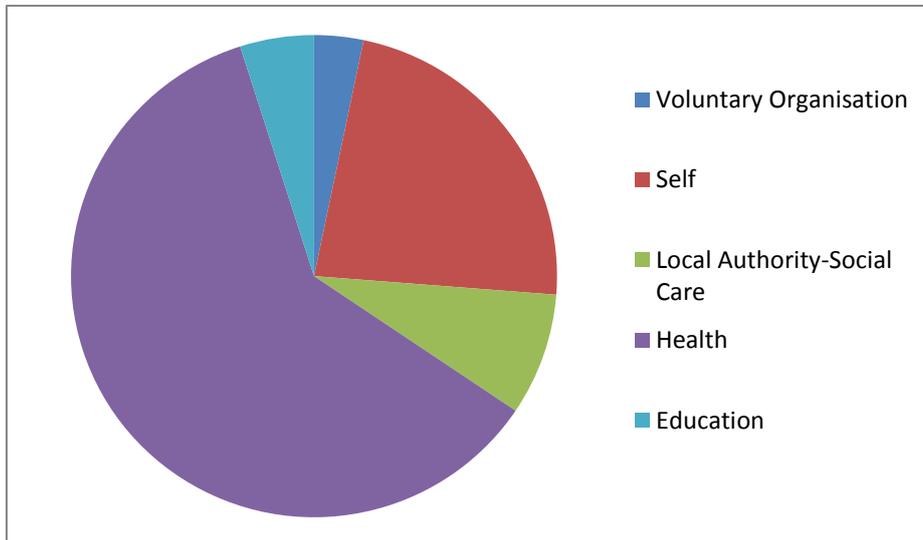
- The cluster currently has a Quality, Evaluation and Data Manager who oversees regular evaluation of sessions and services. See previous section for details.
- Data and management information, including that from consultations, concerns and complaints, are used well to deliver continuous improvement and sustain high-quality provision that is sensitive to the diverse needs of the local community. Complaints are always taken seriously and forwarded to the Barnardo's complaints lead if they are made formally.

Oracle Discoverer Report – July 2015 of all 60 parent open case files:

- Reason for Engagement

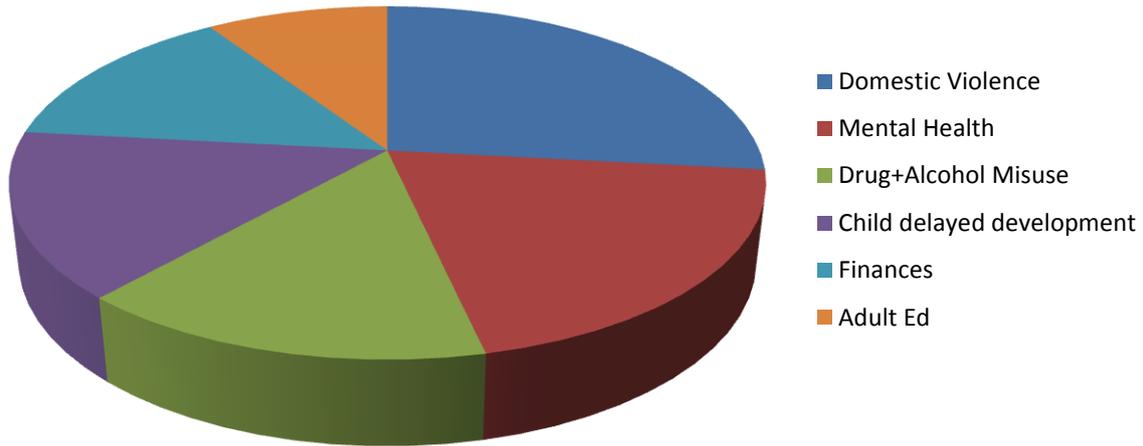


- Referrer

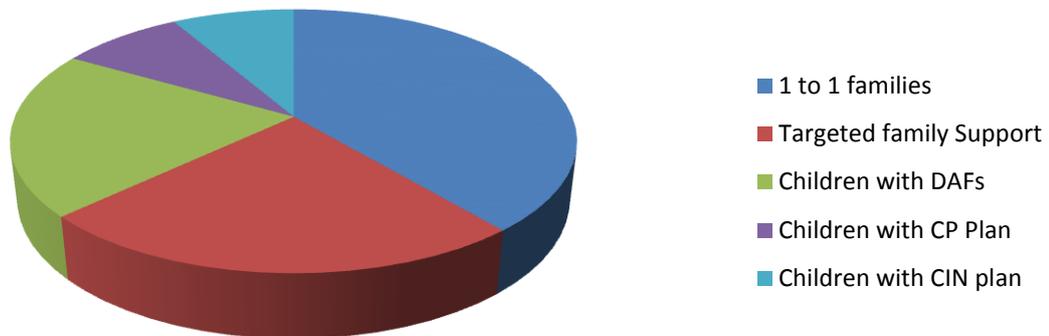


Feb 2015 knowledge of families revealed the following picture some families having a mixture of reasons for requiring support:

## Family Support: 68 families



## Family Support Breakdown



42 individual family support, 26 TFS, 22 DAFs, 9 CP, 9 CIN

- Team Manager has drilled down to find detailed information regarding LSOAs where reach is low and the team will spend part of their Reflecting on Quality day visiting the areas to raise the CC profile, display posters and discover if there is any information about the area that we are unaware of.

### Participation:

- Participation is an important part of the centre's ethos and parents are regularly consulted and listened to. Parents and children are consulted about their needs and any changes to services and most centre users are fully involved in the design and development of services, contribute to decision-making about key priorities for the centre and encourage other parents to use the centre's services. They report a consistently high level of satisfaction with the quality and the ability of services to meet their needs and improve outcomes for them. Also see previous section.

## Managing staff:

- Performance management and professional supervision are well established and consistently applied across all aspects of the centre. Staff are supervised on a monthly basis (pro rata) both caseload and operational. Poor and mediocre performance is swiftly identified and tackled and further training and professional development opportunities identified and secured. Performance is then monitored closely to ensure improvement. Annual Performance Appraisals take place between Feb and June with targets monitored and gaps in development addressed and plans made for future training. Peer supervision also takes place with the Play Team and the Project Workers
- Barnardo's has established a service-wide three-strand approach to quality improvement, through the engagement of rigorous partners (drawn from consultants having current Ofsted inspection status or leadership of outstanding centres); peer-to-peer grouped improvement, supported by an experienced mentor/assessor; professional qualification improvement enabled through a CACHE Centre
- Financial resources available to the centre are well deployed through effective partnership working, integrated service delivery and innovative practice. Resources are used effectively and efficiently to allow the centre to meet its targets and improve outcomes for those in most need. The majority of the budget is used to employ frontline staff who are the centres biggest asset. The Manager encourages staff to look elsewhere to obtain funding for families or to fund a new initiative
- There are plenty of training opportunities within Barnardo's as well as externally. Recent inset training has included the annual safeguarding event, annual equality and diversity workshop, managing difficult conversations, appraisals, effective recording, managing stress in the workplace and externally 4 project workers and a play leader have recently been trained as Thrive practitioners.

## Areas for development:

- Streamlining of systems to avoid duplication
- More interrogation and challenge of data and project reports from Strategic Advisory Board
- Tweak systems to capture the exact statistics the centre needs

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	1	2	3	4
Grade:		*		

- Okehampton & Hatherleigh Children's centre believe our centre to be good because:
- The centre's practice enables the most vulnerable children from targeted groups and their families to access good-quality services that improve children's well-being and achieve the centre's stated outcomes
- The centre tries to mitigate effectively any limitations in data provided by others through local sources and connections to create a baseline for our planning and self-evaluation

judgments and truly identify the need in the local community

- All aspects for self-evaluation are good with some outstanding practice such as our input for families who have children with additional needs and our tenacity when working with families on the Targeted (Troubled) Families Programme at maintaining high expectations and supporting them to change lifelong habits that will effect permanent change and improve outcomes for their children. The centre passed its' target of self-identifying 26 families with the programme and received Payment By Results for 8 of them
- Parental and professional feed-back and internal monitoring processes, including the Barnardo's Quality Performance Review, show the Centre to be compliant to a good level.

Recent quote from CAMHS worker: *"You continue to manage complex cases well, giving good helpful support to parents in the locality. I am aware that the team liaise with other agencies often, relationships are good and the working practice is child centred.*

*The team were able to identify when a referral to CAMHS might be necessary and you regularly called or met with me face to face to discuss referrals or ask for advice in relation to parental mental ill health. It has been a pleasure to work with the team."*

Areas for development:

- See separate sections

## Section B. Factual information about your children's centre/s

This section should include:

### Information about the area/locality (centre or group of centres to be inspected)

Okehampton & Hatherleigh Children's Centre, Bowling Green Lane, Hatherleigh, EX20 3HB  
01837 658621/811190,  
[okehamptonchildrenscentre@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:okehamptonchildrenscentre@barnardos.org.uk), [www.westdevonchildrencentre.co.uk](http://www.westdevonchildrencentre.co.uk)

Okehampton & Hatherleigh Area Children Centre is part of the West Devon Children's Centre cluster with Tavistock Centre. Previously two separate centres it has merged gradually over the past 18 months and staff now work across the whole area and provision is comparable. It covers a large rural reach of 229.5 square miles, which includes part of Dartmoor National Park, and currently has a **population of 1171 children under 5 years**.

48% of the population live in rural areas far from urbanisation according to the Okehampton Mosaic profile. There has been an influx of new housing over the past two years with over 1500 new homes either built or planned.

Hatherleigh Area Children's Centre began as a pilot mini surestart local project in April 2002 selected by Devon County Council as an area of deprivation as it had been the epicentre of the 2001 foot & mouth epidemic which had hit a large number of its farming families. The surestart project became a children's centre in phase two of the children's centre initiative, and was designated in 2007. It is a purpose built office and delivery space in a community centre next to the pre-school and close to the local school

The Okehampton base was first designated in 2007, is a phase 2 centre and has never had its' own delivery space, using local church halls, village halls and community centres. The office is currently based in Okehampton College as part of the Community Hub alongside Tors Counselling Service, Community Lynx, Early Help co-ordinator, Learn Devon and a local preschool. This is very positive for multi-agency working.

### Governance, leadership and management arrangements

The West Devon Cluster of Children's Centres are managed by Barnardo's. They have an amalgamated Strategic Advisory Board made of members from: Health, Education, Voluntary sector, Parents, Community Members.

The local Authority (DCC) as the accountable body has clear guidance, governance and support which are clearly understood by all. Devon issue targets each year and provides a six monthly and annual contract review to establish if targets are being met or where there are issues that might need challenge or support. This is also monitored throughout the year by the advisory board which is made up of a variety of key representatives whose role is to monitor the progress of the centre and include membership of the responsible body. This provides the centre with transparency and clarity to ensure the services provided are outcome focused and appropriately meet the needs of the demographic area, whilst the individual service plan is developed with local partners to ensure that target children and families' needs are met. Feedback and reports from managers of key partners are sought by the accountable body to question the level of engagement in partnership work and effectiveness of practice in particular relation to support of

vulnerable groups.

Devon County Council via a dedicated Children Centre Advisor also provides two levels of information sharing and feedback at both strategic and operational levels. Devon Children Centre Managers' meetings are attended by the cluster Children's Services Manager (CSM), whilst the South and West Devon locality meeting is attended by the Team Manager of Okehampton & Hatherleigh CC. These sessions keep leadership informed of national and local directives and policy. The Centre has a good constructive working relationship with the LA Children's Centre Advisor who sits on the advisory board and locality cluster. She knows the Centre and the area well and provides a key challenge and support role to aid in self-evaluation and quality assurance in the centre, with a particularly strong role in auditing safeguarding practice and procedures.

The responsible body for the centre is Barnardo's which offers robust support to the centre service delivery and quality improvement forming part of a cluster of two centres in West Devon.

The Centre is provided with strategic management by Barnardo's Children's Service Manager (CSM) and Assistant Director Children's Services (ADCS).

The West Devon Locality is strong and the Centre has developed strong and sustained partnership with key strategic leaders from other professional fields. The Team Manager is responsible for the day to day management of the Centre where there is a clear structure with the team, partners and volunteers having clear lines of responsibility. Policies are robust and shared via Content Server (Barnardo's staff intranet) for team, whilst printed versions are made available for parents and service users. Development and review of staff performance is an integral part of the Centre and wider organisations work. Staff members are subject to a performance management cycle which involves targets for development being set once a year, annual appraisal, including a learning and development plan to support the successful completion of targets and any gaps in performance.

## Context

Include a description of the geographical area served by the centre/s or area/locality; levels of deprivation; ethnicity of the area.

The Reach covers the Lower Super Output areas of Bridestowe, Chagford, Drewsteignton, Exbourne, Hatherleigh, Lew Vally, Lydford, Lewtrenchard, North Tawton, Okehampton East Central and West, South Tawton and Thrushel. The most populated areas are Okehampton (347 children registered), Hatherleigh (108 children registered), and North Tawton (119 children registered). A map showing the reach can be found here: [Okehampton & Hatherleigh Map 2015](#). The families live throughout the area covered by Okehampton Learning Community, which comprises of 12 primary schools.

Most families acknowledge the benefits of rural life but the area presents many challenges including: poor transport links, lack of affordable housing, physical isolation and patchy accessibility to services including mobile phone signals and internet connection. All these factors have a significant impact on families' lives, in particular those affected acutely by poverty.

Most employment in the area is part time and low paid, main employers include NHS, schools, local hotel and a few factories, followed by care/service industries and farming. The average income is lower than the national or Devon average, with most people in well paid employment travelling to Plymouth or Exeter for work.

Awareness raising and promotion of Working Tax Credits's has been delivered through our Service Level Agreement with Citizen's Advice Bureau locally both to individual families and in sessions but trend figures identify this needs further work.

Take up of Working Families Tax Credits:

2010 12.09%  
2011 9.94%  
2012 10.06%  
2013 11.05%  
2014 10.06%

The children centre commissioned agreement with Citizens Advice Bureau will continue with an emphasis on income maximisation and guidance through the impact of the most significant reform to welfare in recent history. The commissioned service with CAB is well utilised for support to vulnerable families and groups, not only by children centre staff but by our partners.

The results of a practitioner research surveys to families undertaken by staff report the following key poverty drivers:

- Lack of work
- Seasonal work
- Rurality and the cost of commuting
- 'Hidden' poverty in small pockets
- Isolation
- Mothers experiencing poverty as a result of the impact of domestic violence
- Collapse in farming prices
- Lack of affordable housing
- High private rents

2014 figures show that 18.23% of children under 5 years old are living in poverty, and this has risen by 4.72% over the past year and is now above the Devon average. Local knowledge tells us that more and more families are struggling with the rising cost of living in rural areas and the frozen wages. There has also been an increase in the number of Food bank vouchers being issued by the children centre; a sign of very hard times for families.

Devon County Council's Strategic Intelligence unit produced a profile document for Okehampton & Hatherleigh providing a statistical overview of what life is like in the area. The profile was updated in February 2015 but updated figures for many indicators were not available. Therefore sharing of information regarding data with partners has been important.

The updated profile shows rural isolation as a key social issue which is also confirmed by families. It also demonstrates the scattered nature of deprivation with more deprived families living in close proximity to the less deprived.

Deprivation, domestic violence, post natal depression can go unnoticed and unreported due to the rural isolation of many families and it is a challenge to make sure we are meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in our community. It is recognised by all agencies that in some of the more affluent areas such as Chagford many vulnerabilities within families may also remain

hidden and pockets of deprivation overlooked. There are higher than average levels of reported domestic abuse in the Okehampton area as well as families where domestic violence and post natal depression is unreported that the centre is aware of.

The families in the area are predominantly white and of British origin with 95.7% of children having English as a first language and only 6.7% being of black and minority ethnicity. The centre is aware that the majority of White Other families in the area are Polish and respond to this appropriately with notices, leaflets, membership forms etc. in Polish. In 2013 the number of under fives in Okehampton living in a household in receipt of workless benefits reduced from 15% to 13.5% but many jobs locally are very part time and this is probably not an accurate picture of the area.

There are no children that we know of whose parents are in the armed forces and data pertaining to school age children shows only 1% of population in Okehampton area.

## The needs of children and their families

Local knowledge from the commissioned community profile, consultation events, data and information shared from health following analysis of family health needs case assessment point to some specific needs in the area:

- High levels of domestic abuse – 30% of MASH enquiries in past six months and approximately 35% of current caseload of family support, team affected. This information is not substantiated by Devon Profile statistics but these are only based on reported incidents of DV.
- Poor parental mental health – Analysis of centre case files reveal that parents with mental health issues is evident in approximately 29% of cases showing this to be the most significant issue for families of young children. (case file analysis Feb 2015)
- Housing Issues, poverty and rural isolation– Housing stock and availability is an issue locally although improving in Okehampton with the vast amount of new housing. It is especially hard for women and children fleeing incidents of domestic abuse; the centre works closely with Housing but the nearest refuges are far away and women are frequently housed in local Travelodge or B&Bs temporarily.

### Other statistics

6% births to teenage mothers, shows a gradual increase in the area from 2009 (5%) and is above the Devon and England Averages (4.5%).

- 16.4% of children living in lone parent families lower than Devon average The CC has reached 47 of those families.
- 2.55/1000 children in care in 2012 which is a rise from 1/1000 in 2011.
- 5% BME 0-5 population, just lower than the Devon average (6%).
- 14/1000 rate of children 0-4 with additional needs.

- Autumn 2014 data from Okehampton Learning Community Foundation Stage Profile show that 68% of children achieve at least a Good Level of Development, above Devon and England average and an increase of 7% from the previous year.
- Approximately 3% of children have a statement in 2014 (prevalent needs are for speech, language and communication and emotional/behavioural difficulties, with an increase of children on the autistic spectrum).

### **Any other relevant information**

Please provide information of any particular features of the centre/s or area/locality. Note any significant changes since any previous inspection, such as changes to group/cluster arrangements/mergers, etc.

Hatherleigh Children's centre was inspected by Ofsted under the old framework in February 2013 and Okehampton Children's Centre in March 2013 both as separate centres and both with a 'Good' outcome. Since then they have merged and are now one centre in the West Devon cluster with Tavistock as the other. Tavistock Children's Centre is 21.5 miles away and takes over half an hour to get to with a large area of Dartmoor to cross.