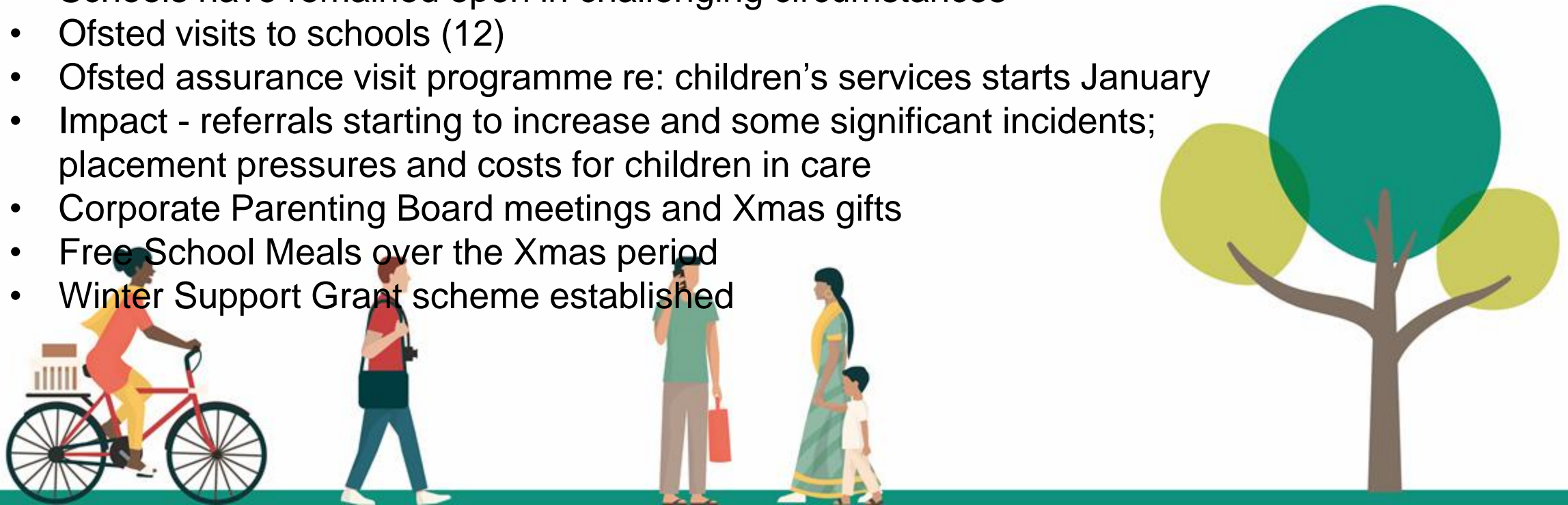


SANDWELL CHILDREN'S SERVICES – Reset and Recovery update

Overview since last report to Scrutiny Board in November 2020:

- All services continue to be very busy
- Many staff continuing to volunteer to assist other response functions
- Absence low; staff who are self-isolating generally continuing to work
- 'Business As Usual' on track but pressures emerging eg SEND assessments
- Levels of scrutiny and contact from DfE and Ofsted continue
- Schools have remained open in challenging circumstances
- Ofsted visits to schools (12)
- Ofsted assurance visit programme re: children's services starts January
- Impact - referrals starting to increase and some significant incidents; placement pressures and costs for children in care
- Corporate Parenting Board meetings and Xmas gifts
- Free School Meals over the Xmas period
- Winter Support Grant scheme established

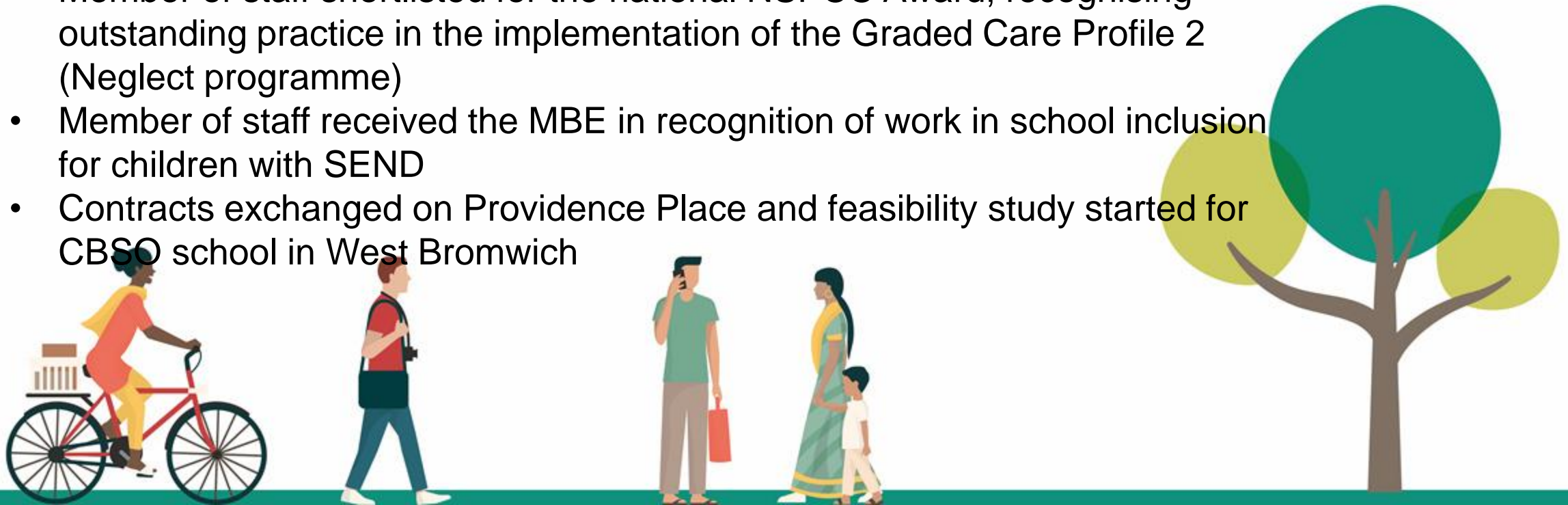


SANDWELL CHILDREN'S SERVICES – Reset and Recovery update



Highlights since last report to Scrutiny Board in November 2020:

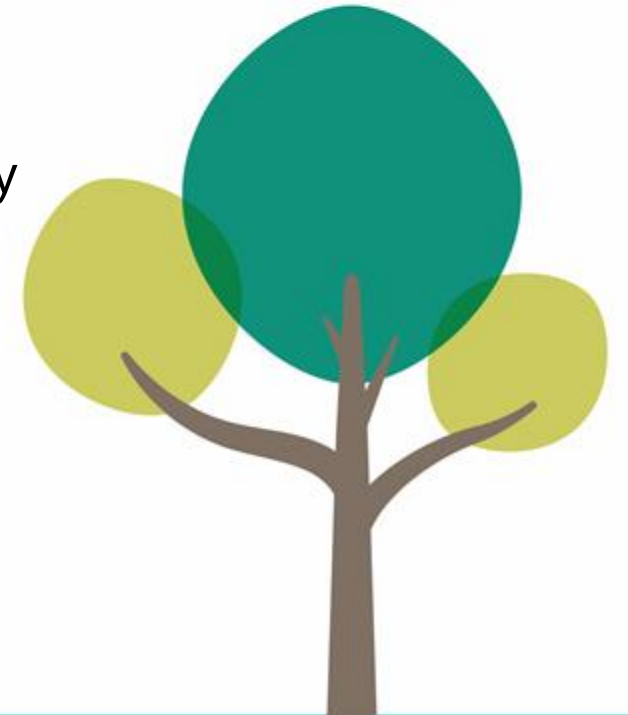
- MJ Awards – winner of the Innovation in Children's Services category for the STEPS Centre
- Finalist in the Children and Young People Now Awards category for Children in Care for the Sandwell Careers Interview Guarantee Scheme and reduction from 24% NEET in 2017 to 6% NEET in 2020
- Member of staff shortlisted for the national NSPCC Award, recognising outstanding practice in the implementation of the Graded Care Profile 2 (Neglect programme)
- Member of staff received the MBE in recognition of work in school inclusion for children with SEND
- Contracts exchanged on Providence Place and feasibility study started for CBSO school in West Bromwich



SANDWELL CHILDREN'S SERVICES – Reset and Recovery update

EARLY YEARS, SCHOOLS AND COLLEGE:

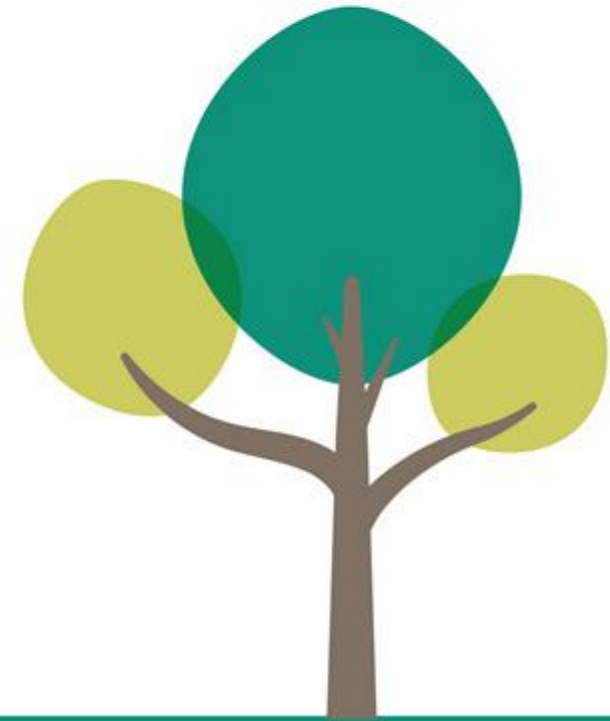
- Excellent engagement between early years providers, schools/academies and Sandwell College and the local authority:
 - self-isolation, remote learning arrangements, attendance, funding, staff wellbeing, managing CEV, Xmas closure dates, Free School Meal arrangements over Xmas, INSET arrangements, end of term contact tracing requirements, information for parents
- Daily updates for Cabinet Members and weekly for all Councillors
- Engagement with Trades Unions
- Meetings with Minister Ford - additional requests from government: early years and childcare (including wrap around, EHE, new operational guidance for FE)
- Mass testing arrangements (aymsymptomatic)



SANDWELL CHILDREN'S SERVICES – Reset and Recovery update

VULNERABLE CHILDREN:

- Vulnerable Children Group meetings continue:
 - SEND, CEV, CME, CSC, AP, EHE, FSM
- Data returns and report from Wave 16:
 - increasing complexity of issues experienced by children
- Ofsted vulnerable children report (3) - children are struggling:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-isolation-having-detrimental-impact-on-childrens-education-and-welfare-particularly-the-most-vulnerable>
- Safe sleeping over Xmas and prevention of suicide posters for schools
- Meetings with Minister Ford - reviews of babies and child protection, family justice and court arrangements, UASC arrangements (and other Brexit matters)
- Vulnerable People's Cell:
 - Winter Support Grant

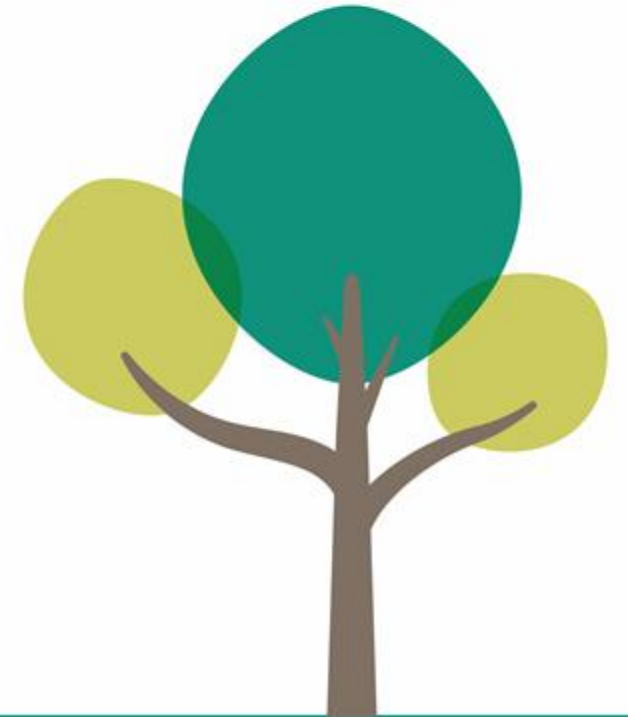


SANDWELL CHILDREN'S SERVICES – Reset and Recovery update



COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

- Sitrep (including Sandwell Children's Trust), Reset and Recovery Board, Vulnerable Children's Group meetings, SIMT, Vulnerable People Cell meetings
- With partners (education providers, safeguarding partnership)
- Several times weekly with DfE and Ofsted
- Regional and national meetings and actions
- Voices of children, young people and families
- Staff meetings and other support, including staff conferences
- 2020 achievements



SANDWELL CHILDREN'S SERVICES – Reset and Recovery update



LOOKING FORWARD:

- Updated guidance and interpretation/implementation
- Mass testing for schools
- Tests and examination arrangements
- Planning for Ofsted focused visit – support to vulnerable children
- Planning for full Ofsted inspection
- Induction of new CEO for Sandwell Children's Trust
- Holiday Activities and Food Scheme roll-out
- Consultation on Keeping Children Safe in Education

